

vccahouston.org
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February
2013

Civic Association Newsletter

Issue No. 31

The Vermont Commons Civic Association Newsletter is published monthly, September through June.

Coming Soon to Our Neighborhood—"Shepherd Street Sewer Saga, Part 1: The Questioning"

What is the Shepherd Street Capital Improvement Project, and What Areas of Shepherd Will Be Affected? The Shepherd Street CIP involves the construction of new sewers, sidewalks, curbs, and street paving. The City's plans call for "drainage improvements to serve an area adjacent to Shepherd from Westheimer to Buffalo Bayou and east along Haddon to Commonwealth." The project area is "approximately bound by Buffalo Bayou on the north, Westheimer on the south, Kirby on the west, and McDuffie on the east."



Darling...you must tell me absolutely *everything* you know about the Shepherd Street Construction Project!

Listen, if you want answers, go to the meeting on Feb. 11, 7:00 pm, at the Mockingbird Bistro. The City's reps will be there. And stop calling me "Darling." I'm your Block Captain, lady!

When Will Construction Begin, and How Long Will It Take?

Construction is scheduled to begin sometime this year...but we don't know when...and we don't know how long it will take.

Continued on Page 2

VCCA meetings are held the 2nd Monday of the month

Join us at 7:00 p.m.

On February 11th

At Mockingbird Bistro
1985 Welch @ McDuffie

Meet your neighbors, then stay for the social hour afterward.



Got News?

We welcome your news, photos, and editorials, but reserve the right to edit for clarity, style, and length. Send questions and contributions to vcca.newsletter@gmail.com. Articles and ads do not necessarily reflect the views of the Vermont Commons Civic Association, nor is the Association responsible for errors that may be expressed by writers or advertisers. Submissions are due the 24th of the month preceding the newsletter.

Michael Forlenza & Karen Kane, Editors

The Origin of Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is not all about roses, candy, and expensive dinners. It has a historical background, too. Contrary to what some may believe, Valentine's Day wasn't created by greeting card companies just to sell cards and candies. It's actually a church sanctioned holiday. In 498 AD, Pope Gelasius proclaimed February 14th the Feast of Saint Valentine.

Shrouded in mystery, the exact origins of the celebration of St. Valentine are somewhat unclear. While the holiday's history is well documented through the years, the saint (or saints) it's named after is up in the air. The Catholic Church acknowledges three separate saints named Valentine or Valentinus. All were martyred.

According to one legend, Valentine actually sent the first "valentine" greeting himself. While in prison, it is believed that Valentine fell in love with a young girl -- who may have been his jailor's daughter -- who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter, which he signed "From your Valentine," an expression still in use today.

The oldest known Valentine's poem in existence was written by Charles, Duke of Orleans, to his wife, during his imprisonment in the Tower of London, following the Battle of Agincourt. The holiday gained greater acceptance through the 17th and 18th centuries, but has seen tremendous popularity in more recent times, with faster communication. It wasn't until the 1840s that Valentine's Day cards began to be produced.





Yard of the Month - February 2013

1710 Huldy

The home of Linda and Tom Hart was custom-built nine years ago, while they lived in a townhouse on Woodhead. Linda is originally from El Paso, Texas, but the couple have lived in the Houston area for more than 30 years.

Citizen Patrol Update

Linda Perez, Coordinator

Thank you for keeping our neighborhood safe.
We collectively walked 337.5 hours in December 2012.

Adriana Breidenstein
Andy Tallin
Betsy Banks
Bill Banks
Bob Costantini
Brenda Rojas
Cathryn Gabor
David Hoyer
Debbie Cody
Delia Cuellar
James Skogsberg
Karen Kane

Lillian Skogsberg
Maria Rodriguez
Mike Link
Paula Holton
Rob Fuller
Tom Hix
Adrienne Bukstein
Cindy Brown
Linda Perez
Mark Del Pico
Tim McWilliams

Helpful Information

Garbage & Yard Trimmings: Mondays

Recycling: Mondays February 11th and 25th.

Heavy Trash Collection:

Tree Waste: 1st Wednesday in Mar, May, Jul, Sep, and Nov.

Junk Waste: 1st Wednesday in Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, and Oct.

Shepherd Street Project Continued from Page 1

What's the Basis for It? According to City documents, drainage improvements are necessary "...to reduce the risk of structural flooding during 100-year, 1% probability rainfall events. Project area has multiple reports of structural flooding."

How Will the Construction Affect Our Neighborhood? We've invited **Dane P. Schneider, P.E.** (Interim Managing Engineer-Storm Water Engineering Section) and **Melissa Meyer**, Project Manager, both from the City of Houston's Division of Public Works Engineering (PWE), to attend our next monthly meeting, on Monday, February 11. At-Large Council Member **Stephen Costello** and a **representative from City Council Member Ellen Cohen's office** are expected to participate. Questions, on the agenda include:

1. When will work on the Shepherd Street project begin? How long is it going to take? What is the sequence of construction activity? What times/days will the construction take place?
2. What exactly does the project entail? Will there be a turn lane on Shepherd? Is the City going to widen Shepherd?
3. Can the City provide us with regular updates on the project's progress, since our neighborhood—Vermont Commons—will be directly affected?
4. How will traffic be reconfigured? What about detour routes? Should we expect an increase in traffic through our neighborhood? Can we have additional police presence to handle the extra traffic? Can the City re-route traffic to the west of Shepherd?

Jeanette Hix will be closely following the progress of this project for the Vermont Commons Civic Association. Please contact Jeanette at hix@rmi.net with questions.

Helpful Phone and e-mail Numbers

Our Website: vccahouston.org

Newsletter Email: vcca.newsletter@gmail.com

City Council Member Dist C: Ellen Cohen (832) 393 3004
e-mail: districtc@houstontx.gov

City Council Member at Large, Pos. 1: Stephen Costello
e-mail: atlarge1@cityofhouston.net

HPD Officer Wayne Pate: wpate43@yahoo.com

Storefront number (713) 284 8604

Office number (713) 284 8608

Daily Crime Report: <http://spotcrime.com>

Houston Police non-emergency phone no: (713) 884-3131

Working Together to Improve Vermont Commons

The VCCA Executive Board formulated goals for 2013 that will help us continue to build a stronger sense of community in our neighborhood. The goals were presented and discussed at the January 14th meeting. Vermont Commons will flourish as members become involved and bring fresh ideas and energy to the organization. If you are interested in helping with any of the projects listed below, please contact Jeanette Hix at hix@rmi.net.

1) Build a Sense of Community

- Increase the number of paid members in Vermont Commons - Emmie Chang emmie.chang@gmail.com.
- Create a caring committee to help neighbors who need assistance.
- Identify project coordinators for these annual events:
 - ◆ Spring Clean Up (spring)
 - ◆ Annual Picnic (summer)
 - ◆ National Night Out (fall)
 - ◆ Holiday Party (December)
 - ◆ Neighborhood Coffees - Pam Lee palomalee@comcast.net
 - ◆ Speakers for meetings (4 or 5 per year)

2) Preserve the Neighborhood

- Monitor new building activity through the work of the Deed Restriction committee.
- Closely follow the Shepherd Street construction project and the potential traffic increase on our streets - Jeanette Hix hix@rmi.net.

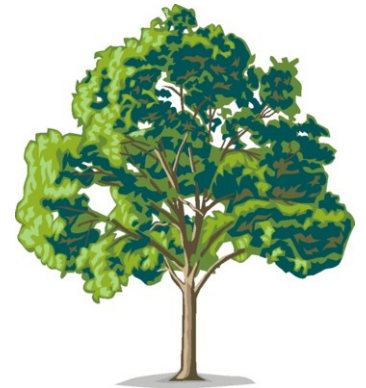
3) Improve Communication

- Update the newsletter through content and layout - Michael Forlenza and Karen Kane vcca.newsletter@gmail.com.
- Develop NextDoor.com social network - Emmie Chang emmie.chang@gmail.com.
- Add content on the website, including VCCA minutes, new members - Wayne Ticac wticac@comcast.net and Delia Cuellar dic@designsong.com.
- Expand the neighborhood email network by working through block captains - Betsy Banks betsy-banks1@gmail.com.

Trees for Houston Conducts Education, Planting Course - February 16

Urban ForesTree Keeper, (UFTK) Trees For Houston's continuing education course in tree care and urban forestry, will be offered February 16th.

Classes teach the basics of tree identification, proper planting techniques, site suitability, and planting care. The course also focuses on the environmental role of trees in our city.



The course, taught by local forestry experts consists of three hours of classroom study along with practical application. Course fee is \$20 and includes a Trees For Houston t-shirt, one 3-gallon tree and a tree manual. For the registration form, please visit www.treesforhouston.org (<http://www.treesforhouston.org/index.php?id=12>) or email Brooke Judice at brooke@treesforhouston.org.

Neighborhood Coffee

The February VCCA Coffee will be on Tuesday, February 26 at 10AM at the home of Lorna Ramsay 1706 Hazard Street.



Come meet your neighbors!

Thanks to VCCA Volunteers

Hosting the Newsletter Folding: Adrianna Breidenstein for hosting the Newsletter folding

Folders: Madeline Schlemmer, Betsy Banks, Lorna Ramsay, Laurel Adams, Susan Wilson, Ann Ince, Pam Lee, Nancy Higgs, Catriona Sarkis and Jeanette Hix

Susan Wilson for picking up the printed newsletters and mailing them.

David Hoyer for making arrangements for the speaker for the January meeting.

Join the VCCA. VCCA Membership is open to all residents (owners and renters) in the area for just \$30 per year. Pay online at vccahouston.org

*John M. Doody, AIA
Architect*

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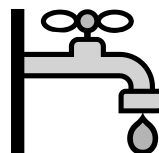
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