

SRCC Elections Set for Tuesday, March 2, 2010

Helen Dey Valdez

Once again we gather to cast our votes for the South River City Citizens Executive Officers and Area Coordinators, who comprise our Executive Committee. While the Texas Primaries have us focused on state and local candidates, none are more important to our community than the group that we as a neighborhood elect to represent us at City of Austin council meetings, board and commission hearings. Yes, it's time to vote for the team that will govern the South River City Citizens Neighborhood association and work diligently on our behalves for the next year.

Our meeting will kick-off with our annual potluck meal at Grace United Methodist Church, 205 East Monroe. **This year the potluck dinner starts at 6:00 PM.** Following our social gathering, we will elect our new officers. We are fortunate that all the

current officers have agreed to serve another term. The slate includes Sarah Campbell, President; Marc Davis, Vice President; Bob Drew, Treasurer; and Nick Garrett, Secretary. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor.

Anyone wishing to run for office is encouraged to contact Sarah Campbell, our current President, or any of the other officers prior to the March 2nd meeting (see insert page for contact numbers).

All residents within the SRCC neighborhood boundaries (see map on back page) are eligible to vote, provided that they are current on their membership dues. New members and members whose dues have expired two years or more must pay dues 28 days prior to the March 2nd election. Existing SRCC members must pay their dues prior to the vote at the March 2nd meeting. Checks may be mailed to: SRCC Treasurer at P O Box 40632,

Austin 78704.

Please note that our meeting is on a TUESDAY, so make sure you mark your calendars, join your neighbors, make new friends, bring a favorite dish and vote. ☘

A Message from the President

Sarah Campbell

Thank you, SRCC, for all your support the last 10 months of my tenure as President. We have a fabulous team of elected (and not) volunteers who are all willing to go another year, providing you re-elect us at the annual meeting on March 2nd.

I was grateful to start out as President of SRCC (in April 2009) during an economic slump, as I had ideas about updating and reforming some of our internal policies and procedures (or lack thereof) that had evolved (or not) over time since this wonderful volunteer organization started back in the early 1970's. During Austin's boom times, our energies are sapped by redevelopment projects and unpredictable behaviors by our City Council and various Boards and Commissions that impact us, making it difficult to focus internally.

Early on, I started two Ad Hoc Committees with very ambitious schedules of several months. One, the Communications Committee was charged with reviewing and making recommendations to improve the way we handle membership, the newsletter, the list serve, and our web presence. While the Committee has made quite a bit of progress, it is still in research and development mode. It seems the technology outpaces our analyses of possible solutions. The other, a

Feature Articles

- SRCC Elections for March 2 2010 1
- A Message from the President 1
- Norwood Posse continues to Press for Restoration 2

Committee Reports

- Transportation & Pubic Safety Focus on Crime 2
- Zoning & Planning Committee Monitors PUD & New City Master Plan 2

SRCC Area Reports

- East Riverside Report 4
- Sherwood Oaks Update 4

Neighborhood Announcements & Safety Tips

- Volunteer Call for THES 5
- When to Call 911 5
- Travis Heights Art Trail a Great Success! 5

SRCC Officers & Committees 6



Financial Policy and Procedures Committee has yet to really get started, not for lack of interest, but for lack of good timing for the members.

Meanwhile, the Transportation and Public Safety Standing Committee has made some great strides in discussing neighborhood crime and coming up with solutions for enhanced awareness (see article herein). The Zoning and Planning Standing Committee has been beset with numerous variance requests and zoning changes, some of which we have adamantly opposed. And the Parks, Schools & Environment group has just been quietly fabulous, getting grants to remove invasive plants and plant natives in the parks and preserve; bird-dogging ongoing water quality projects; and working in the schools. We have also gotten Co-Coordinators in all but one of our 10 area subdivisions, resulting in greater attendance at Executive Committee meetings and (hopefully) more thorough newsletter distribution.

With my ambitious schedules for the two Ad Hoc Committees given reality checks, I now look forward to a more modest schedule for the next year's priorities: completing the work of these two committees, making some changes to modernize the bylaws and to tie up loose ends, simplifying membership dues and the form, and bettering relations with our three public schools. Stay tuned, and thanks for all your inputs to creating such a great neighborhood. ❧

Norwood Posse Continues to Press for Restoration

Wolf Sittler

For the past 20 months the Norwood Posse has been exploring options for restoring a long neglected neighborhood asset, the Norwood House, with the hopes of making it a gem of our city park system, and accessible to all. On January 12, 2010, six members of the Norwood Posse met with Cora Wright, assistant PARD director, and Ricardo Soliz, PARD director of planning. Once again we were told that PARD has no funds available to help solve the problem. In addition, their grant writer is swamped with work, and is not available to help. They did suggest participating in the lead-up to the next, not yet scheduled, bond election. They pointed out that the Norwood House is just one of a number of PARD properties needing upgrading.

We also discussed possible end uses of the facility, without arriving at any conclusion. One group with \$150,000 of city funding is looking to create a Latino Music Museum and considering the Norwood House. My personal view is that with central city population growth, the need for park facilities increases, and a building that could be used for community meetings, rented out for events (making it self-supporting), and equipped with restroom facilities (even a small coffee house/juice bar) for hike and bike trail users, would potentially attract a broader audience. Since end use has not been finalized, please send us your ideas!!!

The future of the dog park was also part of our discussion with PARD. The Norwood Posse has never linked fixing the house with the future of the dog park. We recognize that there are supporters and opponents of this use of the Norwood Estate Park. But to date, there has been no reliable survey of what residents would like to see happen. In short, the Norwood House would be a valuable city park asset with or without, the dog park.

We would like to thank everyone who has made tax deductible donations to the Norwood fund at the Austin Parks Foundation. We now have over \$8,000 available, which is close to our goal of \$9,000 that has been earmarked to protect the house from further damage by securing the roof.

Newcomers and new ideas are welcome. Please consider joining us as we move forward in this bottom-up effort to upgrade this public facility on the banks of Lady Bird Lake. No final decisions have been made . . . please consider being a participant, as well as a spectator. For more information visit: www.restorenorwood.org or call 447-2150. ❧

Committee Reports

Transportation and Public Safety Committee Focus on Crime

Marc Davis

Crime continues to be an issue that affects our neighborhoods and throughout the past year, the Transportation and Public Safety Committee has investigated possible solutions for our community. Many residents have proposed ideas and approaches to combat crime, and we have pursued each one to determine its feasibility and effectiveness:

- 1. More Police Patrols and Coverage** Austin has a ratio of 1.5 officers per 1000 residents and regular patrols are not performed in any of Austin's neighborhoods. Instead, they rely on responding immediately to citizens that report incidents. Political pressure from the SRCC Neighborhood Association will not likely change our coverage in any significant manner given that this is a city-wide systemic issue.
- 2. Private Security Patrols** This has worked well in some neighborhoods but the cost for hiring off-duty officers and carrying the required liability insurance is incredibly prohibitive. The SRCC Neighborhood Association is not in a position to raise the thousands and thousands of dollars each month necessary to put in place a private security patrol.

3. Redistricting The SRCC neighborhoods are in what is known as "Henry Sector" which is a large district that sprawls into east Austin. The size and nature of Henry Sector has led many residents to believe that we don't have as much coverage as we should due to our officers being pulled to the district's other "hot spots." Upon further investigation, it was determined that officers are assigned based upon call volume and incident density and being reassigned to a new sector would not affect our coverage as other sector "hot spots" would have the same effect.

4. Increased Crime Reporting Based upon advice from APD, the most effective way to increase police presence in the neighborhood is to make sure that everyone reports incidents and suspicious behavior immediately via 911 calls. Additionally, using the list-serve to alert fellow neighbors of suspicious activity helps increase awareness within the SRCC neighborhoods. This is an incredibly easy way to increase neighborhood awareness as well as get more attention from APD officers.

5. Neighborhood Watches and COPs Training APD encourages the formation of Neighborhood Watches as a way for neighborhoods to create an environment that is not conducive to crime. These watches can bring the neighbors together, allow them to get to know one another, help facilitate communication, and help them recognize when things are out of the ordinary. Above and beyond the Neighborhood Watch, APD offers Citizens on Patrol (COPs) Training to residents interested in creating actual patrols where the members are registered with APD and have been trained in crime observation/reporting. Unfortunately, it's hard to motivate residents to band together in this way and it's not clear what steps residents should take to do this. Additionally, the SRCC covers a very large area and cannot be represented by a single neighborhood watch or COPs patrol.

After investigating these alternatives, the recommendations for SRCC's approach to combat crime became very clear:

1. Make crime and suspicious activity reporting simple and easy for all residents Unfortunately, there is still a lot of confusion amongst residents about when to call 911 and report suspicious activity. We aim to clarify this through simple and easy-to-understand guidelines.

2. Facilitate the creation of a "network" of neighborhood watches that cover all of SRCC SRCC's boundaries are too vast to be covered by a single neighborhood watch. Instead, we will make it as easy as possible for residents to create a neighborhood watch in their particular area and help connect these neighborhood watches with a variety of technology solutions.

3. Encourage COPs training and organize an SRCC-wide COPs Patrol Once we have a network of neighborhood watches, members from each watch will be encouraged to take the COPs training and eventually join in SRCC-wide citizen patrols.

In the coming months, the Committee will be executing on these efforts and delivering detailed recommendations/materials to SRCC residents. If you are interested in participating in some way, please contact Marc Davis, SRCC Vice President and Transportation and Public Safety Committee Chair - 512 656-2841 or marc.davis@gmail.com. 📧

Zoning & Planning Committee Monitors PUD and New City Master Plan

Jean Mather

Politics & PUD

The PUD ordinance was created to encourage innovative design and a superior development product than the existing development code would allow. The ordinance was recently revised to take subjectivity out of "innovative" and "superior." Some revision was definitely in order as, for glaring example, the Austin-American Statesman publishing house - an industrial use - along with a stretch of trail, was approved years ago as a PUD right on Lady Bird Lake! (This occurred just as the Waterfront Overlay ordinance was getting up to speed).

The revised ordinance now lists elements that can make a PUD innovative and superior, including for example, "benefits to the community" whether or not the community considers them benefits. Sadly, the revised ordinance is not much better than its predecessor, especially in that a City Council majority decision allows it to trump the Waterfront Overlay ordinance. This vote was adamantly opposed by Save Town Lake and many neighborhood groups, but supported, of course, by the developers. The ordinance is attractive to investors building within the Waterfront Overlay zone. For instance, the Barton Creek PUD, less than an acre in size instead of the 10-acre minimum, is asking for PUD zoning.

The Council recently reduced the number of members on boards and commissions to seven, so each council member gets one appointee and there are no members-at-large, thus these bodies reflect the majority mindset. We'll see how the Waterfront Overlay Board votes on the Barton Creek PUD.

City Master Plan to Trump Our Neighborhood Plans!

The Council has hired a firm to provide a new Master Plan for Austin. Latest word is that public participation is minimal. And, it will trump our neighborhood plan! We now have until the end of February for input. Look for

announcements on the list serve. For more information on what's up and how you can get involved go to <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/compplan> or contact Jean Mather, Zoning & Planning Chair. ❧

SRCC Area Reports

East Riverside Report (Areas 6 & 7)

Toni House

Grayco South Shore PUD (Lakeshore Blvd., Riverside Drive)

Council final reading on the Grayco massive apartment complex – or PUD – concluded with even more surprises. Had Grayco actually complied with the City's new PUD ordinance as touted, it would have been required to contribute \$7.8M to affordable housing, not a paltry \$3.1M. Even though thousands of Riverside residents are being displaced by Grayco and other approved new developments, Councilmember Cole was unfortunately successful in ensuring that a portion of the \$3.1M would be allocated elsewhere.

Ignoring repeated requests to limit the number and square footage of liquor sales sites to the same number and square footage as the Lakeshore PUD next door, Councilmember Spelman instead chose to dramatically *increase* the amount of allowable space for liquor sales. Lakeshore PUD is 50+% larger than Grayco. Just what Riverside needs: more apartments serviced by more bars.

Upon completion of Grayco, visitors driving west on E. Riverside from the airport will no longer be treated to spectacular views of the Capitol and UT Tower upon arrival to the City, but will see yet another mega-apartment complex. So dies E. Riverside's claim to being a gateway to the City.

Even though Riverside is mostly concrete and asphalt and has precious little tree canopy left, the Council also increased the number of protected trees that could be removed from Lakeshore Blvd.

Only Councilmember Morrison and Mayor Leffingwell chose to uphold the Waterfront Overlay and the EROC Neighborhood Plan. Councilmembers Spelman, Cole, Martinez, Shade and Riley apparently prefer that Riverside repeat the current cycle of urban decay. In thirty years, we'll be in exactly where we are today. ❧

East Riverside Corridor Master Plan

The master plan for the East Riverside Corridor is scheduled for hearing before the Planning Commission on 2/9/10 and City Council 2/25/10. High density properties abutting and adjacent to a large swath of SRCC Area 6 homes will be entitled to height and density bonuses. If this policy document is adopted as currently written, these homes will lose the protection of single family (SF) compatibility standards, except regulation of height. SF compatibility-required setbacks, vegetative buffering, compatible uses, and other protections will all be gone. **A simple fix is to add two words to the Plan: "All compatibility standards, including regulating the height of buildings in close proximity to single family residences, will apply. . ."** Please contact the City Council and the Planning Commission and encourage them to make this change or reject the Plan. Riverside has little tree canopy, pervious cover, and fewer than 510 SF homes left (compared to more than 8,500 apartment units existing and approved). We cannot afford to lose these protections. ❧

Sherwood Oaks Update

Elloa Mathews

Sherwood Oaks Storm Drain Upgrade

The surveying has finally begun in Sherwood Oaks for the long-awaited upgrade to the original 1960-era storm drain. Yard stakes and bright fluorescent paint have been placed to identify the existing utility lines (water, sewer and gas) in yards and streets. The city plans to hold a meeting to answer questions for neighbors before any street work begins. Questions on the project can be directed to Marty Christman at martychristman@sbcglobal.net or Elloa Mathews at ellomail@austin.rr.com. ❧

Side Yard Carport Variance Requests for Setbacks Denied

For the second time in a few months, the city denied a variance request for a carport that had been built without a permit in the side yard setback. This ruling upheld SRCC's 30-year practice of approving variance requests only when a hardship, based on city requirements, is proven. The side yard setbacks in Sherwood Oaks were put in place as part of the original 1960's SF-2 zoning that allows neighbors to have the area between the houses maintained without development for privacy and noise abatement. SF-2 zoning imposes side yard setbacks of 10 feet between houses as well as 25 feet front yard setbacks that begin at the expansion joint found on the driveway approximately 10 feet from the curb. The city reserves the front 10 feet of each property as right-of-way. ❧

Neighborhood Announcements & Safety Tips

Volunteers Needed for TH Elementary & Other Area Schools

Lorrie DeHaas

Would you like to make a difference in a young person's life? Travis Heights Elementary, in collaboration with Partners in Math, is looking for a few more Math Mentors to provide support and encouragement to 3rd and 4th graders. Mentoring involves working with a group of 3 to 4 kids for 1 hour a week, being there consistently to guide and motivate them, and engaging them in fun weekly math lessons.

Travis Heights has been designated "Recognized" by the Texas Education Agency. This success is due, in part, to the mentoring programs that are in place and the parents and neighbors who volunteer tirelessly to help the school achieve new levels of success. Providing students with a strong foundation in mathematics will enable success in high school, which research consistently shows is critical to ensuring graduation and college and career readiness.

If you are interested in becoming a Travis Heights Math Mentor or volunteer there are all sorts of opportunities at our school. Just take the following steps:

1. Please visit the website: www.classroomcoaching.org and click "Volunteer". Choose "Travis Heights Elementary" from the list of schools on the far right. Find the volunteer opportunities listed below, and choose the Math Mentor option that's right for you: 4th grade, 8:00 a.m. Thursdays or 3rd grade, 8 or 9:00 a.m. Thursdays

2. If you want to try 8th grade math, Partners in Reading at Travis Heights, or other volunteer opportunities, go to www.classroomcoaching.org and click on 'Volunteer'. Follow the directions to search for the program of your choice!

Please feel free to suggest this opportunity to others. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact Lorrie DeHaas at 512.707.1821. Make a difference in your neighborhood schools. Become a Volunteer at Travis Heights Today! ❧

When to Call 911

Calling 911 is an important way to alert our officers that a crime is in progress or suspicious activity is being observed. DO NOT HESITATE to call 911 if you witness any of the following:

1. An actual crime being performed
 - You see someone breaking into your home/auto or stealing your property
 - You see someone suspicious attempting to gain access to a neighbor's home/auto
 - You see someone suspicious taking an item away from a neighbor's home/auto
2. A suspicious activity that could possibly lead to a crime
 - Your home is approached by someone unknown to you after normal hours
 - You see someone looking over fences or into windows in your neighborhood
 - You encounter a suspicious "salesman" or solicitor going door-to-door

Travis Heights Art Trail a Great Success!

Margaret Adie

The Art Trail was great fun this year. We had many new artists in the show, and it made this year even better! We have so many talented people in our neighborhood! A big thanks to our neighbors who came out for the fun, and to all our wonderful sponsors for once again supporting art in our neighborhood--we couldn't do it without you.

The date for the Arts Trail 2010 is December 4 & 5th; mark your calendars now so you can join us in a wonderful, uniquely SRCC/Travis Heights neighborhood event. We also want to welcome any new artists and business sponsors for our next Art Trail December 2010. All applications are due on August 1, 2010. For more information go to: www.travisheightsart.com . ❧



2009 SRCC Officers

President:

Sarah Campbell 512/462-2261

Vice President:

Marc Davis 512/656-2841

Treasurer:

Bob Drew 512/913-7485

Co-Secretaries:

Garret Nick 512/326-7676

SRCC Meetings - We normally meet the 1st Monday of every month at 7 PM at the Grace United Methodist Church, 205 E. Monroe. Check the website list serve for details. If you want to be part of the SRCC list serve, send an email to: SouthRiverAustin-subscribe@yahoo.com.

Membership Renewals - You can renew your membership or join SRCC by sending your dues to P O Box 40632, Austin TX 78704 (see form below). Treasurer Bob Drew will deposit all checks and will forward all membership information on to Carol Martin, Membership Chair, who will update the membership database

AREA COORDINATORS

Area 1	Claudette Lowe	447-1514
Area 1	Helen Dey Valdez	634-3740
Area 2	Elizabeth Day	441-1759
Area 2	Jack Hostetter	214 435-9811
Area 3a	Teri Hubbeling	447-8852
Area 3a	Brian Talenti	992-0136
Area 3b	Brooks Kasson	444-8100
Area 3b	Kenny Hilbig	751-4306
Area 4a	Sam Martin	441-5222
Area 4a	Eric Andruscavage	707-1340
Area 4b	Kris Asthalter	443-4963
Area 4b	Cynthia Biggers	472-1772
Area 5	Neal Nuwash	462-9093
Area 5	Ellen Ward	851-0095
Area 5	Neal Nuwash	462-9093
Area 6	Dawn Cizmar	443-4231
Area 7	Fred Krebs	447-6442
Area 7	Rachel McClure	326-5572
Area 8	Maria Martinez	443-9784
Area 8	Kim Lanzillotti	658-8565

SRCC COMMITTEES & REPRESENTATIVES

Standing Committees

Parks, Schools & Environment	David Todd (Parks)	416-0400
	Sherri Ancipink (Sch)	707-2627
	Marty Christman (Env)	912-0724
Planning & Zoning	Jean Mather	444.4153
Transportation & Public Safety	Marc Davis (Interim)	656-2841
	Carol Martin	
Membership	Inactive	
Special Events		

Ad Hoc Committees

Norwood House	Wolf Sittler	632-9189
TH-FP Historic Dist	Michele Webre	422-1262
Communications/ Newsletter	Helen Dey Valdez	326-4320

Representatives

Austin Neighborhoods Council	Wolf Sittler	632-9189
St. Edward's	Elloa Mathews	442-6986
South Central Coalition	OPEN	
Save Town Lake	Kenny Hilbig	751-4306
TH Arts Trail	Margaret Adie	440-8579
Travis Park Apt/ Austin Interfaith	Terry Franz	447-8786

South River City Citizens Membership Form

Revised May 2007

Membership Categories:

<input type="checkbox"/> Single	\$5	<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	\$10
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$7	<input type="checkbox"/> Big Bubba	\$20

Please mark areas of interest or amount of additional contribution:

<input type="checkbox"/> Parks	<input type="checkbox"/> Schools	<input type="checkbox"/> Oak Wilt
<input type="checkbox"/> July 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Historic District	<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter
<input type="checkbox"/> Arts Trail	<input type="checkbox"/> South Congress	<input type="checkbox"/> St. Eds/Woodward

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

