

vccahouston.org

PO Box 130891
Houston, TX 77219-0891



April 2018

CIVIC ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



Earth Day
April 22nd

Newsletter Published Monthly September thru June
Vermont Commons Civic Association
PO Box 130891, Houston, TX 77219
Issue No. 84

April VCCA Happy Hour

VCCA monthly happy hours are the 2nd Monday, September through June. Location to be determined, watch the VCCA website (vccahouston.org) for additional information. Join us April 9th at 6:30pm.

VCCA Spring Picnic

Mark your calendars!!

VCCA Picnic: Saturday May 19th.
Mark your calendars for the annual VCCA Neighborhood Picnic, at Jim and Sheila Armsworth's "park" - 1605 Woodhead, 4:00 pm. Bring the whole family – there will be activities for all!
The event this year is a potluck so bring a dish- or two! Water will be provided – bring any other beverages you desire, and a chair if you'd like. Look for more details to come in the May newsletter!

VCCA Monthly Venue

VCCA did not find out about the closing of Fuzzy's Tacos until a few days before the March 12th monthly Happy Hour. Several dedicated residents were able to relocate the venue for the meeting to Kennelly's Irish Pub and notify VCCA residents as quickly as possible. The patio at Kennelly's was not able to comfortably accommodate the large number of residents eager to enjoy friendships and to listen to the presentation from City of Houston Public Works on area re-development. With such short notice, VCCA did the best they could. We encourage you to attend future monthly Happy Hours to meet neighbors and learn about important topics. Check vccahouston.com for updates.

VCCA Happy Hour & Speaker Solarize Houston

Date: Monday, April 9th, 2018, 6:30pm Happy Hour .
Speaker at 7 pm

Location: To be Determined. Check vccahouston.org and Nextdoor.com for updates

The speaker for the April happy hour will be Dori Wolfe from Solarize Houston. Solarize Houston is a grass-roots, volunteer, non-profit group organizing Houstonians in a group purchase of solar panels and installation for residents and businesses. Solarize Houston's mission is to increase awareness and accelerate use of solar energy for electricity generation in Houston. Solarize Houston is modeled on similar efforts underway in Plano, TX and elsewhere.

Come to learn about residential solar energy and find out more information on Solarize Houston's third Annual Group purchase program to save money on solar installations.

Check the website for more information:
houstonrenewableenergy.org.



Founded in 1999, the Houston Renewable Energy Group (HREG) supports and promotes renewable energy solutions and businesses, and educates residents of metro Houston on renewable energy technologies. HREG is a non-profit volunteer member organization and is the Houston chapter of the Texas Solar Energy Society a 501(c)3 organization.

Members are primarily renewable energy enthusiasts, developers, engineers, architects, specialists, system designers and users. We represent a bold vision for a cleaner, healthier and more sustainable world that will not only benefit Houstonians, but the global community as well.

Together we create the collective voice for business owners in the renewable energy market, provide resources to help consumers make informed choices on renewable energy solutions, develop and promote educational and interactive workshops, and present opportunities for those interested in advancing HREG's mission on a voluntary basis.



VCCA March Meeting

An overflow crowd of more than 60 interested VCCA residents squeezed on the deck at Kenneally's Irish Pub for happy hour and to listen to a City of Houston presentation on the Avalon Place construction/redevelopment project.

The presentation from COH was informal; just a 15 minute oral overview. The COH provided handouts that were distributed that contained the same information available from the Jan 25th meeting. After the short presentation, the meeting was opened up to questions.

Because of lack of space and the difficulty of having questions adequately addressed, the VCCA is compiling a list of questions and sending them to Councilperson Ellen Cohen's office. These will be forwarded to Houston Public Works for answers. The answers will be published in the May newsletter.

Here is a listing of questions gathered so far:

- VCCA is a pedestrian neighborhood; traffic on Fairview between Shepherd & Woodhead (7 blocks) is too fast & uncontrolled, putting us & our neighbors at undue risk. As part of this project, can you add additional traffic calming/control features (esplanade, crosswalk, crossing signal, speed bumps, etc) to slow traffic? Somewhere in the middle likely makes the most sense (McDuffie to Driscoll, but not in front of Roost)
- Can the project add a more-distinct marker identifying the neighborhood, such as the "Glendower Court" marker on esplanade on Fairview between Dickey & Persa?
- Several of the sections of Glendower Court/Avalon Place already



have great infrastructure (new sidewalks, curbs, underground utilities, fancy lights, etc). Why spend limited resources to tear up a neighborhood that already has robust infrastructure when many of their residents don't want it (perception from the 1/25 meeting) & at the same time skip sections of Vermont Commons that are in much worse shape?

- The road quality on McDuffie is quite poor; can you re-evaluate its current pavement grade & consider it for repavement?
- Sanitary sewers on Huldy between Haddon & Indiana have repeatedly backed up & multiple residents have filed multiple 311 cases seeking resolution. Can you address as part of this project?
- Is there enough room for a dedicated bike lane on Fairview?
- What changes is the project team making or considering based on the January 25th Avalon Place Neighborhood Reconstruction Project meeting?
- On the Avalon Place Proposed Pavement Width file (dated Jan 23 2018), the "Fairview (C)" section from Shepherd to Driscoll "Existing Width" varies from 27' to 40'. This is the only street in the whole project whose width is not clearly defined. Can you specify which sections are which widths?
- Will there be another public meeting & opportunity to ask questions & incorporate feedback prior to the start of construction, possibly at the 90% design complete phase?
- Is the planned start of construction still Jan-March 2019?



If you have questions or concerns about the project, call Councilperson Cohen's office at 832-393-3004.

VCCA COFFEE

Monthly VCCA/Park Civic COFFEE at La Madeleine French Bakery and Café at 2047 West Gray, on April 2th (the first Wednesday each month) at 10:00am.



VCCA Treasurer's Report - March 2018

Beginning Balance (A)	\$	7,380.49	
Income			
Advertising	\$	400.00	
Dues Received in February	\$	0.00	
Randall's Good Neighbor Program	\$	0.00	
Total Revenue (B)	\$	400.00	
Sub Total A + B		\$	7,780.49
Expenses			
February Newsletter	-\$	566.00	
Web Hosting	-\$	107.68	
Reimbursement for Holiday Party	-\$	64.91	
USPS Deposit through June 2019	-\$	1,430.00	
Sub Total (C)	-\$	2,168.59	-2,168.59
Balance = A+B-C		\$	5,611.90
Pending Payments (March Newsletter)	-\$	521.69	
Subtotal	-\$	521.69	
Net Funds Available		\$	5,090.21

Watch Out for Trees

Trees make our neighborhood more livable for us and for our feathered friends. Trees on most City of Houston right-of-ways are protected as described in sections V and VI of Chapter 33 of the City of Houston Code of Ordinances pertaining to the protection and preservation of trees and shrubs on city property. This includes trees on right-of-ways, medians, parks and other city property. A permit is required to remove any tree on city property or on a setback.

If you see any tree that may potentially be cut down on or near the right-of-way (keep in mind that the right-of-way typically extends farther from the street than the sidewalk), call Dale Temple 832-395-8459 or email him at dale.temple@houstontx.gov. Mr. Temple is an employee of the City of Houston and his job is to protect trees in Houston. He will make a site visit.



Send news, notices, photos, editorials, advertising requests to vcca.newsletter@gmail.com. Submissions are due the 15th of the month preceding the newsletter. *Michael Forlenza, Editor*

VCCA OFFICERS 2017-2018

Directors (replacing 1 President)

- Lillian Skogsborg
- Janet Meyer
- Nina Westerfeld
- Ann Green-Terrell
- BR Simon
- Jeanette Hix

Treasurer: Chuck Randall

Vice President - Deed Restrictions: Andy Tallin

Newsletter: Michael F. Forlenza





**EARTH DAY
HOUSTON
EVERY GREEN**

Recommended Native Trees for the Houston Area

Eight trees that thrive in poorly-drained black gumbo soil and are recommended by the Native Plant Society of Texas:

Bald Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) is a long-lived shade tree (to 100 ft) with feathery leaves and yellow-to-rust fall color. Leaves fall for the winter. The fruit is a 1" round cone.

Swamp Chestnut Oak's (*Quercus michauxii*) leaves turn bright red in the fall. This long-lived shade tree can grow to 80 ft. It can take standing water for up to a week. A beautiful tree.

Water Oak (*Quercus nigra*) is semi-evergreen which means that the leaves stay on in warm winters and fall off in cold. This shade tree grows rapidly to 30' with three different leaf shapes.

Willow Oak (*Quercus phellos*) has long, narrow willow-like leaves so there's not much to rake in fall.

River Birch (*Betula nigra*) is a lovely shade tree which grows to a height of 90 ft and has triangular leaves rounded on the bottom which turn yellow in the fall. The flaking bark is outstanding. Saplings have red cherry-like bark and later peachy-white flaking to reveal darker peach-colored bark.

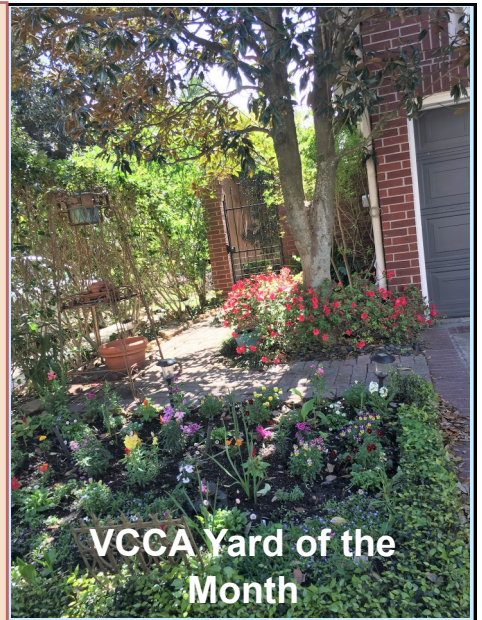
Black Gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*) is a large shade tree to 100 ft with short crooked branches which come off the trunk at right angles. It turns bright red in early fall (sometimes even in August). Female black gum trees bear 1/2-inch black berries which birds relish.

Drummond Red Maple (*Acer rubrum* var. *drummondii*) is a large shade tree to 90 ft tall. It grows fast but can live 50 years and features red flowers in January on males, and red winged fruits on females in spring called samaras. If the winter weather is cold enough, Drummond red maple leaves turn yellow then red before falling.

Green Ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*) is a fast growing shade tree to 50 ft with yellow fall color. Female Green Ashes have bunches of green matchstick-sized fruit which birds love.

VCCA Block Captains

Do you receive notification by email about upcoming VCCA events from a VCCA representative who lives on your block? If not, that is an indication that your block does not have a block captain. Many VCCA blocks need a representative. If you can dedicate a few minutes of your time during every month to be a Block Captain, it would be very beneficial. Your responsibility would be to forward email messages from VCCA to those who live on your block. VCCA does not have an email list so it would be necessary for you to collect them. What a great opportunity to meet your neighbors. Contact Jeanette Hix (hix@rmi.net) to volunteer.



VCCA Yard of the Month

2021 Welch

Constable Patrol Program

Help to keep our neighborhood safe. Join the VC Patrol program which includes Vermont Commons, Park Civic and Lewisdale. The more households who join will insure a greater amount of coverage. More information can be found at www.vcpatrol.com.

VCCA Citizens Patrol

Citizen Patrol had 7 patrolers do 133 hours of walking and driving patrol in February! Bob Costantini led the way with 86 hours. Thank you all for your efforts in keeping Vermont Commons a safe neighborhood. - *David Hoyer, CP Coordinator*

Vermont Commons

A Great Place to Live.



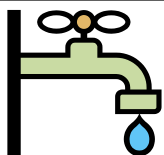
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