

Cherrywood General Mtg 11/28/07

Start time: 6:34pm

Present: 20 residents + 5 SC members + 2 non-residents

Introductions- quorum present (min 20 active residents)- yea!!

Announcements: Andy Hannock running for 98<sup>th</sup> district court judge attending/mentioning his candidacy; David on behalf of Priscilla Boston re: upcoming Cherrywood Art Fair

SC Elections: brief description by David of SC committee's role; 4 candidates up for election/reelection: David Greene, Girard Kinney

Motion to approval slate of four candidates for 07-09; vote taken- unanimous yes vote  
Point made that Julie present and needs to be voted on- Michael Bray still needs to be confirmed

Motion made to approve both parties- passed unanimously

**P&Z report:**

**1715 Giles-** individual has purchased a single lot (lot 69) with intention to subdivide and sell as ½ lots; per Girard, long as owner follows city process, rarely is request denied. May be even state law which prevents city from denying request- already going to planning commission Tues, Dec 11<sup>th</sup>- 1600+ sq ft plus lot- on flood plane but owner has accounted for those set-backs- has already applied for demolition permit for current residential structure on lot. Per Girard, VERY unlikely neighborhood can prevent from happening- one point: many mature trees on lot, some of which may be protected due to size/city policies but difficult to enforce. Suggestion to request one month delay for neighborhood to review then state our concerns- city perspective may be that multiple dwellings on the lot creates more residential space and therefore is of benefit to the city. Questions raised regarding presence of creek & railroad tracks on lot and actual usable/buildable space vs. lot size but, even with set-backs, lot size will accommodate 2 smaller structures. Question of any environmental issues so near to creek but, in city of Austin, very little control over residential building in such areas. May go through environmental review process but seems like will pass such a review. Member mentioned that sub-lots are already listed on MLS as for sale "contingent upon city approval of subdivision," one for \$160k the other for \$170k. Point made that any decision we make should be based on worst case scenario vs. any speculation of what may happen in the immediate future. Suggestion made to get permission from owners of neighboring lots to take photos of lot/house, esp that reflect any mature trees. Question as to whether or not VMU would have any effect on the new construction or if the Cherrywood Design Guidelines could be enforced- answer to both is no- VMU only affects those wanting to utilize benefits and design guidelines only as leverage if owner is requesting something from neighborhood. Motion made to pursue request to city to delay hearing at planning commission; 2<sup>nd</sup>-ed and passed unanimously.

**3717 Robinson-** corner of 38<sup>th</sup> st; new owner wants rezoned to GO (general office) with stated intention of having travel agency or hair salon. Owner approached neighbors as neighborhood guidelines request but only one has responded and agreed with proposed change. P&Z committee voted not to support the zoning change- would lead to loss of residential space as well as set dangerous precedent for other properties in neighborhood. See need to have broader, long term vision for neighborhood and have not had opportunity to do so yet. Point made that planning commission can always override neighborhood's suggestions/request BUT better chance of them respecting our

wishes if we have a broader plan in place. Question as to reason one neighbor supported plan; neighbor is architect who stated house had been previously/frequently unoccupied and that there has been issue of vagrants camping in yard, etc. He feels presence of business would add to daytime presence in neighborhood. Also mentioned that some mixed zone property on street has office space as part of residence- Point made that as business would need to modify off-street parking. Owner has agreed that if rezoned, he will keep current structure and work within Cherrywood Neighborhood guidelines with any remodel. Same point made about need for broader vision of neighborhood and how this proposed rezoning would play in to that. Point made that vagrants do make address unattractive to any future resident BUT rezoning still sets dangerous precedent. Motion made to oppose rezoning, at least until broader plan can be established.

**SAFETY REPORT** with Officer Salisbury:

Home Depot moving to 51<sup>st</sup>/I35; APD will be moving to St. Johns/I35 (previous location). Talk of how this will attract day laborers on site- police aware and will be watching (approx 2 yr transition). Sect of homeless living off railroad tracks, sleep in bamboo off tracks behind school/tracks. Operation coming up in 2 wks to round up homeless/arrest for trespassing. Chief also pressing for more aggressive pan-handling policies. Burglaries in neighborhood- big focus on preventing/catching perpetrators. Newer MO of smashing in doors, using van as getaway- trying to get license plate of perpetrators. Commonly occurs between 3-9pm- suggestion made to reinforce front doors using longer screws with deadbolt. Salisbury also willing to come to homes for crime prevention survey and, if you complete suggestions, most insurance companies will offer 10% discount. Please contact to set meetings after holidays if interested. Perpetrators caught have said our neighborhood is target due to "easy going nature of folks, easy access off airport, lots of high dollar items in homes." Question: are specific houses being cased? OS doesn't think so- just taking chance on finding high dollar items. Also rash of incidents in homes under construction in Mueller. Suggestion made to try to keep car in driveway as deterrent. 974-4498- deal with anything from high grass to burglaries.

**CAP METRO**- presentation by Matt Curtis:

Over the years, ridership has been on an uptrend, either as lifestyle or to supplement transportation needs. RAIL- set to open fall 2008 (on time); most platforms are already completed- working on canopies/finishing touches. Will start testing trains from 183 down to 47<sup>th</sup> street- working on safety concerns (ie stay off the tracks!). They are sending postcards, putting out yard signs, PSAs in both English & Spanish to get the word out regarding said test runs.. Tests will be between 7pm-5am in effort to avoid human foot traffic. Questions raised about track location- track was already in place; originally designed to haul granite in to area. Track/crossing has been upgraded- quad gates in place so no way to zig-zag through if gate down. Also allows city to apply for permit so that trains don't need to blow horns anytime they cross an intersection. City is currently fast-tracking those applications. Currently working to revamp bus lines/routes to work in conjunction with rail stops/stations. Some TOD (Trans Oriented Developments) have already broken ground, others will be shortly. Questions: train will run near Maplewood? (and) Are they, as said, so quiet pedestrians will not be able to hear them coming? Matt confirmed they will be building significant fencing near the schools and strategically placed fencing in other high pedestrian areas. Question: what will speed of trains be? In areas with straightaways/low ped traffic, approx 70 miles- other denser areas slow to 50mph and even 35-30mph in really dense areas, and even to 20mph in downtown area. To compare, freight trains travel at approx 15mph.

Question: travel time of entire line? Approx 51min from Leander to Downtown- fees still in flux but probably flat fee no matter length of ride and comparable to bus fares. Will have universal passes avail which work for both rail and bus. Question: will city employees be able to ride rail for free as can bus? Not yet decided- seems probable that they will. Question: doesn't testing time of 7pm-5am interfere with freight transit? Initial plan was to only offer service during peak hours but, with rise in gas prices/environmental concerns, already push to expand service hours of rail. Will be somewhat limited because running on same rails as freight and there has been a surge in freight use as transport for the same reasons (can transport much more than by semis and much more efficiently). Point: TOD planning is being done by city, not CapMetro- plans for the MLK station area already under way. Question: will rail ever be so pervasive that freight will be phased out? Not likely-

Tracks have been upgraded- welding of joints should prevent "clackity-clack" sound- may be another rail election soon to expand services. There are two other freight track lines which would be usable for this expansion in to the Elgin area/other areas east of Austin. Question: how many cars per train? 5 trains with 1 back-up and only 2 cars per train; each train can carry approx 210 people. Currently 9 stations will be serviced, 8 of which are within City of Austin limits.

#### WRAP-UP COMMENTS:

Homelessness Forum: very successful; approx 30 attended with 2 panel members committee members; want to continue focus on affordable housing and how we can create more of it within Cherrywood.