

**Berkner Park Neighborhood Association  
2025 Fall Membership Meeting Minutes  
September 9, 2025  
Donna Buhr, Secretary**



The following are the Minutes of the Berkner Park Neighborhood Association 2025 Fall Membership Meeting held Tuesday, September 9, 2025, at Berkner High School.

**Call to Order**

Berkner Park Neighborhood Association President, Gene Lawrence called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

**Board Members Present**

President, Gene Lawrence; Vice President, Stephen Beyer; Treasurer, Jano Pretorius; Secretary, Donna Buhr

**Leadership Team Members Present**

Beautification Co-Chair, J.J. Wampler; Communications Chair, Ben Beazley; Welcoming Chair, Cindy Read; Newsletter Editor, Delphia Lawrence

**Visiting Dignitaries, Speakers, and Guests**

Richardson Mayor, Amir Omar

Richardson City Manager, Don Magner

Richardson City Council Members:

- Place 1, Curtis Dorian
- Place 6, Arefin Shamsul

**Opening Remarks**

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

**Treasury Report** presented by Treasurer, Jano Pretorius

January – September 2025 Summary

- |                                     |          |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| • Beginning Balance January 1, 2025 | \$21,600 |
| • 2025 Deposits to date             | 2,360    |
| • Current PayPal Balance            | 0        |
| • Pending Deposit                   | 36       |
| • 2025 Expenses to date             | (9,535)  |
| • Current Total Funds Available     | \$14,461 |

- Note: Primary expenses to date are for sign-topper replacement and Matching Funds Beautification project.

**Unfinished Business - None**

**New Business – None**

## Guest Keynote Speaker: Amir Omar, Richardson City Mayor

### Topic: City of Richardson Update

Richardson Mayor, Amir Omar provided a slide presentation and overview of updates for the city. Mayor Omar went through the slides and provided brief comments.

#### Slide presentation topics discussed included:

- **City maintains AAA status for 15<sup>th</sup> consecutive year.**  
For the 15th year in a row, both Standard & Poor's and Moody's credit rating agencies have reaffirmed Richardson's "Triple A" status, the highest possible rating available for credit worthiness. Richardson has held AAA status from Standard & Poor's for 17 years, and this is the 15th year the city has received an AAA rating from Moody's.
- **Operating Budget**  
The City of Richardson's combined budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 is \$418,498,270, an increase of 3.1% from the previous year. *"By maintaining a clear focus on core missions and responsibilities throughout this economic cycle, we (Richardson) will be well-positioned to quickly return to a path of growth."*
- **Property Tax Rate History**  
The city of Richardson's property tax rate stayed the same or decreased over the last five years. The proposed tax rate for fiscal year 2025-26 is \$0.54218 per \$100 of assessed value which is no change from the current tax rate.
- **Peer Comparisons**  
Last year, Richardson's tax rate ranked sixth lowest among peer cities and was \$0.024197 below the average rate of \$0.566377. A "Peer Comparisons" slide graph was presented of Richardson and surrounding cities. McKinney had the lowest tax rate, and Dallas was shown as the highest. Richardson was shown about in the middle of the graph just below the average rate. Mayor Omar stated, *"Richardson is in a good position, and the goal is to make sure it's an affordable city"*.
- **Typical Taxpayer Impact**  
The average Richardson resident is expected to see an increase of about \$237 for the upcoming fiscal year, which includes an increase in utility rates. This equates to a 5.7% total overall increase of property tax, water, sewer, drainage, and residential solid waste. The increases are primarily driven by higher utility rates and property value increases.
- **Economic Development**  
In 2025, Richardson saw significant business developments. Mayor Omar highlighted some key business announcements.
  - **AT&T expansion**
  - **Micron Technology investment** – is investing \$30 million into the IQ, bringing approximately 250 jobs focused on semiconductor research.
  - **Associa headquarters relocation to Richardson** – the move is expected to retain and create up to 1,000 jobs.
  - **Zipline** – expected to open drone maintenance center in Richardson. The business works with third parties, such as Walmart, to offer drone delivery services for customers.
  - **Richardson IQHQ** -Richardson Innovation Quarter continues to attract technology and R&D investment, earning a Bronze Award for Excellence in Economic Development.

- **Core District Business Openings**

New and recent restaurant openings in the Core District include Oak Highlands Brewery, Las Lomas Mexican Cuisine, Dream Café, and La Souq coffee shop, along with an apparel store, Outside, Texas. Outside, Texas relocated from Dallas' Lower Greenville.

- **Friendship City Initiative**

Richardson is working to establish Friendship City relationships with two cities in Taiwan: New Taipei City and Keelung City. The purpose of the initiative is to encourage cooperation, education, and cultural exchange and economic partnerships. A Friendship City relationship is a non-binding agreement to exchange and promote mutual goodwill and to provide a foundation for building future partnerships.

- **2021 Bond Program Overview**

An update was provided on the library renovation and construction of the new City Hall.

- **City Hall** construction reached an important milestone with the foundation poured and the vertical movement on structures taking place. Expected completion in early 2027.
- **Library renovation** project is now 50% complete, with an expected completion date in mid-2026.
- **Animal Shelter** construction is expected to be completed in 2025.

- **2026 Bond Program Development Process Timeline**

- Summer 2025: Kick-off discussion.
- October 2025: January 2026 – Proposition overview and refinement
- February 2026: City council calls an election.
- May 2026: Bond election is held.
- Followed by a review, proposition confirmation.

- **City Hall Public Art**

Richardson City Council approved a large-scale public art installation by Artist, Marc Fornes. The original concept by Fornes is entitled, "Carousel".

- **Sherrill Park Golf Course**

Sherrill Park Golf Course is partnering with Titleist to open its first fitting center in North Texas.

- Mayor Omar finished his presentation with a discussion on **"What should we be paying attention to?"** highlighting these areas:

- Regional affordable
- Homelessness needs and resource options
- Infrastructure such as water, water waste, and electricity availability costs
- Regional transportation needs and service delivery options
- Continued erosive of local control.



**Speaker: Ben Beazley, Communications Chair & Webmaster**

**Topic: Website and Online Payment Changes**

Communications Chair, and Berkner Park Neighborhood Association (BPNA) Webmaster, Ben Beazley provided an overview of updates and enhancements to the website and membership system.

The BPNA website has been updated with a sleek modern appearance with easier payment options. The BPNA website is located at [www.berknerpark.com](http://www.berknerpark.com).

Mr. Beazley stated that you will notice a few changes to the website, but you will use the same username and password as before. The Home page has a refreshed appearance that's easier to understand and navigate, and the payment process should now be seamless.

### **BPNA Software Upgrade**

- The BPNA backend software was extremely outdated, had fragile architecture, limited features, and technical support was no longer provided. The website required extensive and time-consuming fragile custom coding and backend maintenance just to keep it up and running. The old software had come to the end of its life cycle and needed to be upgraded. The recommendation was made to upgrade to a "Paid Memberships Pro Plus" subscription plan.

### **Paid Memberships Pro Plus Subscription**

- The Plus subscription includes necessary features and add-ons, especially regarding the membership payment process, and includes priority support. The subscription provides more customization options and a flexible platform.
- The Plus subscription provided the option of moving to "Stripe" as the BPNA membership payment processor for essentially the same cost as the previous PayPal pricing. It also allows the opportunity for subscriptions, "which is a HUGE win" stated Mr. Beazley.
- The subscription cost for the first-year introductory price is \$299 with subsequent annual subscription cost of \$597.

### **Payment process changes**

- BPNA members previously reported issues with the membership payment process. These issues have now been addressed with the change from "PayPal" to "Stripe" as the payment processor.
  - Because of changes PayPal introduced in their payment model, it became too restrictive and difficult to use. PayPal implemented changes where users must have a PayPal account and could no longer simply use a credit card for payment. Some BPNA members did not want to set up a PayPal account.
  - The Paid Memberships Pro Plus subscription allowed BPNA to move to "Stripe" as the membership payment processor platform.
  - Stripe is a multinational financial services and software as a service company with millions of customers. The Stripe platform is included with the Paid Memberships Pro Plus subscription. It is flexible, fully integrated, and easier to use.
- **To renew your membership,**
  - First make sure you are logged in to your membership account by clicking on the **Log In** link at the top right of the BPNA website.
  - Next, click on the **Renew Membership** link located directly to the left of the log out link.
  - Clicking on the link opens the BPNA Membership page where you can click on the **RENEW TODAY!** button.
  - Verify your account information and click on the **Submit and Check Out** button at the bottom of the page.
  - This will open you to the payment options where you will see the annual membership dues of \$30.00 and the number of days until the membership is due again. This membership is on an annual basis. If you are paying before your membership expires, you will see the number of days until the next payment is due.
  - Enter your credit card information and click **Pay and start trial.**
    - **Please Note:**
      - Although it states, "start trial", you have a fully paid annual membership.
      - By subscribing, you authorize Berkner Park Neighborhood Association to charge you according to the terms until you cancel.
  - A **Membership Confirmation** page will open verifying your payment and order number with an option to **Print or Save as PDF.**
  - You will also receive an email welcome confirmation with your order details.

If you have difficulty with the membership renewal process, please contact us at [info@berknerpark.com](mailto:info@berknerpark.com).



## Berkner Park Neighborhood Association Signage Update

BPNA President, Gene Lawrence provided an update on the poor condition of the median and holiday signs.

- Four original center median signs that were posted in 2011 need to be replaced.
- Four of the original signs have since disappeared and need replacements.
- Three signs were damaged with two being replaced by the City of Richardson.
- The BPNA holiday signs are over 10 years old, are in poor condition, and need replacements.



## Member or Neighborhood Concerns and Q&A

City Manager, Don Magner and Council members, Arefin Shamsul and Curtis Dorian addressed neighborhood concerns and answered member questions. Items of discussion included:

### Richardson East Shopping Center Businesses

- A special permit was approved for a Senior Activity Center to be located at 1750 E. Belt Line Road, Suite 100. *Senior Activity Center mans a Day Activity and Health Services (DAHS) facility, licensed in accordance with the Texas Department of Human Services, which provides services under a day activity and health services program on a daily and regular basis. A DAHS facility was formerly known as an adult day care center.*

The proposed senior activity is anticipated to include activities, such as wellness programs, exercise activities, games, recreation, and a variety of classes. Basic health services will be provided from on-site nursing staff. Transportation services will also be provided.

### Sears Building Businesses

- No specific updates but Council member, Curtis Dorian stated that the property owner “wants the area upgraded”. Mr. Dorian encouraged members to send emails to the property owner with their thoughts and comments.

### Tripping Risk at Corner Walkways

- **Four at Yale Blvd & Spring Valley Road**
- **One at Spring Valley & Spring Creek SW Corner**
  - Curtis Dorian stated, “*this is designed for ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance, specifically designed for wheelchairs*”.
  - City Manager, Don Magner stated that while “*this is the standard, we will enhance the visibility with additional marking*”.
  - Afrin Shamsul added, “*we will check to make sure this is the standard and see if anything can be changed. I will work with the architect and the neighborhood to do the best we can*” to improve the walkway and make them safe.
  - **Post meeting update:** BPNA President, Gene Lawrence sent an email to members on 9/12/25 with City Manager, Don Magner status update response:
    - **Don Magner writes** - “Thank you for bringing the sidewalk intersection issue to our attention. The cross section shown reflects an older construction detail that is no longer in use, as it is no longer required by the current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.

We acknowledge the concern regarding the potential trip hazard and will be addressing it by replacing the existing white reflectors with yellow ones. Additionally, we will approximately double the number of reflectors currently in place to improve visibility and safety.

We believe this updated approach effectively responds to the concern raised.”



**Important Updates & Announcements by President Lawrence**

- National Night Out - Tuesday, October 7, 2025
- Annual Meeting – Tuesday, November 11, 2025
- Holiday Dinner Party – Aboca's Italian Grill - December date TBD
- Interested in Crime Watch Patrol?
  - Contact, Clayton Rinderknecht at [clayton.rinderknecht@gmail.com](mailto:clayton.rinderknecht@gmail.com)

**Meeting Adjourned at 8:28 p.m.**

**Refreshments provided by Jason's Deli, Richardson Square**

