

University Oaks Newsletter September 2005

President's Letter

Greetings,

I sincerely hope that everyone had a wonderful summer. I enjoyed the time off and took several very enjoyable trips, one to Toronto, Canada, and the other to Oaxaca, Mexico. If you had an interesting summer adventure that you'd like to share, please submit it to the newsletter.

As you know, we are in the process of passing an amendment to our deed restrictions. The new restrictions are **not** anti-development, they simply set limits to prevent overbuilding. The proposed amendment is not against student or rental housing. We have and always will welcome students. They are a part of our community. The intent of this amendment is to discourage boarding-houses. Block Captains are going door-to-door to provide further explanation of the amendment and to answer any questions.

I, as well as the other Board Members, will continue to work for the betterment of our unique community and that is no easy task because it requires facing up to difficult issues at times.


I would encourage all to remain cordial and respectful in the debate. Allegations of impropriety or conspiracies do nothing to further discussion about important issues.

I look forward to seeing you at the next Civic Club meeting.

Sincerely,
-Larry N. Bahn
President

Next meeting of the UOCC:

Wednesday, Sept 14th at 7:30 PM

Location: 

KUHF (Leroy & Lucille Melcher Center for
Public Broadcasting – Building #536 at Elgin St.)



Community Concerns

University Oaks Welcome Club

The University Oaks Welcome Club (UOWC) was recently formed to extend greetings to new homeowners in University Oaks and disseminate helpful information to the new residents.

We need your help to inform us when we have new neighbors. UOWC will provide the new neighbor with a welcome packet that includes a neighborhood directory, good guys list and copy of UO deed restrictions. New homeowners, please contact me at 713.440.9205 or jerwing@whproperties.com so that we can provide you with a welcoming packet and welcome you to the University Oaks community! We try to host a welcome coffee in honor of the new resident at a neighbor's house so that neighbors can meet neighbors.

Cindy Cremer of 4380 Fiesta Ln. hosted our first welcoming coffee for new neighbor Benjamin Perry at

4375 Fiesta Ln. It was a great opportunity for neighbors to meet and greet one another. The social was a great success and we thank her for hosting this event! We are recruiting members to join the UO Welcome Club. Current members of the UOWC, who have volunteered their time, are: Jennifer Erwing, Blanca Garza, Cindy Cremer, Ann Reid and Joy Ditto. For all who are interested, please contact anyone of us or me at 713.440.9205 or jerwing@whproperties.com.

*-Jennifer Erwing
Committee Chair*

Helping Victims of Hurricane Katrina

**Red Cross 'Share your Home' program:
www.shareyourhome.org or 1-888-827-2525**

**www.blackamericaweb.com/relief
www.hurricanehousing.org**

**To host families of patients at Memorial Hermann:
Contact Deanna Foster, Patient Relations Coordinator
@713-704-6031**

August 13, 2005 UH Blaffer Gallery Tour

A special thanks to those who participated in the August 13, 2005 Blaffer Gallery tour. Blaffer Gallery staff [thank you for your participation and enthusiasm you expressed as you viewed the POPulence exhibition and hope you will further explore the museum's offerings](#). I, as a member of the UO community, was excited about seeing familiar faces, and meeting residents I had not met before, at the gallery. Below is a wonderful message from Ms. Lucrecia Cox which expresses her experience during the tour.

Greetings,

Many thanks for a beautiful Saturday afternoon at the Blaffer Gallery. Because the group was small (it felt almost intimate), we found the space and time to appreciate the beauty, talent and creative energy of each painting. My mind is still savoring those that impressed me the most. Thank you for the wonderful gift of your presence, your time and your deep care for our Community, our University and those of us who like to call ourselves 'your friends'.

Lucrecia Cox

Again, Blaffer Gallery is very thankful and appreciative of your participation in the tour and its community outreach effort. We will be inviting the University Oaks community, next October, to an activity related to the upcoming "James Surls: The Splendor Years, 1977 – 1997".

**Wilbert O. Taylor, Jr., Blaffer Gallery
Education Committee
Katherine Veneman, Blaffer Gallery Curator of
Education**

Deed Restriction Update

Approximately 55% of requisite 75% votes have been received in favor of the Amendment.

University Oaks Book Club Schedule

10/5 Nickel and Dimed by Barbara Ehrenreich
host: Nancy Preston

11/2 The Runaway Quilt by Jennifer Chiaverini
host: Nancy George

December - movie and cookie exchange. Date and location TBA

1/4 The Mermaids Chair by Sue Monk Kidd
host: Mary Egert

2/1 Peace Like a River by Leif Enger
host: Susan Wegner (tentative)

3/15 (note change from the first Wed)
Getting Mother's Body by Susan-Lori Parks
Host: Cindy Yopez

UO Garden Club

The first meeting of the UO Garden Club will be on Saturday, October 1st at 10:00 AM. Host will be Gina at 4364 Fiesta Ln. Please RSVP to legge_blakemore@sbcglobal.net or call 713-741-8877.

UO Homes for Sale or Lease

The following UO homes are currently for sale or lease:

For Sale: 4388 Varsity, 4386 Fiesta, 4372 Harvest, 4359 Graduate Circle, 4701 University Oaks, and 4814 Rockwood

For Rent: 4402 University Oaks

Note: This information is based on the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) and may not be inclusive.

UO Resident, Jacob Klementich Wins 11 Medals at Endeavor Games

Jacob Klementich returned from the Endeavor Games, a multi-sport event for athletes with physical disabilities, with 11 medals. Jacob competed against athletes with Cerebral Palsy, spinal cord injuries, Muscular Dystrophy, amputations, and other physical disabilities

winning seven Gold Medals, two silver Medals and two bronze Medals. The Endeavor Games are held annually on the campus of the University of Central Oklahoma located in Edmond, OK.

Reminders

“Pooper-Scooper” Law

Here’s the wording of the city ordinance applying to all pet owners:

Sec. 6-24. Defecation by dogs or cats.

- (a) It is the duty of each person in control of a dog or cat to promptly remove and dispose of, in a sanitary manner, feces left by such dog or cat.
- (b) It shall be the duty of each person in control of a dog or cat to be in possession of materials to remove feces left by such dog or cat.
- (c) It is an affirmative defense to prosecution under this section that the person in control of the dog or cat is owner of the premises, or the owner’s agent of the premises, where the dog or cat deposits the feces.
- (d) Violation of this section is unlawful and any violation shall be punishable upon conviction by a fine of not less than \$75.00 or more than \$500.00. Each act in contravention of this section is a separate offence.
(Ord. No. 03-1275, § 1, 12-17-03)

Classifieds

Cleaning lady needs work. Contact Minerva at 832-428-9524 or 713-242-6238. Minerva speaks Spanish and some English. She has done work for UO neighbor Charic Daniels, who will provide a reference (713-748-8767).

Housekeeping, babysitting, elder care help--Irma Martell can do it all. She is friendly and responsible. Call her at 713-934-8423 or 713-530-3925. UO Reference: Charic Daniels 713-748-8767.

Baby Sitting & Pet Sitting

Red Cross certified, University Oaks resident
References available.
Ilana (M) 832-439-8107

Reliable resident/student (25) available to sit for your children, pet or home. References available.
Call Helena @713-480-8264

Editorials

The civic association board and deed restrictions committee are volunteers. Like all of you, we have only a limited amount of time we can give to neighborhood work. When a problem in the neighborhood has been brought to the board’s attention, we try to work towards its resolution. But everyone can help by making the board aware of problems. You can help by documenting what you observe: take down license plate numbers, take pictures of violations, keep a log of violations. This information is essential if we are to make a case against violations. Attending civic club meetings would be a great forum for letting everyone know of the problems you have observed.

Some concerns have been heard about shrubs located close to the curb at street corners that are obstructing the view of drivers. If you live on the corner, please check to see that your landscaping is not causing this problem. These shrubs are generally located in the city right of way, and the city can be asked to deal with it.

Every time we take a violation to the neighborhood attorney, we are charged up to \$300 an hour. Even phone calls to the attorney to discuss violations cost money. There are some complaints that the association’s dues have gone up and other complaints that not enough deed restriction violators are being brought to court. It is always a balancing act to try to accomplish as much as possible with our resources. The neighborhood always tries to solve its problems itself before turning to legal remedies. But all of this takes time. Just finding the owners of specific properties and absentee landlords can be extremely difficult and trying to establish communication with them can be frustrating. A few people have been handling most of this time consuming job in the past few years. The deed restriction committee has recently been enlarged and work will be spread out among more people thus allowing the committee to investigate and deal with more violations. Please consider volunteering for the committee if you are interested in helping with deed restriction enforcement.

If you are planning not to sign the deed restriction amendments because you are upset that the board didn’t do something you thought they should have done, you should keep in mind that not signing the ballot will not address your complaint. The amendments give the neighborhood an updated framework for a more secure future. How well we use them will depend on how well we work together as a community.

-Robyn Webb, VP UOCC

Deed Restrictions

Thanks to all who either by telephone or letter supported the concerns expressed in my recent neighborhood mailing regarding the effort to overhaul the Deed Restrictions. Several of your thoughts and sentiments are contained below.

1. It appears from a re-reading of the last two years of the UOCC newsletter that the concerns over deed restriction revisions seem to be the pet project of a single household in the community.

2. The whims of the community's architectural watchdogs seem to be constantly changing. Several years ago a neighborhood furor erupted when a one-story house was proposed on an empty lot on Faculty Lane. At that time, "bigger was apparently better" and undue pressure was applied to force a larger two-story home. In the end, the smaller home was built and is a lovely addition to the community. Why try to legislate preferences that are obviously ephemeral?

3. Why wasn't a formal neighborhood survey first conducted to assess what individual or collective "issues of concern" should be addressed in any deed restriction overhaul. Including only those that reached the required 75% voting threshold could have eliminated a contentious neighborhood dispute. Instead, the Board decided to lump all their preferred issues into a single "all-or-none" referendum.

4. While no one knows if the national and/or regional housing "bubble" will soon burst, as many experts think it will, it is generally agreed that areas that fared below the historical average rate of appreciation (i.e., University Oaks) will be the first and hardest hit if there is a downswing in real estate prices. Why would we want to exacerbate this potential exposure by putting into effect new anti-development proposals?

Again, I urge all residents to refrain from signing the existing deed restriction revisions until they have been properly thought out and the issues contemplated reflect the opinions of a super-majority of the neighborhood.

Peter Bacon
4384 Harvest Lane

Dear Neighbors,

I am writing as a concerned resident to urge you to vote in favor of the **new deed restrictions** (the amendment to

the deed restrictions.)

The new deed restrictions will NOT discourage the building of new homes. There are currently 2 houses being built, and several recently built, which DO conform to the new deed restrictions. It is possible for anyone to build a spacious new home which conforms to the new deed restrictions.

The new deed restrictions will NOT prevent home owners from making additions to their homes. There have always been restrictions limiting side and rear boundaries--and, in practice--the front boundary. Establishing a lot coverage percentage (35%) prevents "maxing out" the lot in every direction, but still allows older homes to grow. The older homes in this neighborhood cover at most 20% and that leaves another 15%--almost double--of buildable space.

The new deed restrictions do not prevent home owners from renting their property. As always, homes can be rented to families, but operating a "boarding house" for students is discouraged. There are many older students and grad students who would appreciate lodging in a quiet neighborhood. Changing the limit from 3 to 2 students gives a little more leverage against absentee owners who are already abusing the 3 student limit of the old deed restrictions: it is not for lack of effort on the part of the civic club that some of these offending landlords have persisted.

Why do our deed restrictions NEED updating?
You'll notice that all the homes on a given street in our neighborhood are set back from the street the same amount--it makes the street look good. It turns out that this boundary--set back--has been followed voluntarily all these years. The actually set back in our old (current) deed restrictions is CLOSER to the street. No one has ever built out this far, for aesthetic reasons and "gentlemanly" cooperation--that is, until recently. A spec developer insisted on building out all the way, knowing there was no legal barrier--after all, each extra square foot represents that much more profit on the sale of the house.

The sole purpose of the new language on "attics" is to prevent 3 story buildings. No one is telling us what to do with our attics. "Attic" needs to be clearly defined in order to keep unscrupulous builders from finding a loophole that allows them to build a 3 story house--again, more square footage means more profit.

If these new deed restrictions are NOT approved, super-large houses WILL be built here in great number. Someone you've never met will get a nice McMansion situated near downtown, a realtor and

developer will get a nice profit, and YOU will get higher taxes. But who will want to buy your house when you decide to sell? Eventually it will become a “tear down”. If you already live here and were planning to stay for a few years, you have everything to lose by not voting FOR the amendments.

Unreturned ballots are the same thing as a “NO” vote. A large majority of the neighborhood is in favor of amending, but we need 75%. Everyone needs to participate. The amendments represent a great deal of hard work and time on the part of volunteers who are your neighbors, plus have the input of many residents, as well as an attorney who specialized in helping neighborhoods protect their property values.

Please take a look at the history of other neighborhoods like Bellaire, the Heights, where original residents had to sell low and move out . Do you want to move to the suburbs?

Please vote for the amendments!

Sincerely,
Aralee Dorough



Community Calendar

Newsletter Deadline: Friday of the last week of the previous month.

Civic Club meeting: 2nd Wednesday of every month. Next meeting is September 14th at KUHf

Recycling: every other Tuesday (September 13th & September 27th)

Trash pickup: every Tuesday

Heavy trash pickup: 2nd Tuesday of every month (next pickup September 13th)



Contacts

Mailing address:

University Oaks Civic Club
P.O. Box 8365
Houston, Texas 77288-8365

University Oaks fax line:

713-440-6492

University Oaks webmaster:
webmaster@universityoaks.org

Email Newsletter entries to:
newsletter@universityoaks.org

Architectural Review Committee:
ArchitecturalReview@UniversityOaks.org

Deed Restrictions Committee:
DeedRestrictions@UniversityOaks.org

Welcome Committee:
welcome@UniversityOaks.org

The UOCC Newsletter is posted online:
www.universityoaks.org



Board of Directors and Officers

President	Larry Bahn	713-748-0470
Vice President	Robyn Webb	713-741-2105
Vice President	Doug Erwing	713-440-9205
Secretary	Wilbert Taylor	713-747-3347
Treasurer	Tim Ditto	713-440-6492
Director at Large	Pat Wycliff	713-741-2555
Director at Large	Clyde Leuchtag	713-398-0855

Block Captains

Faculty	Marion Kochi	713-741- 2113
Fiesta	Deborah Thompson	713-741-9963
Fiesta	Mary Egert	713-748-4448
Graduate	Louise Alexander	713-748-4254
Harvest	Lucrecia Cox	713-748-5064
Harvest	Laurie Foxenberg	713-748-7519
N. MacGregor	Ruth Horn	713-748-6555
N. MacGregor	Willie Bright	713-747-8007
Rockwood	Evelyn Broussard	713-748-5157
University Oaks	Billie Livingston	713-748-5286
Varsity	Dayton Smith	713-806-0130
Varsity	Jim Marceley	713-440-7995

Additional Volunteer Committees are listed in the front of the University Oaks Civic Club 2005 Directory

