# **Restore Rundberg Community Meeting**

The Settlement Home

1607 Colony Creek Dr

September 24, 2015

7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

***Call to order: 7:07pm***

**In Attendance**

Team Members & Designees: Ming Chu, Monica Guzmán, Roberto Perez, Linda Powers, Aida Cerda-Prazak, Jo Kathryn Quinn, Rick Randall, Cary Roberts, Erica Saenz, Ann Teich, Randy Teich, Abel Soto Lopez

APD: Baker, Ballesteros, Bazzle, Kianes, Leverenz, McClure, Soliz, White

Denisse Plotycia

City: Nancy Chan

UT: Hernandez, Springer

**New Business**

* Neighborhood Enhancement Team (NET) Update (10 min)
* Youth Empowerment Program Update,

presentation by Farzad Mashhood and Safaa Hansen (15 min)

* City of Austin SWIM 512,

presentation by Dr. Laura Cortez and Wayne Simmons (15 min)

* University of Texas Summer Project Update (15 min)
* Council on At-Risk Youth and R.E.A.D. Updates (10 min)
* Community Engagement (10 min)
  + HopeFest 2015
  + Rundberg Rockstars

Revitalization Team member Ann Teich will coordinate Restore Rundberg presence at **HopeFest 2015** on October 17. She requests a banner showing Restore Rundberg logo. We can print at City Hall indicates APD Grants Manager Kyran. We need two people per shift and at least one Spanish speaker estimates Revitalization Team member Monica Guzmán. Ann Teich indicates she will bring healthy snacks. The 2015 edition is the 10th anniversary of the event, reminds Revitalization Team chair Erica Saenz.

City consultant Laura Cortez explains that, as part of **Swim 512**, she is the person that gets to hear what the community has to say about this project relative to a list of city pools in critical need of repairs. Seven facilities in a critical situation were identified. “After a strong community response to this study, City Council realized that there was a need for more community engagement,” explains Dr. Cortez. A survey at the pools was conducted. The City is looking for about 150 residents of Austin to participate in more intimate conversation on City swimming pools as part of focus groups during the month of October, and also individuals to facilitate those groups. Bilingual pamphlets in English and Spanish are available. “Following the needs assessment and community engagement phases, the City will hire consultants to develop master plans for each of the schools,” concludes Laura Cortez.

City Code Department Process Consultant Nancy Chan presents the **Neighborhood Enhancing Team (NET)** program. “It affects many City Departments because it wants to fight crime, blight, etc. and make sure solutions are sustainable. “A property condition index survey or windshield survey in the Georgian Acres area and a small area of the North Lamar planning area, as well as a cleanup on Brownie Drive, were conducted this month of September and we’re about to start phase 2 [that’s to say: move to the second half of Georgian Acres] in November,” announced Nancy Chan, currently putting together a report of how phase 1 went.

Question on City Departments involved. Economic Development is one, says Nancy Chan, who also wants to work with Austin Recovery on the dumpster program.

Question on the results of the blight survey. They will be available within 30 days, says Nancy Chan.

Revitalization Team vice-chair Roberto Perez introduces **Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment program** coordinators Farzad Mashhood and Safaa Hansen who attended a Restore Rundberg community meeting in the past, but wanted to give the group an update.

Presentation of the Junior Youth Empowerment program:

Aimed to mostly with youth aged 8-12, hence the appellation junior youth. Mentoring by young people aged 17 to 30, “best suited for mentoring younger young persons,” according to the presenters.

The program aims to develop:

• Powers of Expression: learning to communicate effectively through language and the arts

• Spiritual Perception: heightened consciousness of the world around us and our place in it

• Moral Structure: a framework for evaluating situations and making constructive decisions

Program inspired by Bahá’í faith but not religious, aimed at studying principles of that religion, for example lots of conversation to attain equality between men and women.

Components of the program are:

• Arts: a mode of expression that serves to synthesize learning and encourage creativity

• Sports: engaging the latent energy that junior youth have

• Study: enrichment in reading, writing, math and science

• Service projects: connecting knowledge and skills to action meant to improve the community

Program started in the Rundberg area with outreach at Lanier High School. Nine groups were formed in July and August. They are currently being sustained and benefit about 90 participants. At this time, the Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment program is looking to begin a new training group extending through the fall in order to form groups in the winter.

The objectives of the **University of Texas Social Work students’ summer project** were to identify multi-family properties in need of rehabilitation. A matrix combining property and owner information, code violations, Census data (such as median income) and criminal activity data was created in collaboration with the Restore Rundberg Housing Affordability workgroup, explained students Jessica Barszczak and Jennifer Ballow. “Among all resources used, Travis County Appraisal District information was probably the most useful,” said the two students representing the group of six that worked over the summer. A total of 39 properties were identified in the perimeter defined for the project: 8 on Colony Creek, 11 on Galewood Drive, 18 on Brownie Drive, and 2 on Diamondback Trail. 27 property owners were identified. 36 of the 39 properties have an open code violation case, and 26 properties had a prior history of code violations in the past 3 years (see attached table). “It was a lot harder to find contact information for the property owners that we thought,” said the students, when listing the challenges they encountered, like breaking down crime and median income data at the local level, or identifying residents enrolled in the Austin Energy Customer Assistance Program. But the group could rely on Restore Rundberg community meetings for feedback and help, as well as City of Austin Code compliance officers. They feel like their work promotes continued advocacy and community engagement, underlines the importance of involving community members in housing restoration projects and being culturally sensitive when working within the community. “None of us was familiar with it, and we didn’t realize how diverse it was until we walked with Code compliance officers from area to area,” said the students.

Question on techniques for tracking down owners. Reversed phone directory enable to find contacts for management companies, but a lot of them are located in California.

**Rundberg Educational Advancement District update** by officer Ray Kianes.

Region 2 Edward 1 District Representative announced the launch of the READ website READ-EDU.org, where the public can learn about the initiative launched last year, about Rundberg’s youth, the READ structure in three Beautification, Communications and Youth resources committees, keep up with the latest news from the READ schools (Barrington and Guerrero-Thompson ES, IDEA Rundberg, Harmony Science Academy and Dobie MS so far) and the READ initiative, sign up for email updates, follow the link to the READ Facebook page, Facebook.com/RundbergEducationalAdvancementDistrict, and follow the link to READ partner Launchpad (Dobie MS main afterschool program) in order to make a tax-deductible donation to READ that would go to the T-shirts project.

READ is currently fundraising in order to get READ T-shirts to the 4,500 students in the District. The T-shirts would help build community spirit among our youth and send a powerful message about what Rundberg is about. Everyone is encouraged to support the project by promoting and/or donating.

The T-shirts will be used at events like Dobie beautification day on September 12th, when hundreds of volunteers gathered on campus grounds to renovate the building, clean up the campus, plant trees and install new features, including a pergola and limestone blocks.

**Council on At-Risk Youth (CARY) update** by Deputy Executive Director Shana Fox.

This organization “focused on juvenile crime prevention is honored to partner with APD on Restore Rundberg”, said the nonprofit executive. “We work with 100 students at Lanier High School, 25 at Hart Elementary School, 25 at Barrington Elementay School and 75 at Dobie. They are students identified as having aggressive behaviors, who were found in possession of drugs, involved in a gang… We focus on character education and empathy, working with families to really turn around behaviors and close the pipeline to prison. We are honored to be deepening our work in the community.”

Restore Rundberg Revitalization Team member Ann Teich thanked her church (First United Methodist) for the **Wooldridge cleanup** and informed that the group was considering Lanier’s request for next year.

Restore Rundberg Revitalization Team co-chair Roberto Perez announced the upcoming events:

* September 26, 2015 (10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.)

Lanier High School Homecoming parade and Fall Festival

* October 17, 2015 (09:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.)

HopeFest at Reagan High School

* October 30, 2015

Dobie Middle School Fall Festival (5 p.m. – 8 p.m.)

No public comment.

***Adjourn at 8:12pm***

**Next Meeting**

Restore Rundberg Revitalization Team (6:30 – 7:00 p.m.)

and Community (7:00 – 8:30 p.m.) Meetings

October 22, 2015

Restore Rundberg Revitalization Team (6:30 – 7:00 p.m.)

and Community (7:00 – 8:30 p.m.) Meetings

Settlement Home

1607 Colony Creek Drive

