

NWNA meeting minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2008

Armando Vargas, President  
John Dahlstrand, Acting Secretary

Residents present were John Dahlstrand, Dan Dorsey, Kathryn Foster, James Ray, Hannah Soreng, and Armando Vargas.

Guests: Tamara Prime

Armando called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM.

The minutes from the previous meeting were presented and accepted with the corrections of the spelling of Hannah and Dan's surnames.

The Landlord Accountability Initiative (LAI) Statement draft by city council member Karin Uhlich was presented by Ward III liaison, Tamara Prime. This initiative is an effort to make landlords more responsive to problems that their property and tenants create in the community. There will be a study session by the Mayor and Council on Feb 5<sup>th</sup>.

There was a discussion, presented by Armando, about new and ongoing neighborhood concerns (copies of the memo 16 Jan 08 given to Councilmember Uhlich were distributed). Buffleglass elimination continues as a larger environmental concern. Kathryn noted that there is a large tree hampering pedestrian and bicycle traffic on 1<sup>st</sup> Ave between Waverly and Linden streets. There are plans for a group of volunteers to do some pruning.

It was noted that our Neighborhood Improvements proposal is before the Board of Supervisors for tentative approval.

Dan and Katie reviewed the concept plan for Bronx Wash improvements being coordinated by the Drachman Institute. Areas/concepts for improvements include a pedestrian bridge, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenues entries, and landscaping.

Dan began a discussion of the Grant Road widening project. Dan and Armando went to the meeting. Attendees were presented with various scenarios and were able to add input to those concepts. At its minimum property impact the project would only take one property from either the north or south side of the street. At its maximum it could take two properties; either one from each side or both from the same side. The City of Tucson would be involved with the construction while RTA is making decisions. In April there will be a presentation of a composite of the concepts.

Armando announced that there would be a Mansfield Park Neighborhood Coalition (MPNC) meeting on Feb 13<sup>th</sup>. The Ward III Neighbors meeting is Feb 20<sup>th</sup>. The latest information on the East Grant Road properties that NWNA is concerned about is as

follows: addresses 340, 356, and 368; 340 (used car lot) – has received citations; 356 (Mariscos Chihuahua) is still pending; 368 – no problems noted.

Other items: the city is ticketing cars parked on the easement at 4<sup>th</sup> Ave and Linden. There are overgrown plants blocking the sidewalk on or near Waverly. We are not sure who is responsible for pruning. The City may or may not be. Arrangements will be made for a pruning party of volunteers to trim along 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Kathryn asked for donations of black paint to help paint some neighborhood mailboxes.

Armando introduced Charles Casey, president Miramonte Neighborhood Association. He spoke about his association's strategy in addressing problems with rental property owners, their managers, and the tenants. The association invited rental property owners and managers to an initial meeting with area homeowners. At the second meeting the association brought in Becky Knoll from TPD and she discussed ways of making apartments safer. Some of these items required an investment by the owner and included such things as better lighting and more visibility by creating open spaces. It was also noted that making rental lease language stricter, enforcing the terms of the lease, and screening potential renters more rigorously would help reduce problems. All suggestions were couched in a way to appeal to rental property owner's bottom line rather than counting solely on their sense of civic responsibility.

We noted that Nwana has a somewhat different makeup than Miramonte NA in that our rental properties are more often smaller units rather than large apartment complexes.

While discussing the difficulties in finding out who locally is the responsible party to contact about problem properties, Charles said that sometimes a letter to the absentee landlord will produce results. He also said that his association incurred costs of roughly \$100 per meeting in direct mailing fees in their efforts to contact landlords and managers.

Unfortunately the progress is stalled at the moment due to changes in the association's personnel.

It was also noted that the Miramonte Neighborhood Association is also incorporated and has a board of directors, a website, and a quarterly newsletter.

Charles Casey excused himself from our meeting and we carried on briefly with a question about the nature of the construction on the southwest corner of 1<sup>st</sup> Ave and Lester. There was no conclusive answer and it will be looked into.

The meeting concluded at 2:50 PM.