

Minutes

Willow Meadows Civic Club General Meeting

Tuesday, June 9, 2015, 7:00 PM, Fellowship Hall, Willow Meadows Baptist Church

Call to Order: President Steven Paletz called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Comments by Special Guests:

Steven recognized Houston City Councilmember Ellen Cohen, who commiserated with Willow Meadows residents suffering from the recent unprecedented flooding. She reviewed the Willow Waterhole Capital Improvement Project and said she had appropriated funds from her service budget to help pay for temporary street lighting for the remainder of the project. She said the lights should be installed in two weeks.

Joe Myers, Senior Assistant Director, Construction Branch, City of Houston Public Works Department, explained that the Willow Waterhole project is designed to improve drainage by replacing stormwater pipes as well as the streets above them. He apologized for problems with the contractor doing much of the work, describing him as inexperienced but willing to improve his performance. He said that the project would be completed quicker if the contractor were retained than if he were terminated. There was so much rain, 11" in four hours, that no drainage system could have prevented flooding. He said that previous flood control efforts by the City and Harris County Flood Control, especially water detention ponds, actually did minimize flooding.

Steven Paletz, whose own home flooded, said that residents were deeply concerned about the phasing of the project, noting that they cannot hire their own work crews to start home repairs because the crews cannot get to affected homes since the streets have been removed. Mr. Myers said he told the contractor that one lane of major streets must remain open to traffic at all times.

Holly Davies, CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) Coordinator, estimated that it costs about \$100,000 to raise the foundation of a home to avoid flooding. She pointed out that FEMA does have funds available to partially compensate residents if their homes were 50% damaged. See www.willowmeadows.org/flood.

Hugh Rafferty explained that the Brays Bayou Association was formed years ago to address flooding. Project Brays was designed as a \$450 million project to be completed in 2014, but Congress has repeatedly reduced funding. He suggested writing to your Congressman to argue for increased funding.

Mayoral candidate Chris Bell sympathized with residents' problems and gave a short speech about his candidacy, noting he has always supported flood control.

Steven Paletz suggested residents e-mail him with their concerns about all these issues. His address is president@willowmeadows.org. Mr. Paletz singled out Security

Chair Stephen Polnaszek for his years-long dedication to the civic club, stating that Stephen works virtually full-time for Willow Meadows as a volunteer.

Reading of the Minutes: Secretary Howard Lindsay

Howard read aloud the Minutes of the March 10, 2015 General Meeting. Motion to approve as read was made by Holly Davies, seconded by Eric Meimoun; motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Heather Deiss, Treasurer

In Heather's absence, Vice President Jim Schroeder noted that the last *WM News* did not have a complete financial statement because the club is adjusting its procedures per its accounting firm. A complete report will be printed in the September newsletter. He said WM has paid income tax for the first time on revenues from newsletter advertising. The Board has approved \$1600 to help pay for temporary street lighting in the north section.

CERT Report: Holly Davies, Coordinator

Holly said that 153 WM homes were flooded and that she is cooperating with nearby neighborhoods to lobby for more funding for flood victims. Those families who have special needs members, such as the handicapped or elderly, should notify Holly or our Security Committee in order to pre-register in the event of future emergencies. She encouraged residents to obtain a Substantial Damage Letter from the City to document flooding damage. She said that although the City at first said residents could not repair floors or even paint until the City approved the repairs, they have changed their minds. Residents should also register with FEMA, which has funds for paying rent for those who must move out of their homes during repairs. City Councilman Larry Green advises those with *any* water damage to report it to FEMA. Small Business Administration loans are available at extremely low interest rates.

Standing Committee Reports

Website Committee: Erich Wolz, Chairman

Not present; no report.

Security: Stephan Polnaszek, Chairman

Stephen has reallocated some Security Patrol resources to increase protection to the most severely flooded areas. There has been no uptick in crime in the affected areas.

Newsletter Committee: Howard Lindsay, Chairman

Present; no report.

Maintenance and Beautification: Cindy Mora, Chairman

Not present; no report.

Deed Restrictions Enforcement: Tina Myers, Chairman

Tina noted that the City now requires that black and green garbage cans be stored out of sight from the street.

Architectural Control: Jeff Peters, Chairman

Present; no report.

Special Committee Reports: None

Unfinished Business: None

New Business:

Steven Paletz said that with the resignation of long-time Board member Emory Glover, there is now an open position on the Board. Howard Lindsay took Emory's place as Secretary, so Howard's previous At-Large Position 7 is open. Contact Steven if you are interested in serving on the Board.

Sense of the Assembly: No Speakers

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn made by Hugh Rafferty, seconded by Tina Myers. Motion passed and meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM until next general meeting on Tuesday, August 11, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

Howard Lindsay
WMCC 2015 Secretary