

South River City Citizens Neighborhood Association:
February 6, 2006, General Meeting Minutes, submitted by
Tim Mahoney

7:00pm Grace United Methodist Church

1. Introductions:

2. Treasurer's Report and March SRCC Elections: Ending balance overall for January, 2006, \$2,058.37; Austin Community Foundation Environmental Fund balance, \$45,810.93; Austin Community Foundation July 4th Fund, \$6,716.11.

Elections next month, deadline today for new members to pay dues in order to vote in the election at the March meeting; current members (those who have paid in the last two years) can pay up to the day of the election next month in order to vote.

3. Travis County Clerk – precincts, polling locations, etc. -- Guest Speaker: Dana Debeauvoir: 2 of 6 neighborhoods affected by elimination of precincts due to a number of reasons, including redistricting, ADA requirements, failure of notifications, Austin American Statesman's decision last election not to publish polling locations (the nerve!, evidently competition between advertising versus and news, no doubt a very old story that the newspaper is not even conscious of). Becker was especially complained about in terms of the change from Grace United Methodist Church. Congress Avenue Church has been in the running as a substitute, but there has been logistics issues regarding that arrangements (it needs to be approved by the Church Board), and a decision has to be made by next Tuesday, or the voting will return to Becker. Even if in Becker for the next election or so, could still work out in future with Congress (would require County to pay \$1,500 for an ADA ramp modification, and Congress Avenue Baptist Church would have to agree to continue as a polling place for a year).

4. 127 Riverside Project

- Guest Speakers: Jeremy Smitheal (developer owner), Steven Metcalfe, Michele Allen

Last meeting there was a discussion of rescinding neighborhood's previous support for project because some changes have come to light; after

presentation, offer to ask questions of architects and engineers. Location is site of industrial site, just east of Congress and Riverside, south side of Riverside, Bouldin Creek (East) is in bad shape. Plan is to do a 5-story building, mixed use. Present plan goes from the 15 foot protected setback from creek to an average of 25 feet, and state-of-the-art water-quality system, after conversations with City Staff, including Park's people. Without support from the neighborhood, the site would have to remain as the industrial site that it was, or variances that would allow redevelopment under the requirements of the Town Lake Waterfront Overlay.

Suggested Conditions to Granting Variance: 1) TCEQ voluntary contamination cleanup; 2) that the Parks Dept. wants is public access (and wonders of SRCC wants such access as well); 3) Water quality system that is 260% better than required by the City; 4) Stabilize the creek; 5) Green Builder program; 6) Integrated Pest Management Plan; 7) Landscape with native species; 8) vertical mixed use with pedestrian oriented activity on Riverside Drive.

Ways that this project will not make a negative precedence: Difference between East Bouldin and other Urban Creeks that go into the navigatable area of Town Lake in this area: 1) East Bouldin has not any parkland associated with it and the other creeks do not have development potential because of highway right of way and/or parks land (the 5 or so other creeks in this area, from Blunn to Barton to Johnson to Shoal Creeks).

Our Parks Planner Sarah Campbell: She noticed as request for 2 variances, 2 setbacks, primary 80 foot setbacks, and a secondary 50 foot setbacks, each with its own requirements. Lawyer for the developer said that he was stating that whatever would be necessary would be a one variance process.

They are suggesting that this project could be a prototype for future development from Congress Avenue to Townlake to have a public access model for a future Parks Department sponsored trail.

Discussion: Suggestion from the Informal Neighborhood Review Task Force, presented by Sarah Campbell, seconded by Terry Franz, and also Jean Mather: that an 80 foot setback be maintained from Bouldin Creek (instead of the new proposal of an average of 25 feet), which is consistent with the recently passed neighborhood plan and variance requirements, including the special requirements of the Townlake Conditional Overlays. This precedent

would be required on all the future development on East Bouldin Creek, rather than the phantom issues that the developer was raising with other creeks that empty into Townlake. There was general concern that the developer's reference to the 8 conditions were bogus. The primary 80 foot setback would still leave three quarters of the site to develop on. The Task Force felt that the secondary setback of 120 feet was too restrictive (ROMA's report suggested a few years ago that a 100 foot setback was reasonable). A discussion about possibility of moving the setback from Riverside closer to the street, in exchange for the setback further from the creek. Jean Mather admitted that she was incorrect in the original recommendations, and that 80 feet was the better solution. VOTE: SRCC supports granting a variance of the secondary setback from 130 feet to 0 feet, and uphold the primary setback of 80 feet, and that the development is required to comply with all other provisions of the waterfront overlay: unanimous for the Taskforce recommendation, with 2 abstentions.

5. International Peace Garden – Betty Weed, over 200,000 peace poles around the world, and, evidently the Travis Heights Community feels that the children may be getting some incorrect information about our relationship to peace in our country. Possible location: in the natural “lobby” outside the entrance to the front of the elementary school on the way to the gym. Travis Heights parent Krista Einst provided additional information. Moved by Sarah, seconded by Jeff Kessel, that SRCC endorsed the proposal. Passed without opposition.

Becker issue: Travis Heights Elementary people are generally opposed to Becker reconfiguration, support BCNA in keeping Becker open as a K-5th, that the decision to reconfigure is manifestly too soon without effective community input, and that without Becker, AISD is contributing to sprawl and not making Austin a livable city. Motion made by Terry, seconded by Betty. Motion passes unanimously.

6. East Riverside/Oltorf Combined Neighborhood Plan (EROCC): Toni House, given the lateness of the hour, gave a report on the Andrewartha mansion. Gayle Goff said that there were also two important presentations this Saturday morning at the next meeting of the interim contact team at the Diamond Ball Room.
- Report from Jan 26 Council meeting

- Lakeshore Blvd Redevelopment
- Wellesley Property
- Andrewartha Mansion: going to Planning Commission on February 14th, Neighborhood asking for 3 overlays (mansion is history, but 3 conditions are access to property [Windoak], buffer between neighborhood and development, and protection of trees), or they would oppose the development.
- Parker Lane Seniors Apts.

7. Greater South River City Neighborhood Plan (GSRC)

- Reagan Signs Zoning Case postponed to March 2

8. Committee and Project Reports

- Blunn Creek Issues: Jeff Kessel (Blunn Creek study at St. Edwards University, City still officially for the regionally detention pond, but uncertain if things are moving forward, public works and watershed; Sarah Campbell had set some potential opportunities, which the group decided to informally support); and David Todd (Blunn Creek: 1) Jean Drew is still working on the Little Stacy Park issue, and 2) It's My Park Day is April 22nd).

- Crime Watch Meeting Report: Elloa Mathews: an overview, the meeting last January 31st included many people who have not been active before in the neighborhood, but there are also holes in the neighborhood crimewatch effort. Terry Frantz made a list of participants; some of the signs from old crimewatch signs are old and/or stolen. Elloa has a goal of getting an inventory of existing signs and ensuring all that all entrances have a new sign. Elloa is coordinating the inventory for south of Oltorf, Terry for north of Oltorf and west of 35, and Dawn Cizmar for east of 35.

9. Zoning/Variance Issues

DMU zoning south of Town Lake

10. New business and other announcements: discussion of 1213

Newning and the Christmas present that owner gave the neighborhood by pouring concrete in his vegetative buffer.

Also discussed property at 1107 East Riverside, property where property owner is stating that first floor is going to be basement and they will change the grade so three stories suddenly becomes two. The City Attorneys are evidently following the advice of the property owner's attorneys, and Danette is taking the case to the City Council. Similar issue with Bouldin Neighborhood and the Tree House property, another property in OWANA, but this is the first time that a residential property is involved.

Motion by David Coufal, second by Elloa, to clarify position in support of Bouldin against the South Congress Café, passed unanimously.