

## Meeting Notes – September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008

Rules are going to be bypassed / deferred until after Councilman's Leffingwell Discussion.

### Leffingwell's Discussion

Retired Navy Pilot, always looking for good people. Ran for council in 2005, re-elected 2008. Native of Austin, grew up in S. Austin. Recently passed the city of San Francisco in the size of city population. In another 20 years, we are looking to be 1.4M people. We are very spread out, as opposed to more of a consolidated San Francisco.

Begin formal budget hearings on September 8<sup>th</sup>, budget is over \$2.5B. Austin owns Water, Energy, Airport, Solid Wastes, Drainage, and Convention Center and Visitors Center. After we subtract out all the enterprise agencies, what is left is considered the general fund. Public safety, parks, etc... is approximately \$620 million for 2008-2009. Very difficult to balance, as many services and items pull from this budget. General fund revenue is made up of 30% property tax, 20% sales tax, 20% utility transfers with the remaining coming from fees and fines from the public. In April, initial budget plan came back \$25M short. FYI. Actions to balance this budget, 3.5% pay raise increase dropped to 2.5% for city employees, plus timing shifted to align more with fiscal year. Future jobs are approved; however, frozen until justification. 20 new police personnel funded this year. Also general note, rotating library closures in pairs for convenience. This is designed to save money to pay for more security and janitorial services to make them safer and cleaner for public usage.

Forecast of 7.5% growth in sales tax; however, 2.5% actual realized. Going to be more conservative this year to not overestimate revenue from taxes. Property taxes are still going up. All tax increases are required to be amortized. 40.12 cents is a rollback rate on property tax, if exceeds, rate is subject to petition by Austin constituents.

Items on his agenda:

**Street maintenance:** Need to be clean, safe, and drivable. Utility bill "transportation" fee from City of Austin, usually \$5.00 or so. 10% of our roads are considered appropriate, if we start falling behind, our roads will fall behind the ability to "preventatively repair" vs. "full repair" many of our roads. Looking to add approximately \$0.83 to the Transportation Fee to help maintain this percentage. Also looking to propose a \$200M bond e proposed to the public in 2010, to help us get ahead of our goals.

Q: Is this the same rate for business?

A: Yes, same percentage increase is expected for businesses.

Union contracts finalized with Police, EMS, and fire fighters on the way. Giving them healthy pay increases to keep them incentivized.

**Solid Waste Services:** 30 Gallon green containers, no rate increase. 60+ gallon containers will have an increase in Solid Waste Services. This year, we are beginning the Single-Stream Recycle Program. Every

2 weeks, this 90+ container will be picked up. All plastic, glass, paper can be included. This is not to be used for general trash. Within the next year, you'll see a program for recycling "Kitchen Waste". It is unknown how this will work, but be on the lookout.

**Energy Conservation:** Goal is to derive 30% of our energy from renewable sources by 2020. Now, we have Wind, Solar (very expensive), and looking to expand into BioMass. Currently trying to install new Solar Farm. New deal with Nacogdoches Power, we will buy their BioMass Energy 100MW/20 years for a large amount of money, but we have a good contract...no money unless power delivered. This will work for us to retain the renewable energy credits. Federal government to cap carbon tax, BioMass will be exempt from this tax. When this happens, fossil fuels and other carbon emitting power generation techniques will become more expensive.

**Q: Props to Lee on Water Conservation Policy for Austin**

Comments from Lee: May 2006, City Council approved Policy. 32M gallons per day saved moving forward when the entire policy is enacted. 20M gallons a day lost due to leakage, primarily from old Cast Iron pipe. Preemptive measures to solve problems to increase effectiveness. Re-use of reclaimed water for non-potable uses. First line to run down Red River to service The University of Texas. As long as we stay below 2100 acre/ft. per year, our water is "free" by the state and prepaid rates. Staying under manifests in nearly \$14-15M per year, should we accidentally go over.

**Q: Recycling Program, is it a thought to not have require a 90 gallon container?**

A: Do not know at this point, initially 90 gallon will be distributed. May be able to request a smaller size, may be dependent on truck. Note: If you are a person who cannot move your trash can (elderly, impaired, ... ), call 311 and Solid Waste Services will come and move the can for you.

**Q: Is Austin going to continue private rebate for Solar Systems?**

A: No plans he has heard of to cut back on this program. If residential, up to 50% rebate. If commercial up to \$200k per project. Similar programs are available for Water as well.

**Q: Looking for change in bulk pickups per chance?**

A: State laws require take back provisions for Computers; however, TVs were not included. This would be great for the analog to digital TV conversion for next year.

**Q: Transients at Home Depot is a major problem for this neighborhood, what is the status for the Municipal Court + Police Substation.**

A: All is true, all been approved by a previous bond package. This new location is more geographically centric to Austin than original station.

**Q: Planning regarding affordable housing, any plan for the city for affordable housing. Is there a global plan, rather than 3 tactical focus points?**

A: Going to try and discuss, sources for affordable housing comes from the 2006 Bond Fund - \$55M. Slowly using the money on TOD (Transit Oriented Development) and buying down new Apartment buildings. Another source for affordable housing is TIF (Tax Increment Funding?) money. 40% of that money goes towards affordable housing. Approximately \$1-2M per year

**Q: Are TOD only for new developments, or can they be retrofitted?**

A: TOD on new developments are more flexible, less zoning and more density. More specifically, TwinCrest apartments, what can we do? Is there anything we can do to upgrade/revamp these types of properties. These are investor owned, as such, no money is going back into these properties. We are unsure if this TOD program has an incentive to enforce/incentivize these places to upgrade their property.

**Q: Do we know how many trains? Schedules? Tracks?**

A: Delayed until March, from November. Problems related to stations being complete, and don't have certification from their trains from federal agencies. Tracks may not be approved either, but that is uncorroborated, as well.

**Q: Crestview deal with Trammel Crow, ultimately creating more congestion / problem.**

A: Pocket Neighborhood ultimately be created, where traffic is being forced through our neighborhood to alleviate that traffic.

Discussion: A lot of positive response from planners and city council members; however, those discussions are not reflected in the plans that are currently underway. This is an investment on the behalf of the entire city; however, no one is voicing concerns for the people who will live in the area. The new plans, say nothing about site plan connectivity to Morrow. We are concerned about the incompleteness of this traffic planning that will end up finding short cuts through HNA.

A: Lee provides his and his offices pledge to work with the HNA to resolve this issue. They will have to address the traffic issue before they can open the site for operation. Thanks Lee!

**New Neighbor Introductions**

We are a neighborhood association...and we need renters. We are not a HOA. Renters, please attend and make your issues and concerns known.

**Commanders Forum**

September 16<sup>th</sup> @ McCallum High School - 6:30- 8:30pm. Visit the calendar on [www.highlandneighborhood.com](http://www.highlandneighborhood.com) to subscribe to this event. Traffic, crime, and other police safety issues are all fair game. We are in the central-west district now after the new district lines. We are the least serviced area due to the large area of our district.

**Q: Possible ownership change for a scrap metal facility in our neighborhood.**

A: Ownership is under legal review for illegal actions; however, this has not spawned a change in ownership and/or site planning.

**Note:** We are the only neighborhood that's getting 2 site plans for the train. We are getting Lamar Station + Highland Mall station. All of Airport Blvd. as such will turn into a TOD district. The sidewalks for the new Lamar station are planned to be along the curb, this is not desired, and we are working with the city to change this for safer bicycle lanes. We are already seeing congestion from construction at the Lamar & St. Johns. City is working on short-term fix for protected left turn onto St. Johns. If you are experiencing traffic problems, please call 311 and voice your concerns, or report through the Website directly to the Councilmen (<http://www.highlandneighborhood.com>).

**Note:** Crestview is able to turn out large numbers, and this has always been their advantage. We need to take action and assemble. October 23<sup>rd</sup>, call and email to request this change is discussed in the plans. We need to ask to have Morrow connected to the Development. Keep an eye out on the list server and website. The public hearing is closed; however, we are going to ask for them to reopen the public hearing. All we need is 20-30 people to represent the HNA.

National Night Out is coming up. Organizing a neighborhood watch program has been a hot topic. Need to be registered, and need people signed up and registered to make it “official”. Need to setup and coordinate through the National Night Out program. Call the police department and register your party, EMS, police, etc ... will try to stop by and introduce themselves. Feel free to register your event with the Highland Webmaster at [webmaster@highlandneighborhood.com](mailto:webmaster@highlandneighborhood.com) (or <http://sites.google.com/a/highlandneighborhood.com/site/Home/Neighborhood-Info/Events>).

**Q: Why is it called the Crestview Station?**

A: Trammel Crow originally called it this name, the new name is called Midtown Commons. Google “Crestview Station Austin Texas” you can find the plans. City acknowledges it as Lamar/Justin station.

**Q: Is there any communication channel to recommend commercial leasing?**

A: Go to the Midtown commons website (on the sign outside), fill out the form and they will email back. Previous discussion suggests they will not be determining commercial tenants in that area until Spring 2009.

**Reminder:** Against the law to block sidewalk with your car, please call 311 or ask neighbor to move the car. It is not against the law to block the bike lanes. You can report in anonymously. If its suspicious, please report! The more we report, the more coverage by the police patrolling we get.

**News 8 Austin** – In your neighborhood story. If you have any issues with neighborhood problems, that you think might help with other neighborhoods, contact her regarding the story. Watch News 8 next Monday, to see a story on the new development. Contact Information: Veronica Castelo @ [vcastelo@news8austin.com](mailto:vcastelo@news8austin.com)