

DRAFT MINUTES

SRCC GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING (www.srccatx.org)

Tuesday, January 21, 2025, 7:00 PM

1. Welcome and President's Report

Presenter: President, Noah Balch

Announced that there is a recording being made (but shortly after was turned off because of echo) and that AI Companion is being used to transcribe the meeting as a backup to minutes taken during the meeting.

announced a Town Hall meeting with District 9 Council Member Zo Qadri and an open house event for the light rail

2. Approve Minutes from previous meetings

Minutes from the Dec. 17, 2024 GM Meeting were approved with no objections. Mary Janecek-Frieman discussed the need to locate a Secretary for our group.

3. Treasurer's Report

Presenter: Treasurer, Will Andrews

Reported a small surplus as of 12/31/24 and reminded members of the \$3750 that was available for Historic District use only.

4. Membership Report

Presenter: SRCC Membership, Mary Janecek-Friedman

Noted current membership of 266 and invited new attendees to introduce themselves. Welcome to Kim Klask, auditing the meeting

5. Reports from Standing Committee Chairs

a) Planning and Zoning – Noah presented on Item 7, a, b, and c below

b) Historic Preservation – See 7 c below

c) Finance.

d) Mobility -- New zone added to PTMD, ongoing talks between Lively Middle School and City, parking on Academy and Newning.

e) Public Safety – Reported a decrease in crime in the neighborhood

f) Parks and Environment – See 8 below

g) Schools.

h) Communications – Betty announced that, after many trials, the Monthly Update now goes directly to the SRCC listserve

6. Reports from Area Coordinators and Group Representatives

a) TEHS CAT

b) ANC

c) SCC

d) EROC – Shared updates on City staff email remark on Neighborhood Plans, CM Velasquez' office response to acquisition of "orphan lot" at Heritage Oaks Park and ongoing efforts to obtain transparency for Parkland Dedication Fees

e) SCWAB

f) St. Edward's

GENERAL BUSINESS ITEMS

7. Planning and Zoning:

a) Rezoning request for 222 E. Riverside – this had already been heard by (PC? CC?)

b) COA Report regarding impact of HOME in first 12 months. Noah referred to the 12/30/24 Community Impact article by Ben Thompson. Since the policy has only been in effect 1 year there is not enough data to substantiate the effects of the policy.

c) 1707 Alameda—Owners will present plan at the Historical Commission on 2/5/25

d) Time Insurance Development, N IH35 frontage at E. Riverside

Presenter: Gayle Goff

Summarized the 1/16/25 neighbor meeting with the Drenner Group rep, Leah Bojo.

Agent acknowledged the following:

The lack of any visuals at this point;

Their plans to work with the neighbors over the course of what will be a slow process: many complexities plus challenging topography;

Their wait for location info from City for a water line that will be located on some of their property (3-5 mos);

The existing restrictive covenants negotiated in 2008;

Heritage Tree Ordinance that affects any excavation;

That no staff recommendation is available yet.

8. Parks and Environment Committee

Presenter: Parks and Environment, David Todd

Discussed options for honoring and memorializing SRCC co-founder and longtime neighborhood advocate Jean Mather, who passed away Jan. 9, 2025. Acknowledged Jean's many contributions to the neighborhood and discussed possible options to commemorate her work. Acknowledged that the City no longer allows the public to place memorial benches in parks. Suggested the naming of the abandoned street pathway at Little Stacy Park or the "Shelter House" (gazebo/bandstand) at Little Stacy. Decided to work to combine ideas to present to the EC for a vote at the 2/4/25 meeting so can be voted on at the GM on 2/18/25. Announced a Blunn Creek workday on Sat, 2/1 in her honor.

9. Mobility and Transportation

Presenter: Mobility and Transportation, Mark Thompson

Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Austin's Light Rail Project has been released and Austin Transit Partnership is accepting public comment through March 11, 2025. SRCC Mobility encourages members to participate in the public comment process and information-sharing events.

Wendy Todd provided information about the elevations, station locations, and areas of impact like historic and environmental sites along Riverside Drive and South Congress based on the draft environmental impact statement released. She recommends committees come together to review and compile comments from SRCC before the deadline. Mary expressed skepticism that feedback will be incorporated despite the open house. Wendy agreed that the project seems pre-determined but urges the neighborhood to document concerns over issues like noise, vibrations, and property impacts for advocacy purposes.

Introduction of Guest Speaker Larry Akers of Mobility Austin

10. Guest Speaker -- Larry Akers of Mobility Austin

Presented an alternative to the proposed rail project, Project Connect. He suggested a hybrid system that includes rapid bus service and on-demand micro transit. This system would provide public transit to the entire city, not just transit corridors, and would be less disruptive to the city's "urban fabric". Larry emphasized that this system is more flexible, adaptable, and cost-effective than the rail project. He also highlighted that it would be more equitable and support wider electronic vehicle adoption. The system would use an Uber-like app for ride requests and would offer door-to-door or block-to-block service. Larry also noted that the system would be more accessible for people with disabilities, as every vehicle would be required to have a lift. He said the software for the system is easily available and already in use in several cities in the US.

Larry said that a fleet of 1,000 on-demand vans could carry 40 to 50,000 riders daily, comparable to the projected ridership of the rail project. Larry also compared the capital and operating costs of the two options, suggesting that on-demand vans could be more cost-effective. He emphasized the hidden costs of transit, such as time and safety costs, which disproportionately affect people without cars.

Larry emphasized the need for a thorough understanding of how the system could function in operation before making an investment. The system could be supported by local revenue streams without federal aid.

Mr. Akers' white paper may be found [here](#). Bullet points of his presentation are [here](#).

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wolf Sittler announced the ongoing work of the Norwood Alliance including a meeting with the new PARD Director to educate him on the benefits of this project.

Upcoming meetings:

GM: Feb. 18, Mar. 18, Apr. 15, May 20, June 17, Aug. 19, Sept. 16, Oct. 21, Dec. 16

EC: Feb. 4, Mar. 4, Apr. 1, May 6, June 3, Aug. 5, Sep. 2, Oct. 7, Dec. 2