

ECCNPT Minutes 10-19-2011

Citizen Communications:

Rep. Joaquin Castro from San Antonio dropped by to introduce himself as a candidate in our congressional district currently under court review by the Justice Dept. Our area is currently represented by Congressman Lloyd Doggett in a district that stretches all the way to South Texas. The new district, should the courts approve it would move our neighborhood into a district that includes more voters from San Antonio than Austin. Rep. Castro said he would move to our area if he should win.

Beverly Silas with IH-35 Corridor Development Program Team made a short presentation about the City's new initiative to improve IH-35 and parking issues. Public comment on short, medium and long-term solutions are being gathered through a big open house on Thursday, Nov 17 at Town Lake Center, 721 Barton Springs Rd, park free at Palmer Events Center. Drop by anytime between 3-8 pm. For more info: bsilas@beverlysilas.com or 374-4997.

Committee Reports and Possible Action Items:

Treasurer's report: Susan provided a balance sheet covering transactions from Jan to October.

Land Use & Design Committee: Kathy Setzer reported that some progress was made in limiting the use of single family homes by commercial companies like HomeAway but allowing homesteaders to rent their homes for short term rentals (short term rental is described as less than a traditional rental period of 30 days). While not totaling restricting commercial use of single family homes to be operated like hotels, neighborhoods will have a voice in the process because the proposal is to require companies to seek conditional use permits in using homes that are not listed for homestead in Austin.

Affordable housing: Updates, if any.

Traffic and Transportation: Updates, if any.

Economic Development Committee: Updates, if any.

Communication Committee: Kathy urged us all to use our website to post updates and blogs more often.

Parks and Environment Committee: Tree planting is on 10-22 and everyone's help is needed.

We approved minutes from September with a minor correction in the Traffic report regarding the City staff name, Steve's last name is Grassfield.

Action Items:

1. We discussed and voted to support a conditional use permit for late hours for the restaurant proposed by Brandon Testa at 907 E. 6th St. We made it clear to him that we would not support outdoor music and that we still have concerns about his off-site parking plans but - in the spirit of compromise - we agreed to support his change in use from a cocktail lounge to a full service restaurant. Late hours are needed because his off-site parking agreements cannot conflict with daytime operations using those same parking spaces.

2. We discussed and took action to endorsement only options B and C for the RBJ tract. Farah and Jo told us that most residents want option A but that plan doesn't increase the number of new affordable units to a level the Team felt is worth the investments. We can't support option E because we believe swapping parkland which would require a city-wide referendum because its dedicated parkland is not feasible and the plan has too much commercial uses and is very dense. We agreed that options B and C offer the best hope to maintain a balance between commercial uses needed to provide income to subsidize the rents for very low income seniors and increase new affordable units on the site. We had a long discussion on option D but ultimately decided it placed too much high-end commercial uses near the lakefront and included more higher income housing units than is necessary to support the goals of the Board and that option D created too much density that would negatively affect parking and traffic in the surrounding neighborhood.

3. We discussed and but did not take action on a Parking Benefit District until we can conduct an inventory of existing public parking spaces and until we learn more about the new program. We did agree to post an action item for November to request increased lighting on E. 4th and E. 5th and at the intersections with the north-south streets in belief that better lighting will make more visitors to the commercial corridors park closer to the bars and restaurants alleviating street parking on E. 3rd and E. 2nd Streets.

4. We discussed and endorsed a late hours permit for Papi Tino's restaurant.

5. We discussed the nomination of Farah Rivera to serve as the Renters' Rep to fill Leah's vacancy and elected her unanimously. We will post Jeff's seat in the next Grapevine and confirm whether Alex wants to continue to serve since his job is requiring so much out of town travel.

6. We discussed and endorsed the application to the federal government for designation of our Tejano Healthy Walking Trail and the Music Legends Trail as National Recreation Trails with help from Nadia Barrera, COA Neighborhood Connectivity Dept.

We confirmed the next meeting at 6 pm on November 16, 2011 at Terrazas Library and will have a Holiday Party in lieu of a meeting in December with Cristina and Richard setting the date for us. Adjourn.