

Meyerlander MONTHLY

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Meyerland Community Improvement Association



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MEYERLAND.NET

JULY 2019



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Kolter Elementary Construction Update

By Jennifer Claridge

The new Kolter Elementary School that sits on the northern edge of Godwin Park is in progress. Parents and children are excited to see the new school on its way to completion and look forward to the day when its doors open and the kids can return to their new school. Homeowners may be watching and wondering, however, if this new building is going to contribute to the area's flooding woes as it appears dirt fill is being brought in to build the campus.

Living in Meyerland has become synonymous with knowing the flood-related building codes regardless of professional affiliation to the building trades. Building codes for homes and commercial buildings do not allow fill dirt underneath a building to displace water or impede its flow underneath the building, much less be brought in from offsite. Yet even casual passers-by notice dirt is being brought in and piled up to go underneath the building. Those concerns were taken to the architect of the Kolter campus. The Houston Independent School District (HISD) explained how they arrived at the new design.

The primary building code governing the design, including the foundation and fill dirt, is the 2012 International Building Code with Houston Amendments. The design was modified to meet the Houston's New Flood Plain Ordinance (Chapter 19) that went into effect on September 1, 2018. The ground floor will be elevated on a pier-and-beam type foundation with minimal obstructions underneath to allow storm and flood waters to flow relatively freely underneath the building. The new structure is not expected to increase flooding or change the flood water flow pattern on adjacent properties.

The soil brought to the site is for areas where more load-bearing capacity and less differential movement is needed. It is select fill soil which is a mixture of lean clay and sand with little to no organic material. It is expected to be more absorbent and hold more rainwater than the current soil that exists onsite. Fill will be used to raise the bus and parent drive lanes to the height of the first floor. For every cubic yard of fill brought onsite, there is a corresponding cubic yard of soil being scooped out to lower the elevation in another area of the site. This approach is called a "balanced" cut and fill strategy required by city ordinances. By its own measurements it is scraping away 300 cubic yards of dirt more than it is bringing onto the land.

Many are concerned that more impervious space is being poured than the old campus had to accommodate the contemporary community. For instance, there will be a dedicated carpool and bus lane, parking, and a larger footprint of the building. The designers explained that those concerns were addressed and meet current regulations. The new two-story building is larger, but it does not greatly increase the footprint. The previous building with temporary buildings had a footprint of approximately 50,870 square feet. The new building will be 94,969 square feet, but its footprint will be 60,552 square feet.

According to HISD, the new building will have carpool lanes for traffic flow and safety that will also move car and bus queuing off adjacent streets. The amount of impervious surfaces will increase by 10%. The increase will be offset by the retention capacity in the new onsite storm drainage piping. HISD worked with the city's Code Enforcement Division, including its Flood Plain and Storm Water groups, to ensure all drawings, calculations, and specifications meet city detention requirements.

Contrary to rumors, there will not be detention storage underneath the building nor is a pond planned. Instead, there will be a storm water management and retention system. The large structures being placed underground are large storm water drainage piping equipped with flow restriction devices to retain storm water before strategically releasing it into the city drainage system. This will act as retention to guard against overwhelming the system. This retention system is being combined with site grading, storm water drainage inlets, and other measures to deter rainwater runoff to adjacent properties.

Lastly, in the event that heavy rain starts during school hours, the new building can be used as a place of refuge for both students and nearby residents. HISD plans include such contingencies. Though the school is not designed to serve as a long-term emergency shelter, the first floor is being built a foot above the 500-year base flood elevation established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The building is designed to meet requirements for withstanding storms and high winds. HISD has an agreement with the Houston's Office of Emergency Management to allow several facilities to be used as Refuges of Last Resort.

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Brays Bayou Trail – What is planned?

by Gerda Gomez, Section 7 Director



The widening of Brays Bayou, which is part of Project Brays, has reached our area. The end point for the bayou widening is at Fondren. You may have noticed that work is occurring in different places simultaneously. This

is primarily due to the fact that different contractors are involved. The progress may be slow due to unforeseen obstacles that occur. The Hillcroft bridge is set to be raised 15 inches this summer. Bidding is in progress to replace the South Rice and Chimney Rock bridges and construction of both bridges is planned for early 2020.

The hike and bike trail will be impacted by the widening of the bayou as it will be torn up during the construction period. Harris County Flood Control District's (HCFCD) representatives have reassured us multiple times that the impacted trail will be replaced with a 10-foot wide concrete trail. (Asphalt trails last approximately nine years; concrete trails will last 30 years.)

Prior to construction, the bayou trail required walkers and bikers to cross South Rice, Chimney Rock and Hillcroft streets in order to continue on the bayou trail. All three streets and their bridges are heavily trafficked. With Greenway 2020 funding, the Houston Parks Board (HPB) has plans to add additional trail sections that will pass under all three bridges. Hikers and bikers will have the option of continuing on the trail under the bridges or stay street side and cross with the traffic lights.

In addition, HPB will add trail sections where they are missing to ensure a continuous bayou trail on the south side of the bayou. Project Brays is building a shelf on the south side of the bayou under the I-610 bridge and South Post Oak exit ramp. This shelf will enable HPB to build a trail on it so that bikers and hikers will be able to pass under the I-610 bridge and South Post Oak Exit ramp on the south side of the bayou. HPB will be building a new section of the trail on the south side of the bayou between I-610 and Chimney Rock so that crossing the Chimney Rock bridge will no longer be necessary. The bayou trail will be continuous on the south side.

(Continued on Page 6)

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(Continued from Page 6)

Currently the walkway width of 46 inches on the South Rice, Chimney Rock and Hillcroft bridges is too narrow. The danger lies in the possibility of pedestrians falling off the walkway into the bridge street or bikers falling over the bridge railing into the bayou. Because the South Rice and Chimney Rock bridges will be replaced with city monies as part of Project Brays, they will receive 10 feet wide sidewalks. However, the Hillcroft bridge sidewalk is not set to be widened. The Neighborhoods to Trails Southwest (NTTSW), a nonprofit organization, has been advocating for a regular sidewalk on the Hillcroft bridge. An interlocal agreement between the City of Houston and HCFCF for a cement overlay is close to being finalized. This will permit construction of a 10-foot wide sidewalk.

Another safety issue for hikers and bikers using the Brays Bayou trail is the crossing at South and North Braeswood. NTTSW will be advocating for "Pedestrian Crossing-Stop at Red Light" traffic signals. These crossing lights are already being used in Houston, e.g., on Westheimer between Kirby and Buffalo Speedway. Two sites have been recommended for use of these lights: one by the Fondren Diversion Channel and another by the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center. What sites do you consider important for safe crossing?

May Board of Directors Update

by Elaine Britt, Section 8N Director

Despite the progress in Meyerland construction and redevelopment, we still have houses that are not maintaining their property. The MCIA office sent out 468 letters to homeowners seeking compliance during the January – April 2019 timeframe, and that included 117 letters in April alone. Meyerland continues to strive for uniform compliance with deed restrictions. The board approved a motion to improve the yard maintenance timing which will require a forced mowing (at the owner's expense) a week earlier than the prior timeframe allowed, should the homeowner not respond in a timely manner. This should help keep yards from getting too unkempt.

If you know of a property that does not appear to be compliant with deed restrictions, you can report it via the website (<http://meyerland.net/contact/report-a-concern/>).

Most Meyerland residents are up-to-date with their annual assessments. The MCIA office reported in April that about 15% of dues are uncollected (or \$186,000 out of \$1.2M in annual fees). This is a very good response rate and better than many of the prior years. If you still owe Meyerland for your annual assessment, please contact the MCIA office to work out a payment plan. If you remain delinquent, you may be charged additional fines and interest. Our fees are used to pay for constable patrol and response services, landscaping, the MCIA staff and other valuable community resources and events.

The board confirmed board member and resident participation on the committees. Most of the board's work is accomplished via the committee process (like this newsletter!). The list of committees can be found on the Meyerland website and we are always looking for additional participants. If interested, please reach out to any member of the committee for more information.

As a reminder, MCIA construction fees were reinstated as of July 1. However, the board approved a measure to extend homeowners use of mobile/RVs for living and storage pods on properties for an additional 60 days. So, you may keep an RV or storage unit on your property through the end of August. The board will reassess the approval for these structures on properties effective September 1, 2019.

Remember that board meetings are public (but usually have closed session to discuss matters regarding individual properties, HR or legal matters). We encourage residents to attend! The schedule of meetings can be found on the website calendar (<http://meyerland.net/news-posts/calendar-of-events/>).

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Milbury Update

By Jennifer Claridge

The Millbury Project of Rebuild Houston was completed in 2015. This project included replacing the undersized 18-inch diameter pipes with 5-foot diameter pipes that will increase the outflow at Millbury into the bayou. In early 2019 an interlocal agreement between the City of Houston (COH) and Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCF) was drafted to deed the medians at the frontage road/S. Post Oak and the east and westbound lanes of S. Braeswood from the COH to HCFCF. The medians will be dug out for offsetting detention and will be landscaped and maintained by HCFCF. The residents inside of the sound wall at the frontage road should not be negatively impacted as it will be sloped in such a way so as to not cause more flooding issues.

The final step before work can begin is for the Harris County Commissioner's Court to approve it. The HCFCF recommended that the county judge execute an agreement with "Texas Urban Low Impact Development LLC, dba White Oak Engineers & Planners, in the amount of \$224,960 for design, bidding, and construction phase engineering services for construction of detention basins on City of Houston right of way at South Braeswood Boulevard and West 610 Loop at Unit D100-00-00 in the Brays Bayou Watershed in Precinct 3 (Map ID Z-02, Project IDD100-00-00-E016, UPIN

190900D1E016)".

The Commissioner's Court approved this agreement on April 30, 2019. The funding from the HCFCF will be used to maintain the space in perpetuity. This will include keeping the grass mown. Some of the saplings in the area may be removed in the digging process but should be replaced. It is expected to be a "dry" space, meaning if it is not needed for detention space, it should not hold water. Measuring should begin immediately, and actual digging should begin this summer.

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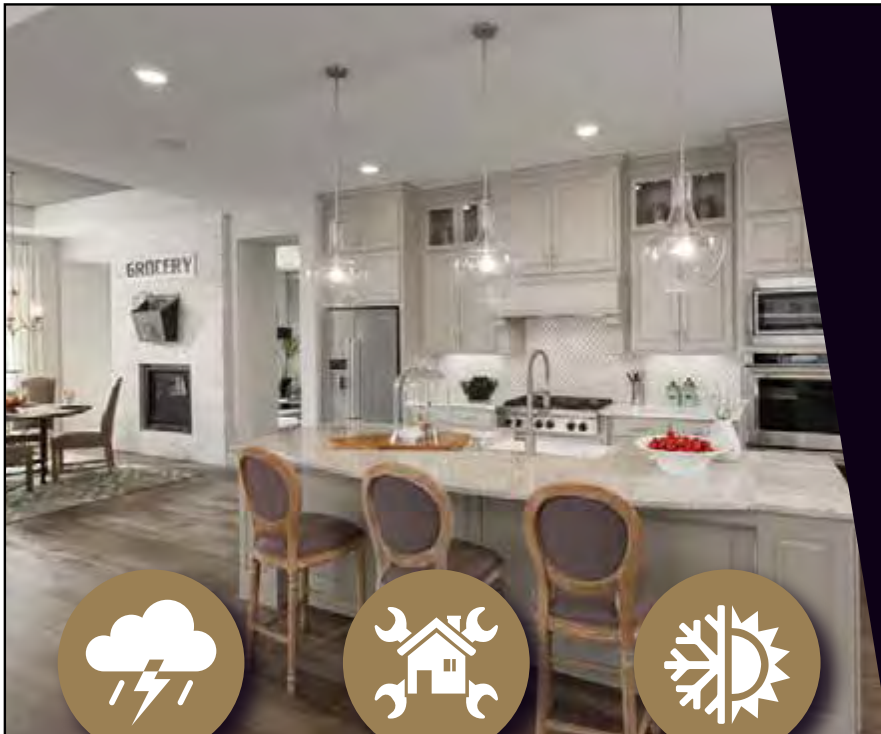


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Trash/Recycling Schedule

July, 2019						
Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
	1	2 Trash	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 T/R	10 Tree	11	12	13
14	15	16 Trash	17	18	19	20
21	22	23 T/R	24	25	26	27
28	29	30 Trash	31			

August, 2019						
Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
				1	2	3
4	5	6 T/R	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 Trash	14 Junk	15	16	17
18	19	20 T/R	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 Trash	28	29	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.

You may now recycle GLASS in your green recycle bin again. Visit the City of Houston Solid Waste Dept. website for more information.



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Leash Your Dogs

by Elaine Britt, Section 8N Director



In the process of elevating my home, I lost all practical use for my backyard, at least until landscaping is completed. It is a mud pit that requires knee-high rain boots to cross and is not an optimal place for my dog to take care of her “business.”

This means that I and my family now walk my dog, Trixie, around the neighborhood. This has been both a blessing and has created some challenges. On the plus side, I get outside much more often and have the opportunity to stop and talk

with neighbors. I truly enjoy catching up with my wonderful neighbors! However, I may feel differently in the August heat.

As noted, I have also found a few challenges to this new routine. Several weeks ago, while walking Trixie (who is a medium-sized mutt), a neighbor’s dog was loose in their front yard. As we walked by on the sidewalk, the neighbor’s dog rushed over and attacked my dog, biting her in the shoulder and chest.

Luckily, Trixie was okay with some wound care, and the neighbors’ dog was quickly placed in their car and they apologized. However, it could have been much worse if my dog were smaller or if the dog decided to bite me (or one of the neighborhood’s small children) instead. I know the neighbor did not intentionally want my dog to get hurt, but this whole incident could have been prevented by simply using a leash.

Did you know that the City of Houston has a law against allowing your dog to be “running at large?” The City’s Code of Ordinances, Chapter 6, Article IV, Section 6-101 states that the owner of any dog that is off-leash and is a “nuisance” to “dangerous” can be fined \$500 to \$2,000 per day. Your dog could also get impounded if found loose.

Your dog might be a sweetheart around you and your family, but you never know how it will react to another dog or person walking down the street.

Please keep your dogs leashed and under your control – even when in your own front yard. Not only is it the law, but keeping dogs leashed also protects both you and your neighbors/visitors. Let’s keep Meyerland safe for all!

Let’s Go Plalking, Meyerland!

by Elaine Britt, Section 8N Director

Before the summer gets too hot, I have been enjoying evening walks through Meyerland. It is exciting to see the changes, growth and new neighbors (kids!) in our community.

I have also noticed that with change, comes debris. Yes, trash. One of the first byproducts of progress, unfortunately.

On my walks, I try to pick up at least one piece of trash and put it in my trash bin. Now, imagine if we all took that step and cleaned Meyerland piece by piece?

Apparently, this is really a sport – in Sweden they call it “plogging” which is a combination of “jogging” and “picking up” (or, more appropriately, “plocka upp” in Swedish). I am not a jogger, but can certainly apply this principle to walking. Maybe call it “plalking?”

So, next time you go for a walk, think about picking up just one piece of trash. Maybe even take a small bag with you and pick up the item with it (stay germ free!). Toss the bag in your trash bin and before you know it, Meyerland will be litter-free.

Another plus to doing this is less debris gets clogged in the storm sewers or down the bayou and out into the ocean, so less trash makes it to our shores and less water in our homes.

I hope to see you all “plalking” the neighborhood soon.

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Dressing Recipe

Hello, everyone. Chef Marty here with a fantastic dressing or marinade (works best with shrimp in my opinion) recipe that many of you got to sample during last month's Grape Stomper's Wine Dinner. By popular demand, I will now share it with you all! Enjoy...

Yield: appx 2 cups

- 2 tablespoon lime zest
- ¼ cup lime juice
- ¼ cup brown sugar, packed
- ¼ cup ginger, peeled and grated
- ½ cup green onion, chopped, white parts and some green
- 1 cup cilantro leaves, packed
- 1 tsp nutmeg, fresh grated
- ¼ cup honey
- 1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon Tabasco
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 6 ancho chiles, seeded and cut into strips

1. Place the lime zest and juice, brown sugar, ginger, green onions, cilantro, nutmeg, honey, vinegar, and Tabasco in a food processor or blender and process until smooth.

2. With the machine still running, slowly pour in the olive oil through the feed tube in a steady stream. Turn off the machine and stir in the ancho chiles. Transfer dressing into a tightly covered container and refrigerate. Will keep for up to 5 days.

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