



SOUTH TACOMA NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT SUPPLEMENT 2014

A Organization: The South Tacoma Neighborhood Council By-Laws authorize eleven (11) board members that represent the various neighborhoods in the council area based on population and two (2) at-large members. Census tract data was utilized to assure representation is properly apportioned.

B MEETINGS:

1) Meeting Schedules:

The South Tacoma Neighborhood Council held Board meetings at 7634 South Fife and General Membership meetings at the STAR Center – 3873 South 66th Street – during 2014. The South Tacoma Neighborhood Council will hold both General Membership and Board meetings at the STAR Center in the foreseeable future with the exception of the February and April Board meeting which will be held at the Manitou Community Center – 4806 South 66th Street – due to a lack of space at the STAR Center. The Board of Directors meet the first Thursday of each month and General Membership meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month. All meetings are scheduled to convene at 6:30 p.m. and adjourn at 8:30 p.m. or on completion of the agenda. All meetings of the South Tacoma Neighborhood Council are open to the public.

The Board of Directors sets the agenda for the general meetings. Agenda items range from items of general neighborhood interest to discussions on projects planned for our neighborhood by City departments and other agencies such as Metro Parks, Pierce Transit, etc. We also hold “Forums” for political candidates and discussions on “rate” proposals before the City Council. Our “planned” yearly meeting agendas are usually restricted to the “Innovative Grant” meeting, when funded, to hear proposals; our “Annual meeting”, in November, at which Board elections are held; and we hold “Cop’s Meetings” at every General Membership meeting. In addition, we dedicate a period during every General Meeting to hear reports from the various groups and agencies active in our neighborhoods, Board Members, and the general public. We encourage attendance at our annual meeting by providing free pizzas courtesy of our coffee fund donations.

2) **Topics Presented at Neighborhood Council Meetings:**

We advise the City Council on matters concerning the general health, safety, and welfare of our neighborhoods, by reflecting the needs and wants of our neighborhoods and residents. We held monthly general membership meetings in 2014 to discuss items of interest, including the following:

SERA (South End Recreation Area Athletic Complex), **Kristi Evans**

PIERCE COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE, **Mark Lindquist**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, **Ricardo Noguera**

METRO PARKS BOND ISSUE, **Nancy Johnson**

NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, **Tansy Hayward**

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, **Michael Slevin**

SUMMER LEARNING, **Bojie Mageo**

56TH STREET CORRIDOR, **Tina Dunn** and **Tom Rutherford**

HISTORIC FLUME LINE TRAIL, **Dana Brown**

HOMELESS IN TACOMA; **Colin DeForrest**

SOUTH TACOMA CORRIDOR; **Said Seddiki**

PUBLIC SCHOOL SAFETY; **Miguel Villahermosa**

COMP PLAN UPDATES; **Elliott Barnett**

TACOMA MALL PLAN; **Elliott Barnett**

SERA FIELD MASTER PLAN; **Kristi Evans**

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES RATE PLAN; **Michael Slevin**

TACOMA POWER AND WATER RATE SETTING; **Sean Senescall** and **Pat McCarty**

WAPATO HILLS REPORT; **Andy Mordhorst**

MONTHLY COPS MEETINGS; **John Warczak**

CANDIDATES' FORUM INCLUDING CITY COUNCIL, PORT COMMISSION, AND SCHOOL BOARD

ANNUAL MEETING & ELECTIONS

THANKSGIVING AND CHRISTMAS FOOD DRIVES

C ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

1) Recruitment –

The South Tacoma Neighborhood Council prepares and issues a monthly newsletter to publicize our activities and encourage neighbors to participate. The newsletter is mailed to over 250 households and delivered to 30 plus offices by interoffice mail. The newsletter is also emailed to over 270 members, including Safe Streets, to publicize the South Tacoma Neighborhood Council and encourage them to take an active role in the Neighborhood Council. We also have representatives of Safe Streets at our General Meetings to provide reports of their activities to our membership and to take back information about our organization to their members.

The monthly newsletter includes articles advertising vacancies on the Board and encourages individuals to apply for appointment to the Board of Directors.

In 2014 the South Tacoma Neighborhood Council developed a brochure describing the Neighborhood Council program and the South Tacoma Neighborhood Council. Pennie Smith and Venus Dergan canvassed all the businesses on South Tacoma Way from South 66th Street to M Street discussing the program and leaving copies of the brochures with them to be available to their customers.

Individual Directors contact individuals in their circle of friends, business associates, and members of their volunteer groups that they consider would be active Board members.

The Standards and Guidelines also indicate assistance in this activity will be provided.

2) Innovative Grants – When Innovative Grants are available, our Neighborhood Council actively publicized the Innovative Grant program in our monthly newsletter and provided notice – and electronic copies – of the Innovative Grant application via our growing membership email database. We also provided copies of our newsletter advertising the Innovative Grant program at the reading kiosk located in the STAR Community Center and the information table in common area. We actively worked on the 2012 and previous year Innovative Grants for:

- a)** Beautification of Traffic Circles to encourage individuals and/or groups to adopt traffic circles as part of Tacoma's "Adopt a Spot Program" by providing funding for plants and landscape materials for the initial planting and to replant in case of vehicular damage, vandalism, or damage due to weather extremes.
- b)** South 66th Street Median Beautification to upgrade the landscaping in the median adjacent to the Sound Transit trestle on South 66th

Street to complement the trestle's murals and ceramic art. We are using a portion of the Traffic Circle Innovative Grant to plant masses of native plants to add to the beauty of this entryway into Manitou.

- c) Street tree projects. Board Member Chris Beale coordinated with the City Forester to use Innovative Grant funds to procure trees for planting along Tacoma Mall Boulevard from the I5 on ramps to 78th, 58th and Fife Street, and the 66th Street trestle area in 2015.
 - d) Wapato Hills Entrance Improvements to add signage, bollards, and fencing to make the area look inviting, approachable and available for use by the community. This significantly improved the entrances to the open space area and reduced the appearance of blight. The use of bollards and fencing will provide protection against inappropriate vehicular use. Signage will be utilized to be both inviting and educational
 - e) Lighting South Tacoma Way Medians to provide power to the median between South 52nd and South 54th and the median between South 54th and South 56th Streets died an untimely death due to lack of funding. This project would have meant a great deal to south Tacoma residents by providing the ability to light the medians with holiday lighting and providing power for other projects such as a town clock or reader board to advertise neighborhood events.
 - f) Oak Tree Park Tot Lot at South 74th Street and South Cedar Street received its updated ADA compliant play apparatus. The tot lot is adjacent to the Water Flume Line Trail and will see increased usage now that the trail pedestrian crosswalk at South 74th and Cedar is finished.
- 3) We continued our annual holiday support for two food banks in South Tacoma. We also contributed to the Humane Society's Senior Pet Food Pantry that provides pet food and allows seniors to keep their "companion" and "service" pets. This included cash donations to each food bank in addition to members making cash and food donations at both our November and December meetings. We also encouraged donations by publicizing the food collections in our monthly newsletter and through our email news service database.
- 4) We partnered with **Mike** and **Jeanette** Brown, owners of South Tacoma's **Domino's Pizza**, to support our local food banks by encouraging food drives in our local elementary schools. We have since modified the program to include all community service type projects accomplished by students and added South Tacoma's middle and high schools to the program. The program includes both public and private schools. Each school now has the opportunity to award two pizza parties to the classes accomplishing

community service projects. **This holiday season we awarded over 120 pizzas and included soft drinks.**

We consider a child's involvement in a community service project as a learning experience and a way to demonstrate to the child that they can make a difference in their community. This makes the project a proverbial "win – win" for all concerned and proves again that people really do care for others. Each time we include more people in the process the win is even greater.

- 5) We continued to support the Habitat Stewards **Carol Munsey, Andy Mordhorst, and Loren Korff** on Wapato Hills. We worked with the Habitat Stewards and volunteers to build split-rail fencing at the entryways into Wapato Hills. **Karen Wild, John Miles** and Arlington Board Member **Pennie Smith** and Edison Board Member **Andy Mordhorst**, continue to organize weekly hikes on the trails to exhibit public ownership of the Urban Wildlife Area, to the transients on the hill.
- 6) The flags flying at Wapato Hills Neighborhood Park were initially funded by an Innovative Grant in 2007 and were installed and maintained by the Public Works Department. Our Neighborhood Council has since taken over this responsibility. Our Wapato Hills Hiking enthusiasts; **Pennie Smith, Andy Mordhorst, Kay** and **John Miles Karen Wild, and Doris and Joe Leister** raise the flags in the spring, replace worn or stolen flags, and retire the flags in the fall for protection from harsh winter weather. It is a great source of pride to see the flags flying at the park during the summer months. This year we ran a contest in our local schools to design new flags to display at the park. Each school submitted a winning flag design to our Membership Committee. The committee organized volunteers to construct a flag incorporating that design. The flags fly from a pole mounted on the street lights adjacent to the park. We had a flag raising ceremony at the park and invited the students.
- 7) We supported the Oak Tree Park Restoration Project This project is under the direction of Habitat Stewards **Albert Styers, Cinda Burkhout, and Philip Lord** working under the auspices of Metro Parks. The project concentrates on removing invasive species and open space improvements. In the process they also remove homeless encampments. This discourages the homeless from returning to the park and reduces the negative impact of their illegal activities on the park and people utilizing the park open space. Board Member **Pennie Smith** coordinates our Neighborhood Council support of the project and has been a staunch supporter and a regular worker at these monthly cleanup activities.
- 8) We supported local neighborhood organizations in our Neighborhood Council area. We provided them much needed small funding of their activities when requested, appropriate and cost effective. It is important that activities such as work parties and celebratory events include breaks for coffee or soda

since these breaks provide an opportunity for neighbors to introduce themselves and get to know one another. This brings people together, builds friendships, and knits together the fabric of a neighborhood. We also advertise events in our monthly newsletter and our email news service. Our cash donations supplement donations from local establishments thru arrangements with our Community Oriented Police contingent (CLOs) and our own requests.

- 9) Neighborhood Council representation in the infrastructure planning process is extremely important to assure the concerns and wishes of the local neighbors are considered. This is the basis of our inviting agency planning groups to bring their projects to our General Meetings for discussion. This actually speeds up the planning process by generating a sense of partnership and incorporating neighborhood concerns at an early stage in the planning process. Making late changes is always complicated by the costs of the duplicate efforts involved and the difficulty of making changes after the “pride of authorship” effect has taken place.
- 10) CLO **John Warczak** hosts a “Cop’s meeting” at each of our general membership meetings. This provides our neighbors with a platform for voicing concerns and our police officers always welcome the information and work to resolve the reported problems. Also it always helps to air problems and concerns and to brainstorm solutions. Our CLOs make every effort to make Community Policing a teamwork effort and IT WORKS!
- 11) Graffiti is a huge problem in our area as well as throughout the city. Graffiti affects how citizens perceive their neighborhood and their city. It influences the opinion of visitors and tourists have of Tacoma and thus adversely impacts economic development. Recognizing these impacts and the importance of removing graffiti as soon as possible to discourage taggers, Board Members **Venus Dergan**, **Pennie Smith**, and **Heidi White** are three Board Members that have been especially vigilant and on top of removal of the graffiti they can reach. They report the graffiti to our CLO’s and Code Enforcement Officer **Ken Ketter** as part of the process to aid in identification and apprehension of the responsible individuals.
- 12) Training – In addition to several board members taking grant writing training provided by Evergreen College, several also took advantage of diversity training provided locally. We also provided one board member with funds to pay for his NUSA registration.
- 13) Sound Transit’s 66th Street trestle has been particularly hard hit with graffiti and graffiti along the rail line affects Sound Transit passenger’s perception of South Tacoma. Sound Transit completion of the trestle art work should reduce the amount of graffiti on the trestle. This is an entryway into the Manitou area and **Chris Beale**, **Venus Dergan** and **Heidi White** are taking advantage of Innovative Grant funds to plant masses of native plants in the

median and the area around the railroad trestle to make the trestle's murals and ceramic art a centerpiece'

14) There are many traffic circles in our Neighborhood Council area that have fallen on hard times as the people who once maintained them have given up. Board Member **Pennie Smith** revitalized a number of these traffic circles last year and received many compliments from spectators on her efforts and the comments that they wished traffic circles in their neighborhood were as attractive. Our Neighborhood Council has provided an Innovative Grant to encourage people to officially adopt a traffic circle. The remainder of the grant will be used to purchase of plants for planting in 2015 in both traffic circles and the 66th Street trestle area.

15) Board Member **Andy Mordhorst** directs our community garden effort at the Manitou Community Center. **Andy's** program provided over a thousand pounds of fresh produce to the local food bank, benefiting many in our community. In addition, **Andy** worked with the South Tacoma Farmer's Market to glean over twenty-five hundred pounds of fresh produce left over when the market closed each week. The farmers contributed the fresh produce to the local food banks rather than haul it back to the farm and possibly see it go to waste.

Our Council is also supporting efforts to extend the Community Garden program to a site on Wapato Hills and also a site on 70th and Puget Sound. These would be sites encouraging individuals to raise vegetables for their own consumption of to contribute to local food banks.

16) Our Neighborhood Council supported changes to Tacoma's animal control ordinance to assure animal rights. Board members **Venus Dergan** and **Heidi White's** tireless efforts and their testimony at City Council meetings led to significant changes to the City ordinance to provide protections for pets. The City still needs to further strengthen the animal control ordinance.

17) We strived to build our membership:

a) Our membership committee set up a booth and a 2' x 8' banner sign at the South Tacoma Farmers market once a month. We utilized the opportunity to explain the Neighborhood Council program to the public and to handout publicity materials. We utilized our newsletter as a handout to introduce people to our South Tacoma Neighborhood Council and to provide them with contact points for our Board Members and our Sector's Community Liaison Officers (CLOs).

b) Our membership committee also had a booth at the Better Business Bureau's Shred Event held at Tacoma Mall last Fall. We shared information about all Neighborhood Council's meeting times and places.

c) We also encourage people to sign up for our Neighborhood Council newsletter and email news service. While this hasn't added appreciably

to our General Membership Meeting attendance, we recognize that many families are too busy in today's busy environment to attend more meetings but like to keep up with events.

- d) **Venus Dergan** and **Pennie Smith** went door to door to every business along South Tacoma Way from South 66th Street to South M Street, including all of Nalley Valley, to introduce business people to the Neighborhood Council Program. They provided copies of our newsletter and a special brochure we developed to explaining the Neighborhood Council Program and the South Tacoma Neighborhood Council. They also provided businesses with copies of the brochure to place on their counter for customers that might be interested in our program and attending meetings.
- e) We partnered with a local grocery store to install a glassed-in community bulletin board on the exterior wall of their store for community notices. We place our newsletter and our meeting schedule on the bulletin board as well as notices of upcoming events..

D Evaluation and Recommendations for Program Improvement – The following recommendations would result in improvements in Tacoma's Neighborhood Council program and in Tacoma's neighborhoods:

Volunteer Training –

- a) Develop leadership and communication skill training classes.
- b) Develop a series of training classes tailored to be given at neighborhood council general meetings. Each class would provide the highlights of the subject with a handout that would provide a more in-depth understanding. Some recommended subjects are:
 - (1) City government organization - Functions, Assignments, And Responsibilities (FAR). A basic orientation training course on the makeup of Tacoma's city government.
 - (2) The basis of the powers of the City of Tacoma in law. This would include the restrictions on those powers encompassed in both federal and state laws.
 - (3) The budget process.
 - (4) City of Tacoma Codes that affect neighborhoods. How the code impacts the individual and property rights of residents and businesses. Define, in common words, and impact, the meaning of legalistic and unfamiliar terms used in codes such as those in the land use code.
 - (5) Dispute Resolution with the emphasis on the individual and how they can both prevent and resolve disputes in everyday life.