



sam hughes neighborhood association

News on Hughes

Autumn 2011

O’Dowd’s Overview...

The proximity of our homes to the UA makes our neighborhood a prime location for mini-dorms. Sam Hughes neighborhood is now being threatened by an even greater disruption of its quality of life than has been caused by separately owned and scattered mini-dorms. The Retreat at Sam Hughes is a proposal to construct 17 separate dwelling units on a 2 acre site to be used for student housing. The site of the proposed Retreat is the former Church of Christ Scientists at 5th Street and Country Club. The developer has been issued a permit to demolish the Church which is an iconic landmark of the neighborhood and is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

After learning of the sale of the site by the Church, neighbors and SHNA Board members tried to consult with the developers to determine their plans for the site, but the developers did not disclose the plan prior to filing it with the City. At least one offer to purchase and preserve the Church was rejected by the developers.

The Retreat site is zoned R-1 for single family homes and the developers are not seeking a higher density zone even though the plan submitted to the City’s Development Services department would function as a single site composed of nine (9) individual Lots with two dwelling units on eight (8) of the Lots and a single dwelling unit on the 9th Lot. Nine (9) of the dwelling units would have six (6) bedrooms each and eight (8) units would have five (5) bedrooms each for a total of ninety four (94) bedrooms. Development Services has already performed an initial review of the Retreat site plan and several of the reviewers have denied the application on technical grounds. The developers are now in the process of modifying their site plan to comply with the reviewers’ comments.

However, the review by one of the City’s Planning Technicians raises the issue that the development “as proposed on the site plan, appears to be a multifamily development” and functions

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Board meetings:
3rd Tues. each month
7pm Himmel Library

“more as an apartment complex appropriate to a more intense residential zone, such as R-2, rather than a subdivision for single-family homes.” If this plan reviewer is correct, the developer cannot proceed to subdivide the site in the manner proposed without first re-zoning the property from R-1 to R-2, a process that would involve modifying Sam Hughes neighborhood plan and provide public hearings for residents of this neighborhood to testify before zoning authorities and the City Council that the increased density and its proposed use for mini-dorms would disrupt the residential quality of the neighborhood.

SHNA has requested the City Zoning Examiner make a formal Interpretation of the City Land Use Code that determines that the developer cannot construct these mini-dorms in the existing R-1 zone. If this interpretation is made, there is a chance that the site will ultimately contribute to, rather than disrupt, the residential quality of the Neighborhood.

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE WATER TOWER?

Parts of what is now the Sam Hughes Neighborhood east of Campbell, began as one of the first subdivisions in Tucson in the early 1920s. Residents needed water, and a portion of two water pump “towers” remain in the 2200 and 2400 blocks of East First Street. These towers did not hold water; they simply covered a pump shaft (think oil rig) in a more pleasing, Spanish colonial design that also added an element of elevation to the landscape and neighborhood (see drawings on SHNA website.)

However, by the 1930s new technology replaced the tall pumps and, in the early 1960s, in an effort to reduce maintenance costs, the city decided to literally lop the tops off of these relatively small, 44 foot high “towers”. Long-time neighborhood residents remember the beauty of the towers plus their historical significance. Residents would be pleased to have the top back on the tower at First and Tucson Blvd. for the enjoyment and enhancement of our neighbors and neighborhood.

What’s in it for the Sam Hughes Neighborhood?

Over the years the SHNA has explored adaptive uses for the tower site including butterfly garden, water demonstration or community garden. The enthusiastic response to the 2008 neighborhood survey of “uses” for the water tower showed how a common bond can bridge generations and propel our neighborhood forward. This important and unique landmark, our tower, will become a neighborhood point of pride.

The reconstruction of the water tower is a perfect vehicle to tap into the power of art, architecture, and community. It will allow us to tell our story including the continued importance of water, and water conservation, in Tucson. As we share the experience of raising funds, restoring the tower and planning for the future, neighbors would work and celebrate together. Isn’t this what being a neighborhood should be about?

Where are we on this concept?

The Board is actively meeting with a variety of local (and neighborhood) experts and city officials to assess the viability and potential costs of this restoration project. A good portion of the funding for this project will come from prior SHNA Home Tours, and the rest from donations, fund raisers and potential grants.

Stay tuned for further news!



PERSISTANT POTHOLES

The Tucson Department of Transportation (TDOT) rates Sam Hughes Streets as 100% failed according to a national infrastructure rating scale. To address the issues involved, Ward Six held a meeting with TDOT and constituents. Over the past fiscal year, Ward Six was able to save \$75,000 of our tax dollars which they will spend repairing potholes within the Ward. Sam Hughes Neighborhood Association did a comprehensive pothole survey and reported well over 100 potholes to both Ward Six and TDOT. Since the meeting a month ago, TDOT has filled the potholes from the 2400 block of 7th St. all the way east to Treat.

Ward 6 reports that the money will be spent chip-sealing all the streets in Sam Hughes that lie between Campbell and Tucson Blvd. from Speedway to Broadway. Preparation work is already being done by TDOT and will start within the next few weeks. Work is expected to be completed on or about November 25th. Potholes in the remaining eastern part of Sam Hughes will be worked on as time and weather allows.

In the meantime, if you sprain your ankle, break your leg, fall into a hole while walking, biking or driving on Sam Hughes streets, please report your injuries to your Ward Six office at 791-4601 and TDOT at 791-4371. We can also thank Ward 6 for insisting that the money they saved in office expenses is able to be used to benefit Ward 6 residents.

50+ Money Saving Offers Available to SHNA Members Through SHNA's Deals & Discounts Program!!!!

NEW, Special Offers for SHNA Members! SHNA Membership Committee is actively working with merchants and businesses to make available **Money Saving Deals and Discounts for Association Members.** We are always adding new offers. For a current list of participating merchants/businesses and program information, go to the membership page at <http://www.samhughes.org>. You will need your Certificate of Membership to take advantage of these offers.

Become a Member...Don't miss out on the special offers. Become an SHNA member by completing the membership form and mailing it with your membership payment. You will receive a Certificate of Membership postcard and can start saving \$\$\$\$ by taking advantage of these special offers. **More special offers are coming soon.**

Membership Information:

Name: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____ Email: _____

Annual Membership: \$20. Payment for Membership Year: _____ (All memberships renew January 1st of each calendar year.)

Please include a check payable to SHNA, and mail to SHNA, c/o Membership Chair, PO Box 42931, Tucson, AZ 85733-2931.



PARKING PROBLEMS

Two years ago our neighborhood's restricted parking fees were raised from \$2.50 to \$60.00 by ParkWise, the City of Tucson's parking authority. The increase was to cover costs of the program, a parking program supported in full by participant fees and a very small percentage of parking ticket fines.

Although it has been reported that ParkWise netted 1.3 million dollars in revenues last year, it has only funded two enforcement officers for a total of three hours during sports events at the University. ParkWise wrote a total of 40 tickets in Sam Hughes during the first football game of the season. This represents a meager 10% of the illegally parked cars and less than half of the tickets written last year during the first game.

The University's Office of Parking and Transportation Services (PTS) is perplexed why their High Occupancy Vehicle free parking lot goes unfilled and why fans prefer to park in the nearby neighborhoods rather than pay to use University parking. The PTS mission statement states their goal is "enhancing interaction with the community." To that end we urge the University to resolve long standing parking issues with our neighborhood and work with ParkWise as it addresses internal problems.

SAM HUGHES HOME TOUR 2011 RESULTS

Once again Sam Hughes has had another successful Home Tour on March 13th! Five uniquely beautiful Sam Hughes homes, three special home-studios, and three new local businesses were featured on the tour. Additionally, we were also able to include three non-profit businesses as part of the tour.

The Home Tour Committee of Denice Blake, Marilyn Goulden, Betty Guarraia, and Susan Peters appreciated the support of 48 neighborhood volunteers to make this another Sam Hughes success! Thanks to all!

More than 850 people attended the tour, generating over \$12,000 in ticket revenues. Also featured was a raffle, supported by more than 25 local businesses. The raffle's separate proceeds were donated to the three local non-profits in our neighborhood: Tucson Alliance for Autism, Literacy Volunteers of Tucson, and the Himmel Park Library. Much of the money from recent year's tours has been earmarked for the water tower renovation project, in addition to other smaller neighborhood projects.

In addition, we have donated \$1,500 to the tennis court resurfacing work at the Himmel Park - an initiative led by Casey Pfordt (see photo on the SHNA website) And we are banking the remainder of the Home Tour receipts for other neighborhood projects.

Again, thanks to all for your support and participation! And if anyone might be interested in having their home on tour in 2013, please contact Susan Peters at 305-3728 or Denice Blake at 323-7891.



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