

SRCC

THE SUMMER 2013 newsletter

AN OCCASIONAL PRINTED PUBLICATION OF THE
SOUTH RIVER CITY CITIZENS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
ESTABLISHED 1973 | ONLINE AT WWW.SRCCATX.ORG

SRCC Briefs

■ **The Fourth of July Parade and Picnic are BACK!** We will once again have a fantastic Fourth of July Parade and Picnic in our neighborhood! The theme of this event is EASY and FUN so come on out with the whole family to celebrate: a parade down East Side Drive will start at 11:15 AM and end at Little Stacy Park, where we will have our traditional pot-luck picnic with performances by The Jitterbug Vipers (featuring the legendary Slim Richey) among others. So, put on your red, white, and blue, whip up something good to eat, and mosey on down for an easy and fun way to celebrate the U.S. of A. If you want to help organize, please contact Gretchen Harries Graham at oceansgretchen@gmail.com Also, we welcome any special donations to offset any of the costs. Donate to SRCC and earmark your donation for the Fourth of July Parade and Picnic: www.srccatx.org/membership-dues/

■ **Neighborhood Watch:** Raymond Sinatra provided in June an update about the SRCC Neighborhood Watch effort. Logged patrols were up in May to 33 from 24 in April. These numbers are the same as where we were a year ago so we are looking to increase participation as it is the #1 way we know reduces crime. Contact Raymond: (512-853-0512) neighborhoodwatch@srccatx.org.

■ **Its the 100th anniversary of Travis Heights;** you've probably seen the "Centennial Chicken" yard signs around the 'hood. Its not too late to get your own. Pick up one at Prima Dora next to Magnolia Café for a \$20 suggested donation, or contact Michele Webre (422-1262); all proceeds go to Travis Heights-Fairview Park Historic District Project. We hope to have a Centennial celebration in the fall, so stayed tuned! "Like" our Facebook page, facebook.com/HistoricTravisHeights, to get info on upcoming events.

■ **SRCC's listserv** www.groups.yahoo.com/group/SouthRiverAustin, run by Travis Heights resident Jane Kellogg, is open to anyone to post a message. To subscribe send an email to: SouthRiverAustin-subscribe@yahoogroups.com or visit the newsgroup website.

■ **Stay current with official news with SRCC's website and** through RSS, Facebook or Twitter. The website also offers functions such as the SRCC calendar, keyword searching, useful documents such as "Zoning 101," and online payment of dues. Visit www.srccatx.org and let us know what you think! communications@srccatx.org or by visiting the newsgroup website's contact page.

■ **Join the SRCC and support our neighborhood.** Information is on the last page of this newsletter.

New Quality of Life Committee Formed

Marc Davis, SRCC President

MANY SRCC RESIDENTS HAVE BEEN FEELING the negative effects of Austin's and South Congress Avenue's popularity. Outdoor music noise, trash on streets and yards, constant parking issues, and traffic-crippling events have all taken their toll on this place we call home.

After gathering inspiration from the conversations on the list-serve and frequent issues at SRCC meetings, the membership approved the formation of the Quality of Life Committee at the May 6th General Meeting. The purpose of this committee is to actively seek input from SRCC members to identify specific issues that affect their daily life negatively. In turn, the committee will then spearhead creative efforts to address those issues.

Over the past month of soliciting input, two primary issues have shown to be the biggest concern: amplified noise and trash. The committee is beginning to engage with Congress Avenue business owners to identify ways to address these concerns.

The committee is chaired by Robert Reeves and has Danette Chimenti, Marc Davis, Diane Gouveia, Michael Mayo, and Laura Touns as members. If you would like to provide input or possibly join the committee, please get in touch with Robert at robertericreeves@gmail.com. ☼

Reagan Signs Requests Up-Zoning Again

Marc Davis, SRCC President

MANY OF YOU PROBABLY REMEMBER THAT, BACK IN 2005, Reagan Outdoor Advertising attempted to secure an up-zoning of their property on the northwest corner of Woodland and IH35, which is currently zoned General Retail (GR). They proposed to build their headquarters on the lot that included offices as well as warehouse, sign printing, and chemical storage, and which required portions of the lot to be zoned Commercial Services (CS). After SRCC and the immediate neighbors fought hard, no zoning change was granted but the final approved site plan had many residents concerned because it retained the same warehouse and sign printing facilities.

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Travis Heights Elementary News

Karyn Couvillion, THES PTA Parent

IT'S BEEN AN AMAZING YEAR, thanks to the Travis Heights community and all of your support. We are excited about moving forward as the first grassroots, community-led, in-district charter school in Austin. Here are some highlights from the spring:

- One-quarter of our 5th graders applied and ALL were accepted into AISD academic magnet programs. We will have THES graduates attending the Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders, Fulmore Middle School Humanities & Law Magnet for International Studies, and the Kealing Middle School Magnet Program for Math, Science and Liberal Arts.

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ties in the drawings. Reagan never built the facility and last year, with more involvement from SRCC and the neighbors, the Planning Commission voted to deny their last-minute site plan extension requests and the site plan died. This was good news for the neighborhood because it meant that a new site plan would have to adhere to the newly revised Heritage Tree Ordinance and save many of the trees on the wooded lot that would have been lost under the old site plan.

Now Reagan is back with a new plan; unfortunately they still don't feel that it is in their interest to develop the lot under the current GR zoning which would mean an office or retail building. Instead, they believe that a commercial storage facility like Public Storage or Storage Depot would be ideally suited to the location. This proposal would require an up-zoning to Commercial Services (CS), although Reagan would agree to limit all other CS uses of the land so that only commercial storage would be allowed.

In two smaller meetings, Reagan's representatives met with a small group of SRCC members and concerned neighbors to go over their proposal in detail. Reagan made numerous concessions in the site plan to lessen the impact of the proposed 125,000 square foot, four-story structure on the neighboring properties by including extensive landscaping, tree preservation, lighting, setbacks and layout. They also agreed to restrict the design of the building to be more aesthetically pleasing and resemble an office building with higher quality exterior materials and windows. They also proposed limiting the hours of operations and claimed that the number of site trips would be far less than what an office or retail property would cause.

At a well-attended SRCC General Meeting on June 3rd,

Reagan's representatives gave a final overview of the plan and asked for approval. The membership asked many questions, raised issues and, in the end, voted unanimously to oppose the zoning change for the following fundamental reasons:

- Commercial storage requires CS zoning for a reason – the usage is consistent with all the other uses allowed under CS
- The City already defines CS zoning as 'not compatible' with adjacent residentially zoned properties.
- The neighboring properties would feel significant impact from this type of facility even with all the restrictions that were proposed.
- Restrictions in a Conditional Overlay and Restrictive Covenants can be hard to enforce. Given that Reagan has no operator signed on for this property, there is concern that the style and layout commitments would not be easily enforced and the building would end up as a giant box like most storage facilities.
- 'Zoning is forever.' Once CS zoning is allowed on this site, even when limited by a conditional overlay, it opens the door for the restrictions to be knocked off more easily over time. This phenomenon, known as 'zoning creep' can result in future uses that are more intense and incompatible with the surrounding properties.

The zoning case will now be heard by the Planning Commission where SRCC and concerned neighbors will voice their opposition to the zoning change. The case will either move on to City Council or can be appealed to City Council after the Planning Commission has voted. If you feel strongly about this case, please contact Pat Roeder at pat.roeder@gmail.com to get involved. ☼

- Several teachers were recognized: Ms. Holly Brandt was one of eight central Texas teacher finalists for the 2013 HEB Excellence in Education Award; Mr. Brandon, Ms. Collins, Ms. Adams, and Ms. Friedman were awarded the Innovative Education award from Education Austin; and Ms. Arispe was THES Campus Teacher of the Year.
- Our first campus Service Learning project culminated with the May 9 Hunger March at the our State Capitol steps, where many 2nd, 4th and 5th graders from THES rallied to raise awareness of childhood hunger in Texas. Several students spoke at the podium on the Capitol steps as well. This was the culmination of a year-long project in partnership with Elsa England Elementary in Round Rock ISD. The students from both schools integrated language arts, science, math, art, and music with their study of childhood hunger. To quote a fifth grader, 'When we work together, we can make a difference.'
- The Travis Heights Elementary Art & Music Fund-raiser at Guero's in May raised over \$5400 for our fine arts programs. Thanks to all who came to the event or

donated online. And special thanks to Jon Dee, Gretchen and Willie Graham!

And coming up this summer:

- Teacher training is a critical element to implementing the vision established by the Innovation School Project initiative (For more on the Innovation School Project, visit www.THESinnovationschoolproject.com). Our teachers have been attending ongoing trainings and conferences all spring in the areas of Service Learning, Blended Learning, and Expeditionary Learning, and this summer, are committing several extra weeks to more intensive training and preparation, including a three-day Blended Learning workshop with Rice University, training with Dual Language specialists, intensives on Service and Expeditionary Learning, and ten days with full staff planning in August.
- We have a summer meeting scheduled to help our community stay connected to Travis Heights Elementary School. Join us, Tuesday July 9th, 5:30pm, Wildflower Unitarian Church (East Oltorf) in the 'Parlor.' Children are welcome! Healthy snacks will be provided. ☼

The Norwood Marathon

Wolf Sittler, restorenorwood@yahoo.com

ABOUT SIX YEARS AGO I had some extra time and wanted to do something that did not involve making money. SRCC offered the perfect local opportunity as it is all about residents giving back to our community. At a 2008 SRCC meeting a speaker asked for help to make change happen at the Norwood Estate.

I had paid little attention to that house over the last 25 years, but as a professional woodworker with remodeling and house building experience, I figured this would fit my skills. Blinded by idealism and lack of political experience, I, along with two other SRCC'ers, volunteered to help. I figured it could be finished in one year. Today, more than five years later, I can report that the first stage of the Norwood marathon is almost done. By the time you read this, the Norwood Park Foundation (NPF) and the City will have a signed agreement that authorizes NPF to begin the rehabilitation of the eyesore on the banks of Lady Bird Lake, at minimal cost to taxpayers.

I did not commit to this project because I'm a huge fan of historical houses. In fact, it's never been about the house *per se*. Rather, it has been about the practice of public service—about stepping up to the plate and doing something that can, and should, be done. As long as others join in this effort by donating time, money, and materials, we'll fix the house and surrounding grounds and have neighborhood meetings there, as well as other community-wide events.

Norwood House will be financially self-sufficient as a rental venue for private events. NPF will operate it as a non-profit enterprise and revenue, after expenses, will grow a park endowment fund for future maintenance and improvements—it will not vanish in the black hole of the City general fund.

While it has taken much longer than I thought, what I know for sure is that idealism prevailed! ☘

Travis Heights History OnLine

Michele Webre, 512-422-1262

Folks have been busy working on the history of Travis Heights! Check out our revamped website, historictravishights.org, and some cool new links such as Sanborn Maps, histories of the area, and the Austin Historical Survey Wiki, a great resource for documenting and sharing our history. We're also working on a photographic history book and are looking for family histories, photos, and images that will help tell the story of our neighborhood and the people who lived here. If you have any to share, contact me at michele.webre@gmail.com.

Preservation Austin recently awarded us with a much appreciated \$5,000 grant. It will help pay for the preservation consultants who are working on our historic district

Congress Avenue Baptist Church Seeks Zoning Change

Marc Davis, SRCC President

THE CONGRESS AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH (CABC) is asking to up-zone the back half of their lot that faces Nickerson from SF-3 to GR with a Conditional Overlay. The church has 'civic use' which allows them to build structures like buildings and parking lots on SF-3 zoned land as long as it is for church use. Recently, CABC started leasing out their parking lot to HomeSlice for overflow parking but this is technically not allowed due to it not being a church-specific use. Despite no complaints from the neighborhood, they are attempting to get the necessary zoning for this use to be legal.

While CABC is proposing to limit the GR zoning to only parking use, the up-zoning of that portion of the lot from SF-3 is potentially problematic for the direct neighbors. It could allow CABC to do more intensive parking usage on the lot and it potentially opens the door to non residential development by a future owner of the property.

To obtain this up-zoning, CABC needs a Neighborhood Plan amendment. The GSRC Neighborhood Plan Contact Team has reviewed the proposal and issued a letter opposing the plan amendment due to the fact that it is in conflict with the intent of the neighborhood plan, the intended use of the property could negatively affect the neighboring properties, and it sets a precedent for commercial zoning creeping into the neighborhood.

Representatives for CABC came to the June 3rd SRCC General Membership meeting to discuss the proposal. There was concern over the up-zoning for all the reasons that the NPCT mentioned. CABC is also looking into a proposal that would require an amendment to the Fairview Park NCCD. CABC will return to a future SRCC meeting with their final proposal. ☘

efforts. However, we still need donations and volunteers to serve as block captains, fundraising committee members, and as research assistants. Please email me if you're interested. Finally, we hope to have a Centennial celebration in the fall, so stayed tuned!

Austin is the fifth youngest major metropolitan area in the country, with only 2.5% of its housing predating WWII, so its even more important that we try to preserve our remaining historic structures. Please help the Travis Heights-Fairview Park Historic District Project by volunteering your time and by making a tax-deductible donation on our website. Checks can be written to: Austin Community Foundation, 4315 Guadalupe St., Suite 300, Austin, TX 78751, with "Travis Heights-Fairview Park Historic District" in the memo line. ☘

We thank all our officers, area coordinators, committees and representatives for their dedication to our community!

Call your coordinator for SRCC questions, to volunteer or to help deliver newsletters.

Area Coordinators

- Area 1** Claudette Lowe 447-1514
- Area 1** Helen Dey Valdez 634-3740
- Area 2** Kenny Schulz 448-3290
- 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** Tim Boswell 589-5593
- Area 4a** Sam Martin 441-5222
- Area 4a** Eric Andruscavage 707-1340
- Area 4b** Kris Asthalter 443-4963
- Area 5** Neal Nuwash 462-9093
- Area 5** Elloa Mathews 442-6986
- 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

Committees and Representatives

STANDING COMMITTEES

- Parks, Schools & Environment
 - David Todd (Parks) 512-416-0400
 - Sherri Ancipink (Sch) 512-707-2627
 - Marty Christman (Env) 512-912-0724
- Planning & Zoning
 - Jean Mather 512-444-4153
- Transportation & Public Safety
 - Marc Davis 512-656-2841
- Membership; Communications
 - Carol Martin 512-441-5222
- Newsletter
 - Gloria Lee 512-441-5167
- Financial
 - Sam Martin 512-441-5222

AD HOC COMMITTEES

- Web Guy Jason Molin
j@jasonmolin.net
- Social Media Gal Kristen Haga
communications@srcccatx.org

- Norwood House
 - Wolf Sittler 512-32-9189
- TH-FP Historic Dist
 - Michele Webre 512-422-1262

REPRESENTATIVES

- Austin Neighborhoods Council
 - Wallace Henderson 512-442-8908
- East Riverside (EROC)
 - Toni House 512-447-8090

SRCC Meetings

We typically meet the first Monday of every month at 7:15 PM at the Grace United Methodist Church, 205 E. Monroe. Check the website for details: www.srcccatx.org.

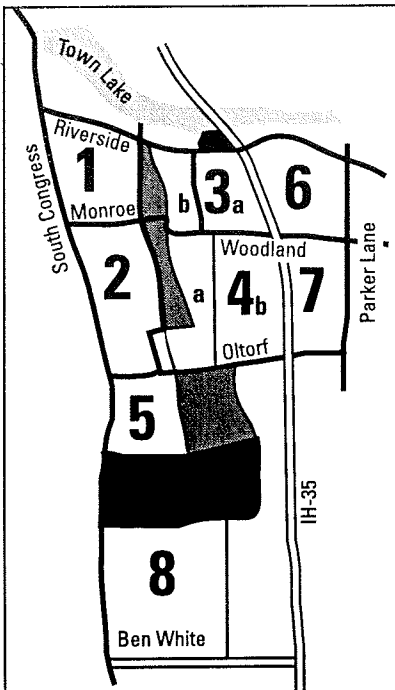
If you want to be part of the group's listserv send a **blank** email to (include hyphen):
SouthRiverAustin-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

- St. Edward's
 - Elloa Mathews 512-442-6986
- South Central Coalition
 - Danette Chimenti 512-912-8290
- Save Town Lake
 - Dennis Cudd 917 568-3147
- TH Arts Trail
 - Margaret Adie 512-440-8579
- Travis Park Apt/Austin Interfaith
 - Terry Franz 512-447-8786

SRCC Officers

- President Marc Davis
president@srcccatx.org
- Vice President Carol Martin
vicepresident@srcccatx.org
- Treasurer Nancy Byrd
treasurer@srcccatx.org
- Secretary Garret Nick
secretary@srcccatx.org

SRCC Areas map



Join your Neighbors in SRCC!

SOUTH RIVER CITY CITIZENS MEMBERSHIP FORM

To pay via PayPal (and where you can also sign-up for a yearly subscription), go to www.srcccatx.org/membership-dues/

You can also send check made payable to SRCC, along with completed form to:

SRCC, Attention: Treasurer, P.O. Box 40632, Austin, TX 78704

Note: Dues and Contributions are not tax-deductible.

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS		
NO. OF YEARS	INDIVIDUAL	FAMILY
1	\$20	\$35
2	\$35	\$65
3	\$50	\$95

Membership: = _____
circle type: FAMILY / INDIVIDUAL
no. of years: _____

Add'l donation to = _____
SRCC General Fund

Total = _____

DATE _____
 NAME(S) _____
 ADDRESS _____
 PHONE(S) _____
 EMAIL(S) _____