

Eastridge Neighborhood Plan Advisory Committee Meeting

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, February 23, 2021
Time: 5:30 – 6:45 P.M.
Location: Via Zoom

Committee	Timothy Ballejo	City of Amarillo:	Emily Koller
Attendees:	Michael Garman		Torie BenShushan
	Tommie T Knox Jr (left early)		Annemarie Rossato
	Russell Pennington	Potter County:	Commissioner Mercy
	Ryan Pennington		Murguia
	Tyler Trinh		
	Constable Georgia E.		

Agenda Items

- I. Welcome, Call to Order and Introductions.** Emily Koller, Economic Development and Neighborhood Revitalization Manager, City of Amarillo, welcomed everyone to the meeting and updated the committee of the potential of Neighborhood Oversight Committee members joining the meeting. Potter County Commissioner Mercy Murguia was in attendance and spoke to the advisory committee of the importance of leadership being in attendance to listen to the meetings and show their support as much as possible. She went over the main objectives for the evening which included: 1) updating the committee on survey distribution 2) reviewing SWOT, Neighborhood Profile/Existing Conditions Drafts, 3) Vision Statement Activity and 4) the next community outreach focus with Small Businesses and Economic Development.
- II. Neighborhood Survey Update.** Neighborhood Planners Torie BenShushan and Annemarie Rossato updated members on the survey distribution process. Annemarie is the staff member assigned to the Swahili, Somali, Burmese and Karen communities. Those surveys have been distributed successfully- they are currently in the process of being returned by March 5th. The Burmese surveys have yet to be distributed due to not having a distributor for that community. Torie is the staff member assigned to the Laos, Vietnamese, Chin and Spanish speaking communities in Eastridge. Both Laos and Vietnamese surveys have successfully been distributed but Torie mentioned we struggled finding a distributor for the Chin and Spanish speaking communities. Committee member Russ Pennington volunteered to help with the Spanish speaking community by distributing surveys during the Bethesda food line Wednesday mornings. Dr. Pennington suggested Ms. Baca to know some potential TA's that could help with the Burmese and Chin surveys via TA's. Tyler shared an update on the Vietnamese surveys. He has sent out 70 and has received about a dozen back at the moment. The question was asked about who will be translating the completed surveys once they are returned back to the City of Amarillo. At the moment, the group agreed paying for translation services for the surveys again would be the best solution.

- III. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Draft.** Emily Koller proceeded with reviewing the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Draft with the committee. She mentioned using the information gathered from the first meeting with the committee as well as an initial Eastridge meeting a year prior. Since this is a draft, she did make the committee aware that changes and suggestions are welcome as the drafting process continues.
- IV. Neighborhood Profile / Existing Conditions Draft.** After explaining the SWOT, Emily continued to explain the Neighborhood Profile and the focus areas in the neighborhood. She used the example of the San Jacinto neighborhood plan and explained how the drafting process works. Reviewing the existing conditions analysis allowed the committee members to see witness the different focus areas in the neighborhood from a different angle. The different focus areas included historic sites, zonings, sidewalks, community points of interest, current and future land uses and community analysis. The topic of the Evergreen Apartments was raised as an area of concern according to Constable Georgia Estrada. Ryan Pennington knows several people in those apartments as well as they are very low income apartments where many refugees are, fear reporting conditions of property. Committee members agreed that a future goal could be a better process for reporting the issues with living conditions and quality of life. Code violations were touched upon as well as transit accessibility, and crime. Torie gave a crime map explanation of the heat map. After going through all the initial data, Emily made a point to ask the committee for feedback as their assistance in helping build the drafts would be greatly appreciated.
- V. Vision Statement Activity.** Emily Koller created a survey with a list of statements of importance for committee members rank in order to get a good start of creating a vision statement. The hope is for the list of statements to trigger more thoughts and ideas to add to build to the vision statement. Committee member Tyler brought up the issue of slumlords and how it can be dealt with. Emily mentioned since there is no property maintenance code, so violations are only civil fines that are settled in court. The penalties are not great enough to make any change with slumlords and often penalize the tenant in the long run.
- VI. Next Community Outreach Focus: Small Business and Economic Development.** After reviewing the Vision Statement Activity, the next item on the agenda Emily brought to the table was the next community outreach focus which will be with the small businesses in Eastridge. Committee Member Dr. Ryan Pennington made the point of asking what types of businesses would the neighborhood needs and suggested asking businesses in the neighborhood what their talents, skills, etc are and then what is needed for people to start a business. Dr. Ryan offered to share his information gathered in late 2019 and 2020 for small business and economic development. He suggested meeting and having conversations with premier businesses in Eastridge for further help.
- VII. Next Meeting Date and Other Announcements.** The next meeting date will be on Tuesday, March 30th at 5:30 pm. This will give committee members time to review the Vision Statement Activity and the Neighborhood Profile that will be sent out in early March. This also gives staff members a month to work on survey answers and time to translate them all for a successful neighborhood survey update. Emily reviewed the agenda for next meeting which included reviewing survey summaries and small business/economic development feedback, confirming

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), confirming the neighborhood profile, reviewing the draft vision statement and have a discussion on focus areas and goals.

VIII. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 7:02 pm.