



P.O. Box 66674
Houston, TX 77266-6674
info@wammcivic.org
wammcivic.org

The following are minutes from the WAMM Civic Association meeting held June 11, 2012.

Attendance:

WAMM Officers Marcus Duffel, John Dascoulias, Lane Llewellyn and Kevin Begnaud.

Approximately 32 Residents

Neartown Association Update:

Kevin Begnaud and Lane Llewellyn attended the most recent Neartown meeting held May 22, 2012 and provided an update. Three issues were addressed at the meeting.

City Mobility Planning of Traffic and Streets

- Inner West Loop Mobility Study is a project being conducted by the City of Houston Planning Department, which studies how our streets will function in the future. Based on current conditions and increased population in our area, the study will attempt to determine what our short term and long term mobility goals are to prepare for the next 20-30 years. Areas of study include pedestrian, bicycle and transit connectivity. The final report should be available in August 2012. Visit the City of Houston website and search for City Mobility Planning for more information.

Montrose Management District

- Lane reinforced that this organization exists to promote economic development in our neighborhood. The District exists to support local commercial businesses however its activities have a positive effect on all WAMM members. Guest speaker at the meeting was Claude Wynn who provided an update on the recycling projects, esplanade landscaping and holiday décor. There is a Recycling Mixer to be held June 28, 2012 (5:30-7:30 P.M.). Visit the montrosedistrict.org website for more information.

Former Ruggles Site on Westheimer

- Developers of the new restaurant called Brande, located at the former Ruggles restaurant site on Westheimer presented an overview of their new concept. A proposed two-story building with open windows and street front seating will offer “rustic, farmhouse fare dining along with American wine and spirits and a heavy bakery”. The purpose of their presentation was to solicit support of a City of Houston building setback variance in order to accommodate side and rear parking with the restaurant closest to Montrose for a pedestrian-like environment. Members in attendance unanimously voted to support the developer’s request for variance to the City of Houston.



Deed Restriction Committee

At the previous membership meeting held, March 12, 2012, there was discussion relating to the absence of a WAMM Deed Restriction Committee (DRC), as set forth by the current WAMM Bi-Laws. Current Bi-Laws state that there is to be a Deed Restriction Committee established to enforcing deed restrictions and review applications. To address the shortfall, Marcus appointed an ad-hock committee of three WAMM members whose purpose was to make recommendations to the Board of Directors on setting in place the DRC.

Marcus provided a history of how the Deed Restrictions were initially established in 1999 when the existing Board sent 235 certified letters to property owners requesting their participation in the restrictions. He noted that owners had the option of agreeing to or denying participation in the deed restrictions. If a property owner failed to respond to the request and the letter was confirmed as delivered via certified mail, the property was automatically defaulted to Deed Restriction status. There were 39 letters that were not confirmed as “delivered” and therefore these properties cannot be confirmed to be either Deed Restricted or not. Marcus is currently researching these properties to determine their status. In addition, Marcus has prepared a plat map of the neighborhood identifying properties that are, are not and are unknown to be deed restricted.

Suzie Harmon was appointed to the above mentioned ad-hock committee and provided members with an overview of her responsibilities. Suzie, along with Joe Webb and Debbie Levine reviewed dozens of neighboring Civic Association Bi-Laws, which have set forth committees similar to the DRC, which WAMM Bi-Laws set forth. Suzie stated that the purpose of her committee was to make recommendations relating to the formation of a DRC and not to suggest or make recommendations for a change to the current WAMM deed restrictions.

The City of Houston Legal Department: Deed Restriction Enforcement

Sandra Eidson, Senior Attorney and Mandy Prichard, Assistant Attorney with the City of Houston Legal Department provided members with an overview of their role in enforcing deed restrictions in Houston neighborhoods. Sandra presentation included the definition of a Deed Restriction, where deed restrictions can be found and how to obtain copies and how they are enforced. The City has been granted limited authority to enforce deed restrictions. (TX. Loc. Govt. Code 212.151, et. Seq.). Since Houston has no zoning, the City enforces land use restrictions created by residents. Sandra described common restrictions and those enforceable by the City under Houston Ordinance 10-553. Examples include Use (residential vs. commercial), Building Setbacks, Size of lots or size, type and number of structures, orientation of a structure and construction of fences that require permit. She also described samples of what the City is not authorized to enforce.



The City Attorney's Office assists with enforcement of Deed Restrictions. They investigate complaints from residents and enforce written deed restrictions on behalf of the City at no charge. The City Attorney cannot represent property owners or civic associations and cannot provide legal advice to residents. Their office does not have the authority to review, approve or deny applications for change to a deed restriction. Each individual neighborhood's Civic or Homeowner's Association By-Laws defines this process.

3300 Graustark

Randy Stenoien, partner in the ownership of the vacant lots at Hawthorne and Graustark, provided a history of the property and described the conditions of the now demolished apartment complex, the previous plans for development and the eventual foreclosure of the property. He explained his desire to sell the property to a buyer who has an interest in developing the property with the best interest of WAMM residents in mind. Randy requested support of a proposed application for change to building height restriction. The subject property is bound by the following WAMM restriction:

"10. Improvements built on any property may not be taller than three stories or 30 feet."

Robert Font, also partner in the ownership, gave an overview of a proposed project that involves construction of nine residential units with a building height of 35 feet. In order to comply with WAMM Deed Restrictions, the developers would need approval of a change to the building height restriction on this particular property.

Feedback from members included complaints of the maintenance and upkeep of the lots. Members noted excessive trash, weeds, graffiti on neighboring properties and inadequate fencing. Randy and Robert agreed to more regular maintenance and upkeep of the property.

Covenant House

Marcus addressed previously discussed security concerns and complaints at the Covenant House and his request for their security to circle the property once an hour. Carolyn Garrard and Lauren Persler of the Covenant House addressed the members. Lauren acknowledged the request for them to increase their security presence in the neighborhood. She discussed their strict enforcement of 5:00 P.M. resident curfew and its positive results. Currently, there is 24/7 security surveillance.

National Night Out – Texas Version

This event will be held on Tuesday, October 2, 2012 and will be graciously hosted by WAMM members Greg Simmons and Sally Scroggs at 1405 Marshall. More details to come.



Closing Comments

We encourage you to solicit your neighbors, who may or may not know about our WAMM Civic Association, to become involved and attend our quarterly meetings. The 2012 WAMM Membership form is available online at www.wammcivic.org, Select Pay Dues on the left side. Civic Association dues are \$25 annually per household.

WAMM has a Yahoo based web page that serves primarily as a forum for conversation of residents of common issues. WAMM residents can register for access to this site at the following address <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wammlist/>. There is also a link to the WAMM Yahoo Group page on the WAMM website at <http://www.wammcivic.org/>.