



Winlow Place

EST. 1923

The latest news from our neighborhood

UPCOMING EVENTS

MONTROSE TIRZ MEETING

Monday, 2/26, 6 pm
@ St. Stephen's Church,
Pecore Hall (Sul Ross @
Woodhead)

WINLOW PLACE GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, 3/6, 7:30 pm
at St. Stephen's Haven Hall

COCKTAILS & CONVERSATIONS

Our neighborhood social!
@ Brasil Cafe, back patio
Friday, 3/9, 5:30-8 pm

Never miss an event by
signing up for our email
list at winlowplace.org.

The President's Update

By Lindsey Walsh

Here we are—another year together in our great neighborhood!

We all take great pride in calling ourselves residents of Winlow Place. We have an active neighborhood with quarterly civic club meetings, residents hosting monthly socials (Cocktails & Conversations), and plenty of neighbors involved with all that's going on in Houston.

Now more than ever, to preserve the character of our neighborhood with our deed restrictions, we're calling on residents to contribute annual dues. We used some of our funds last year to successfully defend our deed restrictions, but we need to be ready for the future too. We all appreciate your support in 2018!

**To contribute, please visit
winlowplace.org/pay-dues.**

In this issue:

Parking Enforcement | Neartown News | Monthly Socials

Lanier Traffic / Parking Enforcement

HPD will begin enforcing traffic and parking rules around Lanier on Monday, February 26 during weekdays 7 am – 4 pm.

Council Member Ellen Cohen's office has arranged for extra HPD resources to help the Lanier and Winlow Place communities meet our shared goals of reduced congestion and increased safety.

This traffic safety plan was originally put into place in 2013, but a new education and enforcement campaign has begun to help educate the new families at the school.

For Winlow residents this means:

1. We are subject to strict enforcement of the signs near Lanier.
2. Traffic patterns will undergo a period of change while drivers accustom themselves to obeying the signs. *Both drivers and pedestrians should be aware that there may be some confusion and new hazards as traffic flow adjusts.*

For more details and a map, visit winlowplace.org.

Constable Patrol Updates

By Mike Hawash

HPD has about 5,000 officers, about 2,000 of whom are qualified to retire. Incoming officers will not have the same retirement structure and benefits as current ones, which has slowed down recruitment.

HPD has recently set up a 36-hr course, called Citizen's Police Academy, on the history and functioning of the department. From it, we've learned that Houston is very selective screening potential officers, with a high bar to qualify. These standards are also

contributing in part to the shortage of officers right now.

This is also a reminder of why our Constable's Patrol—a nonprofit funded by residents in our area—is so important. Our crime rate continues to be very low ever since we funded a constable.

Our financial commitment to the Patrol has to be made in late summer, and we are looking to raise money ahead of deadline. If you can write your check now, please do!

Spotlight On: Cocktails + Conversations

By Margo Fendrich

Winlow's monthly social—held monthly on the second Friday—is one of the highlights of living in our neighborhood. These events give us a marvelous way to meet new neighbors and catch up with familiar ones.

These events are variously hosted by residents in their homes, but we're switching things up next month by going to Brasil Café.

All are welcome—including renters in the neighborhood. We'd love to meet you. *See you there!*

COCKTAILS + CONVERSATIONS

Friday, March 9, 5:30–8 pm
@ Brasil Cafe

————
Get monthly invites by email;
sign up at winlowplace.org.

Neartown News

By Kay Warhol

Learn all about the Montrose TIRZ
The Board of TIRZ 27-the Montrose TIRZ-is inviting all residents of Montrose/Neartown to a public meeting this month. This is an opportunity to learn about the history of the TIRZ, what the purpose of the TIRZ is, how a TIRZ works (and how it differs from a Management District), and how you can provide input to the Board to help them determine the priorities for future TIRZ projects.

MONTROSE TIRZ MEETING

Monday, 2/26, 6 pm
@ St. Stephen's Church, Pecore
Hall (Sul Ross @ Woodhead)

Super Neighborhood Alliance Updates
As Super Neighborhood 24, Neartown also participates in the city-wide Super Neighborhood Alliance. Mayor Sylvester Turner kicked off the Alliance's first meeting of the year with a discussion of his priorities for the city for 2018: Harvey recovery, the Complete Communities initiative, housing Houston's homeless, public safety (and the need for more police), the TxDOT freeway rebuilding projects, and addressing the anticipated budget shortfall (\$130M). For info on the Super Neighborhood Alliance, including agendas and minutes, see: houstontx.gov/superneighborhoods/alliance.html

What is a Management District?

Houston may be unique in having set up more than 20 management districts over the course of the last 20+ years.

These were brought into being because a minimum of 5 individuals petitioned the legislature to apply for a MD designation within a certain area. Nominally, there were notices in print and media requesting public commentary before these were formed. In fact, most of them passed the legislature without much notice. A 2012 special report by then Comptroller Susan Combs found that the legislature created 517 new districts 1992–2010. Harris County added 105 new districts 2002–2012.

The structure of an MD typically has these same 5 people on its board. In Houston, many of the boards are controlled by real estate professionals or developers who have a vested interest in having the valuation of property within its borders continue to rise. While an MD can only tax the business entities within its boundaries (not the residences), once it has been established, it has the right to collect this extra tax. In 2007, I and another member of the WPCC tried to do an evaluation of how the monies were typically spent in some of the MDs near or adjacent to Winlow Place. We found the operations of the average MD rather opaque and the opportunity for outside comment or input into decision making almost totally lacking. While outsiders could nominally attend board meetings, they were not entitled to ask for items to be put on the agenda for open discussion. (In 2007, Vinson and Elkins charged \$65,000 for one for which we had the accounts.) Once a MD is established, often with the help of V&E, the business of most of the MDs is turned over to the Haws Hill legal firm which operates the entity and is paid monthly for so doing. (At the time, Upper Kirby salaries accounted for \$380,000+, in a budget of \$1.4M, and close to 60% was spent only for maintaining the organization itself.) In 2011, according to district audits, Haws Hill billed seven local districts \$1.8M in project management fees. The basic structure of a MD

Editorial by Mary Needham

has not changed and the tax is still imposed without the participation of the payers in the spending process. Many of them also, when we were investigating them, had long term financial obligations that incurred debt servicing fees.

It was our opinion at the time that many decisions were taken on “beautification” that benefitted the MD itself more than people who lived in the neighborhood. For instance, the Upper Kirby district had a huge budget for repainting the red telephone booths. More recently, Upper Kirby has put in sidewalks so narrow and close to the road that walking there is physically challenging and to some extent dangerous. Also, many of the trees that have been planted along Westheimer and Kirby are of a variety that only can provide minimal shade effect. If you want a “walkable” city, shade trees are a big contributor to encouraging foot traffic as are wider sidewalks set back from the curb.

The Montrose MD was recently in abeyance. The temporary restraining order was related to the 2012 court case 1620 Hawthorne Ltd. v. Montrose Management District, et al. , but was recently lifted by Judge Daryl Moore of Houston’s 333rd District Court, pending a trial date on June 6th. Some of the property owners had filed suit on the basis that they were being taxed without representation as to their taxes’: MMD began levying assessments on some 1100 entities after only 25 property owners signed on. MMD’s board chairman, Claude Wynn, resigned in December, which will take effect when a replacement is sworn in.

Advocates point out that graffiti has increased since the lawsuit. Residents often feel the existence of an MD doesn’t really affect them (since they are not assessed a tax), and for that reason are seldom knowledgeable about their operations. However, this is clearly an ongoing issue for many small businesses, and it behooves all of us to at least understand what they do or do not do.

WINLOWPLACE.ORG

Sign up for email updates, pay dues, and more

- *Heavy trash:* Collection resumes post-Harvey next month. We're the 1st Wed of the month. More info at: houstontx.gov/solidwaste/
- *Mandell-Winlow Constable Patrol:* mwpatrol.org
- *City of Houston questions:* Call 3-1-1
- *New neighbors in Winlow?* Let our welcome committee know by emailing president@winlowplace.org.

2018 Winlow Place Board

President	Lindsey Aldrich Walsh	Vice President	Kristina Bush
Past President	Russel Garrison	Secretary	Brandy Laakso
Treasurer	Denise Hanks and Debbie Leflar	Neartown Assn Delegate	Kay Warhol
Deed Restrictions	Ryan Hicks	Social Committee	<i>open</i>
Communications	Margo Fendrich	Newsletter	Mary Needham
Welcome Committee	Patrick Walsh, and Kristina + Todd Bush	Webmaster	Ticiana Bonacagni
Historian + Yard of the Month	Argo Georgandis		

Block Captains

Have questions or concerns? Reach out to your block captain.

block	captain	contact info	block	captain	contact info
1700 Harold	Janet Ossmann	713.529.3191	1800 Kipling	Mike Hawash	713.417.1468
1800 Harold	Emily Miller	ebzmiller@gmail	1900 Kipling	Luke Hawash	713.417.1468
1900 Harold	Ken Wiesehuegel	713.446.2472	1700 Marshall	Dave Dennison	713.203.3954
1700 Hawthorne	Pam Jenkins	713.927.2880	1800 Marshall	Ron Bland	713.703.6208
1900 Hawthorne	Marg. Nunez	713.529.2549	1900 Marshall	Denise Hanks	713.520.1277
1700 Kipling	Denise Hanks	713.520.1277	1800 W. Alabama	Maria Merrill	832.452.8280