



LAVACA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Proudly Serving San Antonio's Oldest Residential Neighborhood

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Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, January 12, 2015, at 6:00pm

St. Joseph's Hall, 420 E. César E. Chávez Blvd., San Antonio, TX 78204

This meeting was called to order by President Jeff McPherson at 6:30pm. Approximately 55 people were in attendance. Thank you to all of the neighbors and friends who were able to join us for our Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner! A special thanks to St. Joseph's Society Hall for hosting the event, Señor Veggie for providing delicious vegetarian brisket, and Conjunto Heritage Taller for livening things up with music.

The meeting began with out-going President Jeff McPherson thanking the 2015 board members (Jeff McPherson, President; Selsa Gonzalez, Vice President; Adriana Becerra, Secretary; Adele Strelchun, Treasurer; Elizabeth Ball, Member-at-Large; Paula Haley, Member-at-Large; Alex Perez, Member-at-Large; Miles Donnelly, Business Owner, La Frite) and then presenting a look back over the accomplishments of 2015:

- Formed parking committee with King William Neighborhood Association and had a comprehensive parking study done by the city
- Formed Committee to research Train Quiet Zones
- Improved administrative aspects of LNA with the use of block walking and online membership payments
- Found a great place to host General Meetings — Freetail Brewing
- Obtained funding to redo Labor Street Park and applied for a grant for Labor Street Park playground - Introduced membership Cards offering discounts at local restaurants
- Started "Southtown" t-shirt fundraising
- Engaged CPS in neighborhood meetings and started discussion on how to better light our neighborhood

In-coming President Selsa Gonzalez then introduced this year's 2016 board members:

- Selsa Gonzalez – President
- Adriana Becerra – Vice President
- Darryl Ohlenbusch – Treasurer
- Laurel Smyth – Treasurer
- Jeff McPherson – Past President
- Billy Lawrence – (Member-at-Large – Zoning and Historic Preservation Manager)
- Elizabeth Ball – (Member-at-Large – Fundraising and Communications Manager)
- Gini Garcia – (Member-at-Large)
- Miles Donnelly – (Southtown Business Owner)

Ongoing business:

1. **Lavaca's SAFFE officer:** a San Antonio Police Officer addressed the crowd and asked if there were any questions or concerns. Residents asked about crime in the neighborhood and how to stem it. One suggestion for recovering or preventing thieves from being able to sell stolen property to pawn

shops is to etch the owners driver's license number on property especially items like bicycles. Pawnshops cannot purchase items without identification.

2. **Anna Alicia Romero, Outreach Coordinator for District 26 Senator José Menéndez's** office addressed the meeting. Her phone number is 210-733-6604 if residents have any questions or concerns they would like Senator Menéndez to address. Their office is now located in the Wonderland of the America's Mall. There will be a District 26 Community Gathering on Saturday, January 30, 2016 from 9am-11am at the IBC Medical Center at 8650 Fredericksburg Rd. The purpose of the gathering is to get an update on what is happening in and around your neighborhood. Ms. Romero also stated that with regard to the new Open Carry Law, Senator Menéndez has taken the initiative to print open carry prohibition signs for local businesses that do not want open carry weapons in their businesses. Interested businesses should contact the Senator's office for more information.

3. **Victoria Commons Redevelopment by SAHA:** Ramiro Maldonado and Tim Alcott from San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) provided an update on the Victoria Commons redevelopment. In November 2015, SAHA received approval from HUD to go forward with the redevelopment plan that was submitted in 2015. The 26 single family homes along Leigh Street have been sold and the Design Committee will review plans for the houses being built on the lots. As for the remainder of the vacant property between Leigh Street and Refugio, there will be 98 townhouse developed and will likely come out in blocks of +/- 30 at a time in the latter part of 2016. Phase IV of the Redevelopment Plan includes the property at the corners of E. César Chávez and Labor. SAHA will be moving forward at a later date with multifamily buildings on each side of Labor and will include 215 units of which 28 will be public housing and 54 will be for workforce housing for a split of 62% market and 38% affordable.

4. **New Townhomes at 1600 Presa:** Efraim Varga of Varga Adventures provided information on townhouses that will be built on the 1600 block of S. Presa St. There will be a total of 18 townhouses in this area requiring no street parking. He will be asking the zoning commission on February 19 for approval. Given the information provided at the meeting the LNA so no reason to object to the plans.

5. **Mark Reyna, Field Representative from the office of Congressman Lloyd Doggett** addressed the meeting and asked if there were any questions or concerns he could take back to Congressman Doggett. He left flyers and information from Congressman Doggett's office. Mr. Reyna's phone number is 210-843-5801 for those who would like to contact him directly.

6. **VIA Blue line:** Over the holidays, VIA introduced an extension of the exiting blue route to connect Blue Star to Pearl over the holiday season only. A bus came every 15 minutes and ran until 11pm and ended the first week of January. The LNA started a petition to have route extended beyond the holiday time period, which garnered 143 signatures.

7. **Hemisfair Park review:** Omar Gonzalez, Director of Real Estate of Hemisfair Park Area Redevelopment Corporation (HPARC), a 501(c)3 non profit local government corporation appointed to manage and revitalize the Hemisfair area provided an update on the Hemisfair redevelopment. Four businesses will be moving into Hemisfair Park in the coming months... Revolution Coffee, San Antonio Brewing Company, Con Safos (restaurant), and hand made paletas. Also, for parking, the Government Services Administration (GSA) lots located south of César Chávez are available all weekend long from 7am until midnight. During weekdays, both of these lots are free after 6pm. During special events, visitors may be charged to park in these lots, or the lots may be unavailable for parking entirely. Please follow Hemisfair on Facebook and Twitter for the most up to date parking notifications. Overnight parking is prohibited at all times. Hemisfair is also available for private parties for rent.

8. **Parking Committee Update:** Rose Kanusky provided an update on the efforts of the Parking Committee. The City of San Antonio has hired a consultant to study the streets and what general guidelines can be set up given the size of the streets in Lavaca and King William. We're awaiting the

results of that study.

9. **Train Quiet Zones:** LNA President Selsa Gonzalez updated on the efforts on establishing Train Quiet Zones. Federal regulation requires train horns be sounded for 15-20 seconds before entering all public grade crossings, but not more than one-quarter mile in advance. Because of this trains honk for more than 2 minutes straight every time it passes along the east side of Hwy 281. Currently trains come more than 4 times an hour, day and night. Federal regulations provide public authorities the option to maintain and/or establish quiet zones provided certain supplemental or alternative safety measures are in place and the crossing accident rate meets FRA standards. By upgrading infrastructure around intersections in order to prevent cars from entering intersections reducing the need for trains to blow their horns. These measures will create Quiet Zones. There are currently 5 intersections that would need to have to be upgraded to establish these Quiet Zones. There are 2 options for these upgrades:

- a. Option 1: Ask each business owner if they mind having their driveways blocked by a median, then apply for funding. Medians usually cost less than \$10,000 per intersection
- b. Option 2: Install Wayside Horns. These horns are at each intersection and honk directly at incoming traffic so that sound pollution is reduced and train does not need to honk. This costs up to \$125,000 per intersection.

A vote was taken to determine if the LNA should continue to pursue or abandon this project. Membership overwhelmingly voted to continue to pursue the project. Anyone interested in working on this project can contact Selsa Gonzalez at president@lavaca.net.

New Business:

1. Lavaca Neighborhood Association Committees

- a. **Lighting project at the underpass at Florida/Carolina and Hwy 281:** Eloy Gonzales is chairing a committee to light the underpass at Florida and Carolina and Hwy 281 using artwork similar to Bill Fitzgibbons light artwork located at Commerce and Houston streets, connecting downtown to the Eastside. Those interested in helping Eloy and becoming a part of this committee should contact president@lavaca.net
- b. **Community Center:** SAHA Building on the corner of Barrera / Labor / Refugio has been vacant for many years and the building often has people loitering on front porch. Plans to turn this building into a community center have stalled. The LNA would like to establish a committee to follow progress of these plans and help move plans along/apply for funding. Rudy Lopez has offered to co-chair this committee. Those interested in helping to co-chair or become a member of this committee were asked to sign up or contact president@lavaca.net.
- c. **Labor Street Park Playground:** Selsa Gonzalez provided an update on the Labor Street Park Playground. We are on the shortlist for a grant from KaBOOM! to build a playground in the new Labor Street Park. We'll know more in the Spring if we can move forward or not. Once we receive the grant money, volunteers from the neighborhood will assemble the park. Committee chair - Selsa Gonzalez. Those interested in being a part of this committee should contact president@lavaca.net.

2. LNA President, Selsa Gonzalez asked that attendees write on cards provided what they want the 2016 board to focus on. Based on these inputs the Board will form our priorities this year based on this feedback.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.