

OAKMONT HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

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Annual Neighborhood Meeting Saturday, December 1, 2007

The annual meeting of the Oakmont Heights Neighborhood Association will begin at **11 a.m. on Saturday, December 1, in Harris Bell Hall at Westminster Manor.** Harris Bell Hall is on the third floor in the north wing of the building, across from the elevator. To get to the Harris Bell Hall, enter Westminster through the health care center at the north end of the facility, go to the end of the hallway behind the front desk, then take the elevator up one floor (or take the stairs at the end of the next hallway to the right). If driving, park in the lots at Jackson and Bull Creek Road.

The neighborhood association will review the status of issues affecting our neighborhood, and set goals and priorities for 2008. We also will elect officers and fill at-large positions on the Executive Committee, the association's governing board, for next year. If you have time and interest to serve, please contact association president Arten Avakian at 452-6188 or at ajavakian@aol.com. The meeting should be relatively brief; please attend if you can.

Association Dues \$3.00 for 2008

Annual neighborhood association dues for 2008 are \$3.00 per household. Dues payments cover association expenses such as publishing this newsletter, and a small reserve for emergencies. Payment of dues allows you to participate and vote at neighborhood association meetings, although everyone is welcome to attend.

Regardless of whether you are able to attend meetings or help with association activities, your dues payment will allow your neighborhood association to remain active and maintain and improve the quality of life we enjoy here in Oakmont Heights. **Please take a moment to complete the attached form and return your payment today.**

Bull Creek / Kingswood Apartments Redevelopment Project Underway

You've probably noticed the Bull Creek and Kingswood apartment complexes have been torn down and the lots cleared. The developer, Ardent

Residential, met with the neighborhood association and Executive Committee representatives several times during the past year to inform us of plans and to seek input. Construction of a new apartment complex on the site will begin this winter and be completed in about 18 months. The complex will consist of up to 330 apartment units, with a parking garage in the back (on the MoPac side of the property). The developer anticipates the first units will be completed and offered for rent in the first part of 2009.

Westminster Manor

Westminster Manor has long-range plans to expand its facility into property it owns to the north (former temple location). Westminster estimates that they would request bids in August 2008, or later. Watch for further information in the future as we learn more.

Vertical Mixed-Use (VMU)

Last year the City of Austin passed an ordinance creating vertical mixed-use (VMU) overlays that apply to commercially zoned properties along certain high-traffic corridors, including West 35th Street. VMU allows residential uses of upper floors overlying commercial space on the ground floor. At a special meeting on May 30th this year the neighborhood association Executive Committee voted to recommend to the City that the properties on the north side of W. 35th St. from Jackson Ave. to Jefferson Blvd. be opted out of the VMU overlay, primarily due to incompatibility with single-family residences across the alley on W. 36th St., and its potential to increase traffic and parking problems. The OHNA recommendations were combined with those of the Ridgelea and Rosedale neighborhood associations, and submitted to the City in June. The City has not yet acted on VMU recommendations. More information is available on the [City web site](http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/planning/designstandards.htm) at www.ci.austin.tx.us/planning/designstandards.htm.

Neighborhood Planning

The City's neighborhood planning process has not reached Oakmont Heights. Oakmont is in the Rosedale Planning area along with the Ridgelea (across Bull Creek Road from Oakmont) and Rosedale

neighborhoods. Representatives of the Rosedale Neighborhood Association have recommended against pursuing the process, citing among other things that it requires a substantial amount of work, and in the end does not guarantee the City will not alter the plan later. More information on neighborhood planning is available at www.ci.austin.tx.us/zoning/.

“McMansion Ordinance”

New residential design and compatibility standards (the “McMansion Ordinance”) went into effect in Austin October 1, 2006. The task force that helped prepare the standards will be meeting to evaluate its implementation on Wednesday, November 28. More information is available on the City’s web site at www.ci.austin.tx.us/zoning/sf_regs.htm.

MoPac and Sound Walls

TXDOT’s near-term plan for MoPac is to add one managed lane in each direction and sound walls from Parmer Lane to the river. Latest information from TXDOT is: (1) noise workshops will be held in early 2008, (2) property owners who would be adjacent to sound walls will then have an opportunity to vote on the walls, (3) TXDOT will submit an environmental report by Spring 2008, (4) hold public hearing in fall 2008, and (5) request bids from contractors early to late Spring 2009. TXDOT has said its goal is to build sound walls first in order to help minimize the noise from the construction of the managed lanes.

Originally, Oakmont Heights was not considered for a sound wall because the neighborhood is separated from MoPac by the TXDOT property and Westminster Manor. However, more recently TXDOT said it is reevaluating the Oakmont section for sound walls in response to interest expressed to TXDOT by several Oakmont neighbors, the neighborhood association, and Westminster Manor. We await further information from TXDOT on this matter.

Sample walls are being completed on the TxDOT Bull Creek campus across from Westminster Manor. TXDOT advises that the sample walls are not samples of what the MoPac walls will be, but samples designed for the entire TxDOT Austin District. The sample walls are in place and should be ready for viewing (with information signs) soon.

State Property on Bull Creek Road

The State Property Report continues to identify the Bull Creek State Cemetery site (open area near 45th and Bull Creek Road) and TXDOT Bull Creek Campus as unutilized or underutilized properties and recommends disposal (sale or lease) for development of residential and mixed uses. The designation is not new - the

General Land Office has designated these properties as desirable for sale several times before - however, we will need to stay alert regarding future plans for these properties.

Parking Problem? Blind Corner? Code Enforcement? Pothole?

If you are experiencing a problem with parking encroachment on intersections or driveways, blind corners, code violations, or other problem you aren’t able to solve by contacting the owner, call the City of Austin 311 line. An operator will direct your request to one or more City departments that can address the problem. If the issue involves public safety, you may also wish to contact the Austin Police Department District Representative for our neighborhood, Officer Ricardo (Rick) Vargas, at 974-5801, or ricardo.vargas@ci.austin.tx.us.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan

The City of Austin's Bicycle and Pedestrian Program is seeking public input on a new Pedestrian Master Plan. For more information visit the City’s web site at www.ci.austin.tx.us/bicycle/ped_sum.htm.

Book Club Forming

A book club is forming in the neighborhood. If you are interested, please contact Joan Judge at joanejjudge@austin.rr.com.

Handy Links

Curious about a remodel or other development on your street? Want to read City codes? Try these handy links:

City Permits:

https://www.ci.austin.tx.us/devreview/a_queryf_older_permits.jsp

Codes: www.amlegal.com/austin_tx/

Join the Oakmont E-Mail List

If you have not done so already, join the Oakmont E-mail list, a relatively low-traffic forum for neighborhood news, events, and other information. To join, send a message to 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.