

vccahouston.org

PO Box 130891
Houston, TX 77219-0891



May 2017

CIVIC ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



**Fly your flag on
May 29th**



*Newsletter Published Monthly September thru June
Vermont Commons Civic Association
PO Box 130891, Houston, TX 77219
Issue No. 75*

May VCCA Monthly Meeting

VCCA monthly meetings are the 2nd Monday, September through June, at Local Pour, 1952 W Gray St, just behind Cafe Ginger. We meet in a room toward the front. We hope you will join us and enjoy a glass or some nibbles at or after the meeting. See you at Local Pour on **Monday, May 8th at 7 PM.**



Dear Neighbors,

It is with mixed emotions that I write to notify you of my resignation as Vermont Commons Civic Association President. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve this community and I have delighted in getting to know so many of you. I wish I could continue my term, but I am moving out of the neighborhood and will be ineligible to serve. Thank you all so much for your time and energy. Vermont Commons is an exceptional community and it has been wonderful to be a part of the neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Lis Harper
VCCA
President



May 8th VCCA Meeting Speakers: Ellen Cohen & Stephen Costello

The speakers for the May 8th VCCA meeting will be **Ellen Cohen and**

Stephen Costello. Mayor Pro Tem and City Council member Ellen Cohen will provide a City Hall update that will include a general overview of City Council, a summary of the initiatives that she and Mayor Turner are pursuing, and the latest District C news. Stephen Costello will talk about his new role as the Chief Resilience Officer in the Mayor's Office. Attendees will get a chance to ask questions.

About Mayor Pro Tem Ellen R. Cohen

Ellen Cohen has lived and worked in the city of Houston for the past 40 years. She served for 10 years as the Executive Director of the American Jewish Committee, and for 18 years as the CEO of the Houston Area Women's Center, working with survivors of sexual and domestic violence. In 2006, she was elected as the Texas State Representative for District 134. After serving two terms in the Texas State Legislature, Ms. Cohen continued her public service career at home. She ran for Houston City Council and was sworn into office in January 2012 as the Council Member representing District C. District C is a dynamic, neighborhood-centric community located just west of downtown.

During her tenure on Council, Ms. Cohen has championed the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance, the elimination of the sexual assault kit backlog, the creation of a dedicated Human Trafficking Unit within the Houston Police Department, the introduction of a Parking Benefit District for the Washington Corridor, and many other initiatives to improve the quality of life of her constituents. She is currently serving her third term on Council and is Mayor Pro Tem for the City of Houston.

E-Mail: districtc@houstontx.gov

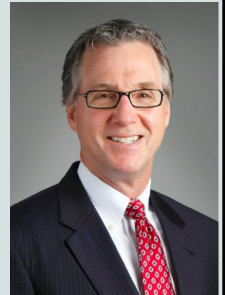


About Stephen C. Costello, Chief Resilience Officer

Stephen Costello, Chief Resilience Officer, Mayor's Office, is an engineer with a background in flood control and drainage, which began with his first job out of school with the Corps of Engineers in Galveston. He co-founded Costello, Inc. in 1991 and served as Houston City Council Member At Large for 6 years from January 2010 to December 2015. Mr. Costello ran for Mayor of Houston in 2015. In May 2016, Mayor Turner appointed Mr. Costello as the city's first Chief Resilience Officer. His initial task in this role is to focus on the flooding and drainage issues facing the city, which is why he has been labeled the "Flood Czar."

Mr. Costello, a VCCA resident, is currently an active board member of Family Houston and SER Jobs for Progress, Trees for Houston, and Marathon Kids. He also served for many years as a member of the board of the Memorial Park Conservancy. Mr. Costello is a longtime runner and triathlete. He and his wife Debbie raised two sons in Houston and are now proud grandparents to two granddaughters.

Email: Stephen.Costello@houstontx.gov



New Block Captain Committee Chair

Sharon McKenzie is stepping down as the Committee Chair of the Block Captains. Many thanks to Sharon McKenzie for her service to the neighborhood. We're delighted to welcome our new Block Captain Committee Chair, **Ann Green-Terrell**. Learn more about Ann in her own words:



My husband, Tommy, and I were attracted to the Vermont Commons neighborhood because of its close proximity to the downtown Houston Area, the Medical Center, and the Museum District. Also, the ability to walk to the variety of restaurants and shops in the West Gray shopping district appealed to us. After meeting a few of our neighbors, we were assured that we'd chosen correctly. Vermont Commons and the surrounding neighborhoods are a wonderful collection of unique homes surrounded by retail and business, the mixed use gives vibrancy to the area. We take special pleasure in meeting our fellow residents - from the young singles, families with children, and our fellow retirees. After retirement, my husband and I sought an area to live that allowed us to continue to experience the city life without having to drive long distances.

Both Tommy's and my professional backgrounds are in Engineering. We're still involved in our respective professional societies, where we work to inspire the interest of the next generations in the field of science-engineering. Since retirement, we've also enjoyed globetrotting and travelling to visit family scattered through the U.S. and abroad. Tommy is a native Texan, returning after spending nearly his entire career outside of Texas, whereas, I grew up in Miami and spent most of my years in the east. Tommy says that while I may be considered a Houstonian now after four years in Houston, it'll take a while more before I can become a Texan!

I've always stated my mission as, "I believe in being an active part of my community, positively influencing both people and processes that impact daily life. While I make a living by what I attain; I build a life through my achievements in what I return to my community." Joining the VCCA as an active member is part of how I give back to my community.

VCCA By-Law Changes Proposed

Spring is in the air and change is proposed to the VCCA By-laws. VCCA is proposing to change their bylaws at our next monthly meeting, May 8th. Bylaw change requires the proposal of the change one month prior and voting on the change at the next monthly meeting by those in attendance. A simple majority prevails. The two changes proposed are:

- **Participation of Park Civic Residents.** Many residents of both the VCCA and the Park Civic Association have expressed an interest in combining the two associations. The VCCA by-laws can be changed to informally allow residents of Park Civic to join the VCCA. The informal arrangement will allow Park Civic residents to pay dues, receive the newsletter, and attend VCCA activities and social events. Park Civic residents already participate in the Holiday Party, Spring Picnic, National Night Out, and coffees that are sponsored by the VCCA. Many Park Civic residents volunteer and assist with these events. Some Park Civic residents pay dues to receive the newsletter. VCCA wants this relationship to continue and would like it to be more of an arrangement rather than just word of mouth.
- **VCCA President.** VCCA is reorganizing how the leadership board will be set up. Bylaw changes will allow that, instead of a President, there will be four to six Directors who will work together to keep the VCCA program running. The Directors will split up the monthly meeting responsibilities so that two directors per month are in charge of each meeting and the related activities. Directors will be volunteer positions (unelected). The conventionally elected Officers of the organization will remain in accordance with VCCA by-laws. These Officers are: Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Newsletter Editor. One person serving as the President is a lot of work, so this change is planned to allow the leadership duties to be distributed and shared. The VCCA is hoping that at least two Park Civic residents will step up and volunteer to be Directors. The VCCA can return to the single President if a suitable candidate is nominated and elected.

Why We Flood

Every part of the country must deal with the threat of natural disasters. For Harris County, the primary threat is flooding. The reason for this? Our area is prone to severe rainfall, tropical storms and hurricanes, is generally topographically flat, and has impermeable clay soils. This area flooded long before the Allen brothers founded the city of Houston in 1836. Geologist R. H. Loughridge, in his "Report on the Cotton Production of the State of Texas," a supplement to the 1880 United States Census, wrote: "The surface of the entire region is very level and even, with a descent to the coast so gradual as to afford no drainage to the soils, and, as a natural consequence, water remains in pools upon the prairies of the region until removed by evaporation."

As the city of Houston's population grew, many homes and businesses were unknowingly built in floodplains, which were not defined until the National Flood Insurance Program formed decades later. As a result, more property naturally became vulnerable to flooding. The flood of 1929 covered all bridges over Buffalo and White Oak bayous west and northwest of the city and put all homes in Alief under 4 feet of water. The flood of 1935 covered two-thirds of Harris County with one day of rain. Buffalo Bayou overwhelmed an emergency sandbag levee and shut down Houston's central water plant. This flood lasted four days, killed seven people and partially disabled the Houston Ship Channel for eight months. These two floods prompted the creation of the Harris County Flood Control District in 1937 to be a local partner to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers so our federal tax dollars could be used for desperately-needed local projects.

From the Harris County Flood Control District [www.hcfdc.org]



VCCA Officers 2016 - 2017

President: vacant

VP-Deed Restrictions:

Andy Tallin atallin01@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Chuck Randall
cwrandall@gmail.com

Secretary: Lillian Skogsberg
lillian_skogsberg@earthlink.net

Newsletter: Michael F. Forlenza
vcca.newsletter@gmail.com

President Emerita: Jeanette Hix
hix@rmi.net

Give Back to the VCCA

Looking for ways to give back to the neighborhood? Visit our advertisers and let them know you where you heard about them (the VCCA newsletter!).

This month there are three adjacent town-houses noted for their landscaping. The houses are 1706, 1708, and 1710 McDuffie Street. They seem to have coordinated their plantings very decoratively.

Send your nominees for June Yard of the Month to: Lillian skogsberg@earthlink.net.



VCCA Treasurer's Report as of April 2017

Beginning Balance (A)	\$ 5,788.17
Income	
Dues	\$40.00
Advertising	\$500.00
Misc Revenue (Randall's Good Neighbor)	\$4.00
Total Revenue (B)	\$544.00
Sub Total A + B	\$ 6,332.17
Expenses	
March Newsletter Printing/Mailing	-\$566.00
Yard Signs for Spring Picnic	-\$213.64
Web Hosting	-\$107.88
Sub Total (C)	-\$887.52
Balance = A+B-C	\$ 5,444.65
Pending Payments (Apr 2017 Newsletter)	-\$566.00
IRS Form 990 Filing Fee	-\$39.95
Checks deposited	\$100.00
Net Funds Available	\$ 4,938.70

Avalon

Nail & Spa 713.529.5692



m-f: 9-7, sat: 8-7 1305 South Shepherd
sun: 10-5 Houston, TX 77019

Nail Care • Spa • Skin Care • Facial • Waxing

Voted Houston Press 2007 Readers Choice & 2011 Best Manicure
Best Mani/Pedi KPRC 2009 & 2010, KHOU 2013
Open Since 1996

Citizen Patrol Update

David Hoyer, Coordinator

Citizen Patrol had 12 patrollers that did a total of 294.5 hours of driving and walking in March! Bob Costantini (The Man!) led the way with 119 total hours of patrolling.

Officer Pate has committed to attending next month's Civic Association meeting on May 8th at 7PM at Local Pour on West Gray. I hope all those patrollers whose certifications are expiring in May (like mine) will make plans to attend and get a quick and painless renewal. If you cannot make it, please contact Officer Pate (wpate43@yahoo.com) to make other plans.

Start Your College Search at UST

Be among the first to see our Center for Science and Health Professions. Visit campus and tour our new home for STEM programs at the **University of St. Thomas**.



UNIVERSITY
ST. THOMAS
HOUSTON

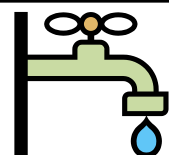
Sign up at
stthom.edu/vc



RIVER OAKS GYM

Bring in this ad and receive a one-week pass and complimentary personal training session.

riveroaksgym.com
1937 W. Gray, Suite 200
(713) 528-4600



**David
Hicks Plumbing
Inc.**

"Since 1952"

Complete Plumbing Services
Residential • Commercial • Repairs
Remodeling • Gas Inspections
Tankless Water Heaters

713 / 528.0141
davidhicksplumbing.com

Rebecca M. Harvey, D.D.S., P.A.

drharvey@dentisthouston.com
2025 Fairview Houston, TX 77019
Phone (713) 528-4054
Fax (713) 528-1443
www.dentisthouston.com



Vermont Commons Civic Association
PO Box 130891
Houston, TX 77219-0891

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
Paid
Houston, TX
Permit 9079

Connect and communicate with
your neighbors in Vermont
Commons - join Nextdoor.com

Stay Connected @
vccahouston.org



Circle of Excellence, Hall of Fame, 2015 - #1 Top Producer

**WE
ARE**

#1 IN SALES \$250K AND UP,
\$500K AND UP AND
\$1M AND UP.

NO FINE PRINT.

"It's not about selling one house;

it's about building relationships."

Contact me with all your Real Estate needs.

Jay Monroe

BROKER ASSOCIATE

713.504.6936

Jay.Monroe@Sothebyshomes.com

Martha
Turner

Sotheby's
INTERNATIONAL REALTY