

El Gheko Neighborhood Association
May 7, 2014
Meeting Minutes

Tom Wills, President, called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

Tom Wills introduced Sandra Perez, from the Tucson Police Department, who discussed Neighborhood Watch. She stressed the fact that if you have to call 911, for example, you're far more likely to get an immediate response. Neighborhood Watch meetings can be combined with other Neighborhood Watch groups.

Twenty households on a street (vacant homes won't be counted) must agree to participate. Meetings occur only once each year. We thanked Officer Perez for taking the time to come to our meeting, and for her enthusiasm for this program.

5:45 p.m. Tom Wills began the official meeting by calling for the reading of the minutes from the November 6, 2013 meeting. The minutes were read by Virginia Salzman, Substitute Secretary. Tom Wills moved and Jeff Steinkamp seconded to accept the minutes as read and the voice vote was unanimous.

Tom Wills then invited Ernest Duarte, Tucson Department of Planning & Development Services, and Ted Prezelski, Aide to Paul Cunningham, Ward 2, who were invited to our meeting to discuss the changes Walmart has requested from the City to expand their Speedway location into a Super Walmart. Paul Cunningham also attended this portion of the meeting and made comments, which will be reported. Mr. Duarte told us that the zoning for the area East of Kolb Road, South of Speedway, and North of Broadway was approved by the City Council in 1983 as a Planned Area Development (PAD). The zoning that was done in 1983 wasn't specific about the details, such as setbacks, etc. Big Box zoning came in 1998, sixteen years after the 1983 PAD zoning was approved. Since this is very unclear, City Councilman Paul Cunningham recommended that the group call the Transportation Director to find what is specific here.

A number of objections came up including the following:

- Bus lanes and their interfering with traffic in the Speedway and Kolb intersection;
- The Rosewood left turn through the median onto Kolb heading South;
- The serious need for a red light at 5th and Kolb;
- It was mentioned that our suggestion for a block wall between the KMart and the alley immediately north was done, and the crime rate has abated a lot. It was noted this option is not applicable in this instance;
- Traffic on Kolb Road and Speedway Blvd are a major concern to the residents of the El Gheko Neighborhood Association residents.

It was a very spirited discussion all around.

Someone (I do not know the name) mentioned that this meeting was much nicer than the meeting held earlier in the year discussing HSL

Properties' plans for the land it owns around the El Dorado golf course and townhomes and the introduction of an Embassy Suites hotel to the area. In that meeting, we were TOLD what was going to happen, and our suggestions were brushed aside.

Mr. Cunningham did suggest that we should be more forthcoming with the City and make whatever demands we think are important NOW. He did not list anything in particular that he would recommend. (President's Note: Walmart has never returned any requests to discuss these concerns despite repeated requests to do so.)

After the discussion Councilman Cunningham left the meeting.

The status of the Walmart request to the City was the next topic to be discussed. Mr. Duarte said that the Gateway Center is 30-45 days away from issuing permits. They can move rapidly because of the flexibility built into the process in 1983.

President Tom Wills asked for Volunteers to put together a list of concerns and any suggestions for remedy. Only Two people volunteered, June and Clem Chase.

Mr. Wills called on Jeff Steinkamp to bring us up to date on the Cleanup of Rosehill Wash and also, Nextdoor.com: Mr. Steinkamp stated that it takes time to get permits to clean up the wash. If he began the process we could realistically be permitted by October or November, 2014, when the weather is nicer. Since this cleanup was previously agreed upon by the Association, we did not vote again to do it. Mr. Steinkamp then explained about the social networking group Nextdoor.com. It is a off-shoot of Facebooks and anyone signing up to it need to be aware they may be putting themselves at risk of identity theft.

Questions about the old Kingston Knolls (later Jim Nance Swim Club) came up and Rita Tulino stated that Mr. Nance, when he had the pool Club would allow neighbors who had paid dues to be members to use the pool any time the pool wasn't being used for lessons. Now the neighbors have had their dues for the year taken and the pool is locked.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia H. Salzman
*Substituting for Carla Long Casler, Recording Secretary, whose
absence was excused*