

Berkner Park Neighborhood Association 2024
Fall General Membership Meeting Minutes
September 24, 2024
Jano Pretorius, Treasurer



The following are the Minutes of the Berkner Park Neighborhood Association 2024 Fall General Membership Meeting held Tuesday, September 24, 2024 at Berkner High School.

Call to Order

Berkner Park Neighborhood Association President, Gene Lawrence called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Board Members Present

President Gene Lawrence; Vice President Stephen Beyer; Treasurer Jano Pretorius.

Leadership Team Members Present

Membership Chair Carol Weldon; Beautification Co-Chair Judy Bergstrom; Beautification Co-Chair J.J. Wampler; Social Chair Allison Turner; Communications Chair Ben Beazley; Newsletter Editor Delphia Lawrence.

Speakers and Guests

Guest speaker: Chris Shacklett Director, Economic Development; Richardson City Council Members: Curtis Dorian, Dan Barios and Mayor Pro Tem Arefin Shamsul.

Opening Remarks

- President Gene Lawrence offered greetings to members and introduction of guests.

Treasury Report presented by Treasurer, Jano Pretorius

• Beginning Balance January 1, 2024	\$16,838
• 2024 Deposits to date	3,168
• Current PayPal Balance	56
• Pending Deposit	48
• 2024 Expenses to date	(617)
• Current Total Funds Available	19,493

Unfinished Business - None

New Business - None

City Council Remarks

Topic: Sears Building Redevelopment

Councilman Curtis Dorian provided the first brief update from the City Council (The City). The City is supportive of developments and wants businesses to be successful. Even though the Sears Building Redevelopment started with weak communication, more organized presentations were given of the developer's plans, including promises of high-quality development with good quality tenants. This is aligned with the City's objectives for neighborhood developments.

Curtis encouraged members to reach out to the developer to ask questions and provide suggestions to help communicate the community wants/needs as it relates to the redevelopment.

Members'/community's feedback will drive change to be more aligned with the neighborhood's needs.

Contact details of the developer are shown on the sign by the building site, but will also be shared with the Chairman of the neighborhood association after the developer would be notified of the details being shared. Due to involvement from an outside investor, progress since the groundbreaking has been slow

and the development schedule seem to lack transparency.

A number of good developments in the area was mentioned, including the Barbeque Chicken restaurant that hosted a successful toy drive around Christmas.

Questions were raised about recent projects including:

- the new parking lot laid East of Lowes and who the owner is as potholes are already showing.
- Development southwest of Belt Line and Plano. Noted a zoning change is required due to the nature of the arcade shop that is planned. A special permit was requested.

Councilman Dan Barios said he had retail background. He stated that there is a science behind deciding which stores will fit there.

Homeless person living in Berkner Park Pavilion

A question was asked about a homeless person that has been seen living in the Berkner Park pavilion. A patrol car was called, who engaged with him. He has a valid ID, although he doesn't speak English. He lives in the park, using restrooms and water fountains. The City Council members mentioned that it is not illegal to be homeless as long as he doesn't cause problems. The City will work to help him to get out of his situation. The Police officers are also trained to interact appropriately with homeless individuals to make a connection and to give options. The City partners with a Dallas-based organization to support homeless individuals and lift them out of their situations. The City does a homeless count on a periodic basis – the last number was 15 or 16.

A question was asked about panhandling. Councilman Barios stated that panhandling is more of a safety issue. It is not allowed on private property and in public space, people's safety becomes a concern (due to moving vehicles, etc.). Buckingham and streets along city borders seem to be where panhandlers are found most often. The councilman talked about mutual aid between Richardson and Dallas and agreement on policing across borders. Garland's treatment is different and were not clarified.

Guest Speaker: Chris Shacklett Director, Economic Development

Topic: Richardson Economic Development

Chris provided a slide presentation covering the following:

- an overview of his career at Richardson City, and his path over 17 years to become the Director of Economic Development.
- a brief history of the Richardson Economic Development Department, since its inception in 1984 to today, including the 2023 restructuring to enhance alignment with the City's mission and vision.
- Economic development's programs and initiatives:
 - Due to limited available of undeveloped land, redevelopment is a big focus area.
 - The Innovation and Entrepreneurship ecosystem supported by the IQHQ (Innovation Quarter Headquarters)
 - Placemaking initiatives are taken to create places where people want to go to live, work, play and learn.
- Economic development's strategic plan:
 - Mission and vision with 4 strategies:
 - Diverse and resilient economy
 - Innovation and technology
 - Real estate and development
 - Quality of Life and Place
 - 5 Industries are targeted:
 - Advanced and additive manufacturing (TI and other Semi-Conductor manufacturers)
 - Health, Medical & Life Science (Pegasus Park for example)
 - Professional & Financial Services
 - Technology & Software
 - Research & Development
- Retail & Office Market Focus, (reinvent, reinvesting and reducing tenant improvement gap)
 - Example of Baylor Scott White office/business building that was rezoned to residential.
 - Tenants would come with proposals and the city can see how they can assist, considering the Return on Investment (ROI) - zoning, future revenue, etc. Specific requirements from the city are stipulated in

- contracts with tenants/developers.
- Real estate wins (7 accounts mentioned across Richardson – during 2024)
- Also 3 examples of shopping centers that changed owners, which brought many retailers, etc.
 - Promenade North (Civil pour; Mr Max Japanese Restaurant)
 - Richardson Heights retail area.
- Richardson East Shopping Center was also recently sold and has a new owner. Hopefully the new owner will make new improvements and retail development.
- Focus areas for development include:
 - Richardson IQ
 - 5G testing & Evaluation lab – Center for emergent technology.
 - Startup runway – India based businesses, but also opening to more companies. Bringing companies from foreign companies, wanting to invest and expand to the US.
 - Core district (Main Street Greenville; Heights shopping center; Lockwood ; Downtown; Chinatown, Interurban)
 - The department is working on updating their economic development plan from 2009, components include:
 - Future land use
 - Mobility & transport
 - Neighborhoods & Housing
 - Econ Development
- Questions were asked about:
 - Development at Plano Rd by Post Office and Apollo: The City bought it with the initial plan to change it to park land - multi-use fields on the western side. The future is to be decided on.
 - West Spring Valley and what was done there, back in 2010: The development is heavily influenced by the Richardson Heights area developments. There were concerns about the apartment buildings barely being good enough for code enforcement. Zoning changes enabled flexibility which brought reinvestment and redevelopment opportunities. The areas south of Spring Valley is part of Dallas, and harder to do anything about.
 - Richardson's strengths.
 - Proximity is really good, especially considering the DART stations (2 new train stations coming that would enable a train ride from the Airport to Richardson).
 - Code enforcement is doing a good job.
 - Weakness is the lack of developable land. The CityLine development was relatively easy... redevelopment is much harder, as you have to consider a lot more things.
 - Belt Line church that was demolished. rezoning for town homes.

Membership Drive

- Flyer delivery distribution 19 volunteers needed.
- New membership via USPS or online. If there are any problems with the payments, reach out to info@berkerpark.com or reach out to one of the relevant members (Ben or Steve).
- Membership drive is crucial due to challenges in increased costs and other factors.
 - meeting room requires liability insurance and a lease agreement. In the prior year fees for the room usage fees were waived. Current cost is \$72 per meeting (90 minutes). Insurance was waived for this year.
 - PO Box costs also increased to \$232.

Important Updates & Announcements

- Annual Meeting – Tuesday, November 12, 2024
- Holiday Dinner Party – December **TBD** (Aboca's Italian Grill – 100 S Central Expressway)
- Suggestion was made for auctioning off sign-toppers or selling them – **Item for further discussion**
- **Clayton Rinderknecht** – new coordinator for crime watch patrol requested members to consider volunteering for the crime watch patrol. They ask for 1hr walking or driving through the neighborhood. 1 training class will be provided. Current members will take new volunteers through the process. Members are mostly retired, new volunteers are sought. Clayton.rinderknecht@gmail.com

Meeting Adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

Refreshments donated by Jersey Mike's located at 205 S Plano Road, Suite 200, Richardson, TX 75081