

# MIRAMONTE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Board Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, January 10, 2024  
Ward 6 office, 3202 East 1<sup>st</sup> Street

Ellen Wheeler, President, called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

**MNA Board members present:** Ellen Wheeler, Sam Behrend, Linda Dobbyn, Ann Baldwin, , Ann-Marie Laurian, Jan Howard, Richard Webster, Theresa Webster, Morris Palter, Betsy Lubis, Ravi Bewtra,  
**absent:** William Kuitert, Brenda Kazen

**Guests:** Approximately 7 additional Miramonte neighbors; Tucson Housing and Community Development representatives: Ernesto Portillo, Public Information Officer, Rachel Hutchison, Public Information Specialist, Andrew Min, Public Housing Administrator, and Sonia Valenzuela, Residential Property Manager; Steve Kozachick and Dora Maldonado, representing the Ward 6 office; Nicholas McCullough from the Pima County Board of Supervisors District 5 office

## **Affordable housing complex – 626 N Dodge**

- Ernesto Portillo, Tucson Housing Community Development Public Communications Officer presented information regarding the recent renovation of this complex into 28 studio apartments providing clean, safe housing for residents.
- Originally built in 1978, the City has owned them for approximately 15 years. The project is in response to Mayor and council's charge to increase affordable housing and invigorate housing stock.

There was a Q&A covering a variety of topics and potential concerns about the property, most related to ensuring law abiding tenants and consistent property upkeep and maintenance. City representatives made the following assurances:

- This is an affordable housing program, owned and managed by the City, and operating under existing landlord/tenant laws and regulations. If tenants are in violation, they are held accountable.
- While the program does not allow for an on-site manager, the City holds residents accountable through 6-month and annual inspections. Pest control services are administered monthly.
- This project isn't low income housing; it's an affordable housing program. Rents are lower so folks can afford it, but the majority of tenants are employed or have income sources such as social security, etc.
- The City operates like any landlord – evictions can occur for criminal activity; not paying rent; not paying utilities, etc. Keep in mind, eviction laws are mandated by the state.
- Most of the complaints registered for other City-owned affordable properties are typical of any multi-family property--loud neighbors, barking dogs, etc.
- The city conducts background checks on all renters. Criminal activity, previous convictions, aggravated assault are all cause for rejection.
- The City also requires damage deposits, much like a landlord.

There will be an open house on Friday, January 19, and the public is invited to see the work being done. Tenants are expected to move-in by end of February. They will sign 1-year leases.

Any problems or concerns can be directed to Property Manager Sonia Valenzuela, [sonia.valenzuela@tucsonaz.gov](mailto:sonia.valenzuela@tucsonaz.gov). City representatives will also be back in April/May to check-in with the Board and get community feedback.

**Ward 6 Update (read about more Ward 6 topics in [Steve's weekly newsletters](#)).**

- Contract has been selected for utility work (water lines, etc.) along 5<sup>th</sup> Street in preparation for sidewalks and paving, with projected completion in Summer 2025.

**5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Street Lighting/Pedestrian Improvements**

- Steve noted that 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> street will never be shut down; that there will always be vehicle access along the route.
- Multiple neighborhoods have all requested different alterations to the lighting plan—and many of the requests are conflicting, (e.g., brighter lighting, no lighting, keep current lights (historic lampposts), etc. The Bond Oversight Commission will review the results of the recently completed citizen survey and entertain (the various options). Whatever the improvements, safety is the paramount consideration, and the lighting plan must be the same/consistent along the entire length of the street, Steve said.
- El Encanto has submitted a 47-signature petition saying they want either historic lights or no lights, which includes residents of 13 houses on the Miramonte side of 5<sup>th</sup> Street also signed the petition.
- Miramonte/5<sup>th</sup> Street resident, Jonathan Homan joined the meeting on behalf of Miramonte residents who would be directly affected by the lighting. 35' tall arc lights are the ones proposed. Residents along 5<sup>th</sup> want to understand the purpose of the 35' lights—and whether lower, pedestrian scale would make more sense. Pedestrian scale lights would enable drivers to see pedestrians better and would likely be less expensive. Jonathan is hoping that the Board would take some type of position in encouraging the Bond Oversight Committee to consider pedestrian scale lights, not the 35' lights.
- After additional discussion, Sam made a motion that MNA support adjacent neighborhoods in asking the City to consider all available lighting options, and in consideration of safety. Linda seconded. The motion carried with 8 voting in favor and none opposed.
- There will be a Bond Oversight Committee meeting on January 29<sup>th</sup> for those who wish to attend. The meeting will be at 5:30 p.m. in the Mesquite Room at the Parks and Recreation Building at 900 S. Alvernon Way.

**Proposed Neighborhood Signage at Chicanes**

- Neighbor Ruth Beeker is leading an initiative to place “Miramonte” branded signs at the north/south ends of Camino Miramonte.
- Ruth presented a concept drawing for 2' x 4' metal signage mounted on a 5' tall frame. The sign and frame will echo the design and materials used in the public art at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Camino Miramonte, and will be consistent with the font, colors used for the Miramonte street signage at the corners.
- The north end location is planned to be on the west side of Miramonte between 2<sup>nd</sup> and Hawthorne; the south end location will be on the west side of Miramonte just north of Terra Alta Blvd. The signs will be incorporated into the first chicanes a driver/pedestrian would come to as they enter the neighborhood on Camino Miramonte.

- Ruth requested the Board’s support for the plan and its consent to submit the plans to the City for approval and work with the City’s appointed consulting group to coordinate placement/installation. Note, there is no installation expense to the neighborhood or city. Ruth is donating the signage.
- The Board is in full support of Ruth’s endeavors and thanked her for her dedication to our community.

**Other Updates:**

**Billboard removal**

- As a result of the Mister Carwash upgrade (Speedway/Country Club location), the billboard was removed. MNA had written a letter of support in alliance with Sam Hughes Neighborhood Association to remove the billboard.

**Treasurer’s Report**

- Ann reported a beginning balance of \$6,154.33 in the account, with no deposits or expenses. The ending balance, as of January 10, 2024, remains \$6,154.33

**Upcoming Annual Meeting**

- The MNA annual meeting will be held on April 27, 2024 from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. at the Ward 6 office. Additional information and agenda to be announced.

**Spring newsletter**

- Plans for the MNA Spring newsletter are underway. Ellen, Jan, and Theresa will coordinate, along with Stephanie van Latum’s help.

**Old Pueblo Community Services (OPCS), individual parking plan waiver (3701 E. Third St. )**

- no additional information. Proposal has been submitted to the City; city has asked them to resubmit for some technical reason. Hope to invite them to the meeting to talk about the plan and answer any Board questions

**Miramonte Pocket Park and Upcoming Park Events**

- The next Miramonte Meet-Up is scheduled for January 28, 4:00 – 5:30 p.m. The next Kid’s Playtime at the Park will be on Saturday afternoon, February 3, from 3:00-4:30 p.m.
- Volunteers and donors (time, talent, food, drink, or funds) are always needed and welcome.

**Larsen Baker Updates**

- Rancho Center is close to signing a lease for a new sit-down restaurant (name is yet to be disclosed) in the space adjacent to Whole Foods (where the Halloween store was).
- Potential DoorDash tenant – currently on hold
- Larsen Baker has offered \$2,500 towards plants for the chicanes project

**Board of Supervisors – Adelita Grijalva, District 5**

Adelita Grijalva and District 5 are launching a kid’s K-8 art contest themed, “Why do you love D5?” Participants must live in supervisor District 5, which includes the Miramonte neighborhood. There will

be prizes for 10 winners and 5 runners-up. Visit [www.adelitasgrijalva.com/art-contest](http://www.adelitasgrijalva.com/art-contest) for more information.

There being no further business, Ellen adjourned the meeting at 7:11 p.m.

***The February MNA Board meeting is set for 6 p.m., Wednesday, February 14 at the Ward 6 office, 3202 E. First St. The meeting will also be available via Zoom.***