

Hancock Neighborhood Association

Minutes of the Meeting of March 16, 2022

Held on Zoom and recorded. Coan Dillahunty presiding.

General business and updates

At the January meeting there was concern about the classifications in the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan (ASMP-<https://www.austintexas.gov/department/austin-strategic-mobility-plan>). Bart Whately reported that this is the mobility plan for the streets, which designates streets with Level 1 to 5, level 1 being the narrowest. It doesn't overlay well on some of the existing streets. Harris Ave. had been classified as Level 2, which allows for protected bike lanes and a right-of-way of 84 feet. For Harris Ave, that could take a resident's entire front yard. Although the city assured us that for older streets, they would never do that, they did reclassify Harris Ave. to a Level 1 street. Citizens can provide feedback using the ASMP website.

The Recreation Center at Hancock Golf Course will be open for in person meetings by our May meeting. The plan at present is to have an in person meeting along with a Zoom meeting.

Cady Lofts

Megan Lasch (Consultant) with Saigebrook Development (<https://saigebrook.com>), SGI Ventures, O-SDA Industries have partnered in this development project. They are Texas-based, women-owned firms working with the Housing Authority of Austin (HACA) to build 100 continuum-of-care studio units located on 3 lots of land at 39th St and I-35, 1004-1008 E 39th St. Currently the lots are zoned SF3 and LO-MU. The owners of the building will be SGI Ventures and HACA. They have applied to the city for a zoning change to MF-6-NP and a FLUM amendment from single use and mixed use office to multi-family. This would allow them the greatest flexibility in building height and setbacks but their proposal is building only to a height of 45 feet with setbacks of 7.5 and 26 feet. Examples of development sites were included in the slide presentation.

Joy Horak-Brown, President and CEO of New Hope Housing (<https://newhopehousing.com>), is working with SGI Ventures as consultants with their expertise for stable, affordable housing and services for people on a very limited income. These units would be fully furnished, energy efficient with computer centers and resident services such as health screenings, a fitness center, etc. They provide an integrated care approach with case management to deal with things like addiction, behavioral health and physical health. Emily Ablein, Vice President for Real Estate Development at New Hope Housing, Discussed the population of at-risk individuals that would be homeless if not for this type of housing that provides services for the residents.

The necessary applications have been filed with the city and state with a proposed construction start date of January-March 2023 and a 15 month completion timeline.

Hugh asked about the hearing date for the proposed zoning change. It has not been set but Megan expects that it will be sometime in May. City will send a notice to HNA about the April 7 meeting about the form change.

Josh asked about parking spaces. There will be 29 total under the building. A second follow-up question later in the meeting about parking got the reply that they plan for .3 parking spaces per person and that has always been more than enough for low income people because most of them cannot afford a car.

Robyn asked what Continuum-of-care meant? Joy answered that the residents receive vouchers through HACA to rent the units. In Austin, Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) (<https://austin.echo.org/leading-system-change/continuum-of-care>), is the organization that qualifies individuals for these units.

Joshua Ellinger asked about the name of the Lofts and was told it was named after Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the 19th century advocate for women's rights and suffrage.

Bart Whately asked about SGI Ventures experience with the density level of this project. The Abali (I-35 and Airport), A senior residence across from the IRS and a planned development at Grover and Koenig was cited. He also asked about the zoning change and what protects the neighborhood from a future developer that might build to the allowable height of which 135 ft. Ordinance passed by Austin to increase affordable housing called "Affordability unlocked" (<https://www.austintexas.gov/department/affordability-unlocked-development-bonus-program>) is like a restrictive covenant that is recorded on the land for 45 years. If SGI Ventures' project fell through, future developers would be restricted unless they were also providing affordable housing.

Robyn Ross asked how they work with the neighborhood. Megan replied that they work closely with the neighborhoods and listen to any concerns or complaints. They are open for suggestions about anything. Example given was the color of the building. Joy said that the best way to see how these types of projects have been managed over time is to visit some of the existing properties.

Report from the Transportation Committee (Robyn Ross)

Robyn reported on a meeting with TxDot in January. She displayed the diagram of the preferred proposal for the reconstruction of the I-35 corridor through downtown, which is titled "Modified Alternative 3." In this proposal the upper decks would be removed and the highway would be lowered below ground level. In the downtown area, the construction includes several east/west crossings (aka caps and stitches) to allow easy pedestrian and biking over the highway. The frontage roads are all on the west side and constructed like a boulevard until 15th St. Then they

move to the east side but still together until Dean Keaton. North of this the frontage roads go back to the traditional model. The caps and stitches will be installed as part of the project but the city will have to provide the funds for the bike lanes, etc that would be built on the caps. In the Hancock area there are 3 crossings at 32nd, 38 ½ and 41st St, with potential for public spaces. Airport Blvd will be at grade with the freeway running below it. Pedestrian pathways crossing Airport are still not straightforward. Modified Alternative 3 will take 20 less homes through eminent domain.

The Transportation Committee is still concerned about the traffic impact on our neighborhood of the extra lanes for a total of 20 lanes. Frontage roads will be lowered to 35 MPH.

Robyn also reported on the meeting between the North Central I-35 Neighborhood Coalition (NCINC -<https://www.ncinc.org/>) And TxDot in late February. They questioned TxDot about Project Connect in relation to the number of lanes needed for I-35 since the orange line down Guadalupe and Lamar will be transporting a large number of passengers along with additional bus lines. TxDot referred to a report to be published by the Texas Transportation Institute at Texas A&M University that indicates the number of lanes will still be necessary. There was concern about simultaneously doing all 3 projects (Project Connect, I-35 reconstruction and moving Red River after the Moody Center). The answer was that they were coordinating all of the projects.

Mary Sanger asked if there was still talk about rerouting trucks to 130. Robyn said that there are still too many trucks that have to go through Austin so no plans to restrict that at present. TTI did a study on this specific point.

Report from the Bylaws Committee (Hugh)

Committee has been cleaning up the bylaws. Committee will have one more meeting before the May meeting of the entire association. Everyone will be notified and invited to that meeting when the date is set. Robyn reported a new idea is to add a Talent & Membership Committee that would function somewhat like a nominating committee to ensure that the Association has members running for office by the time of the annual elections. They can scout for potential officers during the year, get them acquainted with what each position entails.

Recorded by Laura Tull