



# Vermont Commons

## CIVIC ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

### April 2023



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



#### VCCA PIONEERS

Left to right: Tom Oxford, Cay Dickson, Margaret Lam, John Focke, Christine Focke, Anna Doody, and John Doody

The pioneers to the left gathered almost 30 years ago to hatch an idea that eventually became Vermont Commons Civic Association. The pioneers met to reminisce about the last 30 years of

Vermont Commons on March 6, 2023 at the same spot they first met 30 years ago. The neighborhood was pretty shabby then, one pioneer said, but he thought it had great potential. In 1992, Cay Dickson, the ring leader, put a flyer in neighborhood mailboxes. She had a dream and was very passionate about meeting her neighbors and creating a sense of community. The seven in the picture above and three others answered Cay's call. They participated because they wanted this area to be their forever homes. All seven have continued to live in Vermont Commons — John and Christine Focke in their 1933 home, John and Anna Doody in their 1933 home, Tom Oxford in his 1934 home and Margaret Lam in her 1984 townhouse. Cay Dickson moved into her 1938 house, built a townhouse on the property, and still lives in her townhouse. They all agreed that the primary reasons they attended that meeting 30 years ago were to meet neighbors and to figure out how to improve the neighborhood. Margaret said they began to work with City of Houston to determine how to protect the area. From those meetings a plan to create deed restrictions began. It was a tremendous amount of hard work, but eventually the deed restrictions were filed with the City. They planned for the future for all of us and stayed to enjoy the fruits of their labors. Thank you to our great pioneers!!!! They were right; it is a fabulous neighborhood to live in.

#### SPRING PICNIC

Dust off your sun bonnets. It's almost time for the annual VCCA picnic! Mark your calendar for **April 16<sup>th</sup> at 4:00pm**. The VCCA-sponsored picnic is once again at Jim and Sheila Armsworth's home at what they call "THE BACK FORTY" at 1605 Woodhead. A shout out of thanks to them for generously sharing their property. Hot dogs and ice cream will be provided free of charge. Please bring an item of food that would accompany hot dogs to share with those who attend. Water and ice will be provided. Bring a chair or blanket and a drink of your choice. Hope to see you at the picnic. If you would like to volunteer to set up or clean up, show up a little early or stay until the end!

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

**April 5** - Coffee, 10am,  
Empire Cafe

**April 8** - Egg Hunt,  
10:30am, West Gray Park

**April 10** - 6:30pm  
Happy Hour, Churassco's

**April 16** - Annual VCCA  
picnic, 1605 Woodhead,  
4pm

**April 19** - 2 pm - 3:30pm,  
Book Club

#### May Pub Crawl

Join neighbors in May for a walk through the neighborhood to near-by establishments and lift your glasses to our great neighborhood. Stay tuned for date and time!

#### SUBMISSIONS

Send news, notices, photos, editorials, or advertising requests to Beverly McPhail at [bevmcphail@icloud.com](mailto:bevmcphail@icloud.com). Submissions are due by the 12th of the month preceding the newsletter.

To read the newsletter in color, go to [vccahouston.org](http://vccahouston.org)

## BOOK CLUB

The VCCA Book Club meets every third Wednesday of the month from 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. on Zoom. In April that falls on the 19th. We read a variety of genres that often includes a book we might not have read otherwise. This month we will discuss *Still Alice* by Lisa Genova. We welcome new members! Please contact Natalie Browne at [nbrowne48@gmail.com](mailto:nbrowne48@gmail.com) if you have any questions or wish to join us.

## CITIZEN PATROL

Just a reminder of what Citizens Patrol (CP) is. In our neighborhood, it was formed in 2011. It's a community-based volunteer program sponsored by the Houston Police Department (HPD). The goal of the CP is to provide an effective method of discouraging crime while promoting friendlier, safer, neighborhoods and to encourage awareness and improved communication among its neighbors. We have a steady, friendly group of about 16 patrollers walking/driving around our neighborhood. Lillian Skogsberg

## MONTHLY COFFEE

The monthly **Coffee Klatch** meets at Empire Cafe on Westheimer at Elmen on the first Wednesday of the month at **10:00 am**. Attend to enjoy conversation, laughter and camaraderie.

## VCCA OFFICERS 2022-23

**Directors:** Jeanette Hix (Lead Director), Stephanie Taylor, Nina Westerfeld, Janet Meyer, Lisa Meyer, Lillian Skogsberg, & Ann Green Terrel  
**Treasurer:** Kay Johnson  
**Deed Restrictions:** Andy Tallin  
**Newsletter:** Beverly McPhail

## ALL IN THE VCCA FAMILY

VCCA Families are invited to participate in the 3rd Annual Montrose Easter Egg Hunt at West Gray Park (1475 W. Gray St.) on Saturday, **April 8th at 10:30am**. This FREE event will have face painting, cookie decorating, games/prizes, and of course... the Easter Bunny! Local businesses are auctioning off prizes to raise money for *Kids Meals* (a charity that feeds Houston children). We hope you hop on over! *Please note this is not organized or sponsored by the VCCA, although a handful of neighbors have donated eggs/candy.* If you are interested in connecting with other neighborhood families, please join our Facebook group, All in the VCCA Family, or email [AllintheVCCAFamily@gmail.com](mailto:AllintheVCCAFamily@gmail.com) to be added to the WhatsApp chat group. For babysitting opportunities, please email us for further details (qualifications required). We look forward to building a community with you!

### Montrose Blvd Redevelopment

(VCCA SENT A LETTER IN SUPPORT OF THIS PROJECT)

There is a proposed plan for \$55 million in improvements along a stretch of Montrose Boulevard where development is booming. The project involves making street, sidewalk, and drainage improvements along a 2-mile stretch of Montrose Boulevard from Allen Parkway to I-69. Lane and sidewalk configurations differ across three distinct sections of the project. The plans largely focus on widening sidewalks, improving safety, and making the road more accessible to all user types. The project is being taken on and funded by the Montrose Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone, which contracted with Gauge Engineering for the design work. At a meeting, attendees browsed posters with project details and spoke to representatives working on the project's design. They could also place notes on project maps with comments or suggestions. NMCA leadership and people who attended the January NMCA meeting offered additional suggestions for the TIRZ items for inclusion in the final project proposal including:

- Improved street and pedestrian sidewalk lighting
- Raised crosswalks that are adjacent to nearby school intersections
- Unique and distinct signage for Montrose Boulevard
- Placement of benches and bike racks
- Creation of a dedicated fund for the maintenance of Montrose Boulevard, its esplanades, and trees.

Plans call for work to begin later this year on Montrose Boulevard section that runs from Allen Parkway to West Dallas Street.



**2012 Indiana**



## More Fun: Past and Future!

### VCCA HAPPY HOUR

Join VCCA Residents at Churrasco's on Westheimer at **6:30 pm April 10<sup>th</sup>** to meet and greet friends and neighbors. There are always new neighbors who join the crowd, so be sure and introduce yourself and welcome them to Vermont Commons.

### FUN WAS HAD AT OUR NEIGHBORHOOD MARDI GRAS CELEBRATION

Lots of children and adults arrived at the Mardi Gras Party ready to celebrate. Beads were given to all the children & adults as well as king cake. Laissez les bons temps rouler (Let the good times roll)!



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