

SRCC newsletter

AN OCCASIONAL PRINTED PUBLICATION OF THE
SOUTH RIVER CITY CITIZENS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
THE FALL 2011 ISSUE



PARD Staff: "Restore!"

Wolf Sittler, restorenorwood@yahoo.com, 447-2150

THREE AND A HALF YEARS after beginning a campaign to do something about the Norwood House, the Norwood Posse is delighted to announce that last month, PARD planning staff recommended the house be restored. They noted, but disregarded, the demolition recommendation submitted by their paid preservation consultant in late June. Instead they responded to our pro-bono consultants' promotion of restoration, the intent of historic zoning and a pro-restoration resolution by the City Council from March of last year. Plans for the redevelopment of the entire Norwood Park are ongoing.

In July we presented a restoration proposal to PARD based on a public/non-profit partnership that relies on private funding via donations, loans, and grants and includes involvement of volunteers, as appropriate. Our intent is to create a 501(c)3 that will provide the leadership necessary subject to approval of the Landmark Commission and PARD. It will be called the Norwood Park Foundation.

PARD staff are now preparing to meet with us to explore this partnership. We have two members who have agreed to invest \$300,000 to jump-start restoration. While they plan a substantial donation, their remaining investment will be returned, without interest, via rental fees generated by the restored house. Once the cost of restoration is repaid, revenue from rentals, after expenses of operation and maintenance will be reserved for park upgrades....even for other PARD properties. According to PARD figures, and our projections, this will easily be in excess of \$100,000 annually. *Continued, page 3*

So. Congress Parking Advisory Group Meets

Sarah Campbell, sarahecampbell@earthlink.net

Last March, City Council adopted a resolution (#20110310-024) directing the City Manager to work with all groups—specifically naming the Bouldin Creek and SRCC neighborhood associations and locally owned businesses—affected by inadequate and overflow parking associated with the success of the “nationally known retail district” that is South Congress. The City’s Transportation Department put together an “advisory group” comprised of neighborhood representatives and So. Congress business and property owners, which first met on August 2nd. From SRCC, I, as SRCC President, am participating along with Mary Lovell, who actually lives on So. Congress at East Gibson, and Matt Lynaugh, who lives on Academy between two very popular commercial establishments within one-half block of So. Congress.

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Shifting of Responsibilities

Beginning September 2011, Vice-President Marc Davis began taking over some duties usually performed by SRCC’s President. He now is receiving City notices instead of me, is preparing meeting agendas and conducting the meetings, all in addition to his work with the Safety Committee.

There are several reasons: 1) I am at the mid-point of my third year as President and need to start phasing out; 2) Marc is willing to try on the Presidency for the next six months, as a warm up to the March elections—assuming he does run and you do elect him; and 3) our bylaws provide only minimal duties to the Vice-President, so I will be trying to develop that role over the next six months for better responsibility sharing among SRCC Officers. Wish us luck!

Sarah Campbell, SRCC President ☘

INSIDE! UPDATES ON:
Neighborhood Watch
East Oltorf Street & EROC
Fulmore’s 125 Celebration—Photos!
Blunn Creek Herbicide Status

SRCC Briefs

- **The Brook Apartments Complex**, with frontages along Woodland, IH 35 and Fairlawn, has only one point of everyday ingress and egress, from the IH 35 service road just south of Woodland. There are two other access points, one from Woodland and the other from Fairlawn. These two points were made Emergency Only as a condition of the zoning in 1971, in response to neighborhood concerns over future new traffic resulting from the 184 apartments at The Brook. Over the years, there has been the occasional tenant complaint, as there is now, but the apartment management has always honored the zoning condition. A new resident recently met with SRCC's Zoning and Planning Committee to request that the Fairlawn access be opened permanently to shorten her trips when she needs to go west. The Committee could find no justification for changing rules that have worked for forty years, simply in order to reduce her slight inconvenience; we denied her request.
- **The Travis Heights Fairview Park Historic District Project** is making a push toward our

National Register nomination for the historic neighborhood. The effort begins again this fall, focusing on research and writing, with a goal of submitting the finished nomination to the Texas Historical Commission in the late spring. Volunteers are needed for database management, photography, brief research and writing assignments and editing.

Please contact consultant Casey Gallagher (casey@historictavisheights.org) or Michele Webre (michele@historictavisheights.org) if you are interested in volunteering.

- **Regarding the former Sunnymeade Apartments, now Known as The District at SoCo** In 2008 the SRCC negotiated with developers Kaplan Management, who had purchased the Sunnymeade apartments (501 E. Oltorf Street), about their plans to build a new residential complex in place of the existing one. The developers came to the table having already addressed many of the concerns the SRCC often times had to fight for so the process went fairly smooth. St Edwards also weighed in on the development as it potentially partially blocked their view of downtown. Shortly after

the agreement was made, the Sunnymeade apartments were demolished but with the economy suffering the new project was delayed. Right at about the time the city started the Oltorf reconstruction project, The District at SoCo broke ground.

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

- **SRCC's official news-only website** enables you to stay current on official SRCC events, meetings and announcements through RSS, Facebook or Twitter. The website is intended as a supplement to the invaluable Yahoo list serv and the printed SRCC newsletter.

The website also offers new 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!

Mark your Calendars— Its Time for the Travis Heights Arts Trail!

December 3 & 4, 11am–5pm

www.travisheightsart.com

COME OUT for a weekend

of art as your neighborhood artists open up their homes

and studios to the public. There are 35 artists, including many **new** participants this year. We are lucky to have so much talent in our neighborhood. We look forward to seeing you all. And, a BIG thanks to so many wonderful businesses that have supported us this year. ☘



VAMPIRE power in YOUR house?

Austin Public Library and Austin Energy are providing a service to help you find out exactly how much electricity all of your plug-ins are drawing (with power on and off). You might be surprised to discover that some of your every-day household appliances use quite a bit of electricity when they are plugged in but turned off. Called "phantom load" or "vampire power," this energy drain can account for about 10% of an individual home's electricity use – enough electricity to more than pay an electric bill one month of each year. Beginning October 15, you can check out one of the easy-to-use wattmeters for three weeks through any of the libraries. You will also find a good selection of books and materials on energy efficiency and conservation tips. Plugging devices like the TV, DVD player, and DVR into a power strip and switching it off when not in use can save you a surprising amount of money. ☘

Why Join SRCC?

Wondering why we ask that you pay dues to your neighborhood association? Well, your dues and membership:

- enables you to vote on issues at SRCC meetings;
- contributes to neighborhood watch programs, park enhancements, street improvements, newsletters, neighborhood schools, neighborhood planning—SRCC efforts to maintain and improve the area we live in;
- shows involvement if you haven't time to volunteer;
- shows your support for your neighbors who are working hard on the neighborhood's behalf.

A single membership is \$20; a family membership is \$35. You can find the membership form in this newsletter or pay online at www.srccatx.org. ☘

So. Congress Parking, continued from page 1

The Advisory Group's meetings have been facilitated by the City's new Community Engagement Consultant Larry Schooler. Mr. Schooler has kept us on track with his excellent skills and good humor such that by the end of the third meeting on September 26th, the group was able to come to a very high degree of agreement on a list of twenty-five ideas. The list is too long to include here but is posted on our website srccatx.org under the Transportation tab.

The number of ideas demonstrates that there is no easy fix for the So. Congress parking problems—nor is there one difficult fix. A true fix will have to be a delicately balanced number of initiatives, instituted in just the right proportions, which will likely take some trial and error. So don't be surprised to see some short-term changes that might occur on and near the Avenue in the near future.

Meanwhile, check www.srccatx.org for updates.

SRCC Neighborhood Watch Update

by Marc Davis, marc.davis@gmail.com, 512-656-2841

THIS PAST JULY, SRCC LAUNCHED a pilot Neighborhood Watch Patrol program in an effort to dramatically increase our impact on the ongoing vehicle and home burglaries in our neighborhood. The pilot program covers Areas 4A and 4B, two parts of the neighborhood that have historically experienced a significant amount of crime, and is modeled after the very successful Patrol program in Barton Hills that has decreased burglaries by over 50%.

After an initial training session led by Committee Members Dennis Cudd and Shelly Leibham Vornberg, aided by Officer Robert Barboza, Officer Dwayne Kinley, Commander Ernest Padraza, and Barton Hills Neighborhood Watch Chair John Luther, we had twenty-four trained patrollers who began signing up for slots on our patrol calendar. Throughout August and September, we had volunteers patrolling the pilot area for anywhere from five to fifteen hours per week with large magnetic "Neighborhood Patrol" signs on their vehicles. In addition to these volunteer efforts, Constable Maria Canchola graciously offered to have her Deputies patrol the neighborhood occasionally on their way to and from the Court House. The increased presence was noticed by several supportive residents and, we are sure, many criminals as well.

In early September, APD apprehended two suspects after a burglary on Avondale and an attempted burglary on Travis Heights Blvd. In addition, 911 calls by the victims and neighbors played a large role in the arrests. Since these arrests, and the implementation of the patrol program, we have seen a drop in the amount of burglaries in these areas of our neighborhood. It's still too early to tell whether there has been a lasting effect, but we will examine the data very closely at the end of the year to determine whether or not the patrol program has had a positive impact on crime and, if so, the program will be expanded.

A second training session was held in September where an additional fifteen patrollers were trained. We are trying to encourage all of the trained patrollers to sign up for just two hours per month as well as continue to hold periodic training sessions for anyone who is interested in participating in the program. If you feel that you can devote just an hour and a half to training and a small ongoing commitment of two or more hours per month, then please contact us at neighborhoodwatch@srccatx.org and we'll get you involved. ☘

Norwood House, continued from page 1

While we cannot know how this will unfold, we do know that PARD staff have responded affirmatively to our input...a sign that may bode well for future campaigns for other projects. For a complete look at the last seven months of our activity go to the Norwood blog at www.restorenorwood.posterous.com. ☘

City Seeks to Redefine Open Spaces in Development Requirements

by Gayle Goff, Linda Land & Toni House

[Editor's note: It may be that by the time this printed newsletter reaches you, the reader, that hearing date of 10/20 will be passed, but we still felt it important to provide awareness of this issue, as well as links to the complete article: <http://www.srccatx.org/2011/10/11/city-seeks-to-redefine-open-spaces-in-development-requirements/>]

IN SUMMER 2011, CITY COUNCIL initiated a review of the ordinance requirements for private open space that developers would be need to provide when creating commercial and multi-family developments (Resolution No. 20090514-036.) Council directed staff to review and make recommendations on modifications to the city-wide standards and criteria for what qualifies as open space. The resolution further stated that the proposed revisions should consider the needs of families and children, including child-friendly features such as interactive play spaces, art, requirements for public access, bicycle and

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What's Up with EROC.* The Fall Version

Toni House, latoniahouse@hotmail.com

► **THE EAST RIVERSIDE CORRIDOR REGULATING PLAN** (proposed new development regulations) will be unveiled in conjunction with the commencement of the East Riverside Transportation Study on October 27, at an Open House held in the Travis High School Cafeteria, 1211 East Oltorf, from 5 to 8 pm. (The ERC Regulating Plan will be provided to Working Group members at its Oct. 12 meeting.) The Open House attendees will be able to ask questions and provide feedback on the Regulating Plan. Your comments are important as additional changes may be made to the Plan based on your input. The Regulating Plan is expected to go before Planning Commission and City Council after November.

The East Riverside Corridor Transportation Study is your opportunity to advise the City regarding mobility issues along the Riverside Corridor—identify the problems and recommend solutions. The Study will address short, medium, and long-term transportation improvements through designing, costing-out and evaluation. There will be multiple opportunities for public participation in this Study. For more information, go to www.austinstrategic-mobility.com and www.AustinSMP.com.

► **MANSION PROPERTY PARK** (Maybe): PARD and the owner of the Mansion property (2100 Parker Ln. and adjoining lots) are still talking, but no contract is in place and the property is still on the market. ☘

*EROC: E. Riverside/Oltorf Combined Neighborhood Planning Area, encompassing SRCC Areas 6 & 7 as part of the Riverside Neighborhood Planning Area (NPA), Pleasant Valley NPA, and Parker Lane NPA.

Fulmore Falcons Celebrate the Middle School's 125th Anniversary

Some photos by current Fulmore Middle School journalism students, taken on September 24, 2011.



Ladies from Class of 1953 with their Falcon yearbook.



Left: Dolores Trevino of FMS Class 1969. Right: Carol Lee Sadler, FMS Class 1953 (with current FMS clarinet students). Ms. Sadler was the editor of the FMS newspaper, the Travis High newspaper and she became a reporter for the Austin American-Statesman



Bill and Ann Armentrout. Mr. Armentrout started as a Fulmore coach and shop teacher in 1968. He became assistant principal under Miss Linder and then principal when she died in mid-year. He is the link between the "old" Fulmore and its future. After he left Fulmore in 1985, he opened Covington MS and became its first principal.

Regarding the Blunn Creek Herbicide Spraying Debacle

Sarah Campbell, sarahecampbell@earthlink.net

As you may know, last summer the Parks and Recreation Department (PARD), along with support from the Watershed Protection Department, allowed an individual named Daniel White to spray herbicide in our park along Blunn Creek, killing a lot of vegetation. PARD required White to provide an herbicide applicator's license and insurance, which he had, but PARD also allowed him to write his own work plan and to work totally without supervision or even assistance. PARD did not notify SRCC, although the Director of PARD was told by her employees that the SRCC president had approved the spraying. Not only did I NOT approve the spraying, I didn't even know about it. Furthermore, I have found zero evidence that anybody else spoke for SRCC. This miscommunication is one example of a number of missteps on the part of PARD that have added up to a huge error in judgment to allow the spraying.

We now know that White was rude to threatening in response to skeptical residents who questioned his actions; sprayed trees and shrubs that were not listed on his own work plan; indiscriminately drove on parkland and the trails while people were nearby; mixed what we assume to be herbicide chemicals at a park drinking water fountain; applied fertilizer to a tree or trees without authorization or inclusion in his own work plan; took without permission numerous bucketfuls of water from the elementary school outdoor spigots; and admits to having sprayed without permission in other City parks in the past. Perhaps most condemning of all, though, is that White's reputation was known to PARD employees even before he was allowed to spray in Blunn.

SRCC put together a Task Force to channel residents' questions and concerns (outrage in some corners) for meetings with PARD. The meetings and ensuing conversations resulted in a final report on the incident, in the form of an internal memorandum to the Director, who accepted it. The SRCC Task Force found the report lacking in taking responsibility and in detailing real steps to ensure this sort of thing does not happen again. The Task Force sent a rather damning response to the City Manager, Council and Parks Board members among others, requesting a meeting to resolve concerns.

The objectives include having PARD officially acknowledge its mistakes with regard to this issue and having the City officially notify Mr. White that he will be subject to legal action if he is ever found using his applicators equipment on public lands within the City. Enforcement action (including fines) are recommended for the damage caused in executing the work he has done to date. The meeting has not yet occurred. ☼

pedestrian connectivity, and the functionality of the open space provided.

The proposed ordinance changes now being discussed, and that are supported by staff, are intended to clarify when and how open space is to be provided, and also sets forth requirements for amenities and design of the space. However, we are extremely concerned that many issues regarding the changes have not been addressed. The proposed changes raise serious questions as to the **NET RESULT** of the changes, both in terms of the actual amount of open space provided in current and future projects and the impact on our under-funded public parks. (City Council hearing on 10/20/11.)

We are very concerned about these proposed changes, and urge you to ask Council to ensure that the proposed amendments do not over-burden existing parks by increasing density without requiring sufficient on-site personal open/green space and that the proposed amendments do not adversely impact Neighborhood Planning Areas (“NPAs”) that already suffer from a lack of parkland and access to multi-purpose trails. Austin has always been known for its parks and common greens. Regulations to protect those spaces must apply equitably to all construction of new units and no one should be able to substitute for the open space requirement or buy out of it.

1. The proposed changes will apply to any MF (apartment or condominium) buildings constructed after the effective date of the ordinance.

- Many negotiations have taken place relying on the current Open Space Ordinance requirements as a baseline for what a project must include. This proposal will change the rules on these projects without any site/project specific input from the public.

- What does “constructed” mean in this situation? ... And what about a multi-building project? Is percentage of open space computed by project or by building? ...

2. The proposal includes a change in open space required from 2 percent of NET site area to 5 percent of GROSS site area.

-How would this change affect actual projects both on the ground and approved?

-How will the deletion of the required minimum open space per dwelling affect the actual overall open space on both small and large projects?

-Has staff reviewed actual examples of the NET open space gained or lost? Actual examples should be provided applying the new formula of 5 percent of gross site area to see how this compares to the former language requiring 300 sq ft for MF-1, 200 sq ft for MF-2, 150 sq ft for MF-3 and 100 sq ft for MF-4 and 5....

3. The proposal allows for eliminating, under certain conditions, and under other conditions, reducing the need for open space if the developer provides affordable units.

-How is it that providing affordable units replaces the need for open space? Do those with lower incomes need open space less? Does the fact that a development provides opportunities for those with lower incomes mean that all residents must do without open space?

-Why, because a developer provides affordable units, should the adjacent parks bear the impact of the increased usage his residents place on them? In most of the cases where developers have agreed to affordable units, they have already been compensated with other entitlements to do so (increased height, density, etc.) ...

4. Developer would have to pay fees in lieu if he claimed a hardship or that it was impractical to provide on-site personal open/greenspace, but there is no provision to ensure that the affected neighborhood would receive the benefit of those fees.

-Should the impact of hundreds of units be ignored merely because they are near a park? ... Why doesn't this ordinance take into account the number of units/residents relying on existing parkland/open space versus the actual square footage of parkland available to the surrounding community? ...

5. Whose definition of accessible parkland should the City use: PARD's or this new definition?

PARD's definition of what constitutes accessible parkland and multi-use trails should be used, not the definition currently proposed. Merely being within one-quarter mile of a park or trail does not mean that it can be safely and easily reached by residents. During PARD's Long Range Planning, PARD staff was very clear that highways and arterial roads are major barriers to accessing parkland....

6. The proposal adds a new type of open space—Private Personal Open Space—and allows developers to include it in their total accounting of Open Space provided within their development....

7. The proposed changes provide some specific elements of a project that may be counted toward the open space requirement. For example, a playground is described with some detail. But a water quality and storm water detention pond also counts if it is developed as an amenity.

Yet here the only definition of amenity is that the Director (we assume it means the Director of Neighborhood Planning & Development, but don't know for sure) approves. What happens if it is a regional water quality pond and involves reimbursement from the City? Or what if it was claimed as a community benefit in obtaining PUD zoning? What if it requires destroying a creek bed or removing a stand of trees to create it? ...

8. The proposal allows for “fees in lieu” instead of providing on-site personal private open/green space. ...

9. Additionally, in 2.7.3 B—Location Criteria #7 states: “Public access easements may be required in order to guarantee public access to the facilities.”

-Why is this not a requirement?

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

Call your coordinator for SRCC questions and to volunteer for co-coordinator or block captains 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** 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** 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) 416-0400
 - Sherri Ancipink (Sch) 707-2627
 - Marty Christman (Env) 912-0724
- Planning & Zoning
 - Jean Mather 444-4153
 - Teresa Griffin 444-6914
- Transportation & Public Safety
 - Marc Davis 656-2841
- Membership; Communications
 - Carol Martin 441-5222
- Newsletter
 - Gloria Lee 441-5167
- Financial
 - Sam Martin 441-5222

AD HOC COMMITTEES

- Norwood House
 - Wolf Sittler 632-9189
- TH-FP Historic Dist
 - Michele Webre 422-1262

REPRESENTATIVES

- Austin Neighborhoods Council
 - Wolf Sittler 632-9189
- East Riverside (EROC)
 - Toni House 447-8090
- St. Edward's
 - Elloa Mathews 442-6986

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.srccatx.org.

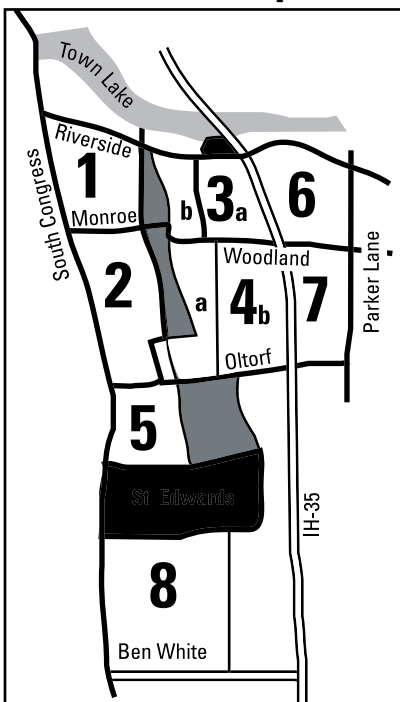
If you want to be part of the group's listserv send a **blank** email to (include hyphen): SouthRiverAustin-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

- South Central Coalition
 - Danette Chimenti 912-8290
- Save Town Lake
 - Dennis Cudd 917 568-3147
- TH Arts Trail
 - Margaret Adie 440-8579
- Travis Park Apt/Austin Interfaith
 - Terry Franz 447-8786

SRCC Officers

- President
 - Sarah Campbell 462-2261
 - president@srccatx.org
- Vice-President
 - Marc Davis 656-2841
 - vicepresident@srccatx.org
- Treasurer
 - Les Case 448-1032
 - treasurer@srccatx.org
- Secretary
 - Garret Nick 326-7676
 - secretary@srccatx.org

SRCC Areas map



Join your Neighbors in SRCC!

SOUTH RIVER CITY CITIZENS MEMBERSHIP FORM

To pay via PayPal, please go to www.srccatx.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	X	NO. OF YEARS	=	AMOUNT
<input type="checkbox"/> Single \$20	x	=
<input type="checkbox"/> Family \$35	x	=
Add'l donation to SRCC General Fund (Big Bubba/Bubbette)			=
			=
			TOTAL	=

DATE _____

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE(S) _____

EMAIL(S) _____