

It's Not Just About Fixing Up an Old House!

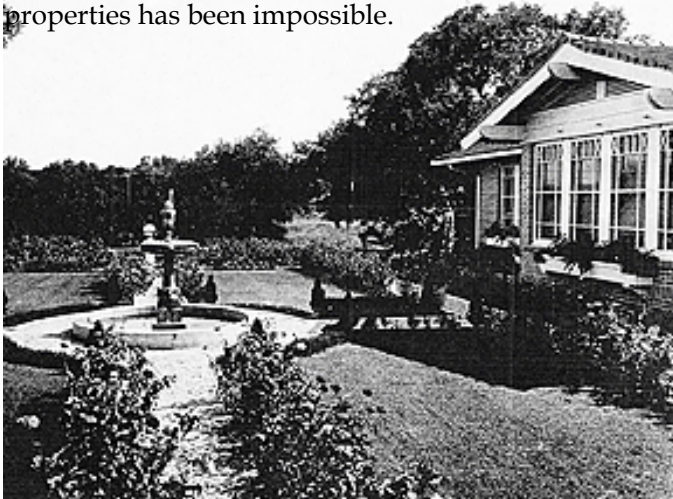
By Wolf Sittler

Every preservation expert agrees that protecting a historic structure from further deterioration is step one. Since the roof of the Norwood House leaks, this is our first step. If you or I owned the Norwood House, we could remove the existing shingles & felt, temporarily patch the holes, and install a protective shield, with the help of our friends in 2-3 days, at almost no cost. The debris would need to be hauled to a special landfill, since the felt contains asbestos. Although it was deregulated ten years ago, roofing felt on public buildings requires a much more costly remedy (even though the users are private citizens). For starters you need: a licensed abatement contractor (\$3,000 to \$8,000), an air monitor during removal (\$650 a day), and a special landfill. And that's just the beginning. Lead paint was used throughout, and asbestos is in the interior wall plaster. That part can only be done by the experts and that's fine as we don't need to do that now!

As you can tell, these costs add up, but our immediate goal is protection. The Norwood House restoration fund at the Austin Parks Foundation has a current balance of \$6,500. Hopefully we won't need much more for this first critical step.

So how much is the city chipping in to fix what they broke? For the last 18 months the city has said that there is no money available. During that same 18 months, \$1.4 million was paid to a firm to design the controversial boardwalk. By the time you read this we might know whether the city council has added another \$590,000 to complete the boardwalk design. So public funds can be found; clearly what's lacking is the political interest and will.

Once the Norwood House is restored and becomes a valuable part of our park facilities, the conditions that allowed the house to fall so badly into disrepair will remain. PARD has never been adequately funded, so proper maintenance of existing properties has been impossible.



But that is no reason to sit idly by and permit this historic house to self-destruct. It is instead a call to action. Consider contributing what you can in time and/or money. Contact elected officials and urge them to find money to help the Norwood Posse cover the costs of lead paint/asbestos abatement. After all, even if the house were to be torn down, the abatement costs would be the same!

You are also encouraged to let these same officials know that you want them to adequately fund PARD in order to protect and preserve our public property. For more information or to volunteer, go to our website www.restorenorwood.org. ☰

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Victory for the Neighborhood!

By Sarah Campbell & Jean Mather

Early this year, the Congress Avenue Baptist Church (CABC), filed applications with the City to (1) rezone its property at 1511 S. Congress and to (2) amend our Greater South River City Combined (GSRCC) Neighborhood Plan Future Land Use Map (FLUM) -- yes, a mouthful! This required review and commentary not only by SRCC, but also by the GSRCC Planning Contact Team members within the neighborhood, a creation of City Planning.

The CABC property was zoned SF-3 (single family), like most of the neighborhood, but unlike most of properties facing S. Congress. Also unlike most properties along S. Congress, which are only one-half block deep before an alley divides them from residential properties, CABC is a full block deep. The rezoning request was to intensify the entire tract. The amendment request was to change the FLUM from Civic to Commercial. Both SRCC and GSRCC agreed to Commercial zoning and use on the western (S. Congress) half of the tract, but differed on the east half of the block surrounded on three sides by SF-3 residential uses. In an intelligent attempt at compromise, GSRCC voted in May to recommend Neighborhood Office zoning for the eastern half. In a more emotional and impassioned vote in June, SRCC recommended the eastern half remain SF-3.

Mary Lovell began gathering the required 20% of nearby resident signatures to validate a petition AGAINST the Church's request on the eastern half and FOR keeping it SF-3 zoning. Greg Jacobson, a new nearby neighbor, and Mary met with City Zoning staff and with City Council Members to argue for SRCC's position. While the Planning Commission voted on August 25th in favor of CABC's requests, the City Council voted in favor of SRCC's position several weeks later and to not challenge the valid petition. The Church could not budge any of the petition signers to change positions, so in the end, CABC agreed to leave the eastern half of its tract zoned SF-3 with a Civic use.

This is an especially sweet victory because SRCC took a bold position against all odds, AND because other Councils have overridden valid petitions collected by citizens, a legal path of objection. Thank you, Mary and Greg, and all others who wrote and/or visited staff, Planning Commission and City Council Members and attended public meetings. And many thanks to Council Members Laura Morrison, Bill Spelman, Chris Riley, and Randi Shade, who agreed in advance to support the valid petition prompting the Church to withdraw its request for commercial zoning on the Nickerson side of the property. 🌿

Proposed Elimination of Bus Route 9 by Capital Metro

By Carol Martin

In a recent SRCC newsletter I wrote an article announcing the installation of a handsome new bus stop in our neighborhood. I encouraged residents to consider taking the bus as an alternative to driving. So I'm disappointed to write that Capital Metro is proposing to eliminate our Route 9. The decision is based on several factors which you can study in documents posted on their website (see links below). Service Plan 2020 is a comprehensive analysis of the bus system and provides a plan for growth over the next 10 years.

This article is intended to raise awareness, rather than summarizing all the issues and perspectives. Bus Route 9, Enfield/Travis Heights, is a north-south route reaching from Walmart on Ben White to 35th St (near Laguna Gloria). Capital Metro's ridership studies conclude that the number of riders using the portion of the route that runs through the Travis Heights neighborhood is not high enough to be cost-effective. Riders who use bus stops along Oltorf, East Side, Live Oak, Travis Heights and Monroe will have to go to Congress Avenue to board a bus.

On Friday October 16th, Capital Metro Senior Planners, Roberto Gonzales and James Gamez, met with neighbors to discuss the proposal to eliminate Route 9. We expressed our concerns about losing the service and discussed route alternatives. They described the method of ridership statistics and said they are continuing to monitor ridership for Route 9 due to the neighbors' concerns. We learned that Route 29 which serves the Zilker and Barton Hills neighborhoods is also proposed for elimination. Representatives of SRCC agreed to contact both neighborhood associations and explore opportunities to coordinate our efforts to retain core service to our areas.

If you rely on Route 9 to get to work and other destinations, or if you believe that convenient public transportation reduces car congestion in the downtown area, **now is the time to let Capital Metro know**. You can contact Capital Metro at 389-7400 or go to their website: capmetro.org; and take the online survey at capmetro.org/serviceplan2020/contact.asp. 🌿

Committee Reports & Neighborhood Announcements

Sherwood Oaks/Area 5 Update

By Elloa Mathews

National Night Out

About 20 neighbors braved the heat and mosquitos to eat pizza and meet with the Sherwood Oaks District Representative from APD, Officer Ray Lopez as well as South Central Area Commander Lt. John Hutto. Kids and dogs played at the entrance to the Blunn Creek Preserve while adults discussed crime issues in the neighborhood.

Vote on Variances similar to Board of Adjustment stance

Due to the number of carports and other structures being illegally built in the city setbacks in Sherwood Oaks, neighbors voted unanimously less one abstention at the October meeting to send a letter to the city stating that SRCC does not support granting variances regarding carport setbacks. The most recent variance request for a carport built in the setback required five hearings at the Board of Adjustment, which first denied the request unanimously in June, before the applicant then tried to make a hardship case based on fairly insignificant trees. The Land Development Code requires that hardships may only be granted based on a physical impediment on the property such as a protected tree (19" diameter or greater), topography or lot shape.

Nine out of ten cases at the Board requesting a variance have already built the structure in the easement without getting a permit and nine out of ten have no hardship. Board members at the Oct. 12 hearing expressed their continued disappointment in the number of these cases while discussing how much time these cases consume on the Board's agenda.

Storm Drain Project

Glen Taffinder, COA project manager for the Long Bow Storm Drain Project to alleviate flooding, reports that the project is set to begin next Feb. 2010. Questions about the project can be referred to SRCC members Jeff Kessel (jskessel@pbsj.com), Marty Christman (MChristman@geosyntec.com) or Elloa Mathews (ellomail@austin.rr.com). ❧

SRCC Communication Subcommittee Making Progress

President Sarah Campbell asked several Executive Committee members (Marc Davis, Garret Nick and Dawn Cizmar) along with Carol Martin, Membership Chair, Jane Kellogg, owner of the current SRCC website and listserv and Helen Valdez, Newsletter Editor to join her in serving on an ad hoc committee to explore new and better ways for communicating to and among our membership.

The group held its first meeting in June and set the following goals for the committee: 1) Expand Membership 2) Increase Newsletter Access; 3) Provide Greater Security for our List Serve; and 4) Expand/upgrade the SRCC Website and Web Presence. We've looked at several different neighborhood association newsletters, tossed around some concepts for general advertising rules and looked at different types of web services. Marc and Garret have done extensive research on different web options and presented their positive and negative attributes to the group. Several meetings later, and with ongoing online discussion between our sessions, it appears that the group is ready to start alpha testing a new platform, with the goal of developing this product sufficiently (adding more content and testing it for security, convenience and accessibility) to roll it out to the full Executive Committee, SRCC chairs and Area Coordinators for further testing in the not too distant future. We will obviously keep you posted!

JOIN US FOR THE TRAVIS HEIGHTS ART TRAIL

DEC 5TH & 6TH FROM 11 AM TO 5 PM

By Margaret Adie

Come and enjoy your local artists as they open up their homes and studios to the public again this December. There 33 artists this year in 21 locations! It is going to be a great show, and we love showing off our beautiful neighborhood and the great talent that is here! Watch for our brochure and map as well as signs and balloons marking the locations. We look forward to seeing you all!

And a BIG THANKS to so many wonderful business that have supported us this year!

For more information and an Arts Trail Map go to: www.travisheightsart.com. ❧



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

Dawn Cizmar 512/443-4231

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 listserv for details. If you want to be part of the SRCC listserv send an email to: SouthRiverAustin-subscribe@yahoogroups.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

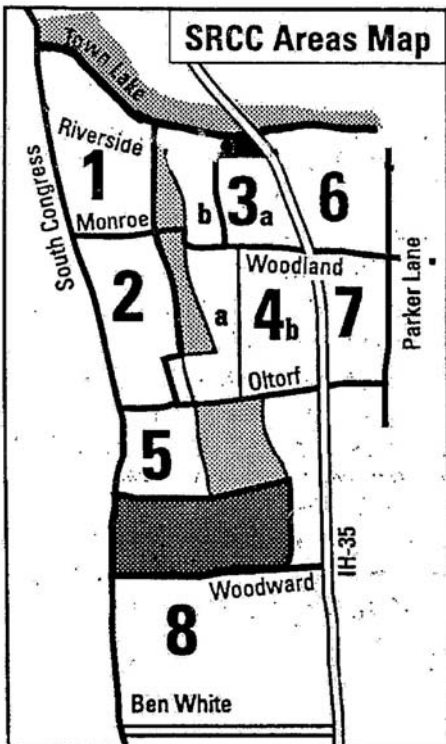
Parks, Schools & Environment	David Todd (Parks)	416-0400
	Sherri Ancipink (Sch)	707-2627
	Marty Christman (Env)	912-0724
Planning & Zoning	Jean Mather	444.4153
Transportation & Public Safety	Marc Davis (Interim)	656-2841
Membership	Carol Martin	
Special Events	Inactive	

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	Jean Warneke	443-5488
St. Edward's	Elloa Mathews	442-6986
South Central Coalition	Danette Chimenti	565-0217
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 October 2008

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: _____

Make checks payable to SRCC (for membership) and mail to: SRCC, P O Box 40632, Austin TX 78704.