

SRCC newsletter

AN OCCASIONAL PRINTED PUBLICATION OF THE
SOUTH RIVER CITY CITIZENS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
ESTABLISHED 1973 | ONLINE AT WWW.SRCCATX.ORG
THE FEBRUARY / MARCH 2013 ISSUE

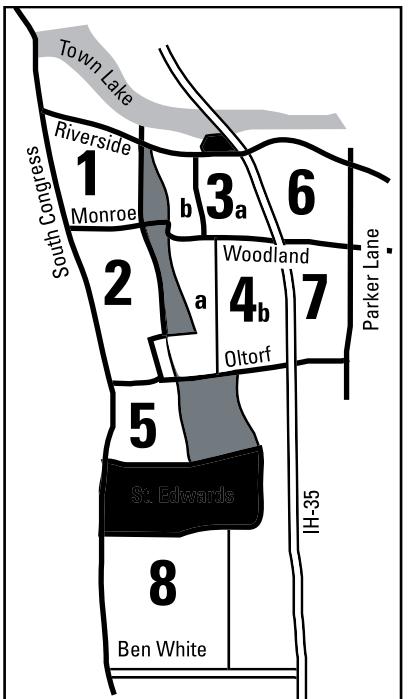
We thank all our officers, area coordinators, committees and representatives for their dedication to our community!

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 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

SRCC Areas map



Committees and Representatives

STANDING COMMITTEES

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

AD HOC COMMITTEES

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

Norwood House	632-9189
Wolf Sittler	

TH-FP Historic Dist	422-1262
Michele Webre	

REPRESENTATIVES

Austin Neighborhoods Council	
TBD! Contact President Marc Davis if you are interested in the position	

East Riverside (EROC)	
Toni House	447-8090
St. Edward's	

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@yahooroups.com

Elloa Mathews 442-6986

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

Marc Davis 656-2841

president@srccatx.org

Vice President

Carol Martin 441-5222

vicepresident@srccatx.org

Treasurer

Les Case 448-1032

treasurer@srccatx.org

Secretary

Garret Nick 326-7676

secretary@srccatx.org

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

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

Addt'l donation to = _____
SRCC General Fund

Total = _____

DATE _____

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE(S) _____

EMAIL(S) _____

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The SRCC Annual

POTLUCK ELECTION

Tuesday, March 5th 6pm

Grace United Methodist Church 205 East Munroe

KIDS WELCOME!

WHILE COURTS UP AND DOWN THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM continue to debate the voting maps in Texas, we are happy to say that our neighborhood zones have not yet been part of the gerrymandering. So come on down! Join your neighbors in the 'hood' for the annual potluck and elections for the executive board.

The 2012 SRCC executive team has been excellent. They have advanced the organization's administration to more efficient ways of communicating, record keeping and collaboration by creating a website and using online calendars, postings, archives, etc. This is the time to come by and give thanks for all of their work. A special thank-you goes to Les Case, who after two years as our treasurer, is stepping down. We are fortunate that several current members have agreed to serve again, if elected, in 2013. The nominee slate is:

President: Marc Davis (*P since 2012, VP since 2009*)

Vice President: Carol Martin (*VP since 2012,*

Communications Chair since 2010; Membership Chair as long as she can remember)

Secretary: Garret Nick (*Secretary since 2007*)

Treasurer: **Vacancy! We need a volunteer!**

Nominations will be accepted from the floor. Anyone wishing to run for the office is encouraged to contact Marc Davis, our current President or any of the other officers prior to the Tuesday March 5th meeting (see back page for contact information). ☺

ELECTION NOTE

Feb. 5th was the deadline to become a new member and vote at the general membership meeting, BUT if you have not lapsed membership in two years, you can pay your dues on the floor and vote. And of course, we encourage your membership in the neighborhood association at any time. And come in ny event! Meet your neighbors!

Looking Back on 2012

THE YEAR 2012 was an eventful one for SRCC—we continued to preserve and celebrate the diversity and uniqueness of our neighborhood while vigilantly fighting to maintain the quality of life that brought us all here in the first place.

Our residents created fifty-six new certified wildlife habitats on their properties and earned 2nd place in the 2012 Wildlife Habitat Challenge. Our very own Travis Heights Elementary School became the first community based, campus-led public school in Austin with the help of some incredibly dedicated parents and staff. Stacy Park continued to benefit from dedicated neighbors and outstanding efforts from the Watershed Protection department. Our Art Trail celebrated all of the truly magnificent artists that live within our boundaries. All in all, wonderful things continue to happen in our neighborhood as a result of our dedicated and committed neighbors.

Annual Meeting

Potluck starts 6 pm

Grace United Methodist Church Entertainment 7:15 pm
205 East Munroe Elections at 7:30 pm

Unfortunately, we all had to deal with continued parking issues from South Congress Avenue, massive infill development construction noise, an increase in burglary and property crime, and repeated attempts to increase commercial development near our single-family homes. At every step, SRCC and its core group of members and dedicated residents volunteered countless hours to try and help protect our neighborhood from these threats.

In 2013, there will be an ever-increasing need for active, caring, and committed neighbors to step-up and help make sure that SRCC continues to be the wonderful place it has always been. Come to a meeting, get to know your neighbors, and get involved.

—Marc Davis, SRCC President

Travis Heights Elementary's Innovation School Project

Kim-Marie O'Driscoll

TRAVIS HEIGHTS THUNDERBIRDS, with the support of Education Austin, Austin Interfaith and Austin ISD, are thinking outside the box when it comes to education by bringing it back to the “village.” Travis Heights Elementary School is now the first community based, campus-led public school in Austin!

For nearly two years, Travis Heights Elementary School parents, teachers, administrators and community members have been collaborating to make a great school even better. We spent over a year examining the specific needs of our school and developing a vision for a more holistic approach to our children’s education. In October 2012, over 90% of household and faculty voted in support of the proposed vision. In December 2012, Austin ISD school board trustees gave us their unanimous approval to move forward with a carefully crafted, and heavily-researched proposal, based on the ongoing feedback from our school community. So began the journey of Travis Heights Elementary School as the first grass-roots, community-led, “campus based in-district charter” school within AISD.

What does the vision for THES's future look like?

We want to implement creative and relevant instruction based on our current TEKS curriculum, with more flexibility for how our teachers teach and when they teach certain topics in core subject areas in the classroom. Think more hands-on activities and meaningful projects to nourish critical and creative thinking skills. Think project-based and service learning activities that integrate math, language arts, science/social studies to create real-world connections and reinforce learning. The goal is to engage, motivate, and inspire all children to be lifelong learners in their community.

- ❑ We want our teachers to receive specialized professional development that is currently not provided by the district.
- ❑ We want to continue to provide exposure to foreign languages and culture (Korean/Spanish) and potentially grow our Dual Language program to include more students should interest, need, and resources allow.
- ❑ We want to integrate technology to supplement learning for our students.
- ❑ We want our children to have greater access to physical activity in the context of learning both inside and outside the classroom, and greater flexibility for teachers in using our outdoor resources for learning opportunities.
- ❑ We want discretion over food served in the cafeteria.

ria. Think menu options, potentially locally sourced, that are both healthy and appealing to children on our campus—as opposed to our currently restrictive AISD menu provided to all elementary schools.

- ❑ We want flexibility in how AISD funding is allocated based on our campus needs, and apply for additional state and national funding only accessible to innovative or ‘charter’ programs and not available from AISD’s current budget.

What does it mean for THES to be a community-based, campus led school?

By becoming what’s called a “campus-based in-district charter” we can remain a public, neighborhood school that is part of Austin ISD while simultaneously having the authority and autonomy at the campus level to meet the unique needs of our community.

We will remain a part of AISD (i.e., same students—including those with special needs, same teachers, same salary ladder/benefits, same code of conduct, and same funding) and will not be run by any external “business”.

What about accountability?

As all AISD public schools do, Travis Heights will remain accountable for student success based on current state-mandated tests, such as the STARR. Attendance is another state-mandated success measure that will continue to be used.

How will decisions be made?

While AISD will continue to oversee our campus, a governance board will work collaboratively to make decisions about the school. This board will include our principal, teacher, parent, and student representatives, community members and our partners, Education Austin and Austin Interfaith. The decision-making model will include specific subcommittees developed based on campus priorities within our vision and resources available (e.g. Curriculum Committee, Technology Committee, Health & Well-Being Committee, etc.) Subcommittees will seek input from the community regarding direction.

Tell me more about Education Austin and Austin Interfaith.

Education Austin and Austin Interfaith have provided great support to THES over the past three years through the Innovation Grant. Austin Interfaith is a non-partisan, multi-ethnic, multi-issue organization of over 30 congregations, public schools, and unions working together on public issues for the well being of families and neighborhoods in our community.

Education Austin is the labor union for certified and classified employees of Austin ISD, and a merged local of the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers.

Want more information?

Visit www.ThesInnovationSchoolProject.com to gain greater insight and context to our historical initiative. ☺

New SRCC Membership Plans

Carol Martin, Vice President

SRCC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE APPROVED the proposal to discount the annual membership fee when members pay in advance. The new dues structure is as follows:

INDIVIDUAL	FAMILY
1-year membership \$20	1-year membership \$35
2-year membership \$35	2-year membership \$65
3-year membership \$50	3-year membership \$95

You can pay online using PayPal on the SRCC official website www.srccatx.org. You can also have your annual membership dues charged automatically each year by using the subscription option for PayPal account holders.

Another way to join is completing the form that appears in the newsletter (you can also download the form from www.srccatx.org) and mail along with a check to SRCC Treasurer, PO Box 40632, Austin, TX, 78704. Dues and contributions are not tax deductible.

Being a dues-paid members means you can participate in voting when SRCC faces motions, elects officers, and makes organizational decisions. Dues income is used to support newsletters, support the parks, trees and public schools in our area, and meet expenses related to representing the interests of residents in zoning cases. We welcome your support and involvement. There are volunteer opportunities also. We can use your help! ☺

Speedy Stop waiver request— WITHDRAWN

Carol Martin, Vice President

RICHARD SUTTLE, REPRESENTING SPEEDY STOP located at 1320 East Oltorf Street (Case #: SPC-2012-0068AW), withdrew the request for a waiver of ordinance prohibiting sale alcoholic beverages within 300 feet of schools and daycares in August 2012.

Thanks to the neighbors and representatives from schools, Faith Presbyterian church, Child Development Center and interested parties who attended meetings with Council Members, met with press, gave interviews and collaborated with all organizations opposed to this issue. You made the difference.

NOTE: Richard Suttle had requested the same waiver for Speedy Stop location bordering Reagan High School. ☺

Norwood House Update

Wolf Sittler, restorenorwood@yahoo.com

VOLUNTEERS HAVE SPENT ALMOST FIVE YEARS lobbying the City to permit volunteers to organize, pay for, and complete the rehabilitation of this publicly owned, structurally sound, but very run down, classic bungalow style, 1800 sq. foot, house. The vision for the property is to completely remodel this historic house to bring it back to what it originally was.

On Dec. 13, City Council approved the essence of an agreement between the Norwood Park Foundation (NPF) and Parks Department (PARD) to enable the NPF to rehabilitate, and manage, the house and surrounding grounds. As of February 13th, we are awaiting a PARD response to our latest suggestions regarding contract details. The hoped for finalization of the agreement this month will pave the way for hands-on work to begin.

Once we have a signed agreement, we'll jump-start the process by beginning to use the \$250,000 interest-free loan offered by local, visionary, venture philanthropists. The plan is to use a combination of loans and donated private money, time and materials to restore the house. Actual costs will depend on the generosity of community members. We have already had the pro-bono assistance of architects, structural and civil engineers, contractors, lawyers, accountants, consultants, and others. We look forward to future help from across our entire community with this short term project (1-2 years?). This will be a great opportunity to "give back."

The Norwood Park Foundation will be organizing an event for the annual "It's My Park Day," on March 2, with a focus on cleaning up the site, mulching heritage trees, and completing other projects approved by PARD. More on that later.....on the listserve. ☺

Who was Blunn Creek named for? Joseph Blunn. Born in Bristol, England in August 16, 1835, Blunn owned land on Burleson Road just beyond Travis Heights. He was a wheelwright and had a business on Congress Avenue. On October 4, 1877, Joseph Blunn, driving home in his horse and buggy, was caught in a flash flood as he was crossing the creek and was washed away. Ever since, the creek was referred to as Blunn Creek. The Blunn farm was near the James Doyle farm. Widow Mary Doyle gave 398 of the 498-acre farm to Father Sorin on April 6, 1872 to found a Catholic school—St. Edwards University.

[Source: Letter from Jane Tarleton, a great-grand-daughter of Joseph Blunn]

SRCC Briefs

■ Jason Molin has taken on the job of enhancing and maintaining our website. He's a long-time neighbor and a "web guy" at the University of Texas and we are very excited to have his expertise on the Communications Committee. If anyone has any input or thoughts/ideas for the website (www.srccatx.org) please contact him at j@jasonmolin.net

■ Kristen Haga has taken on the job of wrangling content for our website, Facebook, and Twitter accounts. She works in the Austin start-up community and social media space and we are excited to have her on the Communications Committee as well. Anyone with ideas for content that they would like to see from SRCC please contact her at communications@srccatx.org.

■ After a brief hiatus, the SRCC 4th of July Parade & Picnic will be returning this year. Gretchen Harries Graham has stepped up to the challenge and will be organizing the event. If you have time to donate or suggestions, please contact Gretchen at oceansgretchen@gmail.com

■ We are looking for a volunteer to be SRCC's representation at the Austin Neighborhood Council Meetings. This person would attend the ANC monthly meetings, represent SRCC's interests, and communicate back to the neighborhood about important city-wide issues affecting our neighborhoods.

■ Eastside Drive Stream Restoration and Rain Garden Project was proposed three years ago but just now getting implemented. From Annie to Monroe there will be 500 linear feet of restoration work to improve stability and water quality along Blunn Creek. The staging area will be minimized and located in a nook across from the main trail. A rain garden will be installed that will collect water from East Side Drive by the footbridge and direct it through a series of limestone steps and into a garden area where it can filter and absorb. While these gardens are drought tolerant there will be an irrigation system to support the project for at least three years.

■ 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.

■ SRCC's official 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 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.

SRCC & the Neighborhood Plan Contact Team Oppose Potential New Oltorf Restaurant

Jean Mather, Zoning Committee Chair

IN NOVEMBER 2012, REPRESENTATIVES OF A PROSPECTIVE BUYER for the office building at 518 Oltorf St. approached SRCC and the GSRC Neighborhood Plan Contact Team to discuss their plan for turning the property into a restaurant. Since the property was currently zoned GO-NP (General Office-Neighborhood Plan) which does not allow for restaurant use, they were requesting an amendment to the neighborhood plan and a zoning change to GR-NP (General Retail-Neighborhood Plan). Representatives met with members of SRCC and the NPCT to describe their plans and propose some compromises that they would be willing to make in return for granting the amendment and up-zoning, including some restrictions of uses as well as noise and parking abatement.

The GSRC Neighborhood Plan had specifically designated this piece of property to remain as office-use due to its proximity to single-family residences and the need for a mixture of uses along the Oltorf corridor. After meeting with the immediate neighbors and discussing the ramifications of the proposed changes, the GSRC NPCT members voted to oppose the neighborhood plan amendment for the following reasons:

1. Office use is desired in our neighborhood, especially for a tract such as this that is directly adjacent to single family homes.
2. This tract directly abuts two single family homes on tracts zoned SF-3. The requested zoning does not provide an adequate zoning buffer between single family homes and commercial land uses.
3. A restaurant at this site would bring constant odors to the adjacent and nearby neighbors from garbage, grease traps, kitchen exhaust, and vermin.
4. A restaurant at this site would bring frequent loud service vehicle traffic including food delivery trucks, garbage trucks and grease disposal trucks.
5. These services are likely to interrupt the sleeping patterns of the adjacent and nearby neighbors due to typical restaurant hours.
6. A restaurant at this site has the potential to bring additional loud noise from outdoor dining, let alone the potential if it is used as an indoor or outdoor music venue.
7. Commercial use of this site is likely to increase parking and traffic on Rebel Road, a residential street that already is used as overflow parking for a nearby popular restaurant.
8. The change of use has the potential not only to make home life unbearable for the adjacent and nearby neighbors, but to drive down their property values.

SRCC invited the applicant to our December general meeting for a presentation regarding the zoning change. There was excellent attendance and lively discussion with lots of Q&A. In the end the membership voted overwhelmingly to support the NPCT's opposition for nearly the same reasons.

The neighbors within a 500 ft. radius of the property pulled together and signed a petition in opposition of the change. The petition was deemed to be a valid petition by the city given that more than the minimum of 20% of the

Continued on page 5

More Solicitors, More Crime?

Raymond Sinatra, Neighborhood Watch and Patrol Chair

AS MANY OF YOU HAVE OBSERVED, our neighborhood has seen an increase in solicitors over the last month. We have seen many complaints about rude behavior and late hours for these solicitors. Unfortunately, we have also seen a dramatic increase in burglaries and property crime in the same period. While we don't know whether the solicitors are responsible for the increase in crime or if they are unwittingly providing "cover" for criminals to pose as solicitors, the correlation is impossible to ignore.

Most of the solicitors claim to work for AT&T and promote their U-verse product and, because of this, SRCC membership has voted to send a letter of complaint to AT&T regarding their solicitation practices. AT&T, like many companies, often use outside marketing firms to hire these solicitors, so our letter will outline our complaints, and ask AT&T to consider changing firms or abandoning their use all together, investigate the marketing firm's hiring practices, and enforce the firm's use of background checks, among other things.

In addition, we encourage our residents to put up a "no solicitors" sign on your door and, even if you choose to not engage with them, always make noise or talk through your door or window so the solicitor knows someone is home. You should never feel obligated to greet an unfamiliar person knocking at your door, but it's wise to make sure they know you are home but not interested. As always, call 911 if you observe any suspicious behavior.

If you are concerned about becoming a victim of a home burglary, consider increasing the level of deterrence in and around your home. Security systems, signage, and good lighting can go a long way in making your home less attractive to burglars.

If you are compelled to go beyond protecting your own personal property, we could always use your help with our Neighborhood Watch Patrol program. Please consider taking our simple training class and making the small commitment of patrolling our neighborhood for two hours each month. The program covers the entire

Oltorf Restaurant, continued from page 2
ownership of these properties had signed.

On January 22nd, the case went before the Planning Commission. David Swann and Sarah Campbell spoke from the NPCT, Marc Davis spoke from SRCC, and Jim Hallinan and Nathan Tate spoke as Rebel Rd. neighbors. Many of the same points were made and it was noted that the presence of the valid petition would require a super-majority from City Council when the case appeared before them. The planning commission voted 6-2 in opposition to the plan amendment and the zoning change. Respecting the neighborhood plan and the massive effort that it entailed

SRCC area now, and we greatly need more volunteers. There will be a new training session scheduled in the next month. Contact neighborhoodwatch@srccatx.org for more info. ☺

Helicopters Everywhere!

Max Woodfin

HOW INTENSE WAS THE HELICOPTER TRAFFIC over and around our neighborhood during November's Formula 1 weekend? Many of us have anecdotal guesses, but the hard numbers are that over the three-day event, there were 317 landings or take-offs from the temporary helipad at Embassy Suites on Riverside Drive. That figure doesn't count the many other helicopters that flew over our neighborhood from other launch sites. As a result of those numbers and complaints from our neighborhood (58% of F1 weekend complaints came from the SRCC area), the city council created a Helicopter Stakeholder Group to recommend changes in the City's helicopter codes.

One bit of good news: Even without new recommendations, the helicopter operators and F1 staff expect next year's traffic to be reduced by as much as 40%, largely because the return trips weren't as convenient as the riders had hoped.

The Stakeholder Group, on which SRCC was represented, is formulating its recommendations this month. The group's consensus was to recommend new rules that would reduce flights into and out of the nearby helipad (or any other that might be permitted nearby) to approximately 72 takeoffs and landings for the three-day weekend. The final recommendations will go to several City boards and commissions before the Council considers them in March. ☺

APD DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES FOR SRCC

Riverside to Ben White, Congress to I-35:

Officer Robert Barboza, 512-974-8246
robert.barboza@austintexas.gov

East of I-35:

Officer Atilano Guerra, 512-974-4475
atilano.guerra@austintexas.gov

was their primary reason for opposing the changes. The two PC members that voted in support cited a desire to compromise – they believed that a restriction of uses and noise/parking abatements could create a "win-win." The majority of the PC members disagreed and felt that a compromise was not appropriate and wouldn't be enough to protect the neighbors from the impact of having a restaurant on the site.

The case will be heard by City Council; no date has been set yet. Please contact David Swann (expfc@att.net) if you have any input, questions, or interest in helping with this case. ☺