Dear Neighbor:

Knowing of your interest in the process of Rice University’s proposed parking variance for the graduate student housing facility on the north side of the 2400 block of Shakespeare, I wanted to let you know of recent developments.

After going through the Parking Commission, the variance request was before the Planning Commission. After delays of almost 4 weeks, the Director of Planning for the City of Houston, a member of the Planning Commission, has ruled that she will issue what is called a Director’s Determination on the required number of parking spaces for this project. The parking ordinance is very specific as to the number of parking spaces required for various types of land use: single family, commercial, retail, restaurants, and multi-family developments. The ordinance allows the director to make a parking determination for those uses that do not fall into a specified category. The Director has ruled that this dormitory does not fall into any of the specified categories in the law, so she will make a determination as to the required numbers of parking spaces required, as provided in the ordinance. Because of this action, Rice University withdrew its variance request.

The Director of the Planning Department has asked her staff to look into the parking requirements of other cities that regulate this type of student housing. After a full review of the situation, she will issue her Director’s Determination, hopefully within a week.

One of the significant advantages of this type of regulatory action is that the stipulations within the Director’s actions are enforceable by the city. Any conditions issued by the Planning Commission would not be as easily enforceable, if at all. I have urged her to take into consideration the conditions put forth by the Parking Commission, the staff of the Planning Commission, and the neighborhood.

I will notify you as soon as we get word of action by the Director.

Respectfully,

Anne Clutterbuck