

ELDRIDGE/WESTOAKS SUPERNEIGHBORHOOD

Minutes

April 10, 2013

The meeting of the Eldridge/West Oaks Super Neighborhood Council was called to order by President Doug Parrish.

I. Speakers

A. Katy Washburn, Executive Director of the Westside Homeless Partnership (“WHP”), spoke about the efforts WHP is making to help the homeless. The Eldridge/West Oaks SN is not in their service area (which is primarily Spring Branch Independent School District), but WHP’s model is usable. Ms. Washburn noted that 2/3rds of Houston’s homeless have mental disorders or are battling addictions. But WHP is geared at helping families with children. They work in conjunction with SBISD. The teachers are aware of children whose families are in need of assistance and recommend families for service.

The homeless count was conducted in Houston in January 2013 (coordinated by the county organization, Coalition for the Homeless). The number counted was 6439 (a 10% decrease from 2012). That is a “point in time” count – it is not really accurate because there are 4000 that are incarcerated or in transitional housing.

National and local organizations’ goal is to end homelessness. 100,000 homes campaign wants to place the medically vulnerable in homes. From 5/5 to 5/10 they hope to identify those people by name and begin efforts toward housing them.

The “hot spot” map, showing where the homeless most frequent does not show Highway 6 as an area where they tend to be. If you disagree, contact the Coalition for the Homeless.

The “invisible” homeless population is the families. Shelters are not a good option for families for many reasons. Many “homeless,” including families, are “doubling up” – meaning they’re moving in temporarily with someone, either friends or families. Education is the best way to end the cycle of poverty. Even a high school diploma leads to a better chance of being independent from government services. Poverty is the reason for homelessness.

The overarching goal of WHP is to protect the education of the children – to keep them in the same school. It is a “hand-up’ not a “hand-out.” Participants have to work. It doesn’t have a shelter or housing. They also can’t have a substance abuse problem, are involved in domestic violence or mental disorders (if on medication). WHP brings in 3 families a month (their goal). Eighty-one percent successfully finish the program. The participants have to find a job within 60 days.

The program is a 2-phased case management program. During the first 9 months, clients receive “an assessment of needs, self-sufficiency plan development, monitoring and advocacy.” Also, WHP subsidizes their housing in apartments in SBISD, so that the children can remain in the same school. During that time (9 months), WHP decreases the help given to the family and the family “steps up” to fill that need through their own resources. They have monthly budgeting meetings and have to save all receipts. After the 9-month period, the second stage starts. During that time, WHP stays in

touch with the family (offering counseling etc.) to the extent the family wants to stay in touch. There are currently 20 families in the program.

B. Dianne Williams, on behalf of the Greater Mission Bend Area Council in Alief, requested support from the SN for the organization's effort to get a bill passed in the Texas Legislature to become the Greater Mission Bend Improvement District. The organization started as a collection of HOAs. It is modeled somewhat after a superneighborhood.

Their goal is to improve the area by getting more authority, for example, through taxing. Ms. Williams stated that the crime in the Alief area bleeds over into our SN, so we will benefit by its efforts also. John Zerwas and Hubert Vo were supposed to sponsor the effort. To support the effort, send emails to John.Zerwas@house.state.tx.us and Hubert.vo at the same House.state.tx.us address and tell them you support it because it will help our area also.

II. City Representatives

A. Councilmember Costello discussed the Chapter 42 amendments before the City Council. The SN alliance is now supporting the amendments. By the end of the month, the amendments will probably be adopted.

B. Oliver Pennington's representative, Mark Kirschke, discussed the criteria contained in deed restrictions such that the subdivisions will be protected from the amendments. There is a Westside PIP meeting every 3rd Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm at Westside station, 3203 S. Dairy Ashford.

You can go to the City's website to give feedback regarding the proposed Chapter 42 ordinances.

C. HPD's representative, Sergeant Barber, stated that crime statistics reflect that there has been a decrease in violent crime by 13.2%, and non-violent crime by 14.2%. Year to date figures reflect that violent crime is down by 23.5% and nonviolent crime is down 4.6%. City-wide there is an increase in robberies and burglaries of a habitation. This is mostly in apartment complexes.

D. Rhonda Sauter, with the Mayor's Assistance Office, reported that there is a "take-Back Drugs" event at Westside Command Station on April 27th. Bring your old, expired prescriptions to the Westside Command Station on that date. Also, the Energy Fest was a big success. Districts C and G are getting most of the Rebuild Houston improvements right now, so there will be road improvements going on. Councilmember Costello mentioned that one of the ways the SN Alliance agreed to support the Chapter 42 amendments, was because of promises that the City will increase the number of inspectors or permit people.

Costello mentioned that the "Save the Forest" issue is a detention issue that is still being looked at.

III. Committee Reports

There are no committee reports; except, Billie Long noted the interactive maps on Rebuild Houston on the City's website.

Homeless Committee - report was given by J. O'Connor. He noted that HPD met with him and J. Lozano at lunch and Captain Skillern had the idea to develop esplanades where homeless were an issue such that it would make it difficult for the homeless to beg on those esplanades. The Homeless Committee is working with West Oaks Mall to try and get this idea moving forward.

IV. Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn. The next SN meeting will take place Wednesday, May 8, at 7 PM at the AC classroom of the Eagle Trace Retirement Community.