

# Garden Oaks Civic Club Meeting Minutes

*Helen Sestak, Secretary*

November 6, 2018

**Location:** Garden Oaks Montessori Magnet (GOMM)

Matt Gannon, GOCC President, welcomed attendees and called the meeting to order at 7:08 pm.

## **Guest Speaker**

Alice Bongers, Executive Director of the Heights Interfaith Ministries Food Pantry, 3523 Beauchamp St., was the guest speaker. The food pantry, founded in 2009 to serve any needy Houston family, is client-choice, allowing clients to choose their own foods. It is open Thursday evening, 5:00-7:00 pm and Saturday morning, 10am-12pm. Today, as many as 50 volunteers serve 60-100 clients weekly with dignity and respect.

Six churches support the pantry, with annual donations to help pay for purchased food. About 70% of the food is purchased at a significantly-discounted price from the Houston Food Bank. Other food is purchased weekly via endowment funds. Both Kroger and HEB donate goods on a regular basis. A large receptacle on the pantry grounds, fondly known as "Frank", is available to hold your generous donations. Thank you to the GOCC members who brought non-perishable contributions to feed "Frank".

A Q&A session followed. Check out [www.himfoodpantry.org](http://www.himfoodpantry.org) for more information or to volunteer.

## **Business Meeting**

A motion to approve the September minutes was made and seconded. Minutes were approved.

New attendees introduced themselves.

## **Committee Reports**

**Treasurer:** Teresa Coleman reported that the Wine Walk generated about \$36,500, which will go directly to help support the under-funded Constable Patrol Program.

In August, GOCC members voted to spend \$5000 for irrigation repairs. Irrigation maintenance on GO Blvd, the Gazebo Park and the Rose Garden in Section 1 has been completed, costing ~\$3900. The remaining ~\$1100 will fund irrigation repairs at the Triangle Park at Azalea and Alba. \$8200 from Spring Fling funds are still available for beautification efforts.

Teresa briefly discussed the proposed 2019 GOCC Budget. It will be submitted to the *Gazette* and voted on at the December meeting. The GOCC anticipates deficit spending, but should have funds to accommodate the overspending. The 2019 budget includes funding for two constables.

A Q&A session followed. The Berm Park on Randall needs repair and scrutiny from the Beautification

committee.

**GOMO:** No report.

**Constable:** No report.

**Beautification:** No report.

**Garden Oaks Website:** No report.

**Citizen Patrol:** Carl Waters reported that our neighborhood experienced 19 October crimes. This included 16 thefts (10 of which were in the 200 block of W. 34th), one burglary and two serious crimes (assault on Apollo and a robbery on 38th). We need patrollers! You qualify if are 18 years old, train one hour with HPD, ride-along with Carl and pass a background check. Carl will retire at the end of the year from this role and Mark Saranie will assume the leadership of the Citizen Patrol. He will be working with a new community service sergeant.

**Membership:** Dian Austin reported that the neighborhood netted \$36,500 for the Constable Program. Thank you to all who worked to make this fundraiser a success.

Mail outs for 2019's GOCC membership and Constable Program dues will be sent out shortly. Matt Gannon won a \$25 gift card that was donated by Peli Peli Kitchen (inside Whole Foods 365).

**Gazette:** Joe Muscara reported that the deadline for December *Gazette* articles is November 15.

**Garden Oaks Montessori Magnet School:** Stephanie Dubroff-Acosta reported that over 500 applications have been received for the 2019-20 school year. The majority of the applications are for limited Pre-K 3 and 4 slots. Also, a very generous donor has provided funds for an off-duty constable to patrol between 2:30-4:30, up to three random days a week. They have been ordered to 'ticket as you please', to ensure that adults behave properly at pick-up time. Once construction is completed, the Pre-K and K students will have a different pick up location, which may alleviate some congestion. Discussion followed.

**Government Affairs / GO CIP:** Stephanie Dubroff-Acosta reported that a GOMM parent has petitioned the city to install a sidewalk from W. 43rd, down Sue Barnett to Garden Oaks Boulevard. The city gave preliminary approval, assuming homeowners impacted by the sidewalk sign the petition and field evaluations are positive. The drainage CIP planned for Sue Barnett, currently on hold, has sidewalk installation (ADA requirement) in the plan. Garden Oaks is one of approximately 20 Houston neighborhoods that is excluded from installing sidewalks with new house construction.

Discussion of school traffic shifted to potholes on 41st street. All need to be repaired. GOMM parents could coordinate activities with Tonya Knauth.

**Section 1 Commercial Development:** Carrie Arnett reported that a final agreement on a Declaration of Restrictions has been reached with Gulf Coast Development Group. This agreement would lessen the impact of commercial development on Section 1 homeowners. Some restrictions include installation of a sound wall, exterior lights and signage constraints, specific entrance locations, and building height constraints.

Section 1 residents will receive two letters, one initially from the GOCC Commercial Development committee and a second from Gulf Coast Development Group. Gulf Coast will coordinate their distribution, hand delivering the GOCC Commercial Development letter to every house in Section 1.

Shortly afterwards, Gulf Coast will mail details of their plan, which should echo similar sentiments to the GOCC Commercial Development letter. Letters from the GOCC Commercial Development committee, Gulf Coast Development Group and the Declaration of Restrictions are available at [www.gardenoaks.org](http://www.gardenoaks.org).

The GOCC has endorsed the project. If Section 1 homeowners, who represent 50% of front linear footage, approve the changes, the Section 1 deed restrictions for four specific lots (GO Baptist Church parking lot between Gabby's and Chase Bank) will be released and replaced by the Declaration of Restrictions. These restrictions will run with the land, so that they will remain in place even if the properties are resold.

The Gulf Coast Development Group has agreed to make a generous donation to the Constable Patrol Program.

Thank you to the Commercial Development Committee for their demanding work.

**Nominating Committee:** John Bartos, and fellow committee members Dian Austin, Carrie Arnett, Kip Noser, and Tonya Knauth have recommended officers for the 2019 Garden Oaks Civic Club. They are Joe Casarez for President, Tonya Knauth for Vice President, Teresa Coleman for Treasurer and Helen Sestak for Secretary. Nominations can also be made from the floor at the November and December meetings. Voting will take place at the December 4 meeting, 7 PM, at the American Legion Post. (Please note that the Dec 6 date on the agenda is incorrect). Only paid GOCC members can vote.

**New Business:** The next meeting will be December 4, 7 PM, at the American Legion Post 560 on Alba. Please bring a potluck dish and an unwrapped toy for the Constables' Toy Drive.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 PM.

Thirteen attendees enjoyed great pizza, generously donated again by Brother's Pizzeria!