

Menlo Park Neighborhood Association Meeting  
April 10, 2025, 6-7:30 pm  
Sentinel Building, 320 N. Commerce Park Loop, Tucson AZ

**Board members present:** Kylie Walzak, President; Laura Dent, Vice President, Wendy Sterner, Secretary; Mamta Popat, Parliamentarian; Liza Grant, Newsletter/Historian

**Introductions:** Board members and neighbors introduced themselves.

**February minutes for approval:** Stanley moved to approve the February minutes as submitted, Gene seconded, motion passed unanimously. Please note the March MPNA meeting was devoted to honoring longtime Menlo Park resident and community activist Matt Perri. No neighborhood business was conducted at the March meeting.

**Treasurer's Report:** No treasurer's report as the treasurer could not be here tonight.

**Technicians for Sustainability Low Income Solar Program/Bridget and Tamarack presenters**

Technicians For Sustainability has been in Tucson since 1983, it's a local business and all staff are in-house. To date they have installed close to 5000 solar systems in Tucson. Tonight they wanted to talk about the Solar Empowerment program, which is designed to make solar more accessible to lower income folks and those who don't have access to tax breaks. Grants are available from the City of Tucson and other agencies that can cover up to 60% of the expense of installing a rooftop solar system. The system would not include battery storage. Homeowner would have to cover the remaining 40% of the expense. If you can't pay it out of your savings, there is a low interest loan program available. TFS has partnered with Clean Energy Credit Union to offer a low interest 5% loan. Some of the restrictions and requirements are these:

- Not available to people living in a mobile home
- Your roof must be in relatively good condition
- You must be up to date on your property taxes and house payments

More information about the low interest loan program can be found at this link:

<https://seriaz.org/sustainable-energy/solar-empowerment-program/loans>

You can find out more about SERI at their website [seri@seriaz.org](https://seri@seriaz.org) or call 520-321-9488. Find more information about their loan program at this link: <https://seriaz.org/sustainable-energy/solar-empowerment-program/>

TFS will work with the homeowner to see if this program is right for them. Probably the most difficult part of the process is applying for the loan, and TFS will help with that. Solar is a good investment, it pays for itself.

Q: I live in a duplex, I am low income but other renter is not. I don't think I would qualify because my neighbor's income is too high.

A: Let's talk about this after the meeting to get more details. As long as you own your unit and your neighbor owns theirs it might not be an issue.

Q: Is there an average cost per system?

A: No. The cost of a system depends on how many kilowatt hours you use per year. An average size system of 6 kwh/month would cost the homeowner approximately \$7000 out of pocket. The size of the system also depends on the size of your roof. They can only install systems on rooftops that have been permitted through the city. For instance, TFS can't install panels on a porch roof that was built without being permitted by the city.

Comment: TFS installed my solar in 2021, live with about 6 people, average bill/month is \$20, total cost to homeowner to install was \$15-16,000. TFS was awesome to work with, explained everything really well.

Q: Can homeowner help with the installation?

A: No, for liability reasons it's not allowed

### **Tucson's History of TCE Contamination (ZOOM presentation)/Alisha Vasquez**

Alisha Vasquez is a co director of the Mexican American Heritage Museum/Carrillo House at the Tucson Museum of Art. They are conducting research with Tucson residents impacted by TCE contamination. Entities such as Raytheon and Davis Monthan Air Force Base used TCE for years to clean airplanes and dissolve plastics, and it's been leaching into our aquifer since the 1940s. In 2024 TCE was declared an environmental hazard. Multiple health problems are caused by TCE like cancer, reproductive issues, immunity issues.

A panel discussion of Tucson's TCE contamination will be held on Wednesday April 23 in the Azurite Room at Pima Community College downtown campus. They will discuss topics like intergenerational conversations between historic southside organizers and current local environmental justice activists. Panelists will draw connections between Tucson's historic TCE groundwater pollution and the experiences of communities today when it comes to pollution, land use, and water in the desert.

There is also a traveling exhibit April through July at various locations in Tucson and includes opportunities to make tiles to be used at a Mission Manor Park event. Go to this link for more information:

<https://www.losdestucson.com/tce>

### **Call to Audience & Neighborhood Announcements**

Menlo Park (the park) 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday monthly park clean-up will be on 4/20 starting at 9 am. (same morning as Easter)

Melwood Community Garden (aka El Rio Community Garden) First Sunday monthly clean-up and potluck will be on 5/4/2025 at 9 am.

Davis Elementary School Fiesta will be on May 2<sup>nd</sup> from 5-7 pm, on Anita St between Davis St and Granada Ave

Fiesta de los Barrios will be held May 3<sup>rd</sup>, at David G Herrera & Ramon Quiroz Park (formerly known as Oury Park) from noon – 10 pm. Armando has been working with Barrio Anita, Barrio Sin Nombre, Barrio Hollywood and El Rio neighborhoods on organizing this event. There is a basketball tournament on May 2<sup>nd</sup> from 5-7 pm: any team can compete; there will be a lot of community resources there, food vendors, an art show, a low rider car show, mariachi youth groups and music. Ward 1 is financing the fiesta.

Kylie announced that the Gadsden Company, developer of the Mercado, MSA Annex, Monier and Bautista, has been found liable for defrauding their investors. They are currently in arbitration, which has put the Monier into receivership and all work on Bautista has been stopped. Some of the Gadsden land has been sold.

Kylie noted that some developers have purchased 2 lots on Congress - Rudy's Garage, and another lot on Linda St. They are using the IID for the development and plan to apply for an individual parking plan. The development will include 67 units of workforce housing on the former Rudy's Garage site and 77 units of workforce housing on the Linda St site. Kylie reminded everyone that Tucson is 13,000 units short of much-needed housing. The planned housing will consist of studio and one-bedroom units. There is an informational

meeting scheduled for April 22 at 5:30 at Ward 1. The developers are from Salt Lake City, they will be marketing the units to people who are not car dependent, with the expectation that residents will rely mostly on mass transit like the streetcar, bus and bicycle.

Laura Dent has joined the Independent Oversight Accountability Commission which oversees how money is spent on neighborhood street repairs. Laura advised that neighborhoods should try and stay together, not separate into smaller neighborhoods, because the more people who get involved in one neighborhood association gives that neighborhood more power with government entities and developers. Laura will be fighting for the Menlo Park Neighborhood street repairs, especially those streets south of Congress that are in really rough shape. Laura encouraged neighbors to show up at the IOAC meetings so our voice is heard and we are not forgotten.

Tisa attended a Complete Streets Coordinating Council meeting. It was very informative, helped her understand the process more completely. Tisa mentioned that she ran into BSNNA President Anthony Nelson who now works for City of Tucson Parks and Rec. He was removing the fence between the park and the Menlo Park Elementary School playground. Kylie hopes to have someone come to our May meeting to explain what is happening with the school and the park.

Several neighbors talked about people doing donuts in their ATVs on our newly paved streets. Kylie clarified that the ATVs are street legal if they have a rearview mirror. If we are unhappy about this we need to work with our Ward and the City to get the law changed.

Benny from Ward 1 dropped off flyers for the next round of Budget de la Gente

Wendy announced that the Menlo Park Neighborhood Plan is stalled with the City of Tucson Planning Department. We would like to get our neighborhood plan finalized before the updated Plan Tucson is approved, but it is out of our hands right now.

Stanley moved to adjourn, Mamta seconded.

Next meeting scheduled for Thursday, May 8, 2025.