

# OAKMONT HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

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## Executive Committee Meeting Wednesday May 30, 2007

The Executive Committee of the Oakmont Heights Neighborhood Association (OHNA) will meet at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, May 30, in the Game Room at Westminster Manor, to decide on recommendations regarding the application of vertical mixed use (VMU) zoning overlays for commercial properties on 35<sup>th</sup> Street, along the south edge of the neighborhood. At the meeting we will also have an opportunity to see preliminary drawings for redevelopment of the Bull Creek and Kingswood apartments, as well as discuss the status of MoPac expansion plans and the omission of noise walls along the Oakmont stretch. The Game Room is on the main floor of Westminster, to the right of the main entrance on the circle drive; if driving, park in the lots at Jackson and Bull Creek Road.

The meeting is open to all. Residents along the south side of 36<sup>th</sup> Street, which shares an alley with potential VMU properties along 35<sup>th</sup> Street, residents along the western edge most affected by MoPac noise, and residents along 44<sup>th</sup> Street (technically not in the Oakmont neighborhood, but directly across from the Bull Creek apartments and with many of the same interests as Oakmont) are especially encouraged to attend.

## More About VMU

Last year, the City of Austin passed an ordinance creating vertical mixed-use overlays that apply to commercially zoned properties along certain high-traffic corridors, including West 35<sup>th</sup> Street. Vertical mixed use (or VMU for short) allows residential uses of upper floors overlying commercial space on the ground floor. VMU is

intended to promote higher density within the city, and are meant to be pedestrian friendly. By placing VMU along transportation corridors, the city hopes to reduce pressure for denser development within the middle of neighborhoods as well as increasing the use of and demand for public transportation.

Neighborhoods must make recommendations to the City by June 4, regarding properties in their areas. The recommendations include whether properties should be included in the VMU Overlay District (VMU zoning would be overlain on top of the current commercial zoning), and if added to the Overlay District which development bonuses could be given for VMU development. Any building not added to the Overlay District could later be rezoned for VMU development through the existing zoning process.

OHNA Vice President Glenn Meter has been serving as the lead for the neighborhood in this effort. The OHNA recommendations will be combined with those of the Ridgelea and Rosedale neighborhood associations, which are together in one planning area.

The Allandale Neighborhood Association has compiled information on VMU and made it available at <http://allandale.typepapd.com/vmu/>. Glenn and OHNA President Arten Avakian have been attending meetings to learn about the VMU process and how it may affect the neighborhood.

The commercial businesses in the 1800 and 1900 blocks of W 35th St. have been queried about their interest in being included in the VMU Overlay District. To date, no business owners have responded to our query.

At the May 30 meeting, Glenn and Arten will make recommendations to the full Executive Committee on the VMU properties that border our neighborhood along 35<sup>th</sup> Street

## MoPac and Noise Walls

At recent open houses, TXDOT presented the preferred plan for adding capacity to MoPac, consisting of adding one managed lane in each direction, with no increase of right-of-way. As part of the capacity increase, noise impact has been analyzed, and neighborhoods along certain stretches of MoPac are expected to have an opportunity to vote yes or no on walls along their stretch. Because the neighborhood is separated from MoPac by the TXDOT property and Westminster Manor, noise walls were not included for Oakmont in the preliminary plan. Several residents have expressed concern about this omission, and TXDOT has indicated that they may be able to revisit the issue. The Executive Committee is seeking a potentially affected neighbor close to MoPac to pursue this with TXDOT.

## Redevelopment of Bull Creek and Kingswood Apartments

Brett Denton of Ardent Residential, the developer of the Bull Creek and Kingswood apartments, will present sketches at the May 30 OHNA meeting illustrating how the redeveloped property may look.

## About the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is the association's governing board. At the May 30 meeting, the Executive Committee will also seek nominations to fill the position of Vice President of the association, which will become vacant this summer. If you have the time and interest to serve, please come to the meeting and or contact association president Arten Avakian at 452-6188 or at [Ajavakian@aol.com](mailto:Ajavakian@aol.com).

## Join the Oakmont E-Mail List

If you have not done so already, join the OHNA e-mail list, a relatively low-traffic forum for neighborhood news, events, and other information. To join, simply send a message [oakmont-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:oakmont-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

## Oakmont Web Site

Remember to visit the Oakmont Heights web site, at <http://www.main.org/Oakmont>, prepared and maintained by our neighbor Carl Hehmsoth. Please e-mail any comments and suggestions for content and links to Carl using the contact link on the site.