

Swiss Avenue Historic District Association
Minutes of the Monthly Meeting
August 18, 2015

The August 18, 2015 meeting of the SAHDA took place at the Aldredge House. President Joanna Hampton called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

President Hampton introduced guest speaker Jose Ruiz with Dallas Code Compliance. He discussed the neighborhood "sweep" that took place several months ago in the District. Residents were invited to take a "walk" of the District, including alleys, to determine areas in need of cleanup. Courtesy letters were sent to offenders, and most complied with the request. One area in the alley near Bryan Pkwy/Sycamore/Swiss, in especially bad condition, was finally cleaned up after multiple contacts, but has again become littered with debris. Code officers will be monitoring this area and proceed with leveling a fine if this matter is not resolved. Another serious matter involves a home where four citations had been issued, but it has since been learned that the home has been purchased and a CA has been issued to demolish the residence, and it will be in process of renovation. Barry Boyd, Mr. Ruiz's assistant, was also introduced. Both men gave their information and welcomed concerned residents to contact them personally if there are matters of Code Compliance concern. You may also call 311, or you may use the 311 APP and post pictures of the problem. Jose Ruiz, 214-316-5555 or jose.ruiz@dallascityhall.com or Barry Boyd, 469-515-0962 or barry.boyd@dallascityhall.com. A question/answer period followed, and Mr. Ruiz answered numerous questions, such as it being optional--but a good idea--to place your house number on the back alley gate/fence. Also discussed was the possibility of the District working with Code Compliance to install security cameras purchased by the District.

Officer Forman presented the Alliance Against Crime Report. It was noted that there is no longer an SAHDA cell phone carried by our extra-hours surveillance officers. That phone has not been used in 2 years, so please disregard that number and use 911 for matters of concern. You may also email our District representative for AGC, Robyn Marin, at rrmarin@swbell.net and she will let Officer Forman know of your concerns. Or contact him directly, stephen.forman@dpd.ci.dallas.tx.us. Several incidents were reported in the past few months, including a gun found in a paper bag in a resident's back yard. It turned out to be a B-B gun, but it looked authentic. Another matter involves a youth who has approached two women, one a walker and one a jogger, and "slapped them on the rear end." Please report such incidents immediately to 911 if you are approached. A cooler was taken from front porch, but that offender was caught in the act because he was under surveillance at the time. Finally, Eric Spencer, who was arrested and imprisoned for the spree of stolen porch furniture, is now out of prison, and has already been stopped once for suspicion of theft.

The June minutes were presented for approval since no meeting was held in July. A motion was made and seconded and the minutes were approved.

Copies of the Treasurer's report were available. Peter Loh, Treasurer, reported we are behind in Alliance Against Crime fundraising, but that donation reminders are being prepared to distribute to the District. Also, as expected, revenue is down from this time last year to due the "rain day" on Sunday of Home Tour. A motion was made and seconded and the report was approved.

Marilyn Waisanen reported that a contract has been reached with the City and she will be meeting with them on Thursday. This should allow us to proceed with the work at Savage Park, etc. Jerry Baus reported on the rather complicated water meter/water access problem on the median at Munger/Swiss, where trees are browning out. Hopefully, as the street work continues on Munger and approaches Swiss, this watering issue can be resolved as the equipment/lines are repaired. In the meantime, concerned neighbors on Swiss have volunteered and are watering the trees.

There will be a Social at Stoney's Wine Lounge on August 28th at 6:00 with appetizers provided by the District. Email invitations have gone out to the District.

Bob Cox noted that it has been suggested that the Preservation Dallas Video shown at Home Tour be posted on our Website. However, the website does not have a video player. The merits of adding this feature to our website were discussed, along with the options of either simply using a link to Preservation Dallas Website or establishing a U-Tube account. More to come on this decision as the expense is determined.

Tom Bonifield and Joanna Hampton presented recent Planning and Zoning matters of concern. One includes a proposed sky bridge across Gaston Avenue. The City Planning Commission took the position to deny the proposal, and it is now going before the Dallas City Council. The recommendation of the P&Z Committee is for the District to support the denial made by the City Planning Commission. There was much discussion by residents attending the SAHDA meeting as to the pros and cons of supporting the denial. Following the discussion, a motion was made and seconded to support the CPC recommendation. During the discussion of this motion, another motion was made to table the decision to support the P&Z recommendation until representatives from Baylor could attend an SAHDA meeting and present their recommendation. Two votes followed. A quorum was established and a vote was taken on the first motion. 11 out of 15 Board Members voted to support the P&Z recommendation to support the CPC recommendation to deny the sky bridge. Then, the second motion was also seconded, and another vote was taken on the motion to table the decision to support the P&Z recommendation until representatives from Baylor could attend an SAHDA meeting and present their recommendation. That motion did not pass.

It was noted that the P&Z responsibilities do not include matters of concern/complaint within the District, but only matters of concern outside of the District. However, there is a matter of concern that involves the Board of Adjustment within the District, and it was brought up for discussion at this time. Tom Bonifield noted that he has only limited details about the Board of Adjustment application at this time. But, it is public knowledge that an

application was filed by resident Barbara McDaniel regarding the Aldredge House as a venue for special events. But, Tom noted, no one has seen the actual wording of the application to the BDA. However, it was explained that our SAHDA Ordinance allows the non-conforming use by the Aldredge House, and if this is denied by the BDA then it would not only eventually force the Aldredge House to sell to a private owner, but it would also cause our Ordinance to lose its integrity. Hopefully, he said, all parties can work the matter out among themselves. It was explained that if this matter moves forward, then a final vote will be taken in October by the BDA. Much discussion followed by numerous residents in attendance at the meeting. Concerns were expressed for both sides of the issue. President Joanna Hampton noted that the Aldredge House had been invited to attend a “pre-session” to the September meeting where they could present information on the Aldredge House history and the organization and residents would then have an opportunity to express concerns or ask questions. This would be for information only. The plan was to have the Social from 6-6:30, the presentation with discussion from 6:30-7, and the Annual Meeting beginning at 7:00. Much more discussion followed and then two items were presented for a vote. The first motion was as follows: “Based on a surprise legal challenge to the Aldredge House use, I move the Board approve the following statement: ‘We are in support of allowing Aldredge House, located in the Swiss Avenue Historic District, to maintain its current uses and operations.’ And also that the letter be sent immediately to the Administrator of the Board of Adjustment.” The motion was seconded. During the discussion, another motion was made that the first motion be amended and a letter be sent to the BDA to recommend to postpone their decision and encourage mediation between the concerned parties. This motion was also seconded. Again, a quorum was established. Both motions passed, the first one with 10 of 14 votes, and the second with 9 of 14 votes.

Old Business and New Business: Munger Place Home Tour needs volunteers. Please join this neighboring Historic District in helping with their tour, if you can. The Dean of St Matthews and a resident of the SAHDA invited the District to use their church anytime needed as a meeting place for the District meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.