

From: [Anne Kearney](#)
To: [cpud](#)
Subject: Writing in protest: CASE No. HPCA-23-00089
Date: Tuesday, August 1, 2023 2:16:26 PM
Attachments: [image2.png](#)

TO: Historic Preservation Commission
Re: Case No. HPCA-23-00089

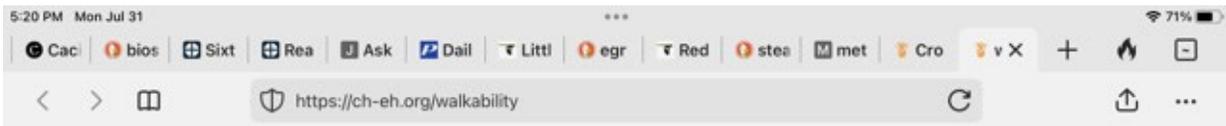
Dear HP Commission members,

In advance of the public hearing on Aug. 2 at 2 p.m., I am writing to protest the installation of a sidewalk on the east side of Shartel in Crown Heights and propose a remedy.

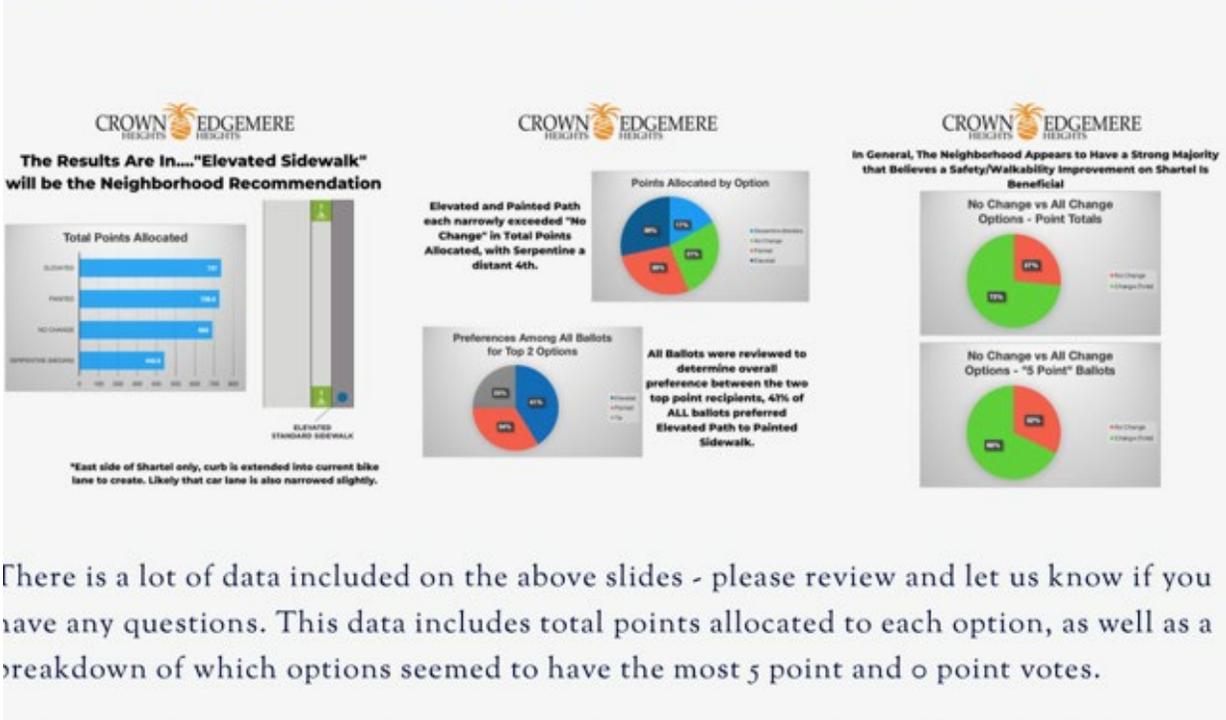
Here are my reasons. Thank you in advance for your review, and my apologies for the length.

1 - LACK OF CLEAR CONSENSUS FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD. When I spoke with MAPS Program Manager David Todd after a Connectivity subcommittee meeting (I believe it was in late April), he said quite emphatically that the city was expecting a “clear consensus” from the Crown Heights neighborhood and would be very reluctant to get in the middle of a neighborhood disagreement. Two neighbors with me at the time can vouch for his statements.

Here is a screen shot of the final results of the “point” allocation system used by the organizers of the sidewalk proposal to collect neighborhood “votes.”



The “Elevated Sidewalk” Option has won the neighborhood’s recommendation.



It also includes the names of the 5 people who counted, verified and “certified” these

I hope you can see that a mere 8.5 “points” separate the ELEVATED SIDEWALK and PAINT options in the “Total Points Allocated” slide on the left. By my calculation, that means that if only two households (one “vote” was allowed per household) had allocated 4 points each (not even the highest value of 5 points) to the PAINT option, the result would have essentially been a TIE.

In addition, the NO CHANGE option garnered 692 points, only 45 fewer points than the ELEVATED option. By my count, that’s a difference of only 8 household votes.

Plus, when looked at more broadly, the two less disruptive/expensive options (PAINT and NO CHANGE) garnered nearly TWICE the number of points of the ELEVATED option (1420.5 vs. 737).

This is hardly a clear consensus.

Can the city in good faith proceed with a proposal that gathered roughly HALF of the points of the two less disruptive/expensive alternatives?

2 - FAILURE IN COMMUNICATION RESULTING IN LOW NEIGHBORHOOD ENGAGEMENT. Despite the insistence of the organizers that they communicated with all CH-EH homeowners either by social media, email, or flyers, none of my neighbors or anyone I talked with leading up to the first neighborhood meeting on May 9 knew anything about the sidewalk proposal or the meeting.

I acknowledge that some fault may lie with us for not staying informed of the MAPS4 process, but also, there was NOTHING printed in the neighborhood newsletter, “The Chronicle,” in the months leading up to the neighborhood meeting letting us know that Shartel had been targeted by MAPS4 and that Connectivity subcommittee meetings were well under way — or that a neighborhood meeting was being planned. (We found out later that the sidewalk proponents had been attending the subcommittee meetings for months.)

In the online survey launched after the meeting on May 9 to gauge peoples’ reactions to the options as presented, there were only 109 “unique respondents” — that is out of 630 CH-EH households.

Again, this turnout hardly represents a clear consensus from the neighborhood.

Moreover, after many ad hoc comments were submitted in the survey preferring a sidewalk to be installed on Walker Ave. instead of Shartel, the organizers added a question on that MIDWAY THROUGH THE SURVEY. Nothing has been done with those comments.

I received one email from the board on May 6, 2023, 3 days before the first meeting, and one email on June 7 about the voting beginning that day. I received a flyer about the second meeting on May 31 but no email (I did receive two lengthy emails leading up to the kickball tournament on May 21). Why no email about the second meeting? Again, haphazard, disorganized communication.

The second meeting was attended by even fewer people than the first.

3 - LACK OF TRANSPARENCY OF THE PROCESS. At the first neighborhood meeting, the Westminster venue was reserved for only one hour. Mind you, this was the FIRST most of us had heard anything about the sidewalk proposal, and we had only an hour to absorb the information and hear from the project engineer, Craig Wallace. We were not given the time to have free and

open discussion of the options, but only to ask questions with few, if any, follow-ups. We hardly knew what we were asking questions about. There was much confusion, not to mention consternation that something this important to the historic look and feel of Crown Heights was being presented in such a hurried and disorganized manner.

Adding to the anxiety, it was not made clear to us at this meeting that we would still have the option to SAY NO.

Pizza and drinks were (unnecessarily) served, adding to the chaos of the gathering.

At the second, follow-up meeting on May 31, where we “voted” for the 4 options by rank-choice (again, a hurried, confused, chaotic process), a tree expert was NOT ALLOWED TO SPEAK to the attendees before the voting began. He was shut down by the organizers. At the insistence of attendees, he was finally allowed to speak after the voting had concluded, which was hardly useful. There was no reason given why the organizers did not want him to speak before the voting began.

More lack of transparency came with the “vetting” process of the options. The entire neighborhood was never presented with anything other than the four pre-vetted options by the proponents of the sidewalk. We were simply assured that the final four had been fully discussed and cleared with all interested parties, including the Memorial Marathon organization, Historical Preservation, and others. We were never given any background information about this process or the interaction with the groups.

There has been no substantive, in-depth discussion of the effect of the sidewalk on the carpool lane to Westminster school, or on the Memorial Marathon runners. Was a concerted effort made to fully inform the homeowner who hosts the Gorilla Hill party every year of the consequences for him?

In short, at no point during this promotional campaign has the entire CH-EH neighborhood been presented with the pros and cons of each option in an objective, comprehensive manner or allowed to have open discussion all together for longer than an hour.

4 - MISUNDERSTANDING OF ELEVATED SIDEWALK OPTION. At the first neighborhood meeting on May 9, SRB Senior Project Manager Craig Wallace presented his overview of the options and the relative complexity and viability of each. I was not the only attendee to hear him say in passing, in effect, that the elevated sidewalk could be largely off the table because its complexity would likely require more money than was allotted in MAPS4. While he may not have intended it, his remarks came across as dubious that the elevated sidewalk was a viable option.

In a subsequent phone call two neighbors and I had with Mr. Wallace, he said much the same thing — that the elevated sidewalk would likely require a request to the city for additional funding.

As a result, I wasn't the only person who didn't take the elevated sidewalk option seriously, thinking that it wasn't going to be a viable option in the end.

At that point, my and others' attention and energy were diverted to fighting against the option of the serpentine sidewalk down the median.

5 - BIASED COMMUNICATION AND REPRESENTATION. Looking back on the entire process, it has been a biased promotional campaign from the start that has omitted critical

information to all CH-EH homeowners while presenting primarily the opinions of the sidewalk backers. The communication has been either subtle or blatant in its preference for a sidewalk.

To cite one example, in the online survey, we were presented with only the options of registering a “concern” or an “excitement,” the presumption being that we all wanted a sidewalk, we just needed to decide on which option. And again, there was no option to choose NO CHANGE.

Many comments in the survey referred to the much greater need for re-paving Shartel and improving the drainage system, particularly around NW 38th St., instead of installing a sidewalk. Nothing has apparently been done with these comments, but they were each categorized as an “excitement,” as though a sidewalk could potentially encompass re-paving and drainage improvements. The comments were clearly misinterpreted by the organizers/sidewalk supporters.

Then there were the summary descriptions of the vetted options at the final online voting. It was clear from these write-ups that an elevated sidewalk was being promoted as the preferred solution.

To cite a more obvious example, at the second neighborhood meeting on May 31 when we rank-choice voted each of the four vetted options, one CH-EH board member led the discussion of the elevated sidewalk option. She stated openly that she felt the elevated sidewalk was the best solution and she had no qualms arguing in its favor or countering objections from attendees.

Her job was to simply present the facts objectively, without bias, which other discussion leaders did. But instead, she earnestly expressed her vocal support of the elevated sidewalk.

6 - THE REMEDY: A SECOND VOTE. In summary, I don't think I'm the only Crown Heights homeowner who has had absolutely no faith in this entire process, and has absolutely no trust in the final results.

I urge the commission to take one final step to ensure that you truly receive a clear consensus on this most critical decision for one of the most treasured neighborhoods in Oklahoma City.

Please consider asking the CH-EH board to hold a second vote between the top two options of ELEVATED SIDEWALK and PAINT.

I don't see how the city can proceed in good conscience without it. This is much too important a decision to proceed with a margin of 8.5 “points.”

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Respectfully yours,

Anne Kearney
815 NW 42nd St.

