

**Southwestern Hills Neighborhood Association**

**General Meeting**

**April 21, 2011**

**Brody Middle School**

President George Davis with the following Board Members Present convened meeting at 6:30pm: George Davis, Steve Utterson, Keith Belling, Penny Harrison, Dennis Trollope, Josh Carmen.

Attendees registered their attendance. SWHNA Newsletters were distributed along with various documents furnished by the speakers.

The following guest speakers were introduced prior to their presentations:

Pat Kozitza, City Public Works Department  
Christine Hensley, City Council Woman  
St. Brian Vance, City Police Department  
Don Tripp, City Parks And Recreation Department

Christine Hensley's remarks included the following topics:

Grand Avenue Bridge Construction Project  
Fleur Drive Bridge Repair Project  
Storm Water Utility Fees  
Nuisances  
Legislative Impacts On Iowa Cities

The Grand Avenue Bridge construction will beginning April 2012. The Grand Ave. Bridge is located over Walnut Creek at 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and Grand Avenue.

The Fleur Drive Bridge construction-Repair will begin in May and will require the closing of regular Fleur Drive traffic for six or eight months. During that time posted detours will be announced. These will include Bell Avenue, SW 31<sup>st</sup> Street, George Flagg Drive. Temporary traffic control

devices will be added to facilitate traffic flow through these detour areas.

Public Nuisance caused by vacant and foreclosed properties will continue to receive a City response for improvement. Of concern, it appears, is the possible negative impact on the quality of neighborhoods.

Storm Water Utility Fee was discussed. It is a fact that every utility user pays this fee. The cost that is listed on the monthly utility bill is based upon the amount of non-pervious surfaces of the property. One (1) ERU is based upon 1,401-4,900sq ft. This is the fee that most property owners are assessed. The cost of upgrading the city sewers is 250 million dollars.

The legislative climate is to be a large factor in Iowa cities operating budgets. There are decreases in property values at a time of proposed decreases in assessments for commercial property to goals of possibly reducing by 40% these collections. Des Moines is faced with increased costs of ten million dollars for additional work on the flood levees. The total "hit" on the Des Moines city 600 million dollar budget is about 25-30 million dollars.

In answer to the budget problem the City Council has taken the following actions:

- \*Decreased the budget by 34 million dollars.
- \*Eliminated 131 employee positions
- \*Considering privatizations
- \*Addressing health care costs
- \*Refinanced debt savings 3 million dollars on bond debt interest
- \*No millage rate increase in five years
- \*Reviewing unfunded mandates

Sgt. Brian Vance of the Neighborhood Based Service Delivery Dept. of the Des Moines Police Department spoke concerning crime statistics in Zip Code 50321 (SWHNA Neighborhood) showing a quite favorable rate. He discussed the DMPD Disposal Of Medicines And Prescription Drugs program in which drugs can be dropped off or the Police Dept. will pick them up at your residence. Sgt. Vance and the Police Department also provides services with regard to neighborhood disturbances. Illegal signs in the neighborhood were discussed. Report illegal signs or simply

remove them. Call Sgt Vance at 515-205-2289 (Cell), 515-237-1570 (Office) email: [bwvance@dmgov.org](mailto:bwvance@dmgov.org).

Don Tripp of the Des Moines Parks and Recreation is very enthusiastic as to the response being received by the general public regarding the development of the amenities our park system. Which comprises 3,900 acres. To be brought up to date as to what is taking place in the Parks & Recreation system, search [www.dmparks.org](http://www.dmparks.org). A movie is to be held at Brody Park this summer. Bird watching is the fastest growing recreational activity worldwide. A rivers study comprising 30 counties and 40 municipalities is underway with the view to making the river corridors a national vacation attraction similar to mountains or beaches that other states are touting. Dr. Tom Rosburg of Drake University has a contract with the City to complete a natural resource inventory of the Des Moines City Park system. Recommendation concerning development and maintenance for major utilization will be forthcoming from this study. [www.dmparks.org](http://www.dmparks.org).

Pat Kozitza of the Des Moines Public Works Department spoke discussing sewer cleaning, street improvements, SCRUB Day, storm utility improvements, and street tree maintenance. A wealth of information was reviewed in these topics. For a complete review it is suggested that the following website be addressed: [www.dmgov.org/Departments/PublicWorks/Pages/](http://www.dmgov.org/Departments/PublicWorks/Pages/).

Comments:

Various questions and comments were presented by attendees and guest speakers.

Dennis Trollope  
Secretary  
April 21, 2011