

Audubon Place Association
Minutes for March 3, 2005
Neighborhood Meeting at Mango's

In attendance: Anita Bryant, Brad Harmes, Peter Van Bommel, Patti Thompson, John O'Donnell, Rion Camerlo, Jay Palmer, Virginia Camerlo, Maaik Van Bommel, Tony Herrada, Peter Boyle, Dan Piette, Doreen Stoller (13 total)

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 pm by Patti Thompson.

Our guest speaker for the month was Jack Rose, President of Neartown Association. Audubon Place is a part of the Neartown Super Neighborhood (Neighborhood #24) as designated by the City of Houston. There is more information about Super Neighborhoods in general and what's going on in Neartown specifically at the City of Houston's website (www.houstontx.gov) under Planning and Development. Mr. Rose spoke to a number of different topics, all listed below:

HSPVA move: When the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts moves to their new campus, their current location will be vacant. The City and HISD have agreed that the building will be torn down and the local communities can reclaim the land as a park. However, there are no funds set aside for this project. It is "approved but not funded" There will be more discussion on fund raising and design issues in the future.

527 Spur Redesign: TXDOT set aside \$1 million for "renovation" of the area once their work is done. This could include landscaping, a more pedestrian friendly area - especially leading over to the MetroRail line, better lighting and sidewalks etc. There was discussion about who knows where this money is and what is currently planned for it Patti Thompson will be contacting Mike Mark (of Westmoreland) to get more details.

Esplanades on Montrose: A private group is working with the City to return the esplanades to Montrose Blvd from West Dallas all the way through to Bissonnet. This group has acquired private funding to hire a landscape architect to design the esplanades and the areas on either side of the street between the curbs and sidewalks. The idea is to give Montrose a cohesive look - as has been done in the Galleria area

One big challenge is the continuing upkeep of any landscaping The esplanades that remain on Montrose at this time have no funding and are just left to themselves or the kindness of strangers. The group hopes to find the money necessary to put the plan in place AND provide for care for the future.

Brad Harmes mentioned that a "Museum Walk" plan is already funded and in motion connecting all the museums for pedestrians This would intersect with the "new" esplanades and perhaps get people excited about the Montrose esplanades project.

Museum District Business Alliance. The 11 member board will be made up of 6 business representatives and 5 representatives of resident groups This entity has the authorization to add a tax to all property owners and businesses in the area This could result in approximately \$2 - 6 million per year in tax revenue that would be available for improvements. The Upper Kirby District and Galleria District have similar groups.

In closing, Mr. Rose invited everyone to attend a Neartown Assn meeting. They are held the 4th Tuesday of each month. Contact Jack Rose at ntaprez@hotmail.com for location and time. You may also find out more information about Neartown at www.neartown.org . He also mentioned that the "Meet your elected official" night that was cancelled in February would be rescheduled soon. More information will be available when the event is set Patti Thompson thanked him for attending and Maaik Van Bommel, Treasurer, gave him a check (\$100) to cover APA's membership fee.

Old Business

Garage Sale: The Garage Sale will be held on April 9 in the Harmes' driveway. People may begin dropping off items 2 weeks prior to the Sale. Please price everything and remember NO CLOTHES! There was some discussion on how to improve the results of the Sale this year and neighbors are asked to dig through their closets and give generously! It was also suggested that local businesses should be approached for donations as well. A mailer will be sent out to all Audubon Place residents.

Esplanade Clean up: Set for this Saturday, March 5.

Treasurer's Report

Maaiké Van Bommel presented the Treasurer's Report:

Checking Account balance:	\$ 839.71
Savings Balance:	\$4,718.62
Esplanade Balance:	\$2,183.48
Total bank balance	\$7,741.81

The only disbursement in the last month (besides the above payment to Neartown Assn) was \$320 for care of the Esplanade on Audubon.

New Business

City of Houston Request Form: An official request form to the City of Houston has been submitted by Audubon Place Assn requesting upgraded water meters on the Esplanade (so the sprinklers will work again), improved drainage, sidewalks, and curbs and debris removal from the alleys in the neighborhood.

Toll Road Petition: Patti Thompson presented a petition form received from another local resident group. This group is attempting to change the laws regarding the way Texas toll road placement is decided (where they will be built). More information on this is available at: www.citizenstransportationcoalition.org. Dan Piette moved and Brad Harmes seconded that APA sign this petition. The motion passed unanimously

National Night Out: This year's NNO will be August 2. There was discussion about how to make this evening more appealing to more neighbors given that meeting outside in Houston in August with the mosquitoes and humidity isn't very enticing. More on this later.

Stanford Oaks: A new townhouse project will begin soon at the corner of Stanford and Harold (the old Covenant House apartments). There was an article in the paper (March 3) regarding the development. It appears that the developers intend to protect the trees but we will continue to keep watch.

Spur 59 construction: The ramps onto the outbound Spur from W. Alabama and Richmond will close Friday, March 4 in the evening and will remain closed through the end of the reconstruction project.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm

Next month's gathering will be April 7, at 7:30 pm at Mango's (on Taft)

Respectfully submitted, Anita Bryant, Secretary

Audubon Place Association
Minutes for April 7, 2005
Neighborhood Meeting at Mango's

In attendance: Anita Bryant, Linda Harmes, Patti Thompson. John O'Donnell, Linda Walsh, Jay Palmer, Kevin Kelly, Katrina Hodge, Steve Hamilton, Terrell Dixon, Katinka Rialton, Doreen Stoller, Tyler Reeder, Sara Beach (14 total)

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 pm by Patti Thompson. She welcomed the new neighbors and encouraged them to continue to attend.

Old Business

Garage Sale: The Garage Sale will be held this Saturday April 9 in the Harmes' driveway. The selling will begin at 8 am. Linda Harmes said wine and goodies would be available to those who came to set up and price items starting at 7pm on Friday.

Treasurer's Report

Maaike Van Bommel was not present so there was no Treasurer's Report:

New Business

Tree Ordinance Violation: There is concern among some neighbors about the 2 trees that were cut down on Stanford at Kipling. The City can give a citation of \$500 per tree when a tree on the City easement is removed without approval. There was concern of the precedent that would be set if we let this slide. We don't want developers to think we are not paying attention to our trees. Patti will continue to pursue this with the City.

Crime in the Neighborhood: Various neighbors reported on a number of different problems recently in the neighborhood and all attending agreed that there seems to be an increase in criminal activity lately. Particular problems related included speeding, loitering and drug activity at the Stanford and Harold property, break-ins, and the recent break-in/drug problem on Harold and Hawthorne.

There was discussion about considering speed humps or some such deterrent to speeders on Audubon. Katrina Hodge moved and Patti Thompson seconded that Patti will contact the City to find out what our options are here.

John O'Donnell had the following suggestions regarding potential drug selling in the neighborhood:

- * If you notice cars loitering with people leaning in the windows or people making quick stops at all hours somewhere, call the HPD Narcotics Division directly. They will pay attention to tips like this - it will probably get lost if you call the general Police number.
- * You must have a NO Trespassing sign posted to get action from HPD regarding loitering.

There was discussion about reinstating the Neighborhood Patrol that was in place in the 1980s. This will take considerable funds and Patti will contact the neighborhood groups

in Avalon, 1st Montrose Commons, Westmoreland, Courtland and the businesses on Lovett to see if they are interested and could help spread the costs around a little more. The most popular option was to hire off duty HPD officer(s) and Katrina Hodge and Patti Thompson said they would both look into how to do this and how much it costs.

Patti said she would contact the HPD storefront on Westheimer and see if an officer can attend our May meeting to discuss crime prevention and our current concerns.

Meet Your Officials Night: Neartown Association will host a Meet Your Elected Officials evening on Wednesday, April 27 at the Museum of Printing History. The event will run from 7:00-8:30 pm. All area residents are encouraged to attend

Audubon Place Signs: Patti mentioned the need to be sure our Neighborhood signs are prominently displayed on the streets so people will know when they are in Audubon Place. There are signs made that need to be posted. Jay Palmer volunteered to take over this job.

May Meeting:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm

Next month's gathering will be May 4, at 7:30 pm at Mango's (on Taft)

Thomas McWhorter of the Houston Preservation Committee will be our Guest Speaker.

Respectfully submitted, Anita Bryant, Secretary

Audubon Place Association
Minutes for September 1, 2005
Neighborhood Meeting at the Lovett Inn

In attendance: Anita Bryant, Brad Harmes, Patti Thompson, John O'Donnell, Maaike Van Bommel, Tony Herrada, Peter Boyle, Chris Bryant, Katrina Hodge, Kevin Kelly, Andrea di Bagno, Alex di Bagno, Tyler Reeder, Sara Reeder, Linda Harmes, Steve Hamilton (16 total)

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 pm by Patti Thompson.

Old Business

Patti announced that she has been selected to be on the Board of the newly formed East Montrose Management District, as a Resident Representative. This new tax collecting entity will be responsible for decisions on how to spend the monies to improve our area's public spaces.

New Business

Patti announced a series of upcoming meetings that will be of interest to APA neighbors. (This information was passed on to APA webmaster, Dan Piette) :

Sept 7, 6:30 pm - Metro Rail meeting at the West Gray Community Center. This meeting will be a public forum to discuss plans to extend Metro Rail down Richmond from U of H downtown to Galleria.

Sept 15, 6:00 pm - There will be a pedestrian/bicycle planning meeting at the Crooker Center on the St Thomas Univ. campus.

Sept 17, 8 am - noon - There will be an organized graffiti clean up day for the Montrose area. Contact information is available on the APA website.

Crime Prevention: Patti informed us that the local HPD storefront is interested in training area residents to serve as Citizens on Patrol. Applications can be found at the storefront. Residents would go through training and then be involved in volunteer teams on foot patrolling the neighborhood.

Andrea di Bagno again brought up the idea of publishing a more current neighborhood directory so we can get in touch with our neighbors when we see a potential (or currently happening!) crime situation. It was discussed that a list of cell phone numbers would be most helpful to be able to reach residents whether they are at home or not.

Historic District News: The City of Houston has added a "Protected Landmark" designation which would offer more stringent restrictions on what can and can't be done with particular structures. To qualify, a building or house must be at least 100 years old.

There was a general discussion about the current state of the Historic District petition. It was mentioned that there have been a number of new neighbors moving in lately and it would behoove us to approach them if their property is not already protected/included. There was discussion that long time residents with new neighbors should approach them on an individual basis about this. John O'Donnell mentioned again the need to have these papers at the annual Christmas party so those neighbors who come to this one event can take care of registering in a "one stop shopping" type deal. Chris Bryant noted that a Notary Public would need to be on hand for some

of the documents to be done properly.

Nominating Committee: Patti stated that we will need to find a new President and Vice President to serve in 2006 and that a nominating committee will need to be formed. Dan Piette and John O'Donnell's names were put forward as possible candidates for President. Patti agreed to contact Dan about serving. Maaike Van Bommel and Anita Bryant agreed to continue on in 2006 as Treasurer and Secretary respectively.

Slide Presentation: Patti Thompson had put together a slide presentation of many of the historic houses in our neighborhood, grouped by architect. The presentation was well received by everyone in attendance and it was suggested it could be used as a fundraiser for the Association. It was decided that the entire presentation will be made available for sale as a CD. The CD will be advertised on the website and in the newsletter and will be available for sale at the Christmas Party. Price was not determined at this time.

Treasurer's Report:

Maaike Van Bommel announced that there is currently \$7600 combined in APA's accounts.

There was general discussion on what to do with all this money.

Uses discussed include: refurbishing the Audubon Place signs, adding a main neighborhood entry sign, irrigation for the esplanade, security, renting Lovett Inn for monthly meetings.

New Membership: It was noted that membership is holding steady from year to year (not growing) even though there have been more new people moving in to our neighborhood. There was discussion about how to get some new faces to attend the meetings and get involved. Katrina Hodge volunteered to approach neighbors about our Association and invite them to join and attend the meetings.

Meeting Space: We are still without a permanent home for our monthly meetings. The Lovett Inn charges \$185 to rent their front room. Mango's and La Mora are ok alternatives but attendees find it hard to hear what is being said. It may be possible to use the Lovett Inn occasionally but it is too expensive for use each month. John O'Donnell offered his home for the October meeting and this was thankfully accepted. Brad and Linda Harnes tentatively offered their home for the November meeting.

The 2005 Christmas party will be held at Alex & Andrea di Bagno's home (608 Harold).

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm

Next month's gathering will be October 6, at 7:30 pm at John O'Donnell's house (3500 Audubon)

Respectfully submitted, Anita Bryant, Secretary

Audubon Place Association
Minutes for October 6, 2005
Neighborhood Meeting at John O'Donnell's house

In attendance: Anita Bryant, Patti Thompson, John O'Donnell, Katrina Hodge, Kevin Kelly, Alex di Bagno, Tyler Reeder, Sara Reeder, Huw Pierce (9 total)

The meeting was called to order at 7:45 pm by Patti Thompson, President.

The meeting began with a presentation by **Kelly DeHay**, a resident of Mandell Place, about what we can do to combat graffiti in our area. He recommended that Audubon Place contact the businesses along the borders of our neighborhood (W. Alabama & Montrose, specifically) and offer to paint over any graffiti on their businesses. They can either provide their own paint or we can use the recycled gray paint the City of Houston has available for this purpose. The idea is that if the graffiti is constantly covered up as soon as it is done, the perpetrators will move on to another area where there is less resistance.

He noted how this problem does not exist in those areas of town that have Management Districts (i.e. Upper Kirby) because they employ someone to paint over graffiti each day.

Kelly also encouraged individuals to take charge of their own neighborhood street and keep it clean of graffiti as well. He has rollers and paint available for this use. He suggested reaching out to those who are unable to clean up their own property with an offer of help to keep this problem under control.

He also informed us that if the graffiti is on City property (stop signs, speed limit signs, streetlight poles, etc.), one should call 311 and tell them about it so they can clean it up.

Kelly does organize Montrose wide graffiti clean ups from time to time and is always looking for helpers or anyone who wants to be a captain for their own area. He can be reached by email at: kdehay@greenwoodking.com or by phone at 713/298-2903.

We all thanked Kelly for his time and hard work towards keeping Houston beautiful.

Treasurer's Report

Anita Bryant presented the Treasurer's Report in Maaike Van Bemmels absence:

Checking Account balance:	\$ 408.50
Savings Balance:	\$4,728.35
Esplanade Balance:	\$2,188.58
Total bank balance	\$7,325.43

The only disbursement in the last month was approx. \$500 for care of the Esplanade on Audubon.

Old Business

Nominations for Officers: Patti informed us that Maaike Van Bemmels and Anita Bryant have agreed to stay on as Treasurer and Secretary respectively for 2006 John O'Donnell agreed to serve as Vice President and Dan Piette will hopefully agree to serve as President. The nominees will be voted on at the November APA meeting.

Metro Rail: Metro is proceeding with their plans to put their newest rail extension down Richmond to the

Galleria (the University Line). Richmond Ave. was chosen because of the high density of people along that route that would be potential customers for the rail thus ensuring Federal assistance with the project budget. There is no timeline for this project yet.

Monthly Meeting Place: The need for a regular monthly meeting place was discussed again. Anita Bryant suggested that perhaps Lovett Inn would be willing to negotiate a more reasonable rental amount if we committed to a year at a time and pointed out that we were meeting on a slow night for them. John O' Donnell agreed to contact them and see if they would agree to let us use their front room for \$50 - \$75 per use/month.

S.N.A.P. program: The Super Neighborhood improvements list has come out for the next year and Patti informed us that the West Alabama repaving project has been pushed back a year.

Storm Drain signage program: Anita Bryant informed us that this project is still in the works. She and her family will be counting the number of storm drains in our neighborhood and requesting signs for each one from the city soon. We will need volunteers to put the plaques in place once they are delivered. More information on this when they arrive. These plaques are provided free by the City and inform all of us (in English and Spanish) that anything dumped in the storm drains goes directly into the bayous and, ultimately, Galveston Bay. We need to encourage everyone not to dump anything into these drains.

New Business

Storm Drain Survey: Patti shared some information about a group that is studying just how much junk gets dumped into Houston's waterways. They will be meeting on Saturday, October 22 in the parking lot at Walgreen's to clean out our area's storm drains and try to keep stuff from getting in the system in the first place. Anyone who is willing to help with this project is welcome.

Citizens on Patrol: HPD is still looking for volunteers from the community to train with their police officers and then be volunteer patrols to help keep neighborhoods safe. For more information, contact the HPD storefront on Westheimer (next to Katz's).

Crime in the Neighborhood: Tyler and Sara Reeder talked about the recent burglary at their home on Harold. There was discussion again about the possibility of hiring security. Huw Pierce mentioned that his previous neighborhood had a Constable Patrol program in place. This is not a dedicated security officer but a Constable who is familiar with the neighborhood and would be the first responder to a call. Huw agreed to look into this and find out costs etc. for Audubon Place.

Calendar: Neighbors were reminded of the Greek Festival this weekend and the large number of cars that will be parking on our streets. We discussed parking issues for other large events and the success of No Parking signs in place to keep us all safe when there are so many cars on the streets. The need for a rolling master calendar was discussed so we will see these events coming and get things done in time, before it is too late to fix. The next big event that affects our neighborhood is St. Patrick's Day at Griffs.

Permit Parking: There was discussion among the attendees about the potential need to instigate a permit parking program on some of our streets so residents and their guests will be able to park near their own houses. This can be done on a block by block basis and can be arranged through the City.

Coming Events:

Storm Drain Clean up - Saturday, Oct 22 North Montrose

Garage Sale - Saturday, Nov 5 Christmas Party at the di Bagno's
home - Thursday, Dec 1

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm

Next month's gathering will be November 3, at 7:30 pm at Brad & Linda Harmes house (?)

Respectfully submitted, Anita Bryant, Secretary

Audubon Place Association
Minutes for November 3, 2005
Neighborhood Meeting at Brad^& Linda Harmes' house

In attendance: Anita Bryant, Patti Thompson, John O'Donnell, Steve Hamilton, Tony Herrada, Peter Boyle, Virginia Camerlo, Maaike Van Bemmell, Linda Harmes (9 total)

The meeting was called to order at 7:45 pm by Patti Thompson, President.

Treasurer's Report

Maaike Van Bemmell, Treasurer, reported that there was no real change from last month's numbers.

Old Business

Nominations for Officers: The following slate of officers was presented for elections.

President: Patti Thompson (kindly agreed to stay on another year!) Vice President: John O'Donnell Treasurer: Maaike Van Bemmell Secretary: Anita Bryant

Patti did express concerns about the high number of meetings she attends every month as President of Audubon Place. It was agreed that a pool of people would be available to attend these meetings in her place to help ease her schedule as much as possible. There will be 3 teams available:

Team 1: Tony Herrada/Peter Boyle

Team 2: Steve Hamilton (solo)

Team 3: Maaike Van Bemmell/Virginia Camerlo

Patti will contact any of these teams by email and they would attend City and other civic association meetings as representatives of Audubon Place.

Steve Hamilton moved that the slate of officers be accepted as presented and the motion passed unanimously.

Monthly Meeting Place: There is still no set place for our monthly meetings and no progress has been made on this front. At this point we will continue to meet in private homes until we can get something settled. Ideas for potential sites were put forward with the proposers agreeing to approach the right people and see if they agree to offer space for our meetings each month.

Storm Drain Marker Project: Anita Bryant reported that she has ordered the storm drain markers from Harris County and will be organizing a half day to put them in place once they are received. There are 85 storm drains within our neighborhood borders and each will be marked with a plaque stating that anything being dumped in the drain will go straight to Galveston Bay -hopefully this will keep most people from dumping junk in the drains!

New Business:

Mail box rental: Maaike suggested that we consider moving our APA mailbox to the US Post Office as there have been some difficulties with our current rental location. It was agreed that Maaike will look into the rates at University Station (on Richmond) and go ahead and make the change if they are reasonable

Other Civic Groups: Patti reported that she had attended the Neartown meeting in mid October and the subjects discussed included:

The redesign of Lower Westheimer

The proposed designs for the Metro rail stops on Richmond Ave

The return of an esplanade on Montrose (from Westheimer to the museums)

All of these projects are publicly funded except the Montrose esplanade plans. Jack Rose brought forward the idea that the tax revenues collected from the newly formed East Montrose Tax Management District could be used for these projects but Patti spoke of her concerns, as a Board member, that the money be used for more pressing issues such as security and better sidewalks and roads

Sprinklers on Audubon: The City has reconnected the water supply to the esplanade so now APA is looking for bids to install a properly working sprinkler system. Linda Harmes and Tony Herrada both agreed to approach their own sprinkler contractors to put together bids on this project. The plans will need to be submitted to the City before work can begin.

Audubon Place signs: Various people reported on the sad state of some of our Audubon Place neighborhood marker signs. They have been defaced, painted over or are falling down! The worst ones can be replaced now with spare signs but Peter Boyle said he was looking at a bid to replace all the signs. He will ask about a graffiti proof coating (if possible). These signs are very important to alerting people that they are entering a neighborhood that cares!

Speed Humps: Virginia Camerlo expressed concerns about speeding (particularly on Stanford and Marshall). There was discussion about the costs and procedures for installing speed humps. It was decided that a good first step would be to make all intersections 4 way stops as it is very confusing to know when you should (or shouldn't) stop and it will slow down the cut-through traffic as well. Patti Thompson agreed to contact the City about getting this underway.

Rate Increase: It was discussed and passed unanimously that the neighborhood membership dues would be raised as follows: \$25 per household or \$15 per individual. This increase will be effective immediately.

Christmas Party: The 2005 Christmas Party will be Thursday, December 1 at Alex & Andrea di Bagno's home. It was decided that a general invitation to all homeowners would be included in a print newsletter to be sent out soon. This invitation will include the new dues rate discussed above.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm

The Christmas gathering will be December 1, at 7:30 pm at Alex & Andres di Bagno's house
Respectfully submitted, Anita Bryant, Secretary