

Minutes

Willow Meadows Civic Club General Meeting

Tuesday, June 14, 2016, 7:00 p.m., Willow Meadows Baptist Church

Call to Order: President Steven Paletz called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., asking that the agenda be modified to allow two City of Houston speakers to address the meeting first.

Don Perkins, Chief of Staff in City Councilman Larry Green's District K office, addressed the issue of aggressive panhandlers at the South Post Oak/West Bellfort intersection. He noted that the panhandlers there are not homeless, just beggars. Community volunteers have tried to counsel these people to seek help from the many facilities in the City but they generally do not want to do anything but panhandle because it is more profitable. HPD's hands are tied because the panhandlers are not breaking the law, and Mayor Turner does not want to criminalize the homeless.

Mr. Perkins suggested petitioning for a "zone" for the surrounding neighborhoods in which panhandling would be prohibited. Other neighborhoods have used this technique successfully. We have 90 days to secure 100 signatures from homeowners (20% of the area). The Galleria has modified its streets to use riverstone pavers (hard to stand or walk on) and planted rose bushes to take up space on esplanades. Meyer Park and Chase Bank are installing new security cameras to watch for problems.

Mr. Perkins presented four documents to assist with the petition:

1. A map of the proposed zone.
2. The current City ordinance for creating a zone.
3. A proposed amendment to the existing ordinance regarding aggressive panhandling.
4. A previous successful petition that created the EaDo (East Downtown) zone.

These documents may be downloaded from www.willowmeadows.org.

Barbara Hite, Constituent Liaison in Councilmember Green's office, reminded residents that former Mayor Parker was roundly criticized when she tried to make

it illegal to feed the homeless. In the meantime, it may be possible to secure funds to pay HPD overtime to enforce ordinances such as not urinating in public, sleeping on the sidewalk, and blocking bus stops.

One resident suggested having a public awareness campaign, patterned after “Don’t Mess with Texas,” to persuade Houstonians that giving to panhandlers hurts them in the long run.

Reading of the Minutes: Secretary Howard Lindsay read aloud the Minutes of the March 8, 2016 General Meeting. Motion to approve as read was made by Tina Myers, seconded by Heather Deiss. Motion passed.

Treasurer’s Report: Heather Deiss, Treasurer, reported that as of May 9, Willow Meadows Civic Club has received approximately 77% of the 2016 dues income budgeted this year. Expense outlays have been below the year-to-date objective but over the next couple of months several once-a-year large expenses will come due. A new security vehicle was purchased using cash reserves. The complete Treasurer’s Report may be found in the June *WM News* and on the club’s website, www.willowmeadows.org.

Standing Committee Reports:

Website Committee: Erich Wolz, Chairman. Erich said that most of the news updates on the website have concerned flooding issues.

Security Committee: Stephen Polnaszek, Chairman, said that three new officers have been hired for patrol duty, for a total of 18 part-time officers. Lieutenant Barrow gave the crime report. The past three months have been a roller coaster. March was light on crime, but April was bad. Daytime burglary of motor vehicles occur most frequently at Willow Park. Most nighttime BMVs occur during the early morning hours on cars parked in driveways. He reminded people not to leave valuables in their cars and to use the civic club’s vacation watch program to protect their homes.

Newsletter Committee: Howard Lindsay, Chairman.
The June *Willow Meadows News* has been printed and distributed.

Maintenance and Beautification: Co-Chairman Bill Cook said that the WM monument signs have been repaired, and plans for flowerbed maintenance are underway, depending on the weather. He coordinated a “spring cleaning” of West Belfort sidewalks, including tree trimming and trash pickup. For the first time, our maintenance crews are picking up trash as well as mowing. In response to resident complaints, the City Parks and Recreation department has been contacted about replacing sand and mulch in Willow Park.

Deed Restrictions Enforcement: Tina Myers, Chair.

Tina reminded residents that a City ordinance specifies that stored garbage cans should not be visible from the street. She said that she continues to work on violations related to landscaping, boats in driveways, inoperable cars, and heavy trash pickup.

Architectural Control Committee: Chair Jeff Peters. No report.

Erich Wolz made a motion to accept the Standing Committee reports, seconded by Stephen. Motion passed.

Special Committee Reports: None

Unfinished Business: The president said that he and some other board members have met with the City’s new Flood Czar, especially regarding damage in the North Section. The original contractor in charge of the North Section rebuild was fired, leaving much work unfinished. Now negotiations are underway with the bonding company about who will pay for which repairs.

New Business: There are now three vacancies on the Board. Steven asked for volunteers to contact him. No one has volunteered to chair the Picnic Committee, so the event will probably be cancelled. A recent story in the *Chronicle* reported on the Garden Oaks subdivision’s travails regarding enforcement of deed restrictions. A homeowner who build a four-car garage in violation of Garden Oak’s DRs won a lawsuit because he proved that the civic club had not uniformly and consistently enforced its DRs. Steven proposed hiring a management company to handle DRs next year because the job is just too big for one volunteer.

A resident reported that during construction on Greenwillow, a stop sign was knocked down, presenting a dangerous problem. Regarding homes that appear to be abandoned, we will be using a survey compiled by Officer Rubio. If the yard is being mowed, the civic club cannot assume the house is abandoned. If the yard is unmowed and the home appears to be falling down, the club can report it to the City.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn made by Heather Deiss, seconded by Bill Cook.

Respectfully submitted,

Howard Lindsay
WMCC 2016 Secretary