

Dated 5-1-07:

Fellow HNP Block Captains;

This is a summary of our HNP neighborhood meeting that was held at the Walnut Ridge Baptist Church on April 19, 2007. We had 41 in attendance that had signed in. I had hoped that we would draw a stronger audience. The interesting thing is that we had most of our 35 streets represented --- even with the low attendance.

I started the meeting at 7:05 pm by summarizing the major events that have occurred with our HNP, since the last time that we had a general meeting in September 2005. After describing our HNP "model" and how the Block Captains operate, we asked the Block Captains to stand and be recognized by the audience for their efforts.

Councilmember Darryl Haynes was our first speaker. He responded to an audience question about the status of the completion of HWY360 to HWY287. He described the HWY360 project as the largest economic development issue facing the City. Efforts are underway to pursue the HWY360 project as a tollway that could be constructed in five years. (Attached is a Mansfield Mirror article that just came out on April 27th, regarding the status of the HWY360 tollway project.) Councilmember Haynes also spoke of a new personal initiative called the Neighborhood Economic Advisory Council. This would be a Council populated with citizen leaders within Mansfield that could utilize neighborhood communication process that is presently in place for HOA's and neighborhood associations to gain broad feedback on specific City projects, programs, and issues. He hopes to have this citizen-based Council in place by this Fall. The audience expressed concern about lighting at the intersection of Collins and Debbie Lane. Councilmember Haynes acknowledged the concern and stated that it is tough to get a neighboring City (Arlington) motivated to respond to complaints from another City. Formal correspondence from our Mayor/City Council to Arlington could be attempted to address the issue.

Pastor Greg Buckles gave a status of the transition of Walnut Ridge Baptist Church to his Mansfield Bible Church (MBC). The Walnut Ridge Baptist Church is expected to move into its new church at HWY360/Broad Street in August, which would make the Mansfield Bible Church the sole occupant and owner of this facility. He is anticipating an August 18th grand opening for the MBC. He expressed a strong desire to be a good neighbor and asset for this community. See the attached pdf file for a copy of his brochure that was passed out to the audience, which describes the MBC and its goals.

Pastor Buckles introduced Steven Newby, who is Headmaster of the Pantego Christian Academy. Headmaster Newby announced that he is working with the MBC on an agreement to bring pre-school (starting at 4 years old) through 2nd

grade kids to the MBC, which could total about 135 kids. The ultimate goal is to expand the initiative with the MBC to include kids up through 5th grade (perhaps by Fall 2008), but not beyond 5th grade. This could bring the total of Pantego Christian Academy kids at the MBC to about 300. The audience did not offer any concerns with this potential addition to the MBC. If an agreement is reached between the MBC and Pantego Christian Academy, it must take place by June such that things can be ready for the upcoming school year. Ultimately, the Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council would have to approve this.

Officer Nike Duckett, Community Resource Officer for the Mansfield Police Department, spoke on the importance of protecting our vehicles and keeping our garage doors closed. She summarized the Citizens Police Academy that is a once a week, fourteen-week program whereby citizens can experience and get training on police activities, process, and crimewatch. She also stated her appreciation for our HNP and shared a recent success story, whereby a burglar was apprehended with a lot of stolen property at his residence, which was located just west of Matlock. Officer Duckett sent us an e-mail that we distributed to our HNP Block Captains for distribution that summarized this happening and that those with missing property should contact her. Two HNP residents were able to match their recent losses with some of the stolen property and consequently filled out formal police reports to start the process of recovering their property. This would not have been possible without the HNP crimewatch network. She also summarized our crimewatch stats for the HNP and stated that our overall crime numbers are better than the norm city-wide.

Dr. Claude Cunningham, Associate Superintendent for the MISD, gave a current status of the MISD. The audience was very interested in the ongoing issue for desired transfers from Coble and Icenhower that would help relieve those two overcrowded schools (portables will be necessary), while allowing HNP kids to join with their aligned feeder schools for the MHS, which is now our high school starting this Fall. The MISD is not reworking the attendance zoning for Coble and Icenhower for two more years, when a new middle school and a new intermediate school will open by Fall 2009. Dr. Cunningham stated that we need to pay attention to the next attendance zone rework that will start in late 2008 to handle two new elementary schools scheduled to open in the Fall 2009 and another one by Fall 2010. This upcoming attendance zone rework could impact the present Martha Reid boundaries.

The audience had no new topics that were introduced for the last segment of this meeting. The HNP neighborhood meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Greg Ajemian
Heritage Neighborhood Partnership