

The Spring 2020

# Neighborhood Newsletter

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



## 2020

# Annual Potluck and Elections Postponed



Please note that due to COVID-19 and Austin's "stay-at-home" order, all SRCC meetings are canceled until further notice. This includes both our regular general meetings and our annual potluck and elections. **Please check the SRCC website for updates on when meetings will begin again.** Note that our meeting location and meeting schedule have both changed; details are below.

During this difficult time, it's more important than ever to take care of our community. Although this means staying at home for most of us, please also think about your neighbors and check in on them with a phone call or text if possible. Elderly neighbors might need help with getting groceries or medicine. If you could use help and aren't sure who to contact, please either call your Area Coordinator or email [info@srccatx.org](mailto:info@srccatx.org) and we will try to connect you with a neighbor. Please see the last page of this newsletter for more contact information.

## New SRCC Meeting Location and Schedule

As you may know, since last fall SRCC has been considering a change of meeting venue and adjustments to our meeting schedule. We're excited to announce that at the general membership meeting on February 3rd, the membership voted unanimously to go ahead with the proposed changes. New meeting yard signs have been printed and have been distributed.

### New Meeting Location:

**Good Shepherd On The Hill, 1700 Woodland Ave, Austin, TX 78741**

Meetings will be held in the sanctuary of Good Shepherd on the Hill. It's a great location, much more accessible, everything is on ground level and the acoustics are far superior. The chairs are more comfortable too! On-site parking is available, the main parking lot entrance is on Woodland Avenue. Overflow street parking, if needed, is available on Sylvan Drive behind the church.

### New Meeting Schedule:

*General Membership Meetings*  
**Third Tuesday of most months at 7pm**

*Executive Committee Meetings*  
**First Tuesday of most months at 7pm**

**Next General Membership Meeting**  
**Check our website for updates!**

## Court Upholds Local Residents' Property Rights

On March 18, Travis County District Judge Jan Soifer ruled in favor of the plaintiffs in *Acuña, et al. v. City of Austin, et al.*, upholding the rights of local property owners who have filed protests in response to City Hall's controversial Land Development Code Revision plan.

The City of Austin argued both publicly and in court that local residents have no right to protest the rezoning of their properties because it intends to rezone all properties at once, rather than one at a time. Judge Soifer rejected that claim.

The court's ruling means that city officials will need approval of three-quarters of the Austin City Council (nine of 11 votes) in order to rezone any property that is the subject of a protest. Only seven council members currently support the rezoning plan.

While the court decision is a significant victory, we must continue to pressure the city to change and improve zoning by including the input of the neighborhoods and

their residents. One way to keep that pressure on is to file a protest if you haven't done so already, and encourage your neighbors to do the same, at [www.FileYourProtest.com](http://www.FileYourProtest.com).

More than 16,000 Austinites have filed official rezoning protests to date. Protests may be filed until one week before the city council takes its final vote on its code revision. That vote had been scheduled for early April, but was postponed by city officials due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Judge Soifer also ruled that the city council's votes on first and second reading of the code revision are void because City Hall failed to provide the state-required notice to property owners and the public. If local officials intend to proceed with their plan, they must provide our community with legal notice, and the city must hold its hearings and votes again.

## The Future of St. Edwards Drive and Sherwood Oaks

Under the Land Development Code (LDC) rewrite that the city council voted 7-4 to pass in mid-December, many apartments and commercial uses could be built along St. Edwards Dr. unless you file a protest.

City staff confirmed that up to 84 apartments or dorms per acre at 60 feet tall could be built where the baseball and other sports fields are now. New apartments would be TWICE as tall as the metal building at St. Edwards Dr. and Carnarvon Lane, and could line St. Edwards Dr. from Carnarvon to IH-35. These would be across the street from your

home if your property line is on St. Edwards Dr. These apartments would not have to provide parking for their residents, so street parking would be more crowded, overflowing onto Nottingham Lane, East Side Dr., Friar Tuck and Sherwood Lanes, as well as Carnarvon. Under the new LDC code, the first floor of the apartments could house businesses that also do not have to provide parking. The access to these businesses would be through our neighborhood. Currently, the Travis County Appraisal District Map shows the property along the south boundary of St. Edwards Dr. defined as "ST. EDWARDS APARTMENTS PROPOSED." The current baseball diamond and practice soccer fields provide a green buffer to Sherwood Oaks that enhances the residential nature of Sherwood Oaks neighborhood, and the fields capture rain water runoff from the higher elevations of the campus. These green non-paved fields protect neighborhood residents from flooding.

If you enjoy walking your dogs or kids in the natural green buffer provided by the sports fields, **you can do something to prevent this from occurring!** Visit and fill out the online form to protest the upzoning of St. Edwards Dr. property ASAP.

### [FILEYOURPROTEST.COM](http://FILEYOURPROTEST.COM)

Addresses for filing a protest on St. Edwards Dr. are:

**401 St. Edwards Dr, 921 St. Edwards Dr and 1101 St. Edwards Dr. as well as 2901 S. Congress (per TCAD).**

If 20% of property owners that are within 200 feet of St. Edwards Drive file a protest, then state law requires that  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the city council must vote to approve the change, not just a simple majority of the council. For more information contact Elloa Mathews, at [ellomail@austin.rr.com](mailto:ellomail@austin.rr.com)



—Elloa Mathews,

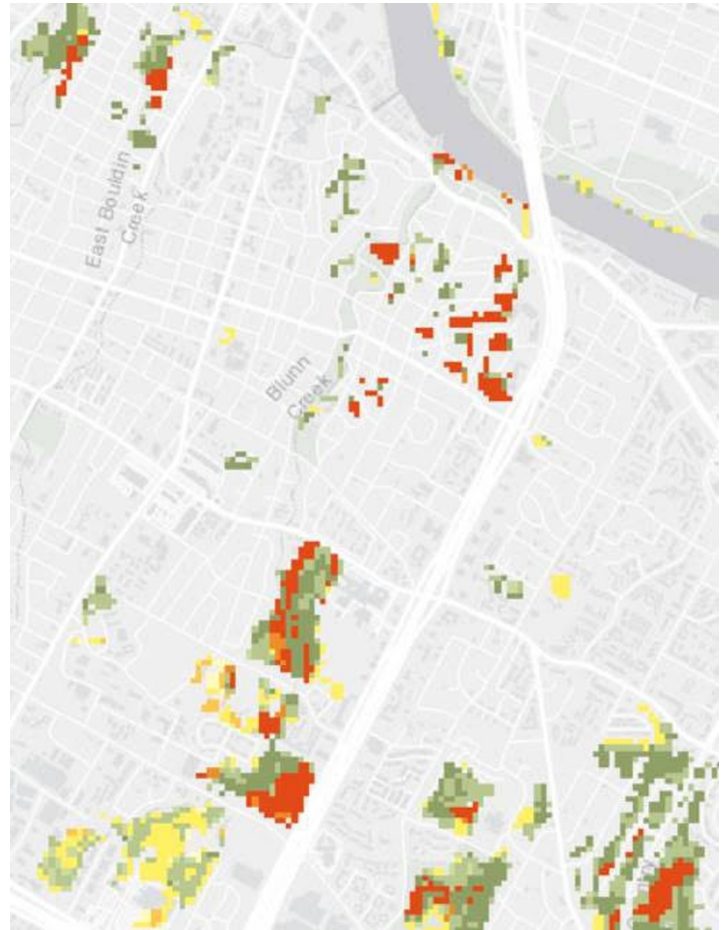
## SRCC Asks City to Review Process for Allowing Exceptions to the Fireworks Ban

A few years ago, when I came home after an evening out, I realized my dog was not in the back yard where I had left him a few hours earlier. I discovered there had been a fireworks event, and my dog had managed to scale the fence in an attempt to escape the perceived threat. The next day, I started to learn something about why and how the city goes about approving permits for fireworks. On a city website I saw *"It is illegal to use or sell fireworks within the City of Austin."* Further research informed me that commercial, religious, and private entities could receive a permit if certain conditions were met. I was disappointed to learn that the permit requirements did not adequately protect Austinites, their pets, or their property from the higher level of risk associated with fireworks. The insurance requirements were insufficient, no consideration was given to how the fireworks might negatively affect others, and the taxpayers were not adequately reimbursed for the administrative and monitoring costs.

Currently, the city is reviewing the threat level and resultant cost of wildfires. Awareness has been increased following the 2011 Bastrop fires, and the fires in California and Australia. Our local focus seems to be on suburban areas such as River Place, Long Canyon, Jester Estates, and Travis Country, but it seems evident that local brushy areas and periodic drought conditions pose the same kind of opportunity for catastrophic loss. SRCC has asked the members of the Austin Public Safety Commission to review the current process for allowing commercial fireworks displays. We have asked that the public be informed and allowed to comment before any permit is given. We ask that the affected public be notified before any approved event. We ask that the insurance requirements be reviewed. And we ask that the cost of processing be paid by the protagonist instead of the general community. A city that bans fireworks in general should probably not allow exceptions unless adequate safeguards and reasonable processes are fully implemented. Other major cities have found it best practice to simply not allow fireworks. We expect our local government to look out for the general welfare. This is a risk that is completely avoidable.

After searching all night for my dog, I gave up in exhaustion. I imagined the worst, like the fate of the terror-stricken dog in Galindo that was struck and killed by a car during a show put on by St Edward's. Fortunately, one of my neighbors on Little John Lane knew my dog and had taken him in to keep him safe.

—David Swann,  
SRCC Planning & Zoning Committee



SRCC area fire risk, using tools available through Texas Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal ([texaswildfirerisk.com](http://texaswildfirerisk.com)). Risk levels range from green for *Very Low* to red for *Very High*.

## Lively Middle School

Become a part of the traditions being formed at our newly renamed middle school! Buy cool new merch online with the Lively logo, and join the PTA while you are at it!

<https://my-site-105818.square.site/>



# Travis Heights Elementary School

We recently held our annual “no-hassle” PTA fundraiser in February, where we ask everyone in the community to make donations according to their ability, instead of asking families to sell wrapping paper, subscriptions, or candy. We haven’t yet hit our fundraising goal, so we are extending the fundraiser hoping to get more donations. Our PTA raises money to help fund teacher supplies, teacher training, campus beautification, music supplies, art supplies, technology (software and hardware), books for the library, and many other things to help our students succeed. Any help is appreciated! You can donate online on our Facebook page or on our website:

<https://www.facebook.com/TravisHeightsElem/>,  
<https://www.travisheightselementary.com/donate/>

## 2020 CENSUS: Every person counts!

The 2020 Census is here! Every household should have received mail with instructions for completing their census form either online or over the phone. Fill out a paper form if needed. Census workers will be contacting each person or household that has not yet responded. Please help by responding now.

***The counting will be complete on August 14th.***

### **Everyone counts.**

The census counts every person living in the U.S. once, only once, and in the right place.

### **It’s in the constitution.**

The U.S. Constitution mandates that everyone in the country be counted every 10 years.  
The first census was in 1790.

### **It’s about fair representation.**

Every 10 years, the results of the census are used to reapportion the House of Representatives, determining how many seats each state gets.

### **It’s about \$675 billion.**

The distribution of more than \$675 billion in federal funds, grants and support to states, counties and communities, are based on census data. That money is spent on schools, hospitals, roads, public works and other vital programs.

### **In our schools,**

a complete count means more money for Title I funding for schools in low-income communities, free and reduced price lunch, special education funding for children with disabilities, Head Start preschool programs, after-school programs, and classroom technology

### **In our homes,**

counting everyone means more funds for Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program, affordable housing programs, and maternal and child health programs

### **In our cities,**

when we count everyone, we have more money for transportation, emergency planning for our communities, and economic development

### **It’s about redistricting.**

After each decade’s census, state officials redraw the boundaries of the congressional and state legislative districts in their states to account for population shifts.

### **Taking part is your civic duty.**

Completing the census is mandatory—it’s a way to participate in our democracy and say “I COUNT!”

### **Your privacy is protected.**

It’s against the law for the Census Bureau to publicly release your responses in any way that could identify you or your household. By law, the Census Bureau cannot share your answers with any other government agency.

For more information: [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov),  
[atxcensus2020.com](http://atxcensus2020.com)



United States®  
**Census**  
**2020**

## Norwood House Restoration Moves Forward

Major announcement: as of Valentine's Day, we are officially in "Preconstruction" with Hill & Wilkinson General Contractors! This is a HUGE milestone for the Norwood project, reached only because we raised enough money over the course of 2019 to earn the full \$250k match offered by Austin Parks Foundation. We now have funding in place to get us through full construction documents and the finish of permitting. Pop the corks! **Thanks to all who donated in 2019, especially APF for its steadfast support.**

A special shout out to the **Moody Foundation** for a very generous gift that put us over the top on the match, and more kudos to the **Still Water Foundation**, the **Austin Community Foundation**, and our friend & neighbor, **Colin Corgan**, for the additional, major support for the Norwood Project in 2019. Thank you!

### Here's where we are now:

- 100% Design Documents now, and 50% Construction Documents by March
- "Value-engineering" redesign (trimming to reduce costs) is DONE!
- Professional project management by the Benz Resource Group continues
- Amendments to our existing Agreement with city (needed for future operations) are currently being negotiated
- Website redesign is underway, to optimize across all platforms/devices
- Currently scheduled to start work at the Norwood site late summer, 2020
- Firm deadline of operations by 2022, the 100-yr anniversary of the house
- Fundraising continues; we still need ~\$1.5-2m to meet the \$6.5m budget w/pad for operations; these figures will continue to be refined as we make progress

As most of you know, the effort to restore Norwood originated as a committee of the SRCC and eventually morphed into the Norwood Park Foundation. We remain laser-focused on a single mission: to restore the publicly-owned Norwood estate with its staggering view, and repurpose it to serve the people as a 100% self-sustaining rental venue and community meeting space. If you are new to Austin or SRCC, and don't know about Norwood, visit <http://www.norwoodparkfoundation.org>

**Want to have future SRCC meetings at the Norwood House?? That's part of our mission, too!  
Please help us, and we'll get there sooner.**

None of this has been easy. Volunteers have worked for years and now we're knocking at the door. *If you have not donated to the Norwood project yet, please do!* ALL donations, no matter how small, are important. Everything goes toward "bricks & mortar" and the strategic steps necessary to ensure completion of the project and opening the doors.

Please contact us through the website to add your email address (we never sell or share), to volunteer for future events, or to offer leads on those who might be able to participate with major gifts. THANK YOU. **Together, we can finish this!** Keep Austin original

—Colleen Theriot, President  
[colleen.theriot@norwoodparkfoundation.org](mailto:colleen.theriot@norwoodparkfoundation.org)



# SRCC Meetings

3rd Tuesday of most months at 7:00pm at  
Good Shepherd on the Hill, 1700 Woodland Avenue

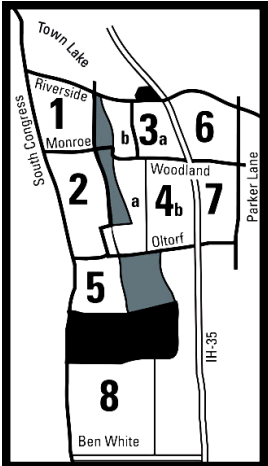
We thank all of our officers, area coordinators, committees, and representatives for their dedication to our community!  
Call your area coordinator for SRCC questions, volunteer opportunities, or to help deliver newsletters.

<u>Area Coordinators</u>	<u>Standing Committees</u>	<u>Representatives</u>
<b>Area 1</b> Claudette Lowe 512-447-1514 Marylin Orton 512-440-7770	<b>Planning &amp; Zoning</b> Russell Fraser (Chair) russell_fraser@msn.com  Jean Mather Kent Anschutz Marc Davis David Swann Ian Reddy Sarah Campbell	<b>Austin Neighborhood Council</b> <i>Volunteer Needed</i>  <b>East Riverside (EROC)</b> Toni House 512-447-8090  <b>Greater South River City NPCT (GSRC)</b> Elloa Mathews 512-442-6986  <b>South Central Coalition</b> Elloa Mathews 512-442-6986  <b>South Central Waterfront</b> Wendy Todd (Chair) wendypricetodd@gmail.com  <b>St. Edwards</b> Elloa Mathews 512-442-6986  <b>Travis Heights Art Trail</b> Charlotte Bell 512-447-2150  <b>Travis Park Apt/Austin Interfaith</b> Terry Franz 512-447-8786  <b>South Central Affordable CDC</b> Gretchen Otto 512-227-1507
<b>Area 2</b> Russell Fraser 512-771-9736 Eugene Kubelka 512-441-9262	<b>Historic Preservation</b> Michele Webre (Co-Chair) 512-422-1262 Angela Reed (Co-Chair) reed.as@gmail.com Melanie Martinez Ian Reddy Bob Gee	
<b>Area 3a</b> Jo Webber 512-441-3117 Sara Newsom 512-444-8292	<b>Finance</b> Sam Martin (Chair) 512-441-5222 Will Andrews	
<b>Area 3b</b> Brooks Kasson 512-444-8100 Marc Davis 512-656-2841	<b>Mobility</b> Paula Kothmann (Chair) mobility@srcc.org Mike Sledge Jeff Kessel	
<b>Area 4a</b> Sam Martin 512-441-5222 Megan Spencer mary7megan@yahoo.com	<b>Public Safety</b> Tom Groce (Chair) tgroce@gmail.com	
<b>Area 4b</b> Kris Asthalter 512-443-4963	<b>Parks &amp; Environment</b> David Todd (Chair) 512-416-0400	
<b>Area 5</b> Neal Nuwash 512-462-9093 Elloa Mathews 512-442-6986	<b>Schools</b> Gretchen Otto (Chair) 512-227-1507	
<b>Area 6</b> Rachel McClure 512-326-5572 Laura Gass Weaver gassweaver@sbcglobal.net	<b>Communications</b> Betty Weed (Chair) communications@srccatx.org Gretchen Otto (Newsletter Editor) Maia Reeves (Newsletter Designer)	
<b>Area 7</b> Richard Whymark richard@apaproductions.com		<b>SRCC Officers</b> <b>President Eric Cassidy</b> president@srccatx.org <b>Vice President Dan Fredine</b> vicepresident@srccatx.org <b>Secretary Mary Friedman</b> secretary@srccatx.org <b>Treasurer Oliver Caruso</b> treasurer@srccatx.org <b>Membership Secretary Carol Martin</b> membership@srccatx.org
<b>Area 8</b> Kim Lanzillotti 512-658-8565 Vicky Moerbe 512-442-5678		



Membership Levels		
# 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 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 are **not** tax-deductable. If dues lapse, renew at a SRCC meeting and be eligible to vote. New members can vote after 28 days.



Number of Years (circle one)

1      2      3

Membership (circle one)

**Individual**                      **Family**

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

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

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

SRCC Area (*see map*): \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Membership Fee Due: \$ _____
Additional Donation to SRCC General Fund: \$ _____
<b>TOTAL: \$ _____</b>