

Meyerlander MONTHLY



Volume 4 | Issue 2

MEYERLAND.NET

FEBRUARY 2016



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IMPORTANT CONTACTS

MCIA OFFICE

Amy Hoechstetter MCIA General Manager
Catherine Martin, Randi Cahill Office Staff

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday - Thursday 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Friday 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Central Time
Closed Saturday, Sunday, and holidays.

Telephone 713-729-2167

Fax 713-729-0048

General Email office@meyerland.net

Architectural Control randi@meyerland.net

Community Assistance catherine@meyerland.net

4999 West Bellfort St., Houston, TX 77035

Visit our website at www.meyerland.net

SECURITY

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Meyer Branch Library 832-393-1840

Godwin Park Community Center 713-393-1840

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Send comments to meyerlander@meyerland.net

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On the Cover

Spring is already peeking out around the house on our cover, 8510 Prichett in Section 2.

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Wednesday, February 10th



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Judy Levin
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jlevin@BernsteinRealty.com



Laura Perlman
281.796.1798
lperlman@BernsteinRealty.com



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713.870.3790
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RESIDENTS PROVIDE FEEDBACK ON PROPOSED DEED RESTRICTION SECTIONS

by Shirley Hou

Residents packed Godwin Park's Community Center on January 12, 2016, to provide feedback to the MCIA's Deed Restriction Renewal Committee on proposed changes to deed restrictions for Sections 7c and 8i. Elizabeth Black Berry, MCIA President, Director of Section 6 and Co-Chair of the Deed Restriction Renewal Committee, opened the meeting and introduced Paul Connor, Director of Section 8 North and Co-Chair of the Deed Restriction Renewal Committee, who facilitated the discussion. Other members of the committee present were Section 7 resident, Tom Killian (7c), Section 8 North residents Eddy De Los Santos (8i), and Sweta Sethna (8f).

Mr. Connor began by explaining that the objective of the Deed Restriction Renewal Committee is to ensure that the restrictions are clear and consistent, and that their purpose is to maintain and enhance the integrity of the neighborhood. There are 22 different sets of Deed Restrictions that govern Meyerland's architecture. The original Deed Restrictions for Sections 7c and 8i, were last amended in 1993 and 1997, respectively. The revised Deed Restrictions contain revisions that were approved by residents in Section 1 back in 2014. While the Memorial Day flood was not the main reason why Section 7c's and 8i's Restrictions are now being amended, the flood did move these sections up in priority for the Committee to review.

Mr. Connor adeptly structured the conversation around four major concerns that were raised in a letter written by Meyerland residents Joe Cohen, Murry Cohen, Randy Farber, Glen Rosenbaum, and Nelson Block, which was distributed to all households in Sections 7c and 8i. The four topics were: minimum square footage on lots, definition of masonry materials, front facing garages, and a "power grab" by MICA. For each of these topics, Mr. Connor presented the current Deed Restriction, the proposed change, and the reason for

the proposed change. After each topic's introduction, Mr. Connor opened the floor for comments. The audience was then polled via a show of hands whether they were for or against the change.

On the issue of minimum square footage for a house in Section 8i, Mr. Connor explained that the proposed minimum size of 2,300 square feet originated from the existing three different minimum sizes, including 2,300 square feet, that are allowed in the current Restrictions. Some residents felt that a 2,300 square foot house was too small of a house on Meyerland's big lots. Mr. Connor explained that the Committee did not feel that a developer would actually build such a small house in Meyerland, and that the reason for 2,300 square feet was to eliminate the confusion of having three minimum sizes in the 8i restrictions. By a show of hands, however, most 8i residents indicated that they wanted to maintain the existing three minimum sizes rather than simplify to one minimum size of home.

On the issue of definition of masonry material, the audience voted overwhelmingly to add "stucco" as an acceptable masonry material in Section 7c, which currently allows only brick and stone. There was heated debate about whether to add Hardiplank as a "masonry material." Some residents argued that Hardiplank, which is sold in over 50 product types, was a durable, efficient material that rivals natural materials. Other residents countered that Hardiplank would cheapen the look of the house and street. By a show of hands, more residents seemed against adding Hardiplank to the list of acceptable masonry material. The clarification was made that Hardiplank is an acceptable material to use in current Restrictions; however, its use is limited to the lesser percentage of 40% of the home's coverage in 8i and 25% of the home coverage in 7c.

Another contentious issue was the proposal to allow forward facing garages at the front building line. Currently, the requirement is for garages in both Sections 7c and 8i to sit many feet back from the building line, necessitating the need for a detached garage and long driveway. Those in favor of forward-facing garages cited that larger backyards and less impervious surface was achieved with forward-facing garages. Others said that rows of ugly garage doors would make the street look like tract, builder homes. The audience seemed evenly split on the issue; however, residents indicated that they were open for a compromise.

The final topic was the allegation that the MCIA Board was trying to expand its power over Deed Restrictions at the expense of residents. Clarification was made that the issue had two parts - governance and policy making. Many in the audience did not realize that the current Deed Restrictions in 7c and 8i grant architectural review power to a separate group, the Meyerland Architectural Control Committee (MACC), that is not elected or accountable to the Board

(Continued on Page 7)



(Continued from Page 6)

or Residents. The new Restrictions seek to move the governance body under the purview of the MCIA Board and the Review and Control Committee (RCC), which is the same architectural review body used by Section 1. Once the distinction was understood, almost everyone in the audience voted to move the governance of the architectural review to the RCC which is under the MCIA Board. There was rigorous debate and philosophical differences, however, about how much leeway to give the MCIA Board in writing policies that could modify and interpret the Deed Restrictions more broadly. Some in the audience argued that the Board should have a strict, limited role in interpreting the Deed Restrictions. Others argued that the Board realistically needed more flexibility to address problems that may arise in the future that are not directly mentioned in the Restrictions, and the residents needed to trust their elected leaders.

At the end of the meeting, a homeowner who is currently drawing up construction plans asked when the Deed Restrictions would be amended. With a chuckle, Mr. Connor said, "not tomorrow." He explained that amending the Deed Restrictions needed to follow

the process. The open house was just one effort to solicit comments and poll the mood of homeowners via non-binding votes. The proposed Deed Restrictions will go through several revisions based on the comments, and then it will go before the MCIA Board in two meetings for a vote. The final version will then be presented to the residents of the affected sections for their approval. Deed restrictions are voted for, or approved, via notarized signature by the homeowners of a particular section. The threshold to pass the amendments by a majority percentage specified in the Restrictions. Homeowners who are currently rebuilding their homes can choose to wait to see if the new Restrictions will pass, or draw up plans that meet the existing Deed Restrictions.

Tempers sometimes ran high during the meeting, and commentators were sometimes greeted with applause or grumbling. Despite these sometimes tense exchanges, civil discourse characterized the majority of the meeting as residents articulated their deeply held convictions about the neighborhood. Whichever side of the debate that was being argued, it was apparent in the open house meeting that Meyerland residents want to preserve and enhance the neighborhood.



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ART CAR MATHEMATICS

by Joyce Young

The students at Lovett Elementary School, under the guidance of Rickey Polidore, art teacher extraordinaire, are at it once again planning and designing their 2016 Art Car Parade entry. The school is collecting art frames from the community to recycle and incorporate into this year's entry entitled "OWL"ways in the Art FRAME of Mind. Once again the project utilizes all grades and according to Mr. Polidore "the frames will be arranged in a repetitive patterned structure based upon the Pythagorean Theorem". The school is accepting art frame donations and the Art Studio is always open for anyone that would like to come and join in the fun.

Lovett Elementary Nominated for 2016 Blue Ribbon Recognition

The Texas Education Agency announced on January 13, 2016 the nomination of 26 Texas public schools for the national 2016 Blue Ribbon Schools recognition. Founded in 1982, Blue Ribbon Schools is a U.S. Department of Education program that recognizes public and private elementary, middle and high schools where students perform at very high levels. Only three HISD schools made this prestigious list. Meyerland's very own Lovett Elementary School was nominated!

All schools that have been nominated for the 2016 honor were selected as exemplary high performing schools as measured by state assessments or nationally normed tests. Each school has an economically disadvantaged population of 20 percent or greater.

The nominated schools must now complete a rigorous application process through the U.S. Department of Education. Announcements of the national award winners will be made in September 2016. Schools that receive the award are recognized at the Blue Ribbon Schools awards ceremony in Washington, D.C.

Be That Neighbor

by Amy Hoechstetter

We all need to be reminded every now and then that the better you keep your grounds, the more likely your neighbor will be to keep his. Isn't that what this community is about – being neighborly? Positive actions are contagious and put people in a good mood – like nice landscaping. Wouldn't you want that to be your neighbor? Wouldn't you want to be thought of as that neighbor?

Now is your chance. In the winter time we do not need to worry as much about falling leaves; they have fallen. We need to be concerned about picking them up, even if they are not from our trees. Meyerland belongs to all of us and it takes all of us to care for Meyerland. The debris caused by the leaves, branches, and trash that falls in our yards and along the curbs in the streets is the responsibility of every homeowner.

So be that neighbor. Get out of your home and pick up what fell down. Collect and dispose of what sits in the streets so it stays out of the storm drains. Clean up after your trees and shrubs. Do your part. Be THAT neighbor.

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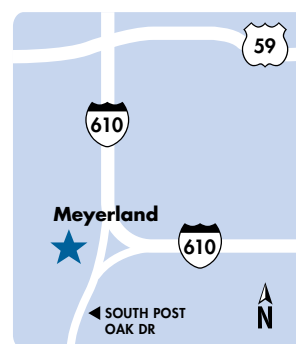
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Construction Update

By Amy Hoechstetter

Many of you have witnessed or experienced first-hand, the results of the devastation caused by the flood waters that deluged Meyerland last May. Since then, we have viewed a community in a state of flux. Evidence is found all around the neighborhood, but none is more obvious than the areas hit hardest by the flooding - Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. Currently, there are over twenty lots in Meyerland with no homes on them - a sight not seen since the original construction of Meyerland in the 1950's through the 1960's. To date, the MCIA Office has talked with over 100 homeowners and the architectural review committees have reviewed and approved more than 40 of those plans for construction.

We estimate that when the dust settles, at least 200 homes will be rebuilt within the next two years. For the weary, displaced homeowners the end result will be worth the wait as they return to newly built homes. New memories will be made and an appreciation for old friends and neighbors who supported them will be deeply felt. These newly built homes will be filled with people ready to enjoy their home ownership in Meyerland.



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Project Brays Update

by Kimberlye Jackson
Manager, Communications Department
Harris County Flood Control District

Editor's Note: *The following question from Meyerland residents was presented to Harris County Flood Control District following the Memorial Day flood event. The information we are sharing is an effort to allay the resident's concerns regarding misinformation that is circulating.*

Question:

The widening stopped on Brays Bayou because of lack of funding. One rumor attributes the diversion of funding was to complete Willow Waterhole detention pond which would further prevent flooding of the Medical Center and West University.

Answer:

Work has not stopped on the Brays Bayou Flood Damage Reduction Project ("Project Brays") since the project's inception. The work has proceeded continuously on separate elements, including stormwater detention basins, channel widening and deepening segments, and bridge reconstruction or modifications. There have been periods when the number of elements – or "projects" – under construction was limited due to available funding and other constraints, such as delays caused by utility relocations, property acquisition, etc.

Each Project Brays element (75 in total) is phased – or timed – to be carried out in a logical sequence, taking into account the need to construct each part without causing impacts to downstream communities. The channel segment that will widen and deepen Brays Bayou adjacent to the Meyerland community has not been constructed, and therefore, the benefits that would be provided by that project were not available during the Memorial Day storm. Funding for this segment was not diverted to construct the Willow Waterhole Stormwater Detention Basin. The timing of the "Meyerland" project segment has been dependent on completion of the Brays Bayou channel sections downstream of this area in order to prevent causing additional impacts to Meyerland and surrounding neighborhoods during storm events.

Project Brays, a cooperative effort between the Flood Control District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), is an active multi-year, \$480 million project that substantially reduces flooding risks in the Brays Bayou watershed. It is the largest partnership project the Flood Control District and Corps have conducted to date.

Encompassing more than 75 individual project components, Project Brays will help to reduce flooding risks by widening 21 miles of Brays Bayou from the Houston Ship Channel to Fondren Road and from West Houston Center Boulevard to State Highway 6, replacing or modifying 30 bridges to accommodate channel modifications and excavating four stormwater detention basins that will hold a collective 3.5 billion gallons of stormwater.



Smile, your house is on the cover!

by Shirley Hou

About the second week of each month, a member of MCIA's Publication Committee goes on a mission to take a photo of that perfect house to grace the front cover of the Meyerlander Monthly newsletter. We seek well-maintained homes with great landscaping, and we try to alternate between different architectural styles. So that no one gets jealous, we try to rotate houses from different Sections. We don't take photos of homes on our "opt-out" list or homes for sale. The whole process requires a lot more work and discussion than a general reader might expect.

When homeowners see their houses featured on the front page of the newsletter, they are usually thrilled and request an additional 20 copies from the office. A few owners, however, wonder why they were not asked permission before we printed the cover. According to *The Legal Handbook for Photographers* by lawyer Bert Kragas, photographing private property from within the public domain (like the sidewalk) is legal where there is not a reasonable expectation of privacy. Also, property owners generally cannot restrict the photographing of the property by individuals who are not located within the bounds of the property. These are the same rules that allow the tax assessor to take photos of your house, and how Google can take a photo of your house for their Google Maps, Street View application.

While there is no legal obligation for us to notify homeowners that their house will be pictured in the newsletter cover, we respect our residents' requests to opt out. If you do not want your home's photograph ever featured in the newsletter, please send an email to meyerlander@meyerland.net with your address and the subject line "Opt-Out."

If you are like most homeowners and think your house would look fantastic on the Meyerlander Monthly, you don't have to wait for our roving photographer to come to you. Just send in a photo to meyerlander@meyerland.net and ask that it be considered for the cover. If you don't provide owner information, we will just list the street address and section number.

Trash/Recycling Schedule

February, 2016						
Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
	1	2 Trash	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 T/R	10 Junk!	11	12	13
14	15	16 Trash	17	18	19	20
21	22	23 T/R	24	25	26	27
28	29					

March, 2016						
Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
		1 Trash	2	3	4	5
6	7	8 T/R	9 Tree!	10	11	12
13	14	15 Trash	16	17	18	19
20	21	22 T/R	23	24	25	26
27	28	29 Trash	30	31		

MCIA Deed Restriction Rules: Weekly - Put garbage and recycling containers, as well as yard trimmings, etc., on the curb no earlier than 6:00 p.m. the evening before pickup. Remove containers no later than 10 p.m. on trash pickup day. Monthly - Put heavy junk/tree waste at the curb no earlier than Friday 6 p.m. before the 2nd Wednesday heavy junk/tree waste collection.

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Serve Your Community

Each year approximately one half of the potential twenty-three Board of Directors seats are up for election. We encourage all of our homeowners to consider taking on this important role in ensuring that each section is represented. If you are interested in running for one of these board positions, the following is what you will need to know.

Board member responsibilities:

*The members of the Board of Directors are required to follow the Code of Ethics (found on the Meyerland website/About MCIA/Board of Directors)

*Mandatory board meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the second Monday of every month and usually last between one and two hours.

*There are two and sometimes three additional events annually that all Directors are required to attend and assist at (such as the Annual Meeting or Afternoon in the Park).

*Board members discuss and determine appropriate actions to take regarding financial, legal, management and contract issues (such as building annual budgets, enforcing of the association documents, and establishing and/or updating sound rules and policies, among

other things).

*Board members must participate in, and guide, committees ensuring appropriate actions are taken to support that which is in the best interest of the association membership.

Additional dates you will be required to attend:

Please note that the election of the Board of Directors will take place on Thursday, March 24, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. at a local school. Attendance at this Annual Meeting by those running for a board seat is not mandatory, however if you are elected, you will be required to attend Board Member Training which will take place on Saturday, April 2, 2016 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and your induction will be at the April 11, 2016 board meeting.

Communicating your candidacy:

Those interested in running for a board seat should send an email to the Secretary of the MCIA stating your intent to run (send to office@meyerland.net with "Candidate" written in the subject box). Please include a short biography about yourself and why you want to be a Director for your section. Also, please include a photo of

(Continued on Page 14)

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(Continued from Page 13)

yourself, in jpeg format, that can be included on the formal ballot. The deadline for submissions to be published in the Meyerlander and included on the mailed ballot is February 12, 2016. Should you miss this deadline but would like to be considered as a candidate; you may submit your information as a "write-in candidate" to the Secretary no later than noon on March 23, 2016. If you are unsure of your "section" please visit our website (Meyerland.net – General Information – Find Your Section) to determine where your property is located.

Open seats:

All sections (1 through 8, 10 and At Large), including the Section 4 seat have at least one Director's position that is up for re-election. A Director completing his/her term is allowed by state law to run for the board seat again.

Save the Date - Annual Meeting

Thursday, March 24, 2016

7:00 p.m.

Location to be determined

Every year the Meyerland Community Improvement Association meets with its membership for a "State of the Union" address. At this meeting, residents learn about the activities of the board over the past year and hear the direction for the new year to come. A special speaker will be invited to enlighten the crowd on key issues facing Meyerland today and in the future. New Directors are also voted onto the Board at the annual meeting. It is a great opportunity to socialize with your neighbors and enjoy tasty refreshments. Watch our website, read our Meyerlander and look for our email blasts to see who will be this year's speaker at our meeting.

Lastly, don't forget to attend the meeting for a chance to win nice door prizes which includes the possibility of winning a free assessment for fiscal year 2017. We look forward to seeing you on March 24th.

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- Worked to eliminate nearly 20 different occupational taxes.
- Championed government accountability, authoring and passing legislation that provides greater taxpayer protections in the state and local contracting and procurement process.

Excellence in Education

- Voted for a high quality pre-kindergarten grant program.
- Supported local control for school districts, fighting against Common Core and runaway testing.
- Supported investment in higher education across Texas and expansion of graduate medical education.

Keeping our Communities Safe

- Voted to increase the level of security and law enforcement personnel defending our border.
- Supported E-Verify Expansion, requiring state agencies and public universities to use the E-Verify system to ensure state dollars are not spent on employing those in the country illegally.

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