

Menlo Park Neighborhood Association Meeting
February 13, 2025, 6-7:30 pm
Sentinel Building, 320 N. Commerce Park Loop, Tucson AZ

Board members present: Kylie Walzak, president; Wendy Sterner, Secretary; Mamta Popat, Parliamentarian; Liza Grant, Newsletter/Historian; Celina Soto, Member at Large

November minutes for approval: Steve moved to approve the January minutes as submitted, Shelly seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer was not able to attend, no report on balances this month.

Yard Sale report: We made over \$700, smaller turnout than last year, but we had a good time hanging out.

Permission to close current bank account to open 501c3 non-profit free checking account

Kylie presented a letter to the neighborhood stating the neighborhood association membership approves of closing the current business account and donating the funds to the Menlo Park Neighborhood Organization 501c3 nonprofit to open a new account which would not be charged the monthly \$10 fee. Steve Brown moved to approve the neighborhood signing on to the letter, Isabel seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Kylie announced that since the 501c3 was formed we have already received a \$1000 anonymous donation.

Annual reimbursement for Zoom and Blue Host website hosting accounts

Tabled for March.

Better Streets Safe Streets/neighborhood street paving update from Jim Degrood, Prop 411 Project Manager and City of Tucson Dept of Transportation and Mobility Deputy Director

In May 2022 Tucson voters approved a half cent sales tax under Proposition 411 for neighborhood street improvements and systemwide street safety projects. 80 percent of the monies collected go to street improvements, 20 percent to safety improvements. Jim is in charge of street improvements, the safety improvements are handled by a different department.

In mid-2023 Jim presented the Independent Oversight and Accountability Commission (IOAC) with a list of the worst residential streets in the city. Every residential street was scored for its overall condition, rated from very poor to good condition. Over 70% of Tucson's residential streets were rated very poor. They came up with a plan to break the work up into three phases, prioritized by the overall conditions of the streets, and divided the areas into "blocks" which are bounded by major arterials or geographical markers. They considered not only condition but equity in transportation needs as well as coordinating the repaving with Tucson Water's endeavors to replace failing water mains throughout the city and Bicycle Boulevard street construction schedules.

They are currently in the middle of Phase 1 which includes a portion of Menlo Park. The residential streets west of Grande and north of Congress have been done first due to Bicycle Boulevard treatments funded under Prop 407. Streets not currently being paved are still under Phase 1 and will be paved in the next year. The paving was started before the city was able to adequately get the word out to Menlo Park due to Tucson Water's schedule for replacing water mains, there wasn't enough time before they needed to start the paving process. Alameda will get different treatment because it's in good shape. This will probably happen in a month or two because they are waiting for daytime temperatures to be consistently in 70s and 80s. The repaving will go up to the gates of Sentinel Peak Park where City jurisdiction ends. They are currently in conversation with

the Parks and Rec Director to coordinate paving the road up to the peak as well, as that will save the city money to do it all at once.

Q: Can we get speed humps on Cedar? Kylie said she will work with neighbors on Cedar to get speed humps put in before repaving.

Q: How were the condition of the streets evaluated? Jim and his staff drove every single residential street to rate their condition. They also considered when the street was last paved and the type of treatment to make sure the repaving method used takes the most advantage of the strength of the existing conditions to ensure that the repaving lasts as long as possible

Q: Does the assessment include current traffic volume and/or future volume? Jim has some flexibility in deciding the best treatment, which includes considering current and possible future volume.

Q: Will Congress/Grande intersection get repaved? Don't know. Jim's program is only residential streets, does not include arterials.

Q: Kylie pointed out that the Mercado and Barrio Sin Nombre not included in repaving, will be doing treatments in there "penetrating rejuvenator" to help the asphalt last longer, experimenting with recipe that may reduce heat, nothing decided yet.

Q: Why weren't the residential streets in Menlo Park from Grande to I-10 not included in Phase 1? Those streets were in better condition than the ones west of Grande. Neighbors pointed out that Melwood is in bad shape due to it being a bus route for many years. It was noted that Melwood is part of the Bicycle Blvd so changes will be coming. Kylie suggested that concerned neighbors form a committee and make their concerns known at the IOAC meetings.

Q: Will you be doing sidewalks as well? No, the funding does not include sidewalk improvements unless the sidewalk presents a significant safety hazard. Per city ordinance, sidewalks are the responsibility of the property owner. Jim clarified that trees lining the roads will be pruned up to 12 ft to accommodate the paving machines. Per Kylie the city doesn't have a funding source to repair sidewalks but there is an assistance program through the city to help with sidewalks.

Q: Neighbors along Sentinel Peak road have a lot of safety concerns about after hours traffic, speeding and reckless drivers, and the fact that many neighbors like to walk the road after the gates are closed because there are no sidewalks or streetlights. Once that road is repaved people will likely drive even faster. Is there a possibility to install traffic calming measures? Jim mentioned there is a neighborhood traffic mitigation group that neighbors can talk to, they have a small "carve out" for traffic mitigation. Tisa has contact information.

Q: About timing and phases. Phase 2 will begin in July 2026. Jim expects Tucson Water will make determination of water valve replacement before giving green light to Jim to start repaving. Jim updates the IOAC on the repaving schedule at every meeting. Laura Dent is the MPNA representative on the IOAC Board so she will get updates such as delays or changes as they are reported to that Board.

Q: Cedar & Grande complaint about people using Cedar to avoid the Congress/Grande intersection. Jim was urged Jim to look again at the condition of Cedar. Jim offered to have crews patch pot holes but said he can't rush the repaving project.

Q: What does IOAC stand for? Independent Oversight and Accountability Commission, which was created to oversee and approve funding for this project. Their purpose is to make sure the money is being spent responsibly and to hear grievances.

Q: Concerns about potholes on Palomas. Jim suggested calling 311, they will log the complaint and track it. Can email tdotconcerns@tucsonaz.gov . Kylie noted that as the president of MPNA she gets notification of all 311 complaints logged in Menlo Park, and she hasn't seen any complaints logged about Cedar.

Q: Request for a traffic count for Cedar because she believes Cedar is more heavily used. Jim will request a new count if current counts are old. A 'collector street' is considered if 1000+ cars/day.

Q: Re Phase 1 is 3 yrs, repaving will continue through 2026.

Q: Why are there no examples of rainwater harvesting w/storm to shade program? Per Jim, the Storm to Shade program has a fixed budget, and this is something they still need to work on. They haven't worked out coordination yet and may not have all these areas identified. Kylie said they will be putting rainwater harvesting treatments on the Bike Blvds, which will include Alameda. Jim noted those amendments will come later.

Q: Will you consider making roads safer regarding water runoff from Sentinel Peak? Kylie told everyone that there is a meeting tomorrow with Tucson Clean & Beautiful to work on water harvesting. Ellen, president of Panorama Estates Neighborhood Association, said she would like to see water harvesting features included in the repaving to eliminate rainwater flooding on Cuesta. She said at the meeting tomorrow they will do a walk through, and will come up with a plan to present to Jim before repaving begins. Jim said he will work with neighbors on a plan to make these improvements.

Kylie noted that the poorly paved Mission Lane in the Barrio Sin Nombre neighborhood is on the scheduled to be repaved.

Per Kylie, we have enough interested neighbors to form a subcommittee to attend IOAC meetings and noted that consistent involvement leads to quicker changes.

Call to Audience & Neighborhood Announcements

Menlo Park 3rd Sunday monthly park clean-up will be on 2-16 starting at 9 am. City workers are currently pruning trees in the park. She is working with the City on dealing with the homeless camps just adjacent to the park, in that small area that's not part of the park. People are no longer camping on the ramadas in the park

Melwood Community Garden (aka El Rio Community Garden) 1st Sunday monthly clean-up and potluck will be on 3/2/2025 at 9 am.

Keith Bagwell from Pima County District 5 announced a company wants to install a cell phone tower in Picture Rocks, residents not happy about it, research indicated a tower was not needed in that area so the Board of Supervisors voted against it. The county created process to start planning for wildfires to avoid the situation

that recently happened in Los Angeles. They are lobbying the AZ legislature to put in .01% sales tax to fund rural fire districts. Kylie asked neighbors to take the library survey on the Pima County Public Library website. It's important to make your voice heard because library use and needs are changing and funding is drying up.. For instance, the county is in conversation w/library staff to increase librarian safety. Also please get a library cards and use it. Question about fire danger on Sentinel Peak can we collaborate to increase fire safety? Abatement project to reduce the buffel grass. Sentinel Peak not part of County jurisdiction. Per David the buffel grass abatement volunteers have been very successful, continuing effort, working on many parts of the park. Question about AZ Son Desert Museum getting a grant to use sheep for buffel grass abatement. Not sure how successful this project will be, will have to wait and see. Volunteers will continue to pull buffel grass on designated days. Talk to David Walker if you would like to volunteer for this.

Steve Brown announced that he was interviewed by Brittany Wong, a graduate student who is doing a research project on Menlo Park. Brittany introduced herself, said she is studying Menlo Park residents' experiences with neighborhood change. She would like to talk to neighbors who have lived here for 10+ years. She is looking at how people are attached to place and how those attachments are affected over time. Interviews take 1 to 1.5 hours depending on how much you want to talk.

Liza brought newsletters for anyone who didn't get one.

A neighbor announced she is working on a project with Mission Garden called "why I love chilies", with the goal of bring children and elders together. Elders are getting more isolated, she is hoping to bring people together through sharing recipes and food. This person did not give her name, but Kylie may know who she is.

Isabel moved to adjourn, Steve seconded.

Next meeting scheduled for Thursday, March 13, 2025.