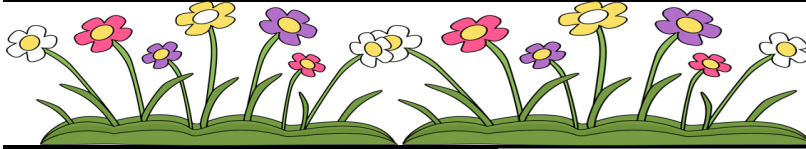


vccahouston.org
PO Box 130891
Houston, TX 77219-0891



April 2014

CIVIC ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



Newsletter Published Monthly September thru June
Vermont Commons Civic Association
PO Box 130891, Houston, TX 77219
Issue No. 43

April VCCA Monthly Meeting

The Monthly VCCA meeting will be held on Monday, **April 14th at 7:00 PM** at Café Ginger, located at 1952 West Gray Street in the shopping center near the intersection with Driscoll.

The April meeting will feature a presentation by Trudi Smith, Director of the PR and Events of the Buffalo Bayou Partnership (BBP). Ms. Smith will describe the Buffalo Bayou Partnership and its mission of revitalizing and transforming Buffalo Bayou, Houston's most significant natural resource. Various projects will be highlighted including past, present, and future works as well as showcasing a few of the many BBP annual community



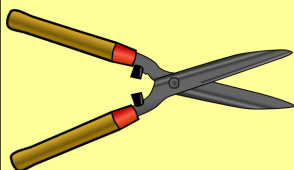
[BUFFALO BAYOU PARTNERSHIP](#) events. Following the presentation, we will have a brief business meeting followed by a social hour. Come learn about the exciting amenities and features planned for the nearby Buffalo Bayou Park and meet your neighbors!

Save the Date

VCCA Spring Clean up and Picnic

These two annual events will be the weekend of May 24th. More details in the May newsletter. Please volunteer to help.

Interested volunteers may contact Jeanette Hix at 713 521 3337 or hix@rmi.net



Pedestrian Crossing—Allen Parkway

The letter below is a follow-up response to a resident's concern for a safe pedestrian crossing of Allen Parkway at Shepherd and Kirby Drive:

Sorry for the inconvenience, I believe my colleague misunderstood the question.

As you mentioned, both the Allen Pkwy/Shepherd Dr and Allen Pkwy/Memorial Dr intersection do not have pedestrian signals and push buttons. The existing ADA ramps also do not meet current standards. The City of Houston has previously conducted extensive assessment of the intersections and concluded the following:

- Both traffic signals will require complete rebuilds in order to provide the pedestrian signals.
- Both traffic signals need to be rebuilt together because of their close proximity and signal interconnection.
- The rebuild is beyond the City of Houston's in-house capability and roughly estimated to cost about \$750,000 to \$1 million, which is also beyond the annual funding available for the signal rebuild program.

Given this information, the City of Houston is seeking federal funding to rebuild these two intersections. Please be advised that I do not have a timeline for the federal funding process, but I do have that inquiry into Public Works.

I hope you find the new information below helpful, if you have any further questions, I would be happy to look into them for you.

Thank You,
Dave Bonem, Deputy Chief of Staff | District C | Council Member Ellen Cohen
[832.393.3004](tel:832.393.3004) | David.Bonem@houston.tx.gov

Crime Prevention Tips – April 2014

Spring has sprung! Taking walks and jogs around our lovely little neck of the woods adds so much to living here in our community. We can easily walk to shops on West Gray or restaurants nestled in our neighborhood, such as Roost, Empire Cafe, Brasil, and Mockingbird Bistro. In this day and age, staying aware of your surroundings can be important no matter the time of day or night. These are a few options to consider.

1. Notice Your Surroundings

Look around you as you walk, and enjoy the sights of our lovely neighborhood. This probably means not being distracted by your phone or having your head down. Headphones can also cut you off somewhat from what is going on. If you are wearing headphones, take extra care to stay alert.

2. Make Eye Contact

Stand tall, walk with purpose, and make quick eye contact with people around you. Let people know you're aware of their presence. Look to see who is in front and behind you. Walk on the sidewalk facing traffic so you are visible to cars passing.

3. Trust Your Gut

When walking alone, your instincts can be your best friend. If you don't feel comfortable, for whatever reason, consider walking to the other side of the street or heading towards the nearest store or restaurant. If you are being followed by a vehicle, turn and run in the opposite direction. The driver will have to turn around in order to continue following you.

4. Make Some Noise

Consider carrying a personal alarm or whistle. Making noise can be a way to let neighbors around you know when something is wrong.

5. Be Rude

This may be the most difficult one for our friendly and courteous neighbors. Consider crossing the street if you don't feel comfortable about the person approaching you. If a person in a car asks for directions, stay far enough back from the vehicle to be safe and be heard. Or maybe even just shrug your shoulders and say, "Sorry..." and continue on your way.

Luckily, in our neighborhood these issues very rarely come up. We have a wonderful Citizen Patrol and our neighbors look out for one another. It is always good to be prepared at worst, and at best, it is great to notice and soak in the beauty of our neighborhood and the season.

Nina Otazo

Junk Mail Removal

A Brun Street resident spoke with Bill (a regular postal carrier) about reducing the amount of junk mail adverts delivered each month. The mailman said to contact Redplum to be removed from the mailing list. Here is the link to the website to get yourself removed from the Redplum advertisements:

www.redplum.com/tools/redplum-postal-addrremove.html

Citizen Patrol Update

Elizabeth and Mike McKenzie, Coordinators

The members of Citizen Patrol listed below drove 55.2 hours and walked 200 hours through our neighborhood in February. Thank you for looking out for your neighbors. Keep up the good work Citizen Patrol!

Sue Attoe	Cathryn Gabor	Henry Rojas
Tim Attoe	Jeanette Hix	BR Simon
Bary Brandt	Paula Holton	Lillian Skogsberg
Debbie Cody	David Hoyer	Jim Skogsberg
Julie Corelison	Karen Kane	Lisa Stephens
Mark Del Pico	Curtis Mooney	Andrew Tallin
Shirley Donohue	Brenda Rojas	

Comments or concerns: Construction vehicles blocking Brun near Fairview are a hazard while attempting to cross Fairview in the late afternoon. Work continued until nearly sunset for several days.

Combating Graffiti

VCCA residents have been combating graffiti for many years. Graffiti removal should be implemented as soon as it is observed. An ally in this fight is the Montrose District. Residents can report graffiti sightings on the Montrose District website at <http://montrosedistrict.org/contact/>. On the right side of the page under "Inquire or Report" enter your contact information and select "Report an Issue" from the pull down menu. Provide information about the location in the text box.

In February, one resident was pleased with the rapid response by a professional cleaning crew after reporting graffiti on a fence and dumpster on the Montrose District website.

Come for Coffee

Craving some java and good conversation? Then come meet your neighbors at the monthly **Morning Coffee!** The hostess for the March coffee will be Linda Perez on **Tuesday, April 22nd at 10 AM, 2009 Elmen Street.**



VCCA Officers

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2nd VP: Robin Green rbogreene9@gmail.com
Secretary: Lisa McDavid lisamcdavid327@gmail.com
Treasurer: Andy Tallin atallin01@yahoo.com
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RENOVATED BUFFALO BAYOU DOG PARK

Perhaps one of Buffalo Bayou Park's most active destinations is the dog park, located near Allen Parkway and Montrose Boulevard.

On any given day, dogs and their owners will be converging in the large open meadow. The addition of a decorative fence will transform this much-used area into an "official" dog park. New ponds – one each for small and large dogs – will be created along a low-lying former bayou meander and shaded by existing canopy trees. A wetland area will help cleanse the water. Shelters will provide additional respite for dog owners. Approximately



17 new parallel parking spaces will be added along the Allen Parkway frontage road providing safe access to this high-traffic

area. Learn more at: <http://buffalobayoupark.org/about-the-project/#dogpark>

Thanks to Volunteers

Pam Lee has been coordinating the monthly VCCA Coffees. She is retiring from this volunteer position and moving on to other things.Carolynn Kevlin will replace her.

Elizabeth and Mike McKenzie have taken over as coordinators of our neighborhood Citizen Patrol from Linda Perez.

Thanks to all for doing such a great job in service to our community. Thank all of these volunteers when you see them out and about.



Above: Volunteers at the February 2014 Newsletter folding.

Recommended Native Trees for the Houston Area

Trees that thrive in poorly-drained black gumbo soil and are recommended by the Native Plant Society of Texas (Part 1):

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 (*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' ft 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.

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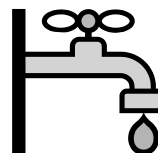
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