

Menlo Park Neighborhood Association
Meeting: January 11, 2024
Sentinel Building, 320 N. Commerce Park Loop, 6-8 pm

Board members present: Kylie Walzak, President; Laura Dent, First Vice President; Anthony Nelson, Second Vice President; Wendy Sterner, Secretary; Liz Martinez, Treasurer; Mamta Popat, Parliamentarian; Liza Grant, Historian & Newsletter; Keren Torres, Celina Soto and Kara Harter, Members at Large

Welcome and Introductions: The meeting was opened by the Las Aguilitas Mariachis from Davis Elementary singing and playing songs to celebrate Board member Celina Soto's birthday! Neighbors and Board members introduced themselves.

December minutes for approval: Stanley moved to approve the December 2023 minutes, Linda seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer report: The current balance in the MPNA checking account is \$1625.41, \$25.02 in savings. Kylie requested reimbursement in the amount of \$149 to renew the MPNA ZOOM license for 2024, and reimbursement of \$155 due in March to renew the license for the MPNA website for 2014. Liza moved that Kylie be reimbursed out of the MPNA checking account for both expenses. Linda seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Laura Dent brought up that she and Wendy are currently working on achieving 501c3 nonprofit status for MPNA. Laura announced that the nonprofit she works for is donating in-kind legal assistance to the neighborhood to start the process. Laura requested that anyone interested in working on this to contact her or Wendy Sterner.

Tucson Dept of Transportation & Mobility, Menlo Park roadway project updates:

Gabrielle Barillas Longoria, City of Tucson Livability project manager presented the following roadway project updates:

- Tucson Delivers Better Streets arterial roads – Silverbell Rd repaving was delayed by water line replacement but will now begin Monday 1/15. The project includes restriping, adding buffered bike lanes (no vertical elements, only paint), adding 15 on-street parking spots by St Mary's Hospital, and reconfiguring the Anklam/Silverbell intersection to correct the current issue of an ADA crosswalk ramp that leads to nowhere. Construction will be completed by December 2024. There will be no road closures. The small island on Silverbell between Alameda and Franklin will be removed during construction but will be re-installed at the end of the project.
- Silverbell road safety assessment from Grant to Grande Ave was conducted in May 2023. The study was initiated by Ward 1 Councilperson Lane Santa Cruz. The objective was to identify safety issues, especially pedestrian safety. Traffic engineers will begin addressing short term recommendations in Feb/Mar 2024. MPNA may request improvements to existing crossings or evaluation for new crosswalks by emailing Tdotconcerns@tucsonaz.gov or calling (520) 791-3154.
- Tucson Delivers Bicycle Boulevards, Pedestrian Safety and Walkability projects: This is an ongoing project to create a bicycle route on the west side of Tucson. At present 30% of the design is complete. The design team will incorporate community feedback into revising the route, and expect to have a final design in June. Construction will begin in the fall of 2024.
- St Mary's Pedestrian Safety and Walkability Project: this project includes sidewalk infill and repair, ADA improvements, enhanced crossings (includes installing a HAWK crossing at Cherokee St and St, Mary's Road near Safeway) and landscaping. Currently they are finalizing the scope of work and expect public kickoff to be in March/April 2024.
- Grande Ave Pedestrian Safety & Walkability Project: The project covers Grande Ave from St Mary's Road to Congress St. The design and construction of street improvements will include traffic calming and water harvesting/green stormwater infrastructure. The city is currently working with the design firm to finalize the scope of work. Public kickoff in March/April 2024.

- Tucson Delivers Better Streets/Safe Streets: systemwide roadway safety at Congress St and Grande Ave. This project covers Grande from St Mary's Rd to W. Cedar St, the Congress St/Grande Ave intersection, and W. Congress St from Bonita Ave to Melrose Ave. A road safety assessment was initiated by MPNA as a result of a crash in December 2021 in which a young girl was killed by a red-light runner. The project will focus on safety improvements including enhanced pedestrian crossings and ADA intersection improvements on Grand Ave. The city is working with a design firm to finalize the scope of work. Public kick off will be in March/April 2024 after some feasibility studies are done. There will be many public outreach events for this project, and a lot of opportunities for neighbors to give public input.
- Five residential repaving projects: The city will be resurfacing streets in Menlo Park, Barrio Kroeger Ln, Panorama Estates, the Mercado and Barrio Sin Nombre. The projects will begin March 2024 and last thru 2026. If you would like to see a map of the streets slated for repaving, you can go online to <https://tucsondelivers.tucsonaz.gov/pages/better-streets-safe-streets>

Preview of MPNA Bylaw amendments and changes (to be voted on in March 2024)

Kylie advised neighbors that the MPNA Board has been working on revising the bylaws for several months. This was prompted by confusion about how the bylaws addressed voting when neighbors voted in the MPNA Board in September 2023. When the MPNA Board looked further into the bylaws they discovered at least two different versions of the bylaws. In November 2023 the City of Tucson Planning Department also identified some issues with language in the bylaws. Kylie clarified that tonight the Board just wanted to alert neighbors that Board members Kara, Mamta and Anthony are working on correcting and amending the bylaws to standardize the language and bring them into alignment with City requirements. Changes to the bylaws will likely take up a good deal of the February MPNA meeting and all of the March meeting. Former Parliamentarian Steve Brown explained how the confusion over the multiple versions of the bylaws and alteration of the numbering came to be. It was pointed out by several neighbors that a major issue at the September 2023 meeting was whether the votes of people who attended the meeting virtually should be counted. Kylie asked neighbors to think about how we as an association would like to include neighbors in the voting. She reiterated the issues as follows: 1. Right now it's unclear who is eligible to vote due to two different versions of bylaws in circulation, and 2. Discriminatory language identified by the City of Tucson Planning Department that currently excludes renters and non-property owners from voting on boundary changes to the neighborhood. Kylie pointed out that the language was not intentionally restrictive to cause harm, and that the history of this language in the bylaws is unknown. Kylie assured neighbors that we will work this out and everyone will have an opportunity to be heard.

Notice will be sent to neighbors via U.S. mail and email in advance of the March meeting at which the bylaw amendments will be considered and voted on.

Call to Audience/Announcements

A representative from the Zoppe Circus handed out tickets to enter a drawing to win 4 free passes to the circus.

Yard sale on January 27, 8am – 2 pm, at 901 and 905 W. Congress (at Congress and Melwood). You can donate items to help raise money for MPNA, and also you may purchase a table for \$50 to sell your own items. Please scan the QR code on the flyer to sign up for a table and/or volunteer. We have heard from one vendor who will be selling vintage costume jewelry and will be donating some of their proceeds to MPNA.

Monday, January 13th is the National Day of Racial Healing at the YWCA on Bonita.

Sunday, January 21st is the Menlo Park park clean-up and Adopt-A-Park Celebration: 9am, free t-shirts and snacks for volunteers.

[Plan Tucson](#) is hosting a series of community forums, both virtual and in person. Go online to for dates, times and locations.

Sun Tran Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) is holding workshops on proposed changes to bus routes and service. Look online to find dates, times and locations.

Liza announced that the MPNA newsletter has been mailed out, if you did not receive one, contact Liza or Kylie.

Stanley announced he enjoyed the mariachis and invited them to come to our meetings to practice.

Keith Bagwell from Pima County District 5/Adelita Grijalva announced the following:

- Dr Sylvia Lee has replaced Sharon Bronson on the Pima County Board of Supervisors.
- The county is still struggling to find more funds to assist asylum seekers with things like food, shelter, and transportation to their final destination. Federal money for this will run out in February. If assistance ends then asylum seekers will be on their own and possibly living in the streets.
- The BOS is holding an art contest for youth ages kindergarten thru 8th grade, the theme is “Why do you love District 5?” The contest is free, winners get gift certificates ranging in amounts from \$50 to \$5

Benny Gomez introduced himself as the new Ward 1 neighborhood representative for most west side neighborhoods and is excited to be in this position. He is a west side kid who grew up off of Silverbell. You can contact Benny with questions or concerns for Ward 1 at 520-791-4040. Kylie invited neighbors to also contact her with questions for Ward 1 and she will keep a list.

David announced that weekly buffelgrass pulls are happening Sundays 9-11 am, they are gearing up for Save our Saguaros event on Feb 3rd. David handed out flyers for this.

Stanley moved to adjourn, seconded by Laura.

Next meeting: Thursday February 8th 2024