

March-April 2014

WINLOW *Place*

A WINNING DEED-RESTRICTED NEIGHBORHOOD OF OVER 400 FAMILIES RIGHT IN THE HEART OF HOUSTON!

Visit for

www.winlowplace.org

WINLOW PLACE

Tuesday, April 29, 2014

St. Stephens Church, 7:30 p.m. , Pecore Hall

Speaker: David Crossley from

HOUSTON TOMORROW

Hello Winlow Neighbors, I hope everyone is enjoying the spring weather after our crazy winter. I'm happy to announce that our deed restriction amendment is official, and I want to thank everyone who signed the amendment. This amendment helps strengthen our deed restrictions. As construction begins to boom again, it's very important that we keep our restrictions up to date and strong. I feel very confident that Winlow Place will remain a great neighborhood for decades based on our deed restrictions and our efforts. A special thanks goes to Steve Dennis , Mary Needham, Debbie Leflar and Argo Georgandis who put a lot of time and effort getting the signatures. If you see them, please thank them for their efforts. I hope to see you at the April 29th general meeting.

Russel



THE CITY VS THE NEIGHBORHOODS

Please make a note of these procedures. With the builders gathering in ever larger numbers, and our assessments for land-value skyrocketing, every single one of us needs to be alert for potential violations. Your Board simply cannot cover all the angles all the time without help!

AROUND AND AROUND THE MULBERRY BUSH...

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT 1755 HAWTHORNE??

The builder is apparently infringing both our deed restrictions and the CITY Code (ORDINANCE #2007-1087) by between 3-4". The Ass't City Attorney, Heather Cook, says essentially that this is such a tiny infringement that it comes under a "de minimum" clause and the city really couldn't care less. When we pressed her as to what constituted an actionable violation – is it 5"? is it 10" – she refused to be drawn and fell back on a secondary explanation – that if such infringement didn't materially affect the character of the neighborhood, it really isn't a problem and the City is not going to get involved in evaluating any "dueling surveys". This builder has presented a survey which purports to show that he is 20' back and that is the end of it as far as the City is concerned.

The bottom line for us is that the next time this or any other builder starts laying out the foundation, we need to get a measurement done sooner.

We have taken some additional steps, but we also know that the city will not do anything to help at this point; A City Inspector, or someone from the permitting dept looks only at whether the builder has presented something that conforms to the deed restrictions; they do **not** check whether what is being done is in fact in accordance with the code – i.e., the Inspector does not double check the correctness of the survey.

Because of our concerns that this house sticks out so much further than the others, we (WPCC) did hire an independent surveyor, South Texas, which provided us with the information; according to them, the city property line is set back between 12 -18" from the edge of the sidewalk closest to the houses; a Winlow Place Board member went with them when they did the survey, and can vouch for the placement of the pins at the corner of the lot adjacent to the third house in on the east side of the new build.

WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO TO KEEP THE CITY HONEST and OUR RESTRICTIONS ENFORCED?

Start with a call to 311

It is not productive to try and outline all the steps that were taken in being bounced from dept to dept as we attempted to keep ahead of the 1755 Hawthorne builder. What has become perfectly obvious however, is that **unless you call 311 and get a number, all other calls fall between the chairs**. This was made even clearer at the CIP (Capital Improvements Project) meeting held by Ellen Cohen earlier this month. If you have any complaint about potholes, builders, sidewalks, you **MUST** get a 311 referral.

Proposed Apartment complex at 1920 West Alabama

Early in March, the city put up a sign at the 1900 block of Marshall saying that someone had requested the abandonment of the street. At this point, we have a case number for the project at 1924 Marshall, which has requested this action – a portion of Marshall, and on the other side of the existing apt. complex, a portion of McDuffie.

We then requested a copy of the building plans from the City, via the Open Records Dept. According to the information from the number on the sign (which is the real estate dept), that the property belongs to Marsh McDuffie LTD, a property developer headed by Mr. Bob Rose. According to Mr. Powell at that number, they have requested the closure in order to have only a fire exit / emergency gate at the ends of Marshall and Kipling. However, given our experience with Trammel Crow several years ago, we are trying very hard to ensure that that is the case, and that we have been given the correct information. Emergency Fire gates are perfectly acceptable, whereas funneling exiting traffic from the complex through the neighborhood would not be appropriate

Procedure

In order to request something via the Open records Dept, again you need to have the 311 referral number. Then you FAX a request to Mr. Roberto Medina at (832) 395-2471, referencing the case number and the location of the property. He in turn passes the request to the Open Records Dept.). Earlier, Mr. Medina had given us a slightly different number. This was supposed to generate an automated reply, but it didn't. We called Mr. Medina to follow up, and he confirmed that the fax had been received.

Where Are We Now?

With the many difficulties we had getting information, we finally established that the City Open Records Dept does not get any information about property until **after a permit application has been approved** – ie., after the fact. In this case, while Marsh McDuffie LLC has filed for permission to abandon the street, they have not yet filed any plans for what they expect to do after the two bits of Marshall and McDuffie are closed. It is an apartment complex, otherwise known as a multi-family development, but there is no information about how it will be laid out, or where the exits and entrances will be, what the accommodation will be for parking or how many apartments will be built. Some of their property does front on West Alabama so it is not illogical to assume that the main entrance would be there, but it is not a given. They have an L-shaped parcel that is actually part of 3 different plats. We received photocopies of this information on the 28th of March, some three weeks after we began trying to obtain it. Any WPCC member interested can obtain this information from the WPCC website.

Meanwhile, Mr. Rose is represented by Janet M. Baccus, at Jones and Carter Inc. Her telephone number is 713-777-5337, (fax: 713-777-5976) and her email is jbaccus@jonescarter.com. The two addresses shown are 1924 Marshall and 1920 West Alabama.

Especially given recent events such as the fire at the huge complex at Montrose/Dallas, which was constructed entirely of wood, your Winlow Place Board has placed a high priority on tracking projects such as this which affect our neighborhood.

Thank you for Signing the Amended Winlow Place Deed Restrictions?

We are extremely pleased to report that the updated, amended Deed Restrictions have been filed with the City as of March 2014. We have several signatures more than would have been officially required, and are encouraged that our membership is taking seriously the prospect of keeping them enforced. Remember that what unites us is that we all own property in Winlow Place and would like to keep the general character of the neighborhood.

When the Winlow Place Civic Club was formed many years ago, its main purpose was to enforce the Deed Restrictions. In the intervening years, there has been a temptation to dilute this purpose with things that are more interesting and possibly more fun, but do remember that without collective action we are sitting ducks!

We urge all of you to participate—we have a great speaker in April and we hope to see you at Pecore Hall (St. Stephens) at 7:30 on April 29th

Another place where there are regular violations on the new rules is on the width of sidewalks. Any new sidewalk laid is supposed now to be 5', to enable two people to walk comfortably side by side. Please continue to watch on YOUR block for whether the builders are complying.

HEAVY TRASH PICKUP DATES

Remember that the city is changing our pickup to the FIRST WED

April 2 -Junk, May 7- Trees; June 4 -Junk, July 2—Trees

Regular trash remains the same; Monday pickup, & the green bin recycling also on Monday, every second week.

Remember, the City doesn't take glass in the regular pickup. Discovery Green has a drop-off center, and the site on Dinkins / off Kirby is still listed as open

5004 Dincans Street, West University Place, TX 77005
(713) 668-4441

SOCIALS

NEXT COCKTAILS AND CONVERSATION—Join us!

Friday April 11, 5:30—8 p.m.

Chez Joe Francis and Leo Busscher
@ 1709 Marshall Street

All are welcome

YARD OF THE MONTH

Thanks to Steve Helton and Debbie Leflar for continuing to keep an eye on the gardens in our neighborhood, and belated congratulations to the winners

December winners: (2)

Eddie de la Vega and Justin Brinegar, 1806/8 Kipling

Patricia & Jeff Hilliard, 1760 Harold St.

Feb: Jackie Calhoun, 1723 Kipling

March Mario Madrid Family, 1732 Harold

OUR SPEAKER

We have arranged for a terrific guest speaker to join us: **David Crossley from Houston Tomorrow**. David is well-known for his research and discussion around planning for Houston's long-term growth and prosperity, and is particularly knowledgeable in the more urban, inner-loop areas. For more information about Houston Tomorrow, visit www.houstontomorrow.org

WALK HOUSTON—SUNDAY STREETS

May 4, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Westheimer will be closed to vehicular traffic between Hazard and Yoakum

CRIME STATS

We have still been comparatively fortunate in this area, except for the fact that there have been several ugly incidents of mutilated cats in the last two months. One was on the corner of Hawthorne and Woodhead, the other reported one was over on Mandell. Please keep your pets on leash (dogs) and cats inside. Everyone—and especially the migrating song-birds—will be happier.

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

2014 DUES ARE DUE

Recommended amounts are below. If you have been hit by these tough economic times, please pay what you can.

Mail to: Treasurer, P.O. Box 980712
Houston, TX 77098

Or, just pay at the meeting and save the stamp!

Patron: \$100.00

Regular: \$50.00

Sr. Citizens: \$10 or what you can afford.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Other News Sources

1. www.citizens.net
2. www.neartown.org
3. www.winlowplace.org
4. www.richmondtrail.org

YARD OF THE MONTH;

Send your nomination to Deb Leflar

dhleflar@aol.com

EMAIL ADDRESSES?

Do you get the email updates on the crime stats? In-between-newsletter news? If not, send your address to president@winlowplace.org

2013 OFFICERS

PRESIDENT	Russel Garrison
VICE PRES	Kay Warhol
SEC.	Caroline Garry
TREASURER	Lindsey Eldridge

2013 COMMITTEE CHAIRS

WEBMASTER	C. Garry
DEED RESTRICTIONS	R. Hicks/ B. Garry
PUBLICATIONS	M. Needham
MEMBERSHIP	L. Eldridge
YARD OF THE MONTH	D. Leflar
SOCIAL	T. Carroll

2012 BLOCK CAPTAINS/ NEWSLETTER

1700 Hawthorne	Pam Jenkins	1707 Hawthorne	713.927.2880
1900 Hawthorne	Paul Cobb	1900 Hawthorne	713.522.8030
1700 Harold	Jan Ossman	1716 Harold	713.529.3191
1800 Harold	Connie Reilly	1829 Harold	713.524.9821
1900 Harold	Ken Wiesehuegel	1911 Harold	713.446.2472
1700 Kipling	Kris Kelly	1756 Kipling	713.523.2721
1800 Kipling	Lee Loe	1844 Kipling	713-524-2682
1900 Kipling	Donia Casperson	1902 Kipling	713.522.6543
1700 Marshall	Michael Drifmeyer	1724 Marshall	713-523-0624
1800 Marshall	Steve Dennis	1825 Marshall	304 685 5626
1900 Marshall	Denise Hanks	1911 Marshall	713.520.1277
1800 w. Alabama	Teri Frankel	1902 w. Alabama	(713) 228-9445

WWW.WINLOWPLACE. ORG

Please check our website frequently

You can improve our neighborhood security