

## Audubon Place Association – March 2007 Notes

The March monthly meeting of the Audubon Place Association was held on March 1 at the Harmes residence.

The guest speaker for the night was Margie Beegle from Margie Beegle Sales. Her company conducts estate sales and came to give us an overview of what she does and some insight for our upcoming garage sale.

The following are some of the highlights of her talk:

### Estate sale expert

- Big opportunity with aging baby boomers

- Asset management

- Who do you want to make money? The sales team or yourself?

- Valuable things getting stolen by “experts”

- Look for honest and competent estate sales companies

### How to staff a sale

- Serious job – financially

- Trustworthy

- Comb entire house

- Go through every nook and cranny

- Find money that might have been hidden during the depression

- Allure of estate sale – stage so that it looks like things haven’t been touched, even though they are staged

### Pricing items

- 50 to 70% of retail for local sale

- No discounting on first day, discount second day

- 60% sold on first day!

### Books and paper – under appreciated

#### How do you protect yourself

- Be well educated

- Make sure they are not interested in buying it or their friends are interested in buying

- Word of mouth is best reference

- Receipt book – ask for copies of everything

### There can be problems with appraisals –

- Take pictures of everything

- Compare with what other things have sold

- Check references

- Only auction house they use – Bonhams

Use internet to find information  
What about jewelry appraisal? Have to pay for that – insurance company's insist  
Flat fee vs percentage of value? Flat fee!  
Never let anyone take anything for appraisal!

Write a Family Love Letter –  
Insurance policies  
Bank accounts  
Brokerage accounts

Garage sale  
Don't let anyone come in early  
Don't throw anything out  
Consignments  
Specialty item – put it online for national market  
Ebay

Garage “Junk” – code word for good stuff  
Digger sale! Want to come and dig through junk  
Cones – yellow caution tape to keep them out!  
Don't over advertise  
Greensheet  
Village News

How to get on mailing list and for more information?

[www.margiebeeglesales.com](http://www.margiebeeglesales.com)

### **Regular Business**

Old Business  
Security  
Building

Security  
FMC – security director – didn't follow through  
Peter asked some friends to try to bring it up  
Westmoreland – Francine passed along Peter's email, good response,  
Invited Peter to come to their meeting in March.

About 40 in our neighborhood will contribute  
Winlow place has about 70 that would contribute  
St Thomas is interested  
WAM and Mandel Place have not answered  
Lovett Blvd? Avondale?

Don't want to make the area too big for one constable to cover  
200 is minimum number of participants at \$75/quarter for one shift

Newspaper article – tax. East Montrose management District wants to tax business  
More than 4 units in apartment complex, considered business and will be taxed.

Lovett Blvd – article – East Montrose is increasing their area – can we increase our area  
to include Lovett Blvd? How to do it?

What would they gain? What would we gain?

John will call a contact over at the townhouses and see if they are interested

How about a joint meeting with the rest of the adjoining neighborhood? Sign up sheet for  
Security?

Newsletter? Who do we send it to? Owners or residents?

One page quarterly – send to all addresses? Residents and anyone who pays dues.

New Business

Steve Hamilton noted that several trees seem to be invested with parasite type of  
bromeliad – will kill the trees.

Steve will take the action item to find out who to consult about the trees

Robin Holtzer would be a good speaker for another meeting

Virginia asked how we spend the neighborhood dues?

About 50 or 60 people contribute yearly, so it is not a great deal of money.

Maybe ask neighborhood how they want us to spend the neighborhood dues.

Benefits of contributing to the association

Help facilitate the activities of those who are active

Thanks to those who contribute time – esplanade cleanup

Maybe we can plant trees with some of the money?

John accepted an award for the neighborhood. from Ada Edwards

Certificate of recognition for partnership with City of Houston

It was suggested that we scan it in and post on website

Does anyone know where the key to safety deposit box is?

What is the latest on the web site? Katrina was working on it at one time. John will  
discuss with her.

Need to pay Neartown dues.

Virginia asked about adding more stop signs to our area to help control speed?

The meeting was adjourned.



Audubon Place Association – May 2007 Notes

The May monthly meeting of the Audubon Place Association was scheduled at 909 Kipling, but it was cancelled due to flash flood warnings

June 2007 Audubon Place meeting

Call to order

April Minutes will be coming and will be reviewed.

Financial:

Garage Sale:	\$427
Membership:	\$250
Checking:	\$1340.71
Savings	4753.78
Esplanade:	2,200.2
Total	8294.75

No garage sale next year?

Old Business:

New website – Audubonplace.net

Curtesy of Katrina Hodge

Peter will be webmaster

Dan has been paying \$40/year for website. Willing to continue to pay.

Group is on Yahoo. Should we move both to one spot?

John moved that we have one independent web site for neighborhood news and documents. Patti second. Movement passed.

Security.

Peter attended Neartown meeting. Dedicated to security. President had list of offences. Motion to extend hours of storefront. Will ask for that. Also trying to get constable patrol for all of neartown. HPD will work with constables. Can assist HPD when officers tied up with other incidents.

Biggest obstacle is to collect money and manage the money.

Shepherd, Allen parkway, SW Freeway and Taft – boundaries of Neartown. Handle 4 officers – one on duty at one time.

\$80K per officer.

There are 315 households in neighborhood

50 in our area said yes.

Part of cost is insurance and one of the advantages of going through constables.

Past experience, constables in other neighborhoods can assist if your neighborhood is also covered.

Peter suggested that we wait for Neartown's decision.

Peter has called in to storefront number of times and has had great response on the apartment on Marshall.

Call in suspicious activity and they can watch it.

Narcotics – can look into. Look up on computer to see how many calls. Be sure to call in and get the numbers up

Call and report as Narcotics – (713) 884-3131

Patti reported on addition of garage doors on alley on the apartment/condo complex at 3403 Audubon.

**Lovett Boulevard** – annexation?

We invited Lovett boulevard to join us, but they actually belong to Avondale.

Civic club not a legal entity. So boundaries can overlap.

Articles of incorporation – should have boundary.

We are paying yearly fee to Washington Mutual for safe deposit box and we can't find keys! It costs us \$45/year and it will cost \$450 to drill out the lock.

They will have to drill it out if we decide to drop the box.

We are an incorporated association – so there are no tax consequence. We are not nonprofit.

It was suggested that we create a document that certifies the following are officers of the association and present to Washington Mutual. John O'donnell will ask his admin to create a document with correct wording. And then Patti, as secretary, can issue.

Historic District – new rules for designation. Prevailing building line and building lot rules changes. Audubon place on West side will be more of a problem getting majority.

Easier to get Historic District through – only need 51% instead of 67%. If we are Historic district then we only need 51% instead of 75%. If we want to do it again, we need a lot of help.

Need to recheck owners.

National night out – August 7<sup>th</sup>.

Patti volunteered yard for event.

Triple townhouses on Marshall – setback petition prevented number of units built on that sight.

Meeting adjourned.

Audubon Place Association Meeting, Sept 6, 2007

Meeting was called to order.

The June meeting minutes were approved.

Copies of the by-laws were handed out.

Peter van Bommel announced the Houston Fire Department's classes on Thursday nights. The Citizen's Fire Academy is "designed to increase understanding of fire and emergency medical operations and to promote citizen interaction with Houston Fire Department firefighters and paramedics." A new 12 week class started in September and the next class will be in February 2008. For more information, please check the HFD website at: <http://www.houstontx.gov/fire/cfa/index.html>

Peter presented a draft of the environmental impact on the proposed Metro Light Rail for the proposed University Corridor. More info on the draft can be found at: <http://www.metro-solutions.org/go/doc/1068/112145/>

The Treasury Report was presented.

John O'Donnell brought up the possibility of moving our savings from Washington Mutual to another bank that might have a higher savings rate, such as ING or IBC. It may be too complicated for the association to move, but it will be investigated.

The missing key for the safe deposit box was found and the contents of the box revealed nothing! It was proposed that we deposit the deed restriction receipts, along with the deed restriction notice from the Houston Chronicle and the notice of inclusion/exclusion of owners in the safety deposit box.

Peter created a CD containing the deed restriction information, including a copy of the deed restrictions, scanned images of the reports used during the process, scanned images of the Return Receipts, and scanned images of the signed Exhibit B.

Jim Dougherty attended a City Meeting on Deed Restrictions. The Planning Department would like a copy of our deed restrictions. Jim will provide the name of the person in the Planning Department that requested the information. The Deed Restrictions are included with the property info on file.

Old Business:

Security

Neartown has created a brochure to be distributed throughout Montrose, but no action reported back on that.

APA started a security initiative, but we have been unable to get enough participation to move forward.

The East Montrose Management District would have the ability to raise money through taxes. It was brought up in the meeting that this District was vetoed by Governor Perry, but it was later discovered after the meeting, that the Management District is still alive.

The neighborhood did have a security patrol over 10 years ago and it did make a difference in cleaning up the neighborhood.

Neartown wants to get more from the current HPD Storefront on Westheimer. It was thought to close at 6pm, but it was later discovered that the office does stay open until 10pm. Neartown would like to get the hours extended to 24hour coverage. The phone number for the HPD non-emergency calls is (713) 884-3131.

It was brought up that the by-laws require a minimum of 15 members to be present at the meetings to vote. It was suggested that the by-laws should be amended based on the low turnout at the monthly meetings.

Alex di Bagno had written a letter to City Council concerning the recent construction of the 4 story townhomes in the 700 block of Harold. The letter was reviewed and revised and sent to City Council on behalf of the Association.

Jim Dougherty mentioned other tools available to neighborhoods such as the minimum lot size, and the minimum set back building line. The neighborhood has already used and established a minimum set back line for two sections – the south side of Marshall between Audubon and Stanford, and the east side of Audubon, between Hawthorne and Alabama.

The meeting was adjourned.

## **October Meeting for Audubon Place Association**

### **The meeting started with Garnett Coleman as the guest speaker.**

The following is a summary of Garnett's comments:

The group he works with focuses on:

Public affairs

County affairs - 254 counties

Environmental issues, consumer issues

Review bills based on content and make recommendations if it is favorable

Staff of 10 – like running daily newspaper

2 studies

State schools for mentally ill

Long term care for elderly and disabled

Preparing for baby boomers to slide into older age

75% of those in long term care on Medicaid

80% of budget for health and human services is for elderly and disabled

20% for children

Last session was a very interesting place

First 10 years – people working together to solve problems

Now win/lose scenario

Now seeing a lot of fighting back

Public education was supposed to be initiative, but turned out to be about property taxes

3 billion cut out of education

Tax cut cost money – dropping money out of school taxes, and then you have to take state dollars to pay for that

Increase cigarette taxes, margin taxes (partner income tax), and used car tax – pay taxes on blue book value not what you paid for the car. Liar's affidavit

Supposed to go to cover the reduced property taxes

\$14 billion needed to cover – \$6 billion has to come from state revenue?

Increase in tuition. Tuition deregulated in 2003. Legislature used to regulate it and keep it low. Didn't need a lot of scholarships since it was cheap

\$300 million pulled out of higher education – forced tuition to increase – 50% or more.

Family income of \$80K/year – no assistance

Pushing kids to community college

Setting income divide – system not set up that way. If you can get in, you can go.

Texas grants – started in 1999

Now serves less students

Texas tomorrow fund – nearly insolvent because of the increase in tuitions

Texas tomorrow fund2 – not quite the same – doesn't do the same

Higher education

Public education

Health and human services

Have to pass a budget.

Taxation a big issue – local taxes

Sales tax, gasoline tax, and this new business tax (margins)

State of Texas deals with fundamental things to provide quality of life

Archbishop of Galveston/ diocese –

Good government does not have an ideology – framework for good decisions

Need to get back to best policy – not “my policy”

State does not levee property taxes – happens on local level

Appraisals

Rate on bill –

Harris county appraisal district says your house is worth xxx

Usually lower than the market

Pay based on value of property

Bill that says appraisal goes up over 10% per year

Scott Hockburg – aggregate number – 10% over a period of time and then caps

Counties and cities killed 5% cap

Garnett then answered a series of Questions and Answers:

Bill K. – Education, money not spent well – not managed well

GC – certain things are for the common good. Do we believe that we should provide for public education?

1045 school districts, 27 in Harris county

Do we want to continue to pay for it?

Accountability provisions in school bill – not going to give you money if you spend it badly.

Strings on the money.

Hold school board accountable.

Bill K. TSU – why does the state keep bailing them out?

GC – the way it has been reported, there is an endemic problem. U of H also has its problems. Financial aid – issue a few years ago – you had to be financially eligible as well as academically eligible.

Auditors were on campus – Slade wanted them off – the writer and oversight was removed in 2001. Fiscal problems traced back to Slade.

School is not short ¼ of its funds due to provision to keep TSU not being able to their funding.

Dorms and Parking garages not paid for by state funds.

Student fees pay for that

2 parking garages were built. Bond covenants – parking fee to students. Bonds were floated on a lie.

Brad H. – if TSU part of a larger institution, would that help?

GC – no – the problem is bad people that lie –

U of H – paid for by raised funds.

Slade used state funds – abuse of state funds

Patti – What is the status of the East Montrose mgmt district?

GC – First tried to pass Montrose district – didn't work, so GC did just the East Montrose. Ellen Cohen and GC tried to put it back together – Perry voted it down.

Service and assessment plan – tax just on businesses

Figure out what you want to do and what it costs

Petitions have to be obtained from business saying they are willing to pay as the final step of creating the district.

Tax on real property

Attend meetings – presidents of associations are automatically invited

Money usually goes to security patrols

Security is usually first service everyone wants

Information is supposed to go out to civic associations

Majority of the board are businesses so that they are actually taxing themselves.

Question: Homeless situation. Any state laws to help the homeless?

GC – 2003 some 100 million cut out of health services.

Under Medicaid can no longer pay for counseling services for adults

Largest mental health care cuts

State has abandoned the fact that people need assistance.

Last session - \$82 million put back, but still much less

Advocate that the money be used to help these folks get back into society

If someone attacks you, you can have them committed as a menace to society.

We are all in this together –

1995 rewrote juvenile justice code – create programs, STAR program

We decide what kind of society we want. We live in neighborhood without gates. Better to try to solve problems.

Civility ordinance – doesn't solve any problems.

Requirement to deal with mentally ill.

Question: what was opposition to mgmt districts?

GC – 3 expansions under considerations

Governor said annexation did not allow the public a say so to voice their opinion, though this is not true.

Allen House project area – half in Buffalo Bayou district and half in Montrose District – hired someone to oppose it. They didn't want to pay the taxes.

No real good reason to veto

Women's hospital also vetoed the one to be created in their area.

Let some people opt out – if that is the only way to get district created.

Ryan Goodwin and xx in his office are always willing to help. Someone in the office 8-5, Monday through Friday. Alameda between Southmore and Binz. 5<sup>th</sup> floor.

### **Regular Business Meeting**

Approved Sept minutes

Treasurer's report same as last month.

### **Old business:**

John O'Donnell – bylaws?

Sent off letter from Alex di Bagno. The general intent of the letter was a request to be treated like old 6<sup>th</sup> ward – protected historic district. They were a historic district before. Reaction to Savannah Homes building.

Patti volunteered to help with Historic District.

Peter will contacted Planning Commission to give them our Deed Restrictions

Neartown held the annual meet your elected officials and was well attended by the elected officials.

Officer Pate –HPD starting overtime

Sgt Wilson loves to throw people in jail. City Council wants more officers. Takes time to get cadets through and on the street. 4 classes going now.

### **New Business**

The property at 705 Marshall has been lots of weeds. It was discovered that the property had been foreclosed. Now in the hands of a realtor. Now for sale.

3504 Stanford – used to be condos, and now is called apartments in HCAD. They are in deed restrictions. Three of them sold.

Fee simple – not subdivided. Peter will call and ask the owner about it.

Private security – possible grant from Justice Department. Mgmt district may be able to help.

Upper Kirby mgmt district focused on infrastructure – moving traffic, sewage, phone booths, etc.

Walgreen's manager Keith Caldwell is a Candidate for District D.

Avondale – petition for historic District goes before city Council next Tuesday.

A nominating committee for officers was selected. Linda and Virginia on nominating committee. Need Vice President.

What is best method to get people to come to the last meeting: Pink pamphlet best? Or email? Or phone call?

**Meeting adjourned.**

## Minutes – APA General meeting – November 1, 2007

Present:

Jim Dougherty  
Cindy Bandemer  
Jack Schaffer  
Denise Lewis  
John O'Donnell  
Peter Van Bommel  
Eric Hardenbol

Prior to the general meeting Wayne Zimber and Jeff Young, of Audubon Builders, brought the plans for their proposed redevelopment at 3507 Audubon. All present agreed that the design of the proposed town homes is very nice, and it was noted that the plans adhered to both the deed restrictions and the recently enacted prevailing building setback of 23 feet. There was discussion about whether or not this particular lot was actually included in the deed restrictions; John O'Donnell read relevant subchapters from Chapter 201 of the Texas Property Code, and the dilemma boils down to this: there is a question as to whether or not the prior owner of this property received actual notice as proscribed by the statute, but yet there is also a question as to whether or not the current owner would be able to contest being included at this point (12 years later). Since the plans were complete and the builders did not want to delay, they agreed to proceed with the plans as they are which conform to the deed restrictions – so the questions became moot. We congratulated them on the quality of their design and thanked them for giving us the chance to review.

Two representatives from the City of Houston's parking division had been invited to the meeting to address the problem of parking in the neighborhood, always growing worse due to congestion from the townhomes and the lack of curbs resulting from the driveways of said townhomes. Since they were due to speak at 8:00, and had not shown up by 8:15, we assumed they had trouble finding parking and gave up...

The regular meeting was called to order at 8:15. Since Patti Thompson, APA's Secretary was absent, John took the minutes.

The minutes from the prior meeting were approved as is.

Since Maaiké Van Bommel was out feeling ill, there was no Treasurer's report.

Peter noted that no new slate of officers for 2008 had been presented; it was suggested that those currently serving continue to do so in their existing capacities, and all agreed. The officers for 2008 will continue to be:

President: Peter Van Bommel  
Vice President: John O'Donnell  
Secretary: Patti Thompson  
Treasurer: Maaiké Van Bommel

Peter mentioned next that there are some problems with APA's bylaws, most notably the requirement of 15 members to constitute a quorum. Since about the only time we have 15 members or more is at the annual holiday party in December, it was agreed that John and Peter

would address the problems in the current bylaws and present the revision for approval at the December party.

Next we discussed the letter that Alex Di Bagno recently sent to city council, to protest the City's near total lack of regard for older neighborhoods; in particular, he pointed to the enormous project currently being developed in the 800 block of Harold. The letter asked for consideration to include Audubon Place with the Protected Historical Status that was recently granted to Old 6<sup>th</sup> Ward. There has been no response from city council as of yet, and I highly recommend no one hold their breath waiting for one.

Peter has contacted the CoH Planning Department about registering our Deed Restrictions. Again, no response. Anyone else seeing a pattern here?

705 Marshall has been recently foreclosed on, and the bank has put it on the market for the seemingly low price of \$379k; someone mentioned that it needs a lot of work on the inside. At least the yard is now being attended to.

Peter attended the monthly Neartown Association meeting:

- 7:00 to 7:30 Dr. Abe Saavaedra discussed the upcoming HISD bond issue, the planned closure of Wharton School (magnet school, dual language, little league baseball field, historic building, recently renovated, Conrad Hilton donated 250k)
- 7:30 to 8:00 – Neartown business; Council Member Sue Lovell
- 8:00 to 8:15 – HISD School Board Trustee Candidates
- 8:15 to 9:00 – District D Candidate Forum; attended by candidates for...
  - District D: Lawrence Allen, Wanda Adams, Larry McKinzie, and Michael Williams
  - at large: Jolanda Jones
  - HISD trustee: Dr. Davetta Mills Daniels and Paula Harris
  - Synopses of the candidates' backgrounds can be found at a website of the Houston Comical:  
[http://www.chron.com/CDA/archives/archive.mpl?id=2007\\_4421635](http://www.chron.com/CDA/archives/archive.mpl?id=2007_4421635)

Metro has approved what is more or less the originally planned route for the University Line, mostly down Richmond. Other than overflow traffic when Richmond is torn up, West Alabama will not be affected.

Peter mentioned that Bill Kelly, who resides at the condos on Marshall at Audubon, has been very vocal about implementing a security patrol again. Peter will be asking him if he would like to take on the role of security director.

Avondale West has recently become a Historic District, the 9<sup>th</sup> in Houston. We discussed using this point as a springboard for regenerating interest in APA for becoming a Historic District ourselves. Denise Lewis showed some interest in this project, but we didn't have enough wine at the meeting.... We'll get her at the holiday party!

The Audubonplace.net website has some new features:

- An "Introduction" button on the "About" page;
- A link to Historic Houston on the "Preservation" page; and
- Permission from Gary Coover, former APA resident and architectural historian, to publish his copyrighted walking tour of the notable homes within the APA boundaries.

The tour has background information on many homes, including (when known) whom it was built by, famous persons who lived there, and pertinent features of the architecture.

This year's holiday party will once again be held at the home of the Di Bagnos, 608 Harold, on Thursday December 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:30.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40.

Respectfully (albeit in some spots irreverently) submitted,

John C. O'Donnell, acting Secretary