

Westbury Civic Club Meeting Minutes

Westbury Baptist Church

February 21, 2024

Board Members attending: C. Chapman, R. Cowley, B. Edmondson, J. Edmondson, M. Funk, J. Hansen, M. Hartman, A. Hirshman, A. Jefferson, B. Pate, and S. Rosales

* Public Safety – Sgt. Derkowsky from Constable Precinct 5 discussed February crime stats. They had a team working speeding in Westbury and, in a 2-hour period, stopped about 40 cars going at least 50 mph (more than 15 mph over the speed limit).

* Updates from representatives from: Harris County Commissioner Precinct 4(Briones), City At-Large 4(Plummer), District K (Castex-Tatum). Candidates for: Tax-Assessor Jerry Davis, Texas Senate Todd Litton, and Judge Civil Court 165 Jill Yazuzi.

* Traffic Study was presented by Houston Public Works regarding safety concerns and request by WCC for a traffic signal at West Bellfort at Burdine. A spirited discussion ensued. See below for summary.

* WCC Board meeting minutes from November 2023 and January 2024 were APPROVED per motion by MH/JE. Treasurer Report and Office Updates were provided. Board workshop training is upcoming.

* Motion by BE/MH was APPROVED to support a grant request by WAIC/ Westbury Super Neighborhood for public art in Westbury (two mini-murals painted on traffic signal control boxes proposed – new one near library on Chimney Rock and repaint an existing one at West Bellfort/ Willowbend).

* Infrastructure updates – pending demolition of Spring Village Apt on Chimney Rock for greenspace/ detention. New excess stormwater overflows installed along Willow Waterhole Bayou on 8 lots owned by city.

* Community updates – Friends of WHS scholarship fundraiser

City Traffic Study of West Bellfort at Burdine

The City of Houston performed a traffic study on W. Bellfort from Chimney Rock to Hillcroft with a focus on the intersection of Burdine. The Westbury Civic Club requested a traffic light on W. Bellfort at Burdine with a dedicated left turn signal onto Burdine. Mayor Pro-Tem and District K Council Member Martha Castex-Tatum reached out to the city on our behalf to ask them to conduct a study. City of Houston Public Works attended the February 2024 WCC board meeting and presented their findings and recommendations, as discussed below.

The city study did not agree with putting a traffic light at this intersection. Surprisingly, their proposal was to block the median completely at Burdine, not allowing any turns onto Burdine from the westbound side of W. Bellfort nor allow traffic to turn left on to W. Bellfort from Burdine.

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The Study instead proposed to:

- * Funnel traffic that would normally go down the short, wider commercial street of Burdine to travel down the nearby narrower residential street of Atwell.
- * Force drivers who wanted to turn across the intersection at Burdine to instead travel further either east or west on West Bellfort, and then do U-turns.

The community response was: The City did NOT take the Westbury Fire Department usage into consideration with this proposal. The fire department uses this route to get to West Bellfort and to Hillcroft. Closing the Burdine median would increase response times for emergencies. Requiring drivers to make these U-turns on West Bellfort would not improve safety, and routing traffic along a narrow residential street of Atwell instead of using the existing wider commercial street of Burdine does not support community street safety.

Additionally, the City Study proposed updating the existing crosswalks on W. Bellfort and adding new signage. The community response was: Updating the crosswalks is good idea, however, the proposal by the City lacked actual knowledge of our area and usage. The City did NOT track or account for the number of WHS students that cross W. Bellfort and where they actually cross. The City did NOT run usage numbers for the bus stops or track the number of pedestrians crossing W. Bellfort at each location. Because the City did not study our pedestrian use, the recommendations do not accurately reflect what is needed and where it is needed to be. For example, the City proposed big HAWK crosswalk (stops traffic with red light when button pushed to walk) at a location with very low usage versus at Burdine where more people cross (. Another example is the City proposed moving one crosswalk to the opposite side of median but community noted the reason many pedestrians cross on the alternate side is for safety, road visibility due to road curvature, and most direct route to bus stop.

Meeting Minutes prepared by: J. Edmondson and C. Chapman