

DRAFT

West University Senior Service Board Minutes

April 14, 2016

Call to order: 2:06 pm

Roll call:

Members present: Stan McCandless, Judy Faulkner, George Baker, Michelle Moore, Carlos De La Torre, Sara Ballanfant, Selby Clark, Ruth Becker, Becky Arnold, John Palmer, Candyce Beneke, Susan Davis, Virginia Lootens
Members absent: Rebecca Davis
Council liaison present: Burt Ballanfant
Guests: Dick Yehle, Officer Joe Klinkovsky

Minutes: March meeting minutes were incomplete due to Secretary Candyce Beneke having to leave early. Board members recalled some additional information and corrections that should be included. Secretary Beneke will amend the March minutes then the draft will be posted on the web site and voted on at the May meeting.

Senior Services Department Activities and Previews (Toby Brooks): The new "Hi Neighbor" newsletter was published. West U is doing a senior Olympics with Bellaire Life and the YMCA, including chair volleyball. Senior Services organized a tour of the West U wastewater treatment plant. Next there will be a potable water plant tour scheduled. Additionally, homeowners of cottages had the option of having their water tested and 10 to 15 people took advantage of the service. Other events included a Heights tour, egg decorating and a trip to Galveston to watch dolphins. The Rotary breakfast was a success with 24 people attending. Parks and Recreation Director Tim O'Connor specifically thanked Judy Faulkner and Stan McCandless for their efforts in organizing it.

Council meeting report (Burt Ballanfant): Councilman Ballanfant explained that the agenda is divided into two sections: a consent agenda for routine unopposed items and individual items that require discussion. Most of the discussion at the last Council meeting centered around whether the City would reimburse future council members if they had to retain a lawyer to defend themselves against any charges or investigations. Mr. Ballanfant noted that Mayor Susan Sample provided a legal opinion that no attorneys fees are to be reimbursed if no charges were filed. In the end, no action was taken and the issue is on the back burner now.

APAC Report (Virginia Lootens): The last meeting on April 7th was chaired by the new Chair Lynn Foley. Ms. Lootens is on the APAC Legislative and Advocacy committee. The APAC group will be on TV May 5th on the Debra Duncan show AT 9am on Channel 11. Ms. Lootens handed out a document showing that AARP is supporting its WHO monitored group of making Houston an age appropriate town. The report discussed the "Eight Domains of Livability". Toby Brooks will scan the document and post on the City's web site.

Good Neighbor Team (Becky Arnold): Last month the GNT delivered the Spring gift bags, but the green gift bags fell apart. Senior Services received a credit from the company. The seniors loved the lotion in the gift pack and GNT members also conducted a survey of their seniors. They have received 25 surveys back and will tally the results in time for the next meeting on Thursday April 21. GNT has a lot of new volunteers so there will be an orientation for the new members at the next meeting as well.

Parks and Recreation report (Tim O'Connor): Colonial Park west end redevelopment dedication is on April 19 from 6 - 7 pm with refreshments underwritten by Prince's Hamburgers. George Baker was the Senior Board representative on the redevelopment task force. Representative Sarah Davis will deliver a proclamation at the April 25 Council meeting honoring the City's Parks and Recreation Department for its recent gold medal award.

New Business: Council will be declaring May as Volunteer Appreciation and Senior Citizen Month at the Council meeting on May 9. Michelle Moore will be presenting our senior property tax exemption increase proposal at that meeting. A copy of the proposal and excel data spreadsheet was handed out. Ms. Moore thanked the senior tax exemption task force for all the work they did: Ruth Becker, Rebecca Dozier, George Baker, and Carlos De La Torre. Ms. Moore stated that she was limited to 3 minutes in her presentation and asked for comments. George pointed out a typo mistake in the amount of the new senior property tax exemption (\$224K not \$242K) as well as some grammatical improvements. Mr. Baker also thought the Board needed to stress the intergenerational aspect more in the presentation. Ms. Moore noted that her earlier draft had a lot more information, but said that it was very difficult to get all the arguments presented in the three minute limitation. Mr. O'Connor pointed out that there are no limits on the packet that the Board presents to Council, so any additional arguments could be put in the packet. Dick Yehle pointed out that Ms. Moore, as the presenter of the agenda item, has more than the 3 minute limit on citizen comments and there will likely be question and answer with Council. Mr. Ballanfant suggested that the summary and packet be delivered to Council in advance of the Council meeting. Ms Moore agreed to revise the presentation to include some of the earlier draft. Mr. O'Connor volunteered his staff to help prepare a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Ballanfant agreed to set up an appointment with the City Manager and Ms. Moore to establish the procedure for getting the proposal on the Council's May 9 agenda. Mr. O'Connor requested that his document summarizing all the benefits that West U already provides its seniors be included in the packet. Mr. O'Connor commended Carlos De La Torre on putting together the senior questionnaire and noted the number of seniors had increased a lot since 2010. Selby Clark introduced the idea of requesting the tax exemption be set at 25% of average taxable value each year versus a set amount that would need to be re-evaluated and revised every few years. After a general discussion, the Board decided to propose a specific dollar value exemption with a recommendation (proposed by Mr. Yehle) to establish a percentage value rather than a dollar value as a more efficient annual method going forward. In discussing the spreadsheet, Mr Clark pointed out a correction to be made and Mr. Baker suggested that the spreadsheet needs a table title and illustrative graphics in addition to the table.

Ms. Moore said she will revise the text of the proposal and send it around for vote by email.

John Palmer motioned to adjourn and Selby Clark seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 3:33 p.m.