

WCBA-Meeting Minutes

June 15, 2010

Location: The Social

AGENDA

- I. Guest Speaker former councilman Peter Brown: "Streetcars on Washington"
- II. Endorsement of the SN22 Transportation Plan-Tom Dornbusch
- III. Electing a Board to the WCBA-Jeanette Chinelli

Introduction by: Rich Taylor

Attendees: Peter Brown, Eric Zuniga, Kimberley Slaughter, Ujari Mohite, John Moss, Shannon, Mike Becker, Nikki Mettrick, Tiffany Purvis, Madeline Williams, Mike Shine, Jon Deal, Jeff Massanow, Andy Adams, Robert Mize, Mike Pittman, Darden Oxley, Paul Easterwood, Rene Zamore, Sammy Patrenella, Tony Allman, Alan Sadeghpour, Jeff Gaston, John Rose, Jaysen Clark, Denise McCaskill, Darren Van Delden, Tom Dornbusch, Paul Nicosia, Jeanette Chinelli, Meg Poissant. NOTE: all did not sign the sign in sheet, if you were in attendance and your name is not listed please email: jchinelli@sbcglobal.net

I. **Peter Brown**, former Houston city council member is now Chairman of the Executive Board of International Trade & Development gave a talk and slide presentation regarding the funding for a study for streetcars on Washington Avenue. The study will be funded via a TIGER Grant. TIGER is an acronym for: Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery. These are federal funds through the DOT. Twelve investors have formed the "Washington Avenue Developers Association", some of the members are Frank Liu, Steve Gibson, Avi Ron, Bobby Orr and collectively they own over 50 acres of land and are very supportive of the streetcar proposal. The application is due in July; the group will be applying for a 10 million dollar grant to fund a feasibility study for the streetcars on Washington Avenue. The funds would also pay for planning, environmental assessment, the production of a complete master plan and preliminary engineering for the improvements that will occur. Some key elements in regards to the streetcar: Less engineered street surface, shorter time period for construction, cost less, only takes up one lane of traffic, will not disturb entire street area while under construction, quieter than buses, better catalyst for economic development, display a permanent and positive image for street and city, generate pedestrian activity. There are 75 cities in America either planning for streetcars or under construction. There are 22 cities with active lines. **Quote**: "I will just say, not everybody likes heavy rail, not everybody likes commuter rail, and not everybody likes light rail. But I have had trouble finding anybody who doesn't like streetcars." **Quote**: "I think this is a great opportunity for the city of Houston to really do something significant so our city can start having urban places like you find in Dallas". **Quote**: "Failing to plan is planning to fail". This is a bottom up plan where everybody gets a voice. This is not a top down plan. It is a conflict resolution consensus building process it is also an educational process for all those involved. You learn from best practices from other cities."

The group was asked to endorse the study to be led by the Washington Avenue Developers Association. The people accepted the proposal with a majority show of hands in attendance and a letter from the WCBA will be generated for endorsement. For a complete transcript please email: jchinelli@sbcglobal.net

II. **Tom Dornbusch**: SN22 would ask the business owners to endorse the draft transportation plan so as we moved forward, we can be representing a consensus of agreement between the businesses, residents and development segments of the stakeholders. You can download the complete power point presentation that the SN22 Transportation Committee has developed. The plan includes, streetcar (local transit), freight rail, commuter rail and light rails for Houston. Cristof Spieler provided advisory support to the committee and has recently been appointed to the Metro board. To view the presentation plan please go to: www.sn22.org and see "Super Neighborhood 22 Transportation Presentation". You can attend one of the upcoming scheduled presentations at Dow School or Rice Military/Woodcrest.

III. **Electing a board to the WCBA**: Jeanette Chinelli

The Washington Corridor Business Association currently is running on a volunteer steering committee board headed by Rich Taylor, assisted by Jeanette Chinelli and Meg Poissant with a liaison from SN22 Paul Nicosia. January 19, of 2010.

(Copy of meeting minutes at www.sn22.org/business.htm) Lauren Barrash & Corey Broche have resigned and Paul Easterwood has volunteered to fill in.

A nomination form for election and participation on a nominating committee was given to all in attendance. The direction of the WCBA needs to be formalized by having "elected" officers. The WCBA needs to initiate member dues, install a mission statement and formalize the structural organizational issues to be put into place in order for the WCBA to continue with more legitimacy. By having the formal aspects as a chamber of commerce employs will allow for ownership by the members and provide the mechanism for having a legitimate stake in the organization. Otherwise it is just a newsletter with monthly meetings. The web site development should be an interactive tool with complete membership listings along with building business and community relationships and provide a member only log in. With the future of the Washington Avenue corridor looking towards a cultural designation, possible streetcar installation and some true urban planning the need for a business board with investors is essential. Strong leadership with the concerns of all in mind will act as a conduit for positive growth. With the installation of a board the WCBA can potentially look towards corporate sponsors and proactive participation by those living and working in the area to create a climate of success. For a nomination or membership form email: jchinelli@sbcglobal.net