

D.A.N.A.

(Downtown Area Neighborhood Alliance)

Meeting Minutes

Stewarts Boathouse, Fairmount Park

Monday, March 19, 2007

7:00 p.m.–8:30 p.m.

Attendees (per sign-in sheet):

Keith Alex, Jack and Nanci Larsen, Norm Gritton, Molly Dougherty, Joan Donahue, Laurie DeFrance, Jim Talbott, David Lucas, Damon Castillo, Gerry Douglass, Jerry Crouch, Don Smith, Nancy and Jerry Sturmer, Robbie Kennedy, Martha Meaghan, Frances Fernandez, Susan Heath, David McNiell, Rob Robinson, Pete Kallinger, Gerry Sheaf, Nicki Sands, Dan Hantman, Chani Beeman, Cyndee Miers, Rod Wolf, Dick and Donna Wing, Heather Troxel.

1. Meeting called to order by Chairman Chani Beeman at 7:00 p.m.
2. Approval of Minutes of February meeting
 - ✓ Motion to approve minutes after Keith's title and the spelling of Nanci and Jack Larsen's last name were corrected.
 - M/S/C: Hantman/Kallinger/Carried
3. **Dom's Report**

Dom led off by thanking DANA members, in particular Pete Kallinger, for their hard work on the rose garden pruning.

Downtown Thursday Night (formerly known as Downtown Wednesday Night) will begin again at the end of March or early April, with different vendors and more of an arts and entertainment focus. A Saturday morning Farmer's Market will be held on the downtown mall also in late March or early April.

Traffic Calming: Residents of Arfon Way are complaining that the traffic calming measures instituted recently on Pine and Redwood are diverting traffic through the street. Dom will have traffic management look into it. Also, the traffic circle at University will be made permanent soon.

Downtown Parking: Dom reported that 600 cars have moved from street parking to garages. Another 100 or so cars are now using meters, which increases

turnover. Some business owners are complaining that the meters are hurting business, though others say they are doing well.

Part of the problem is that downtown property owners are not investing in parking for tenants, even though their property values and equity have risen enormously in recent years. Dom understands that people are angry, but its part of an overall plan to increase accessibility and interest in downtown. Customers will not be either turned off or attracted by the parking situation; if business owners have a good product, people will come. In the meantime, Dom is working on a transition plan to improve the situation while the downtown projects are taking place.

City Council Meeting Format: The Government Affairs Committee will be looking at the format of city council meetings, looking for ways for the council to better relate/respond to public comments. Part of the problem is that the comments are so often negative, and made by the same people who attend most of the meetings. Dom asks that more people attend and give input, instead of letting the meetings be dominated by negative comments and attitudes.

Comments: Chani said she sees the effect the negative effect some regular meeting attendees have on the council and any others who might have something positive or constructive to say; Pete felt that council members need to do a better job of communicating issues to their constituents via email or other methods, to help increase participation at the meetings; Dom said it would help if there were more substantive issues on the agenda to involve people; Frances said that gadflies at public meetings are a common phenomenon, but that it helps if they are treated with respect; Molly suggested that the city begin sending email alerts to residents about upcoming city council meetings and other important issues, events, or information.

Dave McNiel mentioned that there are changes in the process for traffic calming measures like speed humps which will increase the costs for residents, and make obtaining the required approvals more difficult.

Fox Renovation: A “hard hat opening” will be held on May 3 from 6 to 8 pm to kick off the renovations at the Fox, and will include a quick tour.

Fairmount Park rumors: Dom reiterated the plans for the frontage property at Fairmount Park, and assured everyone that he would push for appropriate, compatible businesses at the park, despite rumors to the contrary.

Homeless Services Update: Don Smith, project manager for the city’s HUD/transitional housing program, gave an update on the Homeless Action Plan and distributed fliers and other information about the Homeless Street Outreach Team.

- ✓ Shelters: The emergency shelter facility on Hulen Street works to connect people with services to help get them off the street permanently. There’s a

50-bed family shelter, and another 32-bed shelter for women and children at March Air Force Base, which will be expanding to 160 beds and offering shelter for families for up to two years. The Safe Haven shelter will offer housing and services for longterm homeless and those with severe mental health problems.

- ✓ Rental Assistance: Funding is available to help people both with move-in costs or back rent to keep them from being evicted.
- ✓ Homeless Street Outreach Team is a group of four people who work from 6 am to 9 pm every day, connecting with homeless people, helping them find shelter and access services, provide transportation if they want to go home, and make sure there's someone to help when they get there.
- ✓ National Project Homeless Connect: Riverside will participate in this effort, a one-day event in which Social Security, the Housing Authority, Workforce Development, and other agencies gather to connect homeless people with needed services.

Questions/Comments:

- ✓ Jane asked about services for homeless people who have dogs. Don said Animal Services has offered to board dogs for people while they're in the shelter, but so far no one has taken them up on it. Don said it's a difficult problem, and though no one has come up with a solution so far, they're working on it.
- ✓ Don advises anyone who sees homeless people camping to call the team and they'll do an outreach. Also feel free to call the team back to check on a situation and see if it's been resolved.
- ✓ Don and his team encouraged anyone who's interested in riding along with the team to contact them, and see how firsthand how they work and the services they provide.
- ✓ The Homeless Street Outreach Team can be reached at 951-826-2200.

Scott Barber, director of Community Development for the city (including code enforcement) gave a quick update on efforts by the code enforcement team, and said he would send staff along on DANA's community walks, which will be starting up again soon.

4. **Tequesquite Park Letter/DANA Brochure**

Molly will write a letter to Parks and Recreation asking that DANA be given a seat on the community advisory board for the Tequesquite Park project. She'll also work on a brochure about DANA that can be printed, emailed, and distributed to any groups or individuals interested in DANA.

5. **Community Walks**

Keith reported that the community walks will start up again in March; he'll send out an email with the date and time.

6. Upcoming Events/Information

- ✓ Cultural Heritage Board: Dave McNeil urged more people to attend CHB meetings and be informed about planned demolition projects downtown. Salvage items and fixtures are often available from demolition sites; check the CHB website for information about demos.
- ✓ Parks and Recreation is planning a Walk Your Dog Day. Information will be available on the city's website.
- ✓ Chani pointed out that the toxic waste cleanup that is offered just twice a year by the city is offered every Saturday at the county site at Van Buren and Clay.
- ✓ A fundraiser for Evergreen Cemetery will be held on June 9; Nanci says a mailing will go out soon. Keith said he would like to see the cemetery grading finished and ready for grass hydroseeding by August. More endowment funding is needed, and Vic Micelli will contact local businessmen about contributing to the effort.

7. Fairmount Roses

About a dozen DANA members, plus Dom and others, got together over two Saturdays to prune more than 1,000 rose bushes at Fairmount Park. Even so, there's still a lot of work to do: mulching, fertilizing, etc. Pete plans to inventory the roses to see what we have, what we're missing (about 300 plants), but advises not to replace the missing roses until next winter, since bareroot roses are so much cheaper than bushes.

Heather and Tina plan to meet with Ralph Nunez about organizing a fundraiser to restore the rose garden.

- 8. Treasurer's Report:** Heather reported that the group currently has a balance of \$2,255.96.
- 9. Topics for next meeting:** Chani urged everyone to think about what should be done with the money DANA has raised so far and be prepared to discuss ideas at the April meeting.

10. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Molly Dougherty
DANA Secretary