

OWANA General Membership Meeting
January 7, 2003
Minutes

Joe Meza of Fresh Plus provided a delightful array of snacks and drinks before the meeting.

Margaret Bruch, chair of OWANA, called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Guests: Ben Kramer, Principal of Mathews Elementary School; Tom Bolt, Senior Planner, Neighborhood Planning and Zoning Dept., City of Austin

Margaret explained that this meeting was held in lieu of a General Membership meeting that would normally have taken place in December 2002.

1. Mathews Elementary School Liaison

Barbara Stroud described the opportunity for OWANA to participate in the “Partners In Education” program with Mathews. Ben Kramer explained the program, which serves as a link between schools and businesses or organizations.

Barbara made a motion that OWANA officially be designated as a Partner in Education with Mathews. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Increase in OWANA Dues

Margaret explained that while the current membership dues per household in OWANA is \$15 per year, this amount is not enough to cover costs such as the mailing of the OWANA Newsletter in December to all OWA residents. Sarah Uribe, OWANA Treasurer, recommended that the dues be raised to \$20. It was noted that the OWANA Bylaws allow the OWANA Steer Committee to set the OWANA dues.

Standish Meecham moved that the dues be raised to \$20. The motion passed.

3. Shurgard Storage

Nancy Toelle reported that Shurgard Storage was considering pursuing a location on 5th St. near the Public Storage facility. A representative for Shurgard who contacted her, stated that they would like to get a sense of how the neighborhood would feel about such a development, and that Shurgard has a practice of not building in areas where the neighborhood objects. As a “conditional” use in the zoning overlay recently enacted by the City Council as part of the OWA Neighborhood Plan, a storage business at that location would require approval by the Board of Adjustments.

Discussion followed with neighbors expressing several concerns.

4. Variance Request at 1110 W. 7th St. (Jim Cousar and Donna Squyers)

Laura Morrison reported that Jim Cousar and Donna Squyers have requested a variance to allow building of a 2 story garage/library 2.5 ft. into the rear setback along the alley behind 7th St. This would replace a 1 story garage currently on the same rear line. 3 adjacent neighbors have signed letters of support, and as yet, neighbors within 300 ft. (notified by the BoA) have not formally objected. Greg Leitech, within 300 ft., raised concern about the variance.

Nancy Toelle moved that based on neighbors' support, OWANA support the variance.

Hector Uribe suggested that the vote be postponed until later in the meeting, to allow Jim and Greg to discuss the issue. This was accepted.

5. Zoning Rollback Process

Nancy Toelle explained that a zoning rollback effort, as called for in the OWA Neighborhood Plan, would begin with letters being written to owners of the 340 MF-zoned properties in OWA. Downzoning affords greater protection under compatibility standards. Tom Bolt, Planner with the City of Austin, described the process and answered questions. Concern was raised about the effect that downzoning could have on property taxes. He will look into the issue. Linda MacNeilage described a similar effort that took place in the 70's when protection was sought from development that could have negative impacts on the residential character of the neighborhood.

6. OWA Design Guidelines

Marjorie Moore described the OWA Design Guidelines that have been developed in order to assist residents/owners in OWA with development and remodeling that is sympathetic to the character of our neighborhood. The guidelines have been available for review on the OWANA web site and on the Fresh Plus bulletin board.

Laura Morrison moved that OWANA adopt these guidelines as recommended and voluntary guidelines for development in our neighborhood. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Election of the 2003 Steering Committee

Margaret Bruch reported that the Nominating Committee for the next steering committee consisted of Ed Jordan, Brady Coleman, David Smith, Laura Morrison and herself. A slate of 13, published in the recent OWANA Newsletter, consists of the following OWANA members: Jake Billingsley, Margaret Bruch, Steve Colburn, Dale Detwiler, Paul Dunham, Greg Leitech, Linda MacNeilage, Laura Morrison, Katy O'Neill, Charles Price, Saralyn Stewart, Barbara Stroud, and Sarah Uribe.

No further nominations were offered from the floor.

Mark Stine moved that the slate be elected by acclimation. The motion carried.

8. Newsletter Expenditures

A motion was made to approve the costs of the recent newsletter. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Readdressing the Variance Request at 1110 W. 7th St.

After discussion with Jim Cousar, Greg Leitich noted that while he does not support the variance, he does not oppose it.

The motion to support the variance was passed unanimously.

10. Clarksville Development Corporation and the Haskell House

Jake Billingsley described the efforts of the CDC, and encouraged attendance at the upcoming CDC meeting. The Community Center can be rented for community activities. Contact Jake for more information (472-6013).

Jake also described the situation with the Haskell House, which was granted Historic zoning in November 2002. It has not only local but also national historic significance. Recently a city tourism grant was blocked. *(Note: Jake Billingsley reported that he was informed that as of 1/9/03, the application for the grant was reviewed and reconsidered and approved.)*

11. Train Noise

Jake Billingsley explained the disruptive nature of train noise in parts of the OWA neighborhood, and presented a video describing an approach to reducing such noise by using wayside horns, which direct the noise to an upcoming intersection rather than in all directions. He also explained that a report which had been done on the possibility of instituting train quiet zones in Austin, but that our area was not considered in the study despite the fact that it was legally possible to do so.

Jake moved that OWANA urge the City Council to take action to reduce noise in our neighborhood. The motion passed unanimously.

Jake moved that OWANA ask City Council

- (1) for a more complete report from the City Manager and staff,
- (2) to move forward with the creation of a train quiet zone,
- (3) and to include representatives from effected neighborhoods (including OWANA) in the implementation process.

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.

Note: Steering Committee Members in attendance were Margaret Bruch, Steve Colburn, Katie Crago, Dale Detwiler, Paul Dunham, Laura Morrison, Katy O'Neill, Saralyn Stewart, Nancy Toelle, and Sarah Uribe