

Cielo Vista Neighborhood Association

General Meeting, September 10, 2020

Present:

Michael Adjemian

Bertha Adjemian

Gracie Viramontes

Ruben Franco

Carlos Martinez (Commissioner Leon's representative)

Ben Fyffe (Director of Cultural Affairs and Recreation)

Dino

Sylvia Garcia

Santos Padilla

Yvonne & Rudy Macias

Virginia Abilez

Partick

Cassandra Hernandez (District 3 Representative)

Dianna Valenzuela

Elsa Chacon

Bettina Olivares (C. Hernandez assistant)

Armando & Ceci Renteria

Enrique & Quita Fierro

Vivian

John Perches

Mary Kirschenbaum

Michael Adjemian, President of the Cielo Vista Neighborhood Association, called the meeting to order at 6:00 and welcomed everyone to our second virtual video conference. He welcomed our primary guest speaker, Ben Fyffe, and shared the meeting agenda.

First guest speaker: **Ben Fyffe**, Director of Cultural Affairs and Recreation, City of El Paso

Thanked Michael Adjemian for the invitation to address the group. The Cielo Vista Neighborhood holds a special place in his memories since he used our library branch, then on Viscount, as a child.

He had a PowerPoint, Honoring and Remembering: August 3rd. Due to technical difficulties, the presentation will be emailed to Michael A. to share. Starting in November 2019, the city archived items from the temporary memorial that was located at the Walmart Bridge, and they are now part of a permanent display at the El Paso History Museum. Mr. Fyffe offered to set up a private tour of the exhibit for the CVNA once the COVID-19 precautions are lifted. The exhibition was featured in the Wall Street Journal. This year's city-sponsored memorial activities were held at Cleveland Square and virtually. Orange ribbons were provided for those visiting the temporary memorial at Ponder Park. The city has added the victims' names to the Crime Victims Memorial at Yucca Park (Yarbrough at Carolina).

Project 1: Cassandra Hernandez, District 3 City Representative, has asked the city to reconsider a permanent memorial to the victims of the August 3,

2019, Walmart tragedy. It was previously decided that there was no need for the city to construct a memorial since Walmart was building one on-site, and the county was creating something else at Ascarate Park. Since then, the community wishes have changed, and they are adamant in their desire for a permanent memorial at a site adjacent to the Walmart site. Many victims' families are not psychologically able to return to the physical location of the tragedy. In all probability, that will be Ponder Park.

The funding has been requested in the FY2021 budget. The funding stream, zeroing out a District 3 project using public arts funds and then using those same monies for a permanent memorial to be built within two years. The project would be presented to the Public Arts Commission in November, Museum and Cultural Affairs Department in December, and City Council in January. The artist would probably be local and/or Latino/Latina. It will be fully ADA compliant. The proposed criteria include being "human-scaled" to not interfere with the purpose and activities of Ponder Park. This does not call for a tax increase since funding would come from monies already set aside due to the 2006 ordinance creating Public Arts funding for new construction projects.

Dino suggested covering the ditch on the east side of Ponder Park to create angle-in parking on Sunmount.

Cassandra Hernandez thanked Mr. Fyffe for his buy-in.

Project 2: Flores del Desierto arts project on Airway (silver tubes with purple orbs) has won a People's Choice Award in a world-wide competition. One of the tubes was damaged as the result of a traffic accident and is being reconstructed.

Project 3: The I-10 decorative lights at Airway are being refabbed thru 3D-scanning. The lawyers are dealing with issues as well.

Project 4: The Splash Pads are being completed throughout the city. The one at the old Cohen Stadium site is down to the pinch list. The remaining

three are nearing completion. The challenge is to find the funding to open them. The City of El Paso faces a \$60 million shortfall.

Dino: El Paso used to be nay-sayers, now we have new Quality of Life projects

Ben Fyffe: We are moving forward as a community; we now invest in ourselves.

Guest Speaker #2: **Cassandra Hernandez**, District 3 City Representative

Item 1: The Resciance Center created after the August 3rd tragedy is run by the United Way. Its need is still critical. It has now begun to assist the families of COVID-19 victims with financial and other needs. Using money from the CARES Act; Project BRAVO and the El Paso Community Foundation offer \$1,000 prepaid gift cards to low-income individuals and families that can demonstrate need.

Item 2: The end of emergency directives is dependent on the City Score Card (EPStrong.org), showing that we are in Stage 4 and holding. We are currently in Stage 3.

I was knocked off-line from 6:46-6:50

The CVNA wish-list was addressed:

All of these projects are in progress, a plan has been put in place and connections have been made with city departments.

1. Repainting the Edgemere overpass just west of Airway: The scope of this project will require a contractor rather than the city itself doing the work. Ben Fyffe will look at the project to determine if a mural or designs can be incorporated.
2. The mural on the Geronimo retaining wall across from Bassett Place is included in the FY2021 budget.

3. Speed cushions for Meadowview: Mike has the application.
4. Darlina is on the approved list for speed cushions.
5. Hawkins medians near Viscount: request has been made for the final two medians to be landscaped.
6. Can CVNA adopt a median: No, due to liability issues, corporations can adopt medians but not associations. The city has increased the number of employees dedicated to maintaining medians.
7. Blue Dolphin Pool property: letters and emails have been sent to Mr. Neiman, the property owner, addressing every complaint. He has not responded to any of the communication attempts and does not legally have to.
8. Neighborhood Watch signs: will be replaced.
9. Multipurpose Center: Exterior painting and a new marquee will cost more than \$500,000. Can Community Block Grant funds be used? Mr. Fyffe will check to see if the facility is scheduled for painting by the city.
10. A dog Park for our area does not look feasible at this time. Perhaps one could be combined with another project to get better funding options. Private money that the city would have to accept is another possibility. The naming rights to the dog park could be sold to cover the cost of the park. Mary Kirschenbaum suggested Dean Travis of Pet's Barn is an Eastwood High School alumni. Gracie Viramontes said she would investigate PetSmart Corp., with whom she works.
11. GECU to use rocks and drought-resistant plants to address blight areas near Edgemere Linear Park.

The Yield sign is up at Nueces and Meadowview.

CVNA Business

Walmart Community Foundation – Santos states that the grants are for \$250,000 - \$500,000 and run February to December. You may apply 25

times. Elsa Chacon has experience with them and has been awarded one in the past.

Coffee with a Cop – Wednesday, October 7, 2020

Luby's Cafeteria on Hawkins at 9 AM

The Pebble Hills Regional Commander and Lieutenant will be present.

Minutes from the August 13th General Meeting were read online.

Elsa Chacon made a motion that they be accepted as read.

Santos Padilla seconded the motion.

The Treasurer's Report was made by Armando Renteria.

Ending Balance: \$2072.05

Expenditures: 2 gift certificates totalling \$60.00

Elsa Chacon moved that the report be accepted as read.

Mary Kirschenbaum seconded the motion.

The General Meeting on October 8th will be a candidate forum for District 3 City Representative.

Ballots will be mailed out on September 25th by the elections department.

Ballots should arrive in mailboxes September 28th – October 3rd.

Early voting begins October 13th.

Questions for gift certificates to neighborhood restaurants:

National Neighbor Day is in September on what day?

The 28th, Gracie Viramontes, \$30.00 to Track One

Michael Adjemian became Association president in?

2014, Santos Padilla, \$30.00 to Trattoria Bella Sera

Open Forum

The Crime Stoppers fund-raiser is ongoing. \$7.00 coupons good for one year for cheeseburger basket. John Perches, Vivian _____, and Sylvia Garcia have tickets. (John Perches)

Friends of the Cielo Vista Library: Thank you for your support. Children's' books, board books – young adult, are 50% off through September. (Mary Kirschenbaum)

Edgemere Linear Park – The city is working on getting the contractor, JAR, to complete the job. JAR is having projects already awarded to them pulled. Elsa Chacon expressed concern over the grass in the rock landscaped areas. The issue is being addressed. (Cassandra Hernandez)

Closing

Mike Adjemian:

low turnout tonight, but good dialogue

Officer Patrick _____ is back at work, behind a desk. He has until April to resume regular duties. Mike asked him to bring Cielo Vista crime stats to the November General Meeting. He agreed.

Gracie Viramontes is excited to be part of the meeting and thanked Cassandra Hernandez for her information.

Sylvia Garcia is glad to be back and is trying to become a member.

Dino is glad to be back.

Cassandra Hernandez is working with Ben Fyffe on a Halloween Parade. She is also trying to come up with some type of celebration. There are no answers yet on trick-or-treating. More details will be known closer to Halloween.

Motion to adjourn by Armando Renteria.

Motion seconded by Santos Padilla.