

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Ted Trakas

Let's see what happened with two items mentioned in the last newsletter.

VJ joined other neighborhood groups to host the District 8 Mayoral Forum on February 22 at Hobby Middle School. Neighborhood attendees asked good questions. Julián Castro, Phil Hardberger, and Carroll Schubert, the three major candidates for mayor, debated these well. Election day is May 7th. Please exercise your privilege to vote.

In Zoning case 2004289, Verizon Wireless seeks a special use permit (SUP) for a 20-foot extension of the cell phone tower behind the Oak Ridge Baptist Church at Wurzbach and Vance Jackson, and addition of new antennas for their use. (Verizon does not now use this tower.) Their rationale for the change is it will allow better "in-building coverage" for their customers. At City Council, the company submitted an affidavit giving the results of "propagation studies depicting simulated radio frequency coverage in the area." Their propagation maps, with and without the new antennas, tended to support their claim – no surprise - although most of the improvement for "in-building coverage" appeared to coincide with the Olmos creek and other drainage features in the area. I represented VJ's position at City Council. VJ is all in favor of better phone service for its neighbors – again no surprise - but requests that architectural changes be made to the tower to lessen its visual impact and appearance. The tower is now "ugly and big"; "ugly and bigger" is not progress. Councilman Art Hall continued the case to allow the tower owners to report what it can do to accommodate these concerns. Our dealings with Councilman Hall and his staff, and City staff have been consistently positive; they are competent and fair-minded. Lets hope a reasonable outcome can be achieved.

Finally, allow me to state that VJ officers and board members welcome articles about neighborhood items. Please submit your articles to our (snail) mailing address shown on the back page. Include contact information if you wish. Thanks.

Current Officers:

President – Ted Trakas (The Summit)

Vice President – Daniel Causey (Foothills)

Secretary – Norma Baird (Charter Oaks Condos)

Treasurer – Woody Halsey (Charter Oaks)