

WLCA NEWSLETTER



Woodlawn Lake Community Association

Keeping Woodlawn Wonderful since 1992

Published Bimonthly

July–August 2016

San Antonio, Texas

JULY 4th BEER & TRASH - FOLLOW-UP ON JUL 26th

Our July 26th meeting will feature Raymond Castro, Park Police Captain, and Noah Almanza, President/CEO of the San Antonio Parks Foundation (SAPF). We will hear about their respective functions in the City's Fourth of July celebration at Woodlawn Lake Park. They will tell us about the issues we have presented to them and how they hope to improve future events.

The annual celebration at our Park has become increasingly popular. The *Express-News* listed attendance at this year's event at 20,000. Our police department put the figure at a more modest 10-12,000. That is still a lot of people and a lot of vehicles for our 60 acre park and for our residential streets.

The morning after showed what was disturbing to many of us. Park grounds were covered in trash. There was evidence of heavy beer drinking all around. There were many spots where hot coals had burned the grass. The WLCA president organized a meeting for Monday, July 11th, to talk about these problems. In addition to our two presenters, the meeting was attended by Veronica Moreno, Parks; Christine Gutierrez, District 1; Lt. Juan Valencia, Park Police; Amanda Gangawer, SAPF; Bianca Maldonado, MPNA President; and Ester Soto, WLCA Secretary. We covered such issues as overnight camping (which should not take place because of the park curfew), parking, and whether the celebration has outgrown our Park. The overriding issues remained trash and illegal beer drinking. Our meeting will bring the discussion to our members and engage their views.

Captain Castro is a thirty-six year veteran of the San Antonio Park Police Department. He commands a department of 163 employees and oversees an annual operating budget of 12 million dollars. He holds a Master Peace Officer, Instructor, and Firearm certifications from the State of Texas.

Mr. Almanza has a Master of Business Administration degree from Our Lady of the Lake University. He has been in his current position since April 2014. SAPF is a non-profit organization that works to enhance parks in the City and County. It has sponsored the annual July 4th celebration at our Park for the past 16 years. *(More on the 4th on next page)*

RAINY DAY CANCELLATION RESCHEDULED FOR AUG 30th

State Senator José Menendez will be the speaker at our meeting on August 30th. He had been scheduled for May 31st (May-Jun 2016 Newsletter), but the meeting was cancelled because of rain.

San Antonio had an exceptionally wet spring. On the day of our meeting, rain was very heavy and it looked like driving could be hazardous. At 3 pm, we decided to cancel the meeting. We notified our members by email and by telephone, and posted a notice on the door of the wi-fi room. We also called the office of State Senator Menendez and asked if he could come to a later meeting. We hope that no one was inconvenienced.

CENTENNIAL GARDEN REPORT

Our native plants garden is now in summer survival mode. Our rainy spring gave our first plantings a chance to take root and adjust to the soil. The summer has brought increased heat and an absence of rain. The soil has baked like clay and resembles the street that once ran in this area. We are watering by hose to keep the plants alive during these hot days. We will not be adding any plants until cooler and, hopefully, wetter weather returns.

The goal of a native plants garden is to have it be self-sustaining. Once established, hand watering should be only in the most severe conditions. By mulching around our plants, the ground should soften and should retain moisture better than it does now. Plants have been carefully chosen for their adaptability to our conditions. Those in the ground now include samba portulaca, Greg's blue mist flower, butterfly weed, American pokeweed, frostweed, tropical milkweed, Gulf/Brazos penstemon, red Mexican purslane, golden rod "baby gold," and Texas lantana.

The Parks Department fenced the garden to protect it on July 4th. We thank Parks staff for this and for all the other help they have given. WLCA has purchased equipment for use on this project. When it is done, we will sell the items to the highest bidders. We expect that to be in two years.

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WLCA EXECUTIVE BOARD

President: Alejandro Soto.....485-6168
wlca@att.net

Vice President: Gerard Bustos.....279-8729

Secretary: Ester Soto

Treasurer: Elia Reyna.....279-7204

Board Members:

Fred Ayers.....737-1228

Marcy Gutierrez.....313-8296

Diana Sanchez Lira.....646-1595

Cathy Fernandez (Eastern Reach).....668-4602

AGENDAS & MEETINGS

Our meetings begin at 6:30 pm and we try to be done by 8 pm. To control meeting length, we ask members who wish to discuss a particular subject to present it beforehand to an officer or board member (see block above) for placement on the agenda. Non-emergency items not on the agenda will be heard only if time is available and can be limited to a three minute presentation.

WLCA welcomes membership from outside of our geographic area, but our focus is our Park and our community. We will discuss other area concerns only if they impact on WLCA interests. At times a member or a guest will take advantage of the presence of a Council representative or a guest speaker to ask or make a statement about an issue that does not fit our criteria. The chair can stop and refocus that discussion.

This being an election year, candidates are welcome to visit our meetings. Unless part of a presentation in which all opponents for an office have been invited, each candidate will be allowed two minutes for introduction and will be allowed to visit individually with members before and after the meeting.

WLCA is not subject to the Open Meetings Act. We do keep our members informed about our meetings and our business and give members access to our records.

WLCA Birthdays

July: flower - larkspur; birthstone - ruby

Victor Almaraz, Sally Avila, Mark Banasau, Bodil Beanland, Tomás Braly, Bruce Bronstad, Jean Jarosek, Martha M. Kwan, Rosa Manzano, Cathleen McClure, Diana Prado, Manuel Sandoval, Cynthia Sosa, Rebecca Tadea, Richard Ryan Weber

August: flower - gladiolus; birthstone - peridot

Thomas Black, Gloria Bolick, Tiffany Dale, Efraim Diaz, Agustin Gonzalez, Susan Hudnall, Elizabeth Provencio, Peggy Selden, John Shear, Kyle Snedden, Denise Stafford, Alejandro Soto, Shelley Weber

CROWDS, CONTROLS, COMMENTS

Alejandro Soto, WLCA President

One of my brothers managed a shoe store. While in college, I would help him during his busy seasons. At times, a customer would try to fit a size 8 foot into a size 7 shoe. That is what the City's Fourth of July celebration at our Park has come to resemble. Our Park is 60 acres, one-third of that under water. Its parking lots are designed to hold no more than normal weekend visitors. The surrounding streets are for community residents. Yet, once a year a size 8 part of the City heads to our size 7 Park.

People start heading to our Park early, claiming territory as if homesteading. Many head out late, thinking that an hour before the fireworks they will be able to get a parking space front and center. Cars continue to circle the Park until the fireworks begin, then they simply stop in the middle of the road to watch the show. Other people are packed into the Park or are milling in the streets and in the yards of nearby homes. We who reside in the area stay home, entertain guests, and guard our driveways, often oblivious to what is going on at the Park.

Some comments have been made that visitors should be allowed to park on our green spaces, "it's just one day." Parking off the pavement violates City Code. Placing cars on park turf even for just a day will damage vegetation that is struggling during the hot summer and will make ruts in the ground. In addition, if the green space is filled with cars, where will the people go?

The mass of people makes it difficult to enforce City and Park rules. Captain Castro (page 1) says that he had ten Park Police Officers assigned to our Park on the Fourth. That is one officer for more than one thousand people. Violations in overnight camping, littering, firecrackers, and bicycles on the footpath go unchecked. More importantly, beer drinking is everywhere. The 1918 deed to the Park says, "...the City of San Antonio has agreed...to permit neither beer nor intoxicating liquors of any kind to be sold, given away, or drunk upon said premises..." Because of the sheer number of abusers, little seems to be done to control drinking or punish drinkers. If the City knows that it is going on and chooses to do nothing or to look away, it is permitting or consenting to it, in violation of the deed. Simply putting up signs or announcing prohibition against it is not enough.

Another problem is trash. It was scattered all over the Park. Social media discussions, as in Nextdoor.com, have included comments on city duties and individual responsibility. As stated in our last Newsletter (May-Jun 2016), there can never be enough receptacles for trash and recyclables in an event of this magnitude. We suggested ways to deal with it. Some expect the City or volunteers to be working all day to bag and carry out trash. Yet, we wonder why people throw trash and dump coals on the ground. We should not expect some to give up their holiday to pick up after others who will not respect our Park.

OFFICER & BOARD ELECTIONS

Election for WLCA's Executive Board to serve in 2017 and 2018 will be at our November 29th meeting. The Executive Board includes the offices of president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer, as well as four board members. A fifth board member, representing our Eastern Reach, is appointed by the Executive Board. An immediate past president would be a sixth member.

Nominations will open at our October 25th meeting and will continue at the following meeting before the election. A candidate can be self-nominated or nominated by another member. There are no term limits.

Eligibility for office and duties of each office are set by our by-laws. To run for office this year, a candidate must have been a WLCA active member on May 1st. Only active and associate members as of September 1st of this year can vote in this year's election. Only those present at the meeting can vote. Each member is entitled to one vote with family/household memberships being entitled to two voters (who must be present) of the respective group's choosing.

WLCA seeks officers and board members who will represent the total geographic area of our community as well as the varied interests within it. Tasks are not arduous nor time consuming and can be very rewarding. Members are encouraged to consider serving WLCA in one of these capacities. The new Executive Board will take office on January 1, 2017.

Our current by-laws (adopted October 28, 2014) can be found at neighborhoodlink.com.

SAFFE OFFICER RETIRES

At our June 28th WLCA meeting, our SAFFE Officer Marcos Serda announced his retirement from SAPD, effective July 1st. State Senator José Menendez and District 7 Councilman Cris Medina honored him for his service. Officer Serda served in the SAPD for 33 years and in our community since 2003. He has been both a great helper and a good friend. Although not a resident of our area, he and his wife Diana are long-time WLCA members. We thank Officer Serda for his service and dedication and wish him well in retirement and in his future endeavors.

VIATRANS TICKETS AT H-E-B

Tickets for VIAtrans, the paratransit service for riders with disabilities, are now available at most H-E-B stores. VIA provides public transportation to 4,000 paratransit customers daily, helping riders make connections throughout the community. VIAtrans tickets are sold at H-E-B and at VIAinfo.net in books of 10 for \$20. Single tickets are sold at any VIA information center.

Next WLCA Meeting: Jul 26th at 6:30 pm
Woodlawn Lake Park Wi-Fi Room @ Gym Bldg
Other meetings in 2016: Aug 30, Sept 27, Oct 25, Nov 29

HISTORIC HOMEOWNER FAIR

The 8th Annual Historic Homeowner Fair (HHF) will be Saturday, August 27th, at the Pearl Stable. This free event is hosted by the City of San Antonio Office of Historic Preservation. It is designed to bring together owners of aging and historic homes with local professionals, services, products, and solutions, and to educate homeowners about caring for and maintaining their properties. In addition to an Exhibitor Hall of local contractors and preservation organizations, the HHF provides educational sessions and hands-on demonstrations throughout the day which cover a wide array of topics including window repair, securing financing for a project, and even landscaping.

This year's keynote speaker is Brent Hull, Owner and President of Hull Historical. He is a nationally recognized authority on historic design, architecturally correct molding, and millwork. He and his team of craftsmen at Hull Historical will be featured on a new show on a major cable network this fall.

District 1 Councilman Roberto Treviño will be at the Fair to discuss important initiatives that benefit center city neighborhoods. The Fair runs from 9:30 am to 3 pm. Early attendees will be able to participate in a free tree adoption. You do not have to live in a historic district to attend.

FRED ROAD CORRIDOR STUDY

The City has begun a study on the Fredericksburg Road corridor. Begun in the 1840's, it developed into a major thoroughfare in our near northwest part of the City. Although outside of WLCA's geographic boundaries, it is heavily used by the residents of this area and holds a lot of our history. The first public meeting and workshop was held on June 27th, with more meetings to follow.

The Fredericksburg Road Corridor Study Area consists of approximately 786 acres starting at IH-10 to the southeast, continuing northwest to the City of Balcones Heights city limits and extending 1,000 feet on both sides of the road right of way. The study area is located in the Deco District, is in close proximity to Jefferson High School, and includes the newly completed Old Spanish Trails and Flood Control Basin. The study area contains a portion of VIA's Primo service that connects the Medical Center to downtown.

The study's goals include improvement of the appearance of the corridor and upkeep and maintenance of the property along it; improved access for pedestrians, bicycles, and transit; and strengthened property values. Its tasks are to examine current and long-standing issues and concerns, seek to understand economic and market forces affecting the corridor, and analyze the physical and visual character and quality of the area and develop a design strategy. It will solicit feedback from stakeholders and the public and will coordinate with agencies and jurisdictions in the area. Ultimately, it will seek adoption of design guidelines and standards by City Council.

**Woodlawn Lake
Community Association**
PO Box 28374
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ROOFS AND OTHER REPAIRS

Code Enforcement Section, Development Services Department

Your contractor needs a permit to re-cover or replace your roof, windows, siding, and doors. Contractors must be registered with the City of San Antonio in order to be issued the required permits to start the work. You can check if your contractor is registered by calling the City's Development Services Department at 207-1111 or visiting the website sanantonio.gov/dsd.

A permit is necessary to safeguard the safety of your family and ensure your project follows the City's building codes. It also ensures that your contractor is registered and licensed with the City, properly gets building permits, and has passed required criminal checks. Code Enforcement can issue a "stop" work order until a permit is obtained. Work without the proper permit can result in citation to the contractor and the homeowner ranging from \$300 to \$1,000. When selling your home, you generally need to show the work was done with the proper permit.

To protect yourself from unqualified contractors be leery of contractors coming to your door or those in unmarked vehicles; get multiple bids and ensure they are members of an association, such as Roofing Contractors Association of Texas; research (Better Business Bureau, your insurer or agent, internet); and check for registration with the City. It is a red flag if the contractor asks for payment up front or offers to cut a deal if you pull the needed permit. Never pay the total cost of the project up front.

TRUCKS ON W. WOODLAWN

Work on phase 2 of the Seeling Channel reconstruction will continue for at least another year. Trucks involved in the project have been using W. Woodlawn as their route to and from IH-10. At times the trucks exceed the 35mph speed limit (itself too fast). WLCA has asked that the trucks be routed to Bandera and Culebra, via Wilson or St. Cloud, and kept off of W. Woodlawn.

W. Woodlawn is a collector street for area residents to get to and from their homes. Along its 2100 and 2200 blocks, it fronts Woodlawn Lake Park and passes four bus stops. The street, in three separate projects, has been resurfaced and reconstructed in the past few years. This should not be a route for large and heavy duty vehicles to cut across our neighborhood.

We have brought this up to City Council Districts 1 and 7 and the City's Transportation and Capital Improvements Department (TCI) that is overseeing the project. We have been told that the City is working with the contractors to find alternate routes. In the meantime the heavy truck traffic on W. Woodlawn continues.

CITY LIABILITY

If the City has caused damage or destruction to your property, or injury or death to yourself or a person whom you represent, you must give written notice within 90 days of the harm to the City Manager or City Clerk and state when, where, and how the harm occurred, its extent, and the amount of the damages. Direct your questions to Risk Management, Liability Section, 207-7847.