

President's Message Ted Trakas

We have been tracking the strange, and now very sad and aggravating, case of Mockingbird.

Mockingbird is a short street that connects Greatview to the I-10 access road, near Callaghan, and serves renters, business tenants and neighbors from the Sugar Hill apartments, the Greatview office building, Foothills subdivision, and other locations. In August 2008, Red McCombs petitioned the city to close and abandon Mockingbird so he could buy it at "fair market value". (The city's designation for his petition was Special Project 1402.)

This issue went to City Council on Thursday, March 5.

Bill Kaufman, the high-powered lawyer and insider, represented McCombs for the case, and presented a private neighborhood survey that he commissioned for closing Mockingbird. (See Reference 1.) He presented his results as red 'X' marks on a city map. (See Reference 2.)

Cibrian adopted Kaufman's numbers and thus disregarded prior inputs that were overwhelmingly negative on this case. At the two neighborhood meetings THAT SHE HOSTED, the immediate neighbors on Greatview were 20-to-0 AGAINST and 7-to-0 AGAINST the proposed closing. For an earlier Planning Commission meeting, the City of San Antonio canvassing result was 12-to-0 AGAINST closure. Forty-Nine (49) 'Written Testimony' forms were sent to the City Clerk AGAINST closure. The two cognizant neighborhood associations, VJNI and NNOD, were opposed. Cibrian stated in endorsing McCombs' petition for closure that she had to "listen to the voice of the people", that is, as represented on Kaufman's map.

What is particularly vexing about her decision is that at the council meeting it struck me that the overwhelmingly majority of Kaufman's signatures came from south of Callaghan near Greatview, which I knew was outside our association boundaries. Later I pulled up a council boundary map from Developmental Services. (See Reference 3.) It turns out that perhaps a majority of the signatures on Kaufman's map didn't even come from District 8. THEY WERE FROM DISTRICT 1!

Hence Cibrian disregarded all her District 8 inputs and made her decision on District 1 inputs. She did not represent our district on this case.

I want to thank the 106 persons who sent in signatures opposed to the closure. Sorry we weren't able to make a stronger case in the matter, but honestly, it looks like we never had a chance. Mockingbird was a 'done deal'.

References:

1. Sample of Kaufman's Survey Form: http://www.vjni.org/Zoning-Cases/200808_Mockingbird-Quit-Claim/20090305_William-Kaufman_Signature-Survey_Sample.pdf
2. Kaufman's Signatures Map: http://www.vjni.org/Zoning-Cases/200808_Mockingbird-Quit-Claim/20090305_William-Kaufman_Signatures-Map.pdf
3. "The Final Insult": http://www.vjni.org/Zoning-Cases/200808_Mockingbird-Quit-Claim/20090305_The-Final-Insult.pdf

2009 Officers:

President – Ted Trakas (The Summit)

Vice President – Ann Ryan (River Oaks)

Secretary – Norma Baird (Charter Oaks Condos)

Treasurer – Jimmy Turner (Foothills)

Newsletter Editor – Peggy Hughes (Foothills)

Database Manager - Victor Camacho (Colonies North)

Please visit our web page www.vjni.org for additional details or contact us at officers@vjni.org.