

University Oaks Civic Association

Monthly Newsletter

March 2007

The next meeting of the UOCA will be held on Wednesday, March 14, 2007
at 7:30 P.M. at the home of Bruce and Robyn Webb, 4396 Fiesta Lane.

President's Letter

Dear Neighbors,

Two concerns emerged from our January meeting with METRO that the civic association is working to address. One has to do with the eminent domain zone and the other has to do with the specifics of the alignment along Wheeler. We are pleased to inform you that METRO has been solicitous of your concerns and in concert with Rep. Garnet Coleman and a committee from our neighborhood; we are making progress on the issues that gave some of you pause.

Some of you are uneasy about the effect of METRO's eminent domain zone that will extend 1,500 feet from the station planned for near the corner of Wheeler and Calhoun. METRO has offered to allay your concerns on this point by preparing a letter, an early draft, of which I have seen, that would clarify their broader intentions about plans for the project as it runs near our neighborhood. While we do not have the final letter in hand I have discussed it with a number of residents and the feedback has been generally positive.

As you consider your stance on the eminent domain issue, please also consider the following facts: 1. We live in the midst of numerous governmental entities with the power of eminent domain. In fact, all of us have purchased property within the reach of eminent domain. So the powers that METRO has are not qualitatively different from those that the University of Houston or Harris County possesses. Some of you may feel, however, that METRO's intentions are different from other entities; 2. Texas passed a law in the last legislative session in response a Supreme Court ruling in an eminent domain case that originated in Connecticut. The law enhances property rights and limits eminent domain by preventing the exercise of eminent domain powers to benefit private developers; 3. Finally if you sell your property, title companies will not make any reference or take any exception to METRO's eminent domain powers because there is nothing special about those powers that makes them any different from the powers of numerous other municipal governmental entities. In other words, purchasers will not have any notice of the presence of property within the eminent domain zone. Thus METRO's eminent domain power is treated no differently from a title perspective than the powers of University of Houston or the county or HISD.

As soon as we have the letter I will publicize it to the community for your review.

Residents were also concerned about the specifics of the alignment along Wheeler because the alignment was too close to the houses that front on Varsity and because of a number of other issues regarding access and noise. In response to this issue, METRO has crafted an alternative plan that a committee from our neighborhood that includes Dr. Bruce Webb and Mr. Wilbert Taylor will be reviewing. Both of these gentlemen have extensive experience in planning and rapid transit issues and they will work to see to it that that alignment has the least detrimental impact possible on our neighborhood. The alternative alignment moves the train farther away from the houses that front on Varsity and does not include closing the intersections of Wheeler and Rockwood or Wheeler and University Oaks. As we get more information about METRO's proposed changes I will inform you about them.

While neither of these general issues has been resolved, I am pleased to report that the general tenors of our conversations with METRO have been positive. Also, Representative Coleman has been very receptive to the concerns that came out of the January meeting and he is working diligently to resolve the issues to our satisfaction. As we work toward some accommodation with METRO on these issues we appreciate your

patience. Your concerns were clearly conveyed to METRO and as your President I can assure you that your Board is doing the best that it can to work on your behalf and voice your concerns. Finally, just so that it is clear to you all, any petitions that circle about in the neighborhood that originate from the Board will have our association name printed prominently at the top. Also, any notices from the Board about special meetings will have our association name displayed prominently also. I continue to welcome your comments and feedback. A few of you emailed me after the last newsletter and I enjoyed hearing from you. If you decide you want to fire off an email to me my address is derwing@tanglewoodtitle.com.

Yours,
Douglas A. Erwing
President, University Oaks Civic Association

Good Neighbor “Dos and Don’ts”

Garbage Pickup is normally each Tuesday. Your garbage can should be put out Monday evening and taken in no later than Tuesday evening. The same goes for recycling bins and bagged yard waste. **There should be no bags or containers of any kind left out on the street in the days before or after the date of pickup.**

Heavy Trash Pickup is normally the second Tuesday of every month. It is OK for you to stack items near the curb beginning the weekend before the Tuesday pickup. **There should be no heavy trash in front of your house before that weekend.**

Street Debris. **Do not push yard and street debris into the drainage holes.** It causes water to stand in the street. Instruct your lawn maintenance people about this.

Property Improvements. If you are considering renovations to your home or property such as interior remodeling, an add-on, a new driveway, a fence, etc., please contact the Architectural Review Committee through its chairman Bruce Webb at 713-741-2105. The committee will look over your plans to ensure that they are in compliance with community deed restrictions. It’s better to check it out ahead of time so you can avoid complications.

Rentals. If you are planning to rent any part of your home or property to more than two unrelated people, please run your idea by the Deed Restrictions Committee chairman Doug Erwing at 832-466-4201.

Civic Association Meetings. Do you attend? Monthly meetings are held at 7:30 PM on the second Wednesday of every month September thru June. All residents are encouraged to attend. The location of each meeting is announced in our newsletter which is distributed the first week of the month September through June. We value you and your opinion. Your input is important.

Crime in the Neighborhood

- By Jim Marceley

I don’t have the HPD Crime Report yet, but I did have four felonies reported to me in February. Three involved entering unlocked cars and rifling through the contents.

On one night, a thief entered two cars at separate residences on Faculty Lane. Nothing of value appeared to have been removed from the first car; in the second car the thief took a checkbook, binoculars, a fountain pen, and a small portable radio. There were two locked cars on the property, but the thief did not break into them. In this incident one of the victim’s dog awoke his master about 2:30 am, but the master hushed the dog and went back to sleep. This is the first time we’ve been able to pin down the probable time of a theft.

In the third incident the thief rifled an unlocked car on Graduate Circle sometime overnight, but apparently found nothing of value.

Assuming these car enterings are being done by one person, it looks like the thief is looking for unlocked cars, and *is not breaking into locked cars*. While other thieves might be more aggressive, the pattern we're seeing now says, "**LOCK YOUR CAR!**"

The fourth incident was a thief breaking into a locked storage shed on Faculty Lane. It contained yard maintenance tools. Apparently this thief is work-adverse. No tools were taken.

Trees for the Neighborhood - by *Jim Marcelly*

Davey's Trees delivered and planted the twenty five live oak trees in our neighborhood on Wednesday and Thursday, the 21st and 22nd of February. Congratulations to the owners of the new trees! We intend to give a plaque or other memorial gift to Jack Cato who contributed the trees at no cost to the Civic Association. Our costs (\$325 per tree) involved digging up, moving and planting of the trees.

Right now the trees are shedding their leaves, like all the mature live oaks in the neighborhood. It's that time of the year. The new trees look spindly and scrawny right now, because they're "adolescents." As they mature they will thicken and spread out. (They're like people!).

New trees should not be pruned at all until they are well established and well rooted, about three years. The new live oaks are guaranteed for one year by Davey's, *provided they are watered!* They do need water, especially during our hot summers. Any watering you do to keep the lawn green is not sufficient. To water a tree, run a hose to the base the tree and turn it on to a very slow trickle. Then let it run until the soil around the tree is saturated and the water begins to run off into the street. It should take about two hours. Absent a saturating rain, you should water new trees every two weeks.

The new live oaks have been fertilized, and should not need any more fertilizer this year.

UOCC Book Club Schedule

March 21 – Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress by Dai Sijie
Host – Nancy Klementich

April 18 – The Samurai's Garden by Gail Tsukiyama
Host – TBA

May 16 – Child of the Dark by Carolina Maria de Jesus
Host – TBA

June 20 – The Last Song of Dusk by Siddharth Dhanvant Shanghv
Host – TBA

July 18 – A Fine Balance by Rohinton Mistry
Host – TBA

August 15 – State of Denial by Bob Woodward
Host - TBA

Recipes to Share

Baked Chicken

Grind the following ingredients together and mix with melted butter or margarine to make a paste: ½ tsp thyme, ¼ tsp marjoram, ¼ tsp tarragon, and peppercorns to taste.

Rub chicken inside and out with the above paste.

Put some apple, celery, onion and a parsley sprig inside the chicken.

Roast chicken at 325 degrees for about an hour. As drippings form, mix with the following and baste chicken while roasting.

1 cup yogurt, juice of 1 lime, ½ tbsp coriander, ½ tsp nutmeg.

Enjoy!

For the Kids

Teas Nursery Kid's Club

Nature walk and painting pots* for shamrocks. **Saturday, March 10, 2007 at 11 AM.** Teas Nursery, 4400 Bellaire Blvd. Call Teas at 713-664-4400 ext 222 or 223 or email to reserve a spot diann.teas@teasnursery.com. Fee is \$5.00 per child. *Messy craft warning – wear washable clothes.

UOCC Board of Directors (Board@UniversityOaks.org)

President:	Douglas Erwing	H: 713-440-9205
Vice President:	James Pierce	H: 713-748-1743
Secretary:	Wilbert Taylor	H: 713-747-3347
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Director-at-Large	Clyde Leuchtag	H: 713-398-0855
Director-at-Large	John Preston	H: 713-748-1814
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Other Contacts

Architectural Review Committee	ArchitecturalReview@UniversityOaks.org
Deed Restriction Enforcement	deedrestrictions@universityoaks.org
Security	security@universityoaks.org
Welcome Committee	welcome@universityoaks.org
Directory Changes/Updates	directory@universityoaks.org
Newsletter Entries (submit in MS Word attachment only)	newsletter@universityoaks.org
Webmaster	webmaster@universityoaks.org

Heavy Trash Pick-Up: Tuesday, Mar. 13 Recycling: Mar. 13, 27; Weekly Trash Pick-Up: Mar. 6, 13, 20, 27

Deadline for newsletter entries: last day of month. Submissions in MS Word attachment are preferred. If you are unable to submit in a Word attachment or do not have computer access, please send submissions to Deborah Thompson a few days prior to the end of month deadline.