

Thursday, August 5, 2021-6:30 PM
West University Neighborhood Association
August Board Meeting
Trinity Presbyterian Church, 400 E. University Blvd.

I. Call to Order, Roll Call and Welcome

At 6:40 p.m., Judy Sensibar called the meeting to order. The following members were present: Betsy Besenik-Larson, Lisette DeMars, Rick McDonnell, Shannon Riggs, Judy Sensibar, Larrie Warren, Henry Werchan, Lex Wilcox, and Dave Zipps. Absent: Brian Chaneka, Cindy Doklan, Richard Fifer, Jim Glock, Jane McCollum, Rev. Mack Sigmon, Monique Vallery, and Willem Van Leeuwen.

Also present: Holly Vaden (Grace Episcopal Church), Diana Amado (Ward 6), Collin Chesston (Transportation & Mobility), Samantha Neville (A. Grijalva's office). Neighbors: Jill Bielawski, Jan Labate, Adrienne Parry, Sally Rusk, Chris Gans, and Ellen Platts.

II. Consent Agenda Approval of Meeting Minutes

There being no objections or corrections, the May 6, 2021, Minutes were approved in accordance with the provisions of the consent agenda.

III. Announcements and Call to the Audience

Sally Rusk announced that she had three petitions involving Red for Ed initiatives; Jan Labate announced she had one addressing efforts to remove people from the voting rolls. Each asked for those in attendance to consider signing.

IV. Bike Boulevard

Judy Sensibar introduced Collin Chesston from the City's Transportation & Mobility Department and turned the floor over to him. Collin stated that the Department has an online survey for the forthcoming Fifth Street Bike Boulevard (from Sixth Ave. to Euclid) and encouraged everyone to take it. The survey asks questions about speed bumps, a 20 MPH speed limit, and traffic circles. Krista Hansen is the project manager and she can be reached at krista.hansen@tucsonaz.gov or 520-526-3198. Collin also gave background on the Sixth Ave. bike boulevard, which was funded when prop 407 was approved in 2018. The Sixth Ave. bike boulevard is designated as a protected bike lane (with cars parked between the vehicle travel lane and the bike lane and the bike lane located between the parked cars and the curb). Collin observed that there are about 10,000 cars per day on Sixth Ave. compared to 3 to 4,000 on University Blvd. Ryan Fagan is the project manager for the Sixth Ave. bike boulevard and he can be reached at ryan.fagan@tucsonaz.gov or 520-837-6699. Right now, there is no design for the Sixth Ave. bike boulevard, but the City has hired an expert and is studying the feasibility of what it can do.

A discussion then ensued about the burdens and benefits of the protected bike lane that was recently installed on University between Stone and Sixth Ave. Dave Zipps recounted conversations with ten or so cyclists; all but one reported that they found the protected lane awkward and were simply using the vehicle travel lane. He also stated that while there may be preferred configurations for bike lanes in the abstract, what the City does has to correlate to the circumstances that prevail in a particular location, as there's not much benefit to a bike lane that

cyclists don't use. Jill Bielawski, who lives along the protected bike lane, expressed concerns about getting doored in a bike lane against the curb and had concerns as a driver about the need to cross the bike lane and come level with the parked cars when turning onto University from a side street. She thought this could lead to bad situations, particularly at night. She also had concerns about trash accumulating in a curb-side bike lane, noting that cyclists will have to deal with glass and garbage. Collin stated that the City has a small street sweeper, but Chris Gans, who lives along the protected bike lane, said the City would have to use it every day to keep the lane clear. Chris also noted that in his estimation about two-thirds of cyclists are not using the protected lane. Besty Besenik noted that there is a lot of loading and unloading in the neighborhood, which is problematic if there is a curb-side bike lane. She also thought it would result in more damage to parked cars because of the size and location of the protected lane. Lisette DeMars described the project on University as half-baked. She stated that she would like to see lanes more clearly marked, and she stated that feedback she was getting from cyclists was evenly divided. Judy Sensibar observed that site lines from cross streets are horrible and that the problem will be worse on Sixth Ave.

V. Road Repair Letter

Judy Sensibar stated that the letter to the Mayor and City Council that she sent in May asking for assistance with road repair and missing infrastructure was forwarded to Jeff Whiting in the City's Business Office. Mr. Whiting followed up to report that the City has \$500,000 in impact fees available to a group of neighborhoods including WUNA, and that these fees can be used for certain infrastructure projects. Judy reported that she will be following up with Mr. Whiting to determine how we can get our projects funded.

VI. Welcome Letter

Betsy Besenik called a realtor friend with regard to our efforts to increase awareness of historic preservation requirements among those new to the neighborhood. Her friend suggested that we try to get an addendum included in purchase and sale agreements advising purchasers of the requirements. Betsy said she will be trying to put together a committee of neighborhood realtors to pursue this option and to also educate realtors about the requirements.

VII. Black Lagoon

Judy Sensibar stated that she sent Steve K. photographs of fouled runoff in the Catalina Park catch basins that are downstream from the student housing to the southeast of Euclid and Speedway. Judy noted that there is more and more runoff and we are the de facto flood plain. Judy said that she has had three meetings with the City and she believes that the City is going to put in an additional catch basin on First Street.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Development Committee

Dave Zipps provided an update on TEP's Kino to Demoss-Petrie project, in which TEP seeks to install a new substation next to Banner University Medical Center and connect it to existing substations at Kino & I-10 and Ruthrauff & I-10 using transmission lines installed on 70-110 foot utility poles. TEP must get the approval of the Arizona Corporation Commission to construct the project and its application will include three proposed routes for the transmission lines, including its preferred route. Approximately two years ago, TEP identified a "study area"

that included various roads that it was evaluating as possible routes for the transmission lines. After several meetings with a community working group (attended by Dave & Rick McDonnell), additional public meetings, and geospatial analysis of the area, TEP issued a lengthy report in October 2020 that evaluated a number of "preliminary route corridors" for the transmission lines, including three with north-south segments along Euclid and three with north-south segments along Campbell. For various reasons associated with cost and constructability, TEP eliminated all potential routes with segments along Euclid. It also identified three routes that it intended to include in an application to the Arizona Corporation Commission for permission to construct the project; each of these had north-south segments on Campbell.

In response to TEP's selection of the three routes to be included in its application, a financial analyst for Citigroup (who lives in Iron Horse) and an economist at the U of A formed what has become known as the "Underground Coalition," a group proposing that TEP bury the transmission lines. TEP has been adamantly opposed to undergrounding, claiming it is 10 to 12 times more expensive per mile to bury transmission lines. Consistent with its opposition to undergrounding, TEP recently made a last-second change to its application to the ACC to be filed on August 10, 2021, adding a route that goes up Euclid rather than Campbell. This change is almost certainly an attempt by TEP to head off any possibility of undergrounding. During the work of the Underground Coalition, participants identified a Tucson City ordinance that prohibits above-ground utilities on "gateway corridors" such as Campbell. While we do not believe the ACC is bound by the ordinance, it appears that TEP wanted to give the ACC an option besides undergrounding on Campbell if the ACC decides to respect the ordinance: rather than mandate undergrounding on Campbell, the ACC could require TEP to run the lines up Euclid, which would not be contrary to the ordinance.

Dave noted that the ACC's Line Siting Committee will be meeting at the Reid Park Doubletree on September 13, 2021, at 1:00 p.m. to discuss TEP's application. He encouraged as many people as possible to attend.

Rick McDonnell stated that he had recently talked to Steve K. about the project, and Steve's message was that the neighbors need to be unified. His concern is that neighborhoods will be okay with the project as long as it's not in their backyards. Steve noted that all potentially affected neighborhoods need to be consistent: the transmission lines should go underground. Rick observed that a lawyer hired by the Underground Coalition is putting together legal arguments for the Line Siting Committee meeting on September 13 and we have been asked to contribute towards the payment of his legal fees. Dave Zipps then moved that we contribute \$1000 towards the payment of these fees; Henry Werchan seconded the motion. After a brief discussion, all present approved.

Rick McDonnell then gave an update on the Capstone project at the southeast corner of Speedway and Euclid. Rick observed that the project had been dormant for a while but it is not dormant anymore; Capstone has now filed permitting paperwork with the City. Chris Gans stated that the City agreed in 2010 that the houses at that location would be protected when it approved the Main Gate overlay. (The houses in that location were intended to be a buffer to the rest of the neighborhood, and development in that area must respect the height of the historic homes. But Capstone is proposing to relocate the homes elsewhere in the neighborhood, which would moot the height limitation that exists due to their present location.) Chris felt that capitulating would be a mistake and would set a bad precedent.

Judy Sensibar stated that the chairman of the West University Historic Zoning Advisory Board resigned at the last meeting. Judy noted that the Board is allowed to have 15 members

(5 residents, 5 property owners, and 5 subject matter experts), but its membership has dwindled to 7 (including just 1 resident and 2 property owners). Judy stated that we really need to get word out to people in the neighborhood and subject matter experts who might be interested in serving so that the Board can fulfill its important mission.

IX. Adjournment

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05.

Respectfully submitted,
Dave Zipps