



# Neighborhood Newsletter

An occasional printed publication of the South River City Citizens' Neighborhood Association, Established 1973



## Letter From the President

Hello neighbors and happy fall! Besides the leaves changing and Halloween celebrations, this time of year means we are fully into election season. This issue of our newsletter includes some election-related information. The SRCC does not endorse any candidates running for office, but we do try to help inform neighborhood voters. Exercising your right to vote is one of the most important duties of a citizen in a representative democracy. Not happy with the candidates? Get involved yourself! A great way to make a difference right here in your own community is by volunteering with SRCC, your local neighborhood association. Whether your interests lie with crime prevention, park improvements, transportation infrastructure, or party planning, we've got a spot for you! Come join our team—changing the world starts here! Please contact me if you'd like to help out. Enjoy the holidays!

—Gretchen Otto, SRCC President, [president@srccatx.org](mailto:president@srccatx.org)

### Get Involved in Your Community!

Looking for some fun volunteer work? Want to meet more neighbors? Interested in what's happening in and around our area? We have many volunteer jobs available! Here are some open positions:

#### Neighborhood Watch/Safety Chair:

*Receive training from the city on neighborhood watch program, train neighbors to do patrols, coordinate patrol block captains and make sure there is one in each area, be the point-person for this committee, communicate any activities to SRCC officers, and provide short updates to members at general meetings.*

#### Newsletter Editor/Coordinator:

*Oversee production of newsletter, create story ideas and assign to writers, keep production on schedule, proofread and edit, and be the contact person with the printer to confirm costs, schedules, etc.*

#### Block captains:

*Deliver newsletters to your street or one nearby, or be a sub when someone is out of town; contact your area coordinator (see back page) to learn more.*

#### Schools Chair:

*Maintain open communication and flow of information between SRCC and our three area schools, attend SRCC meetings as often as possible, and write content for newsletter/website.*

#### Special Events Chair:

*Organize annual potluck and Fourth of July Picnic and/or Parade.*

For more information, please contact Gretchen Otto at [president@srccatx.org](mailto:president@srccatx.org).

### Election Day Tuesday, November 8

#### Early voting is Oct 24-Nov 4

Our nearest early voting location is at the Gardner-Betts Juvenile Justice Center, 2501 S Congress

#### Election day Polling Locations:

##### **Precinct 420**

Parker Ln United Methodist Church, 2105 Parker Ln

##### **Precinct 421**

Church on Congress, 1511 South Congress Ave.

##### **Precinct 422**

Fulmore Middle School, 201 East Mary St.

##### **Precincts 433 and 442**

Travis High School, 1211 East Oltorf St.

You may also vote at any Travis County polling place on election day. Check election info at [www.traviscountyelections.org](http://www.traviscountyelections.org) or call 512-238-VOTE.



## Bread for All Food Pantry

It has been good to have some SRCC neighbors helping and donating at the food pantry in our area. The need continues. Food stamps don't pay for diapers; baby food and formula is hard to find for our neighbors in need. Come by or donate at 1711 E Oltorf St. on Mondays.

—Neal Nuwash,  
SRCC Area 5 Co-Coordinator, [cnnuwash@yahoo.com](mailto:cnnuwash@yahoo.com)

**28% OF AUSTIN'S  
CHILDREN LIVE IN  
POVERTY.**

## Our APD District Representatives

The Austin Police Department has a system of district representatives who represent specific areas and serve as liaisons between APD and Austin neighborhoods. These officers are our best points of contact with APD and can be valuable resources for targeting problem areas and preventing crime.

The city is divided into regions, sectors, and districts. The SRCC area overlaps with two regions: Region 3 and Region 4. This means that we have two APD reps. If you live north of Oltorf and east of Congress Ave., your rep is Officer Black. If you live south of Oltorf and west of IH-35, your rep is Officer Rougeou. Both officers attended the October SRCC meeting to introduce themselves. Below is their contact information; please contact them directly if you have ongoing concerns with crime. If you need immediate assistance, always dial 911.

### **Officer Andre Black**

Region 3, Henry Sector 1

*(North of Oltorf,*

*East of Congress Ave)*

[Andre.Black@austintexas.gov](mailto:Andre.Black@austintexas.gov)

512-974-6875

### **Officer Shawn Rougeou**

Region 4, David Sector 1 & 2

*(South of Oltorf,*

*West of IH-35)*

[Shawn.Rougeou@austintexas.gov](mailto:Shawn.Rougeou@austintexas.gov)

512-974-5490



## ANC Scorecard for Austin City Council

The Austin Neighborhoods Council (ANC), with the help of our own SRCC representative James Bilodeau, has created a scorecard to track the voting records of city council members. The council members who represent SRCC's districts (*Kathie Tovo, District 9 and Pio Renteria, District 3*) are not up for re-election this year, but it's still very important to keep up with how they are voting, as each of their votes affect our neighborhood.

“While the results aren't especially surprising today, we are excited to have a data set to quantify which council members are doing a better job of listening to the citizens of Austin and which are serving some other interest,” said Mary Ingle, President of the Austin Neighborhoods Council. “The most eye-opening part of conducting this exercise was that it revealed how difficult it is for the average citizen to figure out how each member voted on various issues, as the city produces no easy-to-access summary report on council members' voting activities. It was up to citizens, through the ANC, to tabulate all the data and come up with an objective report on how council members have voted during this first year of the 10-1 council.”

Scores were based on the ANC's platform, which was approved by its member neighborhood organizations. Issues and votes were divided into seven categories, including: Affordability, Transparency, and Neighborhood Self Determination.

Each council member receives a point if they voted in accordance with ANC's position. Major votes (e.g. ADUs, reflecting lobbying transparency) receive three points. The points are then divided by the total points possible for each issue to get a score. A vote can count toward more than one issue. The total score is the average of all scores for issue areas.

### **You can view the scorecard here:**

<http://ancweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/ANC-City-Council-Scorecard-9.13.16.pdf>

### **Full issue descriptions are here:**

<http://ancweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/ANC-Issue-Area-Descriptions-9.13.16.pdf>

## St. Edward's: Gentle Academic Neighbor or Corporate Bully?

Originally represented by St. Edward's University (SEU) in January 2016 as a police operations building, ongoing details in the city's permit process emerged this summer telling the real story: the new building would also have a shipping and receiving dock to accommodate the largest 18 wheelers for commercial deliveries through the Sherwood Oaks neighborhood to the new site.

Communication and meetings with SEU staff and attorney in early and late spring were useless as the representatives for the university first did not respond, and then said they could do nothing to control how legal vehicular traffic used St. Edward's Dr. At the same time, SEU requested the city waive the Right of Way (ROW) at the intersection of Carnarvon.

In the application for the ROW waiver, SEU engineers stated that the site for the shipping/receiving facility was "constrained by size and Topography," meaning that the site was too small and hilly for an 18 wheeler to access. Nevertheless, they wanted a legal determination (ROW waiver) from the city allowing 18 wheelers to

block the intersection while backing into the site instead of pulling all the way into SEU property.

City traffic engineers approved the waiver without visiting the site in person, or observing that St. Edward's Dr. has dangerous limited sight distances from all Sherwood Oaks streets intersecting it due to parking from the university combined with the hilly terrain.

Dramatic increases in parking by SEU students, faculty, and staff began two years ago when the University instituted an approximate \$200/yr. charge for staff, faculty, and students to park on campus. Neighbors requested SEU waive the fee to encourage use of campus parking spaces. At an August meeting with SRCC representatives, VP for St. Edward's Finance Dept., Kim Kvall, told neighbors that the university could not control where their staff or students park and needed the revenue from the parking fees.

This operations building, with its increased traffic and obfuscated purpose comes as a surprise since the City Transportation Dept. in 2014 labeled St. Edward's Dr. dangerously congested. St.



Edward's Drive was approved for traffic "calming" (*speed humps*). Over 96% of the cars using the street in a 24 hour period in Feb. 2014 were speeding. Two vehicles parked at the entrance to the Blunn Creek Preserve on St. Edward's Dr. were totaled by speeders. In approving the waiver, city traffic engineers overlooked the speeding, traffic accidents, and lack of speed limit signs on St. Edward's Drive.

Neighbors submitted over 25 questions about the technical and administrative process that neighbors Bob Stewart and Elloa Mathews asked in an Aug. 5 meeting with the city (*see on SRCC website*).

The questions reflect two areas of general concerns: How was this

building approved with an application address of 3001 S. Congress and a site address of St. Edward's Dr. and how can an obviously commercial facility that is too large for the site be approved without engineers visiting the site and talking to the neighbors to consider the impact?

At the meeting with the city traffic engineers, Council

*Continued on page 4*





## St. Edwards, cont.

Member Tovo's aide, Joi Harden, requested the department replace the missing speed limit signs.

Sherwood Oaks neighbors continue investigating the permit and have created an informative Facebook page that shares letters to SEU President and other information such as their refusal to provide sidewalks on St. Edward's Dr. (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/No2StEds/>).

At the Aug. 1, SRCC meeting, members passed a resolution opposing the operations building construction and began discussions on how to proceed (*See on SRCC website*). On Aug. 1st, SEU was granted an extension on its permit application until January 2017 to resolve application problems, even though the deadline for the permit wasn't until October.

Little did neighbors know, following this extension notice, in

the mail the next day was another notice that the permit to begin building had been granted. Robin Schneider, SRCC member, suggested a protest occur on August 26, the first day of SEU dorms opening and it was decided to make signs opposing the 18 wheeler trucks in time for the fall semester (*see link for photos and more on SRCC website*). Funding of the signs by SRCC was approved unanimously, less one vote, at the September general membership meeting.

Since then, St. Edward's has failed to live up to the promises it made at its August meeting with SRCC members and Sherwood Oaks neighbors (*See SEU's letter to residents on SRCC website*).

Sports team buses still park on St. Edwards Dr. and idle outside neighbors' homes. Construction workers still park on the streets

along with students, faculty, and staff, and some students were even found urinating on a neighbor's privacy fence after parking their car to access the practice soccer field.

Although SEU has purported to minimize the impact this new building will have on the Sherwood Oaks neighborhood, there is no limit on the number of trucks that can make deliveries to the site. The number will surely increase as SEU grows. As some neighbors stated at the August meeting with SEU officials, SEU staff get to leave their offices and go home at the end of the day and we have to live here with the impacts of decisions made by SEU officials that are degrading our quality of life.

—Elloa Mathews, Area 5  
Co-Coordinator, and  
Tina Buck, Communications Chair

## Update to SRCC Bylaws

The Ad Hoc Bylaws Update Committee has been meeting since January 2016. Our task is to update the SRCC bylaws to reflect procedures that have been in practice, but not described accurately in the present version of the bylaws. The work of the committee has focused on several areas:

### Update:

We will propose that the Finance Committee be named as a Standing Committee. It was established five years ago and has been active in improving SRCC fiscal operating procedures. Also, the specific duties of membership positions described in the bylaws do not reflect the current practices. There are a few instances where bylaws use outdated terminology such as "facsimile", and specifically names the meeting location as Grace Methodist United Church, which no longer exists. The description of SRCC's eastern boundary needs to be updated to include the new streets that extend Parker Lane northward: Shore District Drive and Town Creek Dr. Bylaws state that the annual meeting is the first *Monday* in March, but in practice the annual has been on first *Tuesday* in March due to meeting space availability, etc.

### Arrange and Clarify:

In some instances, references to a subject appear in various articles, making it a bit difficult to find all the relevant points. Revisions will bring together like topics and use a consistent order. For example, language regarding membership qualifications will appear in an article named Membership. Also, we will attempt to clarify terms commonly used such as 'Family Membership'.

### Approval Process:

The bylaws specify the process for amendments. A document will be prepared that outlines the language, wording for every revision, and the rationale for the proposed revision. The document will be posted to the SRCC website and printed in the SRCC newsletter. General membership must adopt the revisions by 2/3 majority at a regular monthly meeting. Notification of the meeting on which the proposed bylaws revisions are an agenda item will be given not less than 10 days in advance nor more than 60 days before the meeting.

—Carol Martin, Chair of Ad-Hoc Bylaws Update Committee

## The Heights on SOCO

With the soaring cost of living in Austin and shrinking number of affordable rental units, many working-class families are being pushed out of central Austin and the South River City Citizens' boundaries.

When the owner of The Heights on South Congress, an affordable housing complex in the neighborhood, announced plans to redevelop the ten oak-filled acres between St. Edward's and the Gardner-Betts center, residents became worried. Would they be forced to move? Would their children be able to continue to go to neighborhood schools like Travis Heights Elementary, Fulmore Middle School, and Travis High?

As the SRCC summer newsletter pointed out, Travis Heights Elementary, with SRCC residents, Austin Interfaith, and Wildflower Church hosted a successful Community Action in May. The owner, Doug Gurkin, publicly promised to provide transportation for families wishing to continue attending neighborhood schools while displaced and to make residents' relocation away and back to the Heights smooth.

An advocacy Team at Travis Heights was created due to the positive response to the Community Action. Working with families in the Heights, they went door-to-door asking neighbors to come to a follow-up meeting on July 27<sup>th</sup>.

At the meeting, the owner gave the assembled residents some important news: no construction would happen in the next 12-18 months, giving residents some breathing room and relief from

fears about having to relocate soon. Further, the owner explained his plan to do the redevelopment in phases such that many (and perhaps all) families with children will be able to stay on the site while the affordable units are rebuilt on the southern portion of the land.

Gurkin proposes to do this by leaving 11 of the complex's 15 buildings standing after knocking down the four buildings adjacent to St. Edward's. He intends to relocate families with children from these four buildings into the remaining 11 when vacancies emerge, where they can remain while new affordable units are built on the south side.

Right now, the property does not have the necessary zoning for the owner's redevelopment plan, which includes rebuilding all of the 173 affordable units and adding possibly 200 market-rate units. He will have to apply for a zoning change with the City and needs City Council approval to move forward.

We appreciate the owner's willingness to meet with the neighborhood, school, and community leaders, however, we would most like his promises to become legally binding through a private restrictive covenant, much like the Tenants' Association at Oak Creek Village in Bouldin Creek did when their complex was redeveloped. A legally binding agreement would ensure that children living at The Heights will have school continuity despite displacement during redevelopment.

UT Law School students are interested in working with residents to ensure that their rights are protected.

Concerned neighbors can weigh in with their support for residents of the Heights as the project winds through the City's review and approval process. You can join the Advocacy Team at Travis Heights Elementary by contacting Colin Clark at (512) 367-0309 or [sprinklerintherain@gmail.com](mailto:sprinklerintherain@gmail.com).

—Colin Clark

## Travis Heights 14th Annual Art Trail Nov. 5-6, 11am-5pm

This is a grassroots art show, created by and for the artists of Travis Heights. Each year showcases some of Austin's longest practicing artists as they open up their homes and studios to the public. There will also be an art car parade! The Travis Heights Elementary School arts program is one of the highlights of the show. Parents and children from the school display and sell "kid" art. They also offer art activities for visiting children. All proceeds benefit the school art program. Don't miss this opportunity to support our neighborhood artists!

—Charlotte Bell

## Yoga in the City

Life in the City is offering FREE yoga classes twice a week! Classes will meet on **Tuesdays at 9am, and on Saturdays at 9am at 205 E. Monroe St.** Each teacher offers a different class experience grounded in the principles of the Hatha Yoga tradition with a focus on wholeness of body, mind and spirit. There is no prerequisite in strength or flexibility to try our Yoga classes—all levels are welcome!

—Katie Apple

**Area Coordinators**

Area 1 Claudette Lowe	512-447-1514
Area 1 Marylin Orton	512-440-7770
Area 1 Lee Schneider	451-250-5936
Area 2 Russell Fraser	512-771-9736
Area 2 Eugene Kubelka	512-441-9262
Area 3a Jo Webber	512-441-3117
Area 3a Sara Newsom	512-444-8292
Area 3b Brooks Kasson	512-444-8100
Area 3b Marc Davis	512-656-2841
Area 4a Sam Martin	512-441-5222
Area 4a Mary Friedman	512-619-5773
Area 4b Kris Asthalter	512-443-4963
Area 5 Neal Nuwash	512-462-9093
Area 5 Elloa Mathews	512-442-6986
Area 6 Rachel McClure	512-326-5572
Area 6 Laura Gass Weaver	gassweaver@sbcglobal.net
Area 7 Kelvin Glover	512-415-2027
Area 7 Jackie Hatfield	jackie.hatfield@gmail.com
Area 8 Maria Martinez	512-443-9784
Area 8 Kim Lanzillotti	512-658-8565

**Standing Committees**

**Planning & Zoning**

Jean Mather	512-444-4153
Kent Anschutz	kent@kentanschutz.com
Marc Davis	marc.davis@gmail.com
Russell Fraser	russell_fraser@msn.com
David Swann	swanito@att.net

**Parks, Schools & Environment**

David Todd (Parks)	512-416-0400
Sherri Ancipink (Schools)	512-707-2627
Marty Christman (Environment)	512-912-0724

**Transportation & Public Safety**

Mike Sledge	transportation@srccatx.org
Jeff Kessel	jeff@impactpro.com

**Neighborhood Patrol Chair**

—Volunteer Needed!

**Ad Hoc Committees**

**Communications**

Tina Buck	communications@srccatx.org
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**Membership**

Carol Martin	membership@srccatx.org
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**Financial**

Sam Martin	512-441-5222
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**Newsletter**

Maia Reeves	newsletter@srccatx.org
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**Norwood House**

Wolf Sittler	512-447-2150
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**TH-FP Historic District**

Michele Webre	512-422-1262
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**City District 9**

James Bilodeau	ancrep@srccatx.org
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**East Riverside (EROG)**

Toni House	512-447-8090
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**CodeNEXT**

Russell Fraser	russell_fraser@msn.com
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**St. Edward's**

Elloa Mathews	512-442-6986
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**South Central Coalition**

Elloa Mathews	512-442-6986
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**Travis Heights Art Trail**

Charlotte Bell	512-447-2150
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**Travis Park Apt/Austin Interfaith**

Terry Franz	512-447-8786
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**SRCC Officers**

**President**

Gretchen Otto	president@srccatx.org
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**Vice President**

Diane Presti	vicepresident@srccatx.org
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**Treasurer**

Nancy Byrd	treasurer@srccatx.org
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**Secretary**

Garret Nick	secretary@srccatx.org
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**Representatives**

**Austin Neighborhood Council**

James Bilodeau	ancrep@srccatx.org
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**City District 3**

Kim Lanzillotti	512-658-8565
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**SRCC Meetings**

**1st Monday every month at 7:15pm at Life in the City United Methodist Church, 205 E. Monroe**

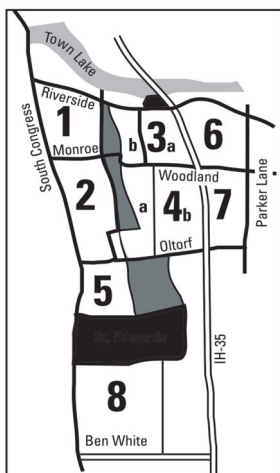
*We thank all our officers, area coordinators, committees, and representatives for their dedication to our community! Call your coordinator for SRCC questions, volunteer opportunities, or to help*

Membership Levels		
No. of Years	Individual	Family
1	\$20	\$35
2	\$35	\$65
3	\$50	\$95

**Become a member and be eligible to vote!** Join or renew online ([www.srccatx.org](http://www.srccatx.org)) or at the membership table at meetings. To pay via PayPal, go to [www.srccatx.org/membership-dues/](http://www.srccatx.org/membership-dues/). You can also send a check made payable to SRCC, along with this completed form to:

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

**Notes**—For Family memberships, please provide the names of each family member (adults residing at the same address). When paying via PayPal, you can include the names of family members in the Instructions to Merchant or Shipping Details areas. Dues and contributions are **not**



Number of Years (circle one):

1      2      3

Membership (circle one):

Individual      Family

Membership Fee Due: \$
Add'l Donation to
SRCC General Fund: \$
<b>TOTAL: \$</b>

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

SRCC Area (See Map): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email (s): \_\_\_\_\_