

A Deed Restricted
Community



NEXT MEETING:

Thursday, May 4
7:30pm

Location TBD

Check the website at
www.audubonplace.net

KEEPERS

City Services
3-1-1

City emergency:
713.834.0600

www.cityofhouston.gov

Public Works
713.837.0600

Westheimer
Police Storefront
*(no officers dispatched
from this location)*
713.284.8604

Police Dispatcher
713.222.3131

Fire Department
713.222.7643
or **9-1-1**

Heavy Trash
*Second Wednesday
of the Month*

AUDUBON PLACE ASSOCIATION NEWS

APRIL 2006

May 4th - next Audubon Place Association Meeting

Guest Speaker: Karla
Nieves, Developers for
710-716 Harold (right).

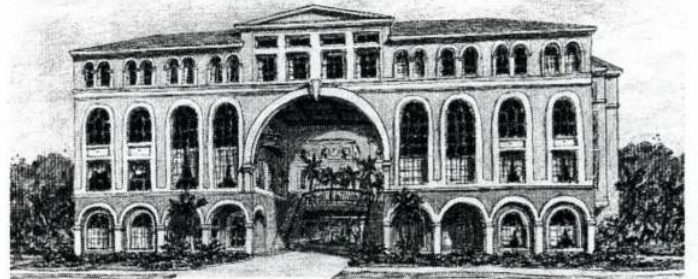
**If you have not
already done so,
please send in your
2006 Membership
dues. An addressed
envelope is included
for your convenience.**

Garage sale: Thanks to
all that donated and vol-
unteered their time at
this year's garage sale.
We made \$961!

New Construction

La Mora recently sold and HNN will be building townhomes.

In our neighborhood, the insurance building at 710 and 716 Harold sold and townhouses will be built there. The builder has offered to attend one of our neighborhood meetings, so I am inviting them for the May meeting. I'll see if we can put the drawing on our Audubon Place website.



US 59 Update

The First Montrose Commons Home Owners Association held their meeting on April 18. Their featured speaker was **Quincy Allen from TxDOT**. He first wanted to thank the neighborhoods for all of our patience during this effort. June 30th is the target date to finish the project. They plan to add about **\$750,000 worth of landscaping** along the newly reconstructed area, plus finish the sidewalks along the freeway. The fig ivy on the current sound walls is not working out well, so they are changing varieties for the new walls. He said that the traffic on the Spur is at one/half the capacity that it was before the construction and TxDOT was wondering when it might pickup again. He asked everyone to please observe the speed limit on the Spur. It is only 30 mph because of the tight lanes. They are only 11 feet instead of the normal 12.

The **HOV lane** should be open in the next few weeks. The barriers that

keep southbound Bagby traffic from exiting to Hawthorne will be removed soon. The signage on the freeway should be ready soon. New standards were created so the signs had to be remade to comply.

There are 12 pumps behind the Chelsea Market area. Six drain the freeway into the retention ponds and 6 drain the neighborhood directly to the bayou. The retention pond is designed to drain to the bayou within 72 hours. The **fiber optic lights** on the new bridge will be a new generation and should not have the fading problems that are effecting the current bridges.

Someone in the audience asked about **rebuilding Alabama** and Quincy said that was a City of Houston question, since they are the ones that put in the reverse lanes. He said that TxDOT will add more lights around Alabama/Milam intersection and will add brick pavers. They will also rebuild the sidewalks under the overpasses that were destroyed during the construction.

Audubon Place Association (APA) is a non-profit corporation organized to preserve the integrity of one of Houston's unique inner city neighborhoods.

Meetings are held the first Thursday of the month at 7:30pm.

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*Thursday, May 4, 7:30pm.
Location to be announced,
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Avondale Place hosted a meeting on March 20 at Rouge with the Neighborhood Protection Group that I attended. Used to be separate organization and now it is part of HPD. Chief Lumpkin is in charge. About 140 city employees – 50% are inspectors and 50% are support staff. They enforce Chapter 10 – and the Buildings to Standards. Their job is to clean up blight and grime. They get a lot of their info from 311 calls, about 200 per week. Every month, they do a C3 (City Council Cleanup) where they pick a different City Council member's district to focus on.

Someone asked about dumpsters and they said that there was very little they could do – no teeth in the ordinance. If they are messy around food establishments, then they could call in Food Inspectors. If there is trash piled around, then they could call in fire hazard. I asked about alleys, and they said that the ordinance changed recently and that the homeowners on either side of the alley were responsible for keeping it clean, but if you see dumping there call it in to 311.

Neartown notes:

A staff member from Covenant house attended the meeting and was looking for **volunteer opportunities** from the neighborhoods for the kids. They have helped with graffiti clean up in the past. I asked if they would like to trim some bushes...

On April 22, there will be a dedication of the new little **league field** at Wharton Elementary. The Hilton foundation funded the renovations. They also gave \$200K to the Dunlavy park renovations.

Steve has been going to the **neighborhood PIP** meetings that happen the 3rd Wednesday of every month. There is a City wide one that occurs the 2nd Tuesday of every month – I wasn't clear on the location, but it was near Houston and Memorial on State? Steve may have more details. Officer Cate said he would like to come to our meeting so I invited him for the May meeting.

The Montrose conservancy group (they are the ones planning to renovate the **Montrose esplanades** and add new ones between Westheimer and Bissonet) is moving along. They have money and a bank account. They are putting together a proposal for mainte-

nance of the existing esplanades on Montrose. They plan to adopt them from the city and assume the maintenance. They are also doing a utility survey and providing engineering drawings to help speed the design process for the esplanades.

There is going to be a meeting on **light rail** in Ada Edwards district on April 11 at the Bering Methodist Church at 6:30. Community meetings are being planned around town during April, and at the end of the year, they will have another round of general discussions.

Robin Holtzer spoke on the different transportation issues.

She suggested calling our city council member to get Alabama put back to the condition it was before the Spur closure. She also shared a **resolution** that she encouraged all neighborhoods to adopt about things Metro can do to make life nicer for us – I will share that via the web site later. There are things like quiet pavement – that has a coating to absorb more noise. City is testing that in part of the city – we need to get them to adopt that around places like Memorial Park.

Robin noted that the Main Street line of Light Rail was paid for locally, not with federal money. It is the most successful light rail in the country! It connects many Houston employment centers. The University Line that is proposed down Richmond would do the same. She said that there are about 65K people employed in the Greenway Plaza area and that is expected to grow to 80K quickly, so something will need to be done about Richmond – whether it is rail or wider streets. She said that in 1997, there were 25K cars per day on Richmond and it must be reconstructed within the next 10 years and posed the question of whether we wanted to have the city rebuild it or the feds? She pointed out that there were 1200 buses per day on Main street before the rail went in. She said that Houston needs Federal money to build this line and the Feds will only build it where they think they will get the ridership – one reason that makes the Westpark alignment an unattractive option.

There is a website that has more info on Metro Projects: www.metro-solutions.org
Meeting notices are there.



Audubon Place Association Newsletter

Happy holidays

Join us at 7:30pm on December 7th for our annual Holiday Party. We will again hold it at Alex and Andrea Di Bagno's house at 608 Harold. Bring a dish to share and also bring your Homeowner's dues for 2007. This year, the dues will be \$ 15 per person or \$25 per household.

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Recycle!

Recycle

The City of Houston is sponsoring a competition among subdivisions that currently have curbside recycling. Each subdivision will be scored on its participation rate and the amount of recyclables. The subdivision with the highest overall score and the one with the most improvement can win a prize of \$5000. Our neighborhood is currently ranked at only 8% participation! If we do not bring our level up, we may lose our curbside recycling program. Dec 5th and Dec 19th are the two remaining recycling days this year.

Civility Ordinance.

The City of Houston created a Civility Ordinance that prohibits "any person to sit or lie down on a sidewalk or blanket, stool, or

Prevailing Building Lines

As most of us know, Houston is a city without zoning. It is one of the things we love and hate about Houston! Since we do not have any kind of zoning, we have to rely on Deed Restrictions to help preserve the character of the neighborhood. Deed Restrictions usually address building setbacks, building heights, and lot sizes. When our Deed Restrictions were -reinstated over 20 years ago, not all properties chose to "opt in." The city has added two ordinances to Chapter 42 of the City Ordinances to help neighborhoods address this. From the City's web page:

Building set backs and lot sizes are often defining features of a neighborhood, giving blocks a certain look and feel. Neighborhoods inside the 610 Loop that want to preserve this aspect of their character may want to explore using the Prevailing Lot Size or Prevailing Building Line application.

As the builders have started discovering our little neighborhood, new houses and town homes are being built. We welcome new development in our area, but we would also like the builders to help us preserve the character of our neighborhood that makes it charming by maintaining a setback that matches the majority of the block and by designing structures that blend with the neighborhood.

Some of our streets have started petitions to establish a prevailing building line for a given blockface, thus insuring that the look of the street will remain the same. I hope you will support your neighbors in this effort.

Once a blockface has been designated with a prevailing building line, that line is in effect for 20 years.

any object placed upon a sidewalk between the hours of 7:00am and 11:00 pm in a designated area. The current designated areas are: the Central Business District, Midtown, Old Sixth Ward, Avondale Area and Greater Hyde Park Area. Avondale and Hyde Park just recently received this designation and they have noticed a difference. Both neighborhoods are part of the Neartown Association, as is Audubon Place. Instead of the other 17 or so neighborhoods in Neartown filing a petition separately, we have decided to write a letter and have it signed by all of the neighborhood associations and then petition city council to use its discretion to extend the ordinance to cover the Neartown area without a formal petition process. Look for more info on this topic early next year.