

President's Message

Ted Trakas

We have been tracking the strange case of Mockingbird, which is near Callaghan and east of I-10.

Mockingbird is a short, innocent looking street that connects Greatview to the I-10 access road. It faithfully and competently serves tenants and neighbors from the Sugar Hill apartments, the Greatview office building, Foothills subdivision, and other locations.

But our Mockingbird road is an endangered species. Its Achilles heel is the misfortune of being sandwiched between two properties that Red McCombs owns, namely Red McCombs Ford and High Point shopping center. You will recall that in August 2008 McCombs petitioned the city to close and abandon Mockingbird so he can buy it at "fair market value". (The city's designation for the petition is Special Project 1402.)

McCombs has tried and failed to close Mockingbird at least two times in the past. Why is he trying this again now? Of course our association is not a party to his strategy meetings, but his motivating factor may be that a potential bill in the Texas state legislature would force the City of San Antonio to compensate the people on Greatview for lost access, making such a closure too expensive for the city. So this may be McCombs' last shot at taking Mockingbird. Why should we take his attempt seriously? By my estimate, he has sunk a cool \$100k into this case, for the Pape-Dawson traffic 'study', and high-priced legal representation.

On January 29th, Councilwoman Cibrian hosted a meeting of interested parties. Mr. Kaufman and Ms. Peveto, Mr. McCombs' high-priced representatives, argued that Mockingbird should be closed for two (mutually exclusive) reasons. First, it's lightly traveled, and so not needed. And second, all the traffic on it threatens the safety of dealership employees who cross Mockingbird (even though it's a little used street!). These arguments were unconvincing; at the end of the meeting, only one out of about twenty attendees indicated approval of the petition. So one would think that a case like this in a democracy, where one pits the private good of one vs. the public good of hundreds should be an easy call.

But wait. We understand that Mr. Kaufman is stating that "there's neighborhood support for the closure". Yes, we could easily dismiss his claim as partisan banter, but actually there's probably some, small merit to his statement. During prior attempts to close Mockingbird, scores of dealership employees went – or were bused? – to city meetings to speak in favor of the closure. We can expect the same tactic this time.

So why do I feature Mockingbird in the President's Message? Because I need your help.

We need you to fill out the enclosed petition stating your opposition to McCombs' petition to close and seize Mockingbird and send it to our association mailbox by March 15th. In this way, we can send a clear message to City Hall that people in the VJ area are overwhelmingly opposed to this unjust taking.

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