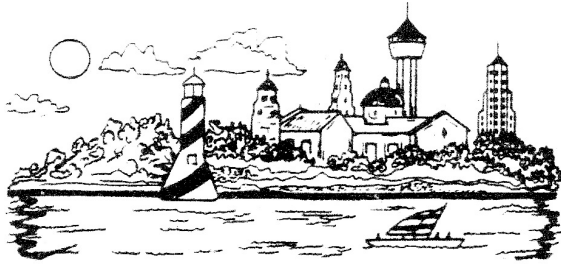


WLCA NEWSLETTER



Woodlawn Lake Community Association

Keeping Woodlawn Wonderful

Published Bimonthly

May-June 2021

San Antonio, Texas

MAY 25th MEETING OUTDOORS; COVID UPDATE PRESENTED

After a year of not meeting, WLCA held an outdoor meeting at the Woodlawn Lake Park pavilion on April 27th. We will meet again at the pavilion on May 25th at 6:30 pm. Face masks and social distancing are required for those not yet vaccinated.

The topic of our meeting is the current status of the pandemic. Our speaker is Dr. Rita Espinoza, Chief of Epidemiology for the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District since April 2015. She has over 20 years of experience in Infectious Disease Epidemiology at the state, regional and local level in Texas. Dr. Elizondo obtained a bachelor of science in psychology from the University of Houston, master's degree of public health in epidemiology from Tulane University, and doctoral degree in public health leadership from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

JUNE 29th MEETING INDOORS; SAPD CHIEF McMANUS TO SPEAK

Unless City COVID restrictions change again, we will return to meeting at the Wi-Fi Room in June. This is in line with the easing of restrictions concerning masks and social distancing for those who have been fully vaccinated. We ask that those who have not received their COVID shots to please not attend.

SAPD Chief William McManus will be our speaker. He began his law enforcement career with the Washington, DC, Metropolitan Police Department in 1975. In September 1998, he became Assistant Chief and was placed in charge of the day-to-day operations of over one-third of that department. In November 2001, he retired and became Police Chief in Dayton, Ohio. He left Dayton to become Chief of Police in Minneapolis in February 2004. He became our Police Chief on April 17, 2006, "retired" in 2015, and then resumed his duties at SAPD.

Chief McManus is a graduate of the FBI National Executive Institute and National Academy, and of the Senior Management Institute for Police at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. He holds a bachelor's degree from Villanova University and a master's degree in management from Johns Hopkins University.

WLCA ELECTIONS IN JUNE; CHANGES IN LEADERSHIP

Elections for WLCA Executive Board positions for 2021-2022 were to have taken place at last year's November meeting. However, the COVID-19 pandemic cancelled that meeting. The Executive Board includes the offices of president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer, as well as four board members (the immediate past president is the fifth). We will begin nominations for these offices at our May meeting and hold the election at our June meeting. Those elected will take office at the meeting immediately following the election and will serve until the end of next year. The new board will deal with any positions that are left vacant.

At our April meeting, WLCA president Alejandro Soto announced that neither he nor secretary Ester Soto will continue in office. Alejandro began his first term in 2003 and Ester began in 2005. Treasurer Elia Reyna has also decided against serving another term. She has been in office since 2016 and also serves as president of the Jefferson Neighborhood Association. Three of the current board members have indicated that they will run to remain in their current positions or will seek another office.

Eligibility for office and duties of each office are set by our by-laws. Election rules will apply as if the election had taken place last year. To run for office this year, a candidate must have been an active member on May 1, 2020. Only those who are active or associate members for at least one month before the meeting can vote. Each member is entitled to one vote with family/household memberships being entitled to two voters of the respective group's choosing. Only those present can vote.

A candidate can be self-nominated or nominated by another member. WLCA seeks officers and 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. Please consider serving WLCA in one of these capacities.

Project Updates – page 2

Final Edition – page 3

July 4th – page 4

WLCA EXECUTIVE BOARD

President: Alejandro Soto.....	485-6168
wlca@att.net	
Vice President: Sally Avila.....	734-2093
Secretary: Ester Soto	
Treasurer: Elia Reyna.....	279-7204
Board Members:	
Marcy Gutierrez.....	313-8296
Charles Oisten.....	702-234-0604
Vicki Wright.....	286-7222
JD Morales.....	885-7146

GOOD & BAD GARDEN HAPPENINGS

Next Garden Day: May 22nd

On April 17th, employees of Kohl's Department Store volunteered at our Centennial Garden. They cleared weeds and added plants. The following week, other park volunteers spread mulch throughout the garden. On April 20th, the City Parks Department added a large bur oak tree at a spot we had requested. About two weeks later, the tree was taken by an unknown party. That party also removed eight railroad ties that we had placed as boundaries for the garden. Parks will try to get us another tree in the fall. We will replace the ties from our environmental fund. If you have any information on this theft, please call SAPD.

April showers bring May flowers. They also bring weeds. The rains we have had in the past few weeks have brought new growth and flowers to the older plants and have allowed the new plants to take root. Butterflies have arrived to feed and lay their eggs. The winter freeze dried out many plant tops, but new shoots have sprouted from the ground. Some weeds are now beginning to dry and spread their seeds.

Weather permitting, we will have a garden day on Saturday, May 22nd, from 9 am to 12 noon. We plan to remove invasive plants and to prune dead growth from our older plants. The ground is well soaked and weeds should pull out easily. Although no longer required for vaccinated individuals, we encourage the use of face masks and safe social distancing. Each volunteer should have a hat and gloves. We also recommend wearing shoes that you do not mind getting wet or muddy.

WLCA Birthdays

May: flower - lily of the valley; birthstone - emerald

Kimberly Cervantes, Bezaleel Chincanchan, Charles Oisten, Enrique Mendoza, Emily Stone, Martha Torres

June: flower - rose; birthstone - pearl

Linda Felan, Joe Gonzales, Liz Gonzales, Johnny Montejano, Jennifer Patkowski, Juliana Perez, Elia Reyna, Henrietta Zavala

PROJECT UPDATES

Almaguer Studio: The demolition of the current Almaguer Dance Studio at 132 S. Josephine Tobin has begun. Crews are removing significant architectural features for later use. Once the building is down, construction will begin on the new Woodlawn Lake Recreation Center. The new facility will include two dance studios, an outdoor yoga patio, classrooms, and a digital library. It will retain the name Berta Almaguer, who taught dance in the City for 36 years (Nwsltr Jan-Feb'19). Construction should be completed in mid-2022.

Seeling Channel Phase III: This is the final part of a multi-phase channel widening project that responds to the 2002 flooding of our area. It is funded in the amount of \$18 million by the 2017 city bond. When completed, over 100 homes will be removed from the 100 year flood plain. The first two phases widened the channel from Woodlawn Lake to Morning Glory. The final phase moves the project upstream to Placid Drive. The St. Cloud bridge is being replaced and the new span should open this July. Mulberry and Huisache along the channel will be reconstructed, to include new curbs, sidewalks, and driveway approaches, with work to be completed in the fall. The entire project is scheduled to be completed in spring of 2022.

Seeling Channel Public Art: "Poet's Point," a community gathering place, will be constructed on the triangular block of Magnolia, Mistletoe, and Emory. It will include a shade structure, seating area, and added trees. Its amphitheater layout will invite poetry reading, public gathering, and just hanging out. It will feature tiled murals, each two by five feet, inlaid into a concrete wall. The murals will exhibit themes of the neighborhood and will feature five street names. The artwork is by local artists, the Mistletoe work created by WLCA member Norma Jean Moore. A poem will accompany each mural. The final plan is a result of meetings in which public input was received. The project has received final approval. Fabrication and installation should begin by year's end, with completion in early 2022.

WOODLAWN POOL OPEN

The Woodlawn Lake Park Swimming Pool opened on May 8th. Swim hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 5 to 8 pm, and Saturday and Sunday from 1 to 8 pm. COVID health and safety protocols for staff and pool patrons will be followed and may change based on guidance from local health officials.

The common areas will receive extra cleaning and sanitizing. COVID screening will take place upon entry to the pool and masks will be required when patrons are not in the pool. Pre-registration is required for designated swim times to manage capacity. This can be done at saparksandrec.com or at 210-207-3299.

Patrons are asked to come swim-ready as access to dressing rooms and shower facilities will not be available. Admission to City pools is free.

YEARS, YARDSTICKS, YIELD

Alejandro Soto, WLCA President

Our June meeting will be the last in which I preside as WLCA president. For many reasons, I have decided not to continue in that position. Among the tasks I have taken on during my tenure is preparing the WLCA newsletter. As I leave office, I am also ending my job as head writer and editor. In this, my final edition, I reflect on the past 18 years leading our association.

I had been a two-year resident of San Antonio when I was elected WLCA president. I began my first term in 2003. Our by-laws at the time held officers to two terms. WLCA members decided to abolish this limit and I continued to serve. During that time, I have had eight vice-presidents (we once had first and second vp's), three secretaries, five treasurers, numerous board members, and five District 7 City Council representatives.

My first term began while we were still dealing with the effects of the 2002 flood. That brought changes to our park and neighborhood that are still happening today ("Seeling Channel," page 2). We stepped up to save Earth Day and were rewarded with a \$1000 prize for our efforts. We have remained an active part of the City's Earth Day celebration since then. 2007 saw the start of a new controversy that pitted neighbor against neighbor, a bridge configuration to improve safety and park access at S. Josephine Tobin and the Seeling Channel. Eventually a solution agreeable to most was reached and seven years later the changes were completed to what we have today.

We dealt with other projects and issues. We helped extend the boundaries of the Monticello Park Historic District, which in retrospect I would have done differently. We also contributed in creating the Jefferson Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD) and created the Woodlawn Lake Area NCD. We fought to maintain the standards of these districts, as well as those of city zoning. At times we faced obstacles with the City's Zoning Board of Adjustment that would defy their charter and rule based on personal preferences. I made these issues known to the City Manager and the Director of Development Services.

We opted for more safety in our streets. We got slower speed limits around the park and more stops at our intersections. We involved our SAFFE Officers with our security and safety concerns. We had various police representatives, including the police chief, at our meetings. We asked for, and got a curfew at the park. We also got increased traffic enforcement around the park.

To enhance health and recreation, we led the effort to eliminate tobacco at all city parks. That came to fruition two years ago. We have advocated for other policies that would affect all of our parks. We have asked for a campaign against the unhealthy feeding of bread to ducks. Also, we have questioned the use of fireworks in parks inhabited by ducks and other wildlife.

We were involved with the early planning for the Westside Creek Trails and are represented in their planning and implementation.

We also gave our thoughts and concerns on playground and walking trail improvements, a community recreation center (see "Almaguer," page 2), a dog park, and a public art sculpture ("Spineway" at S. Josephine Tobin and Cincinnati). We have moved to improve the commercial corridors in our area, including shutting down the nonconforming bars on Zarzamora.

In 2016 we arranged with Parks & Recreation to allow us to develop a native plants garden at the west end of the park. It became the Centennial Garden (page 2) to commemorate our park's 100th anniversary in 2018. It has been recognized as a Monarch Butterfly Waystation, Wildlife Habitat, and Pollinator Habitat. The garden continues to grow and to be renewed. Although I am leaving office, I will continue to head this effort.

We updated our by-laws and instituted finance rules. These can be found online at neighborhoodlink.com. We held membership drives, letting our entire geographic area know of our presence and purpose. We changed our meeting place to make it more accessible to members. We made our meetings more informative by hosting a variety of speakers from the City and other interests. Our newsletters have updated members on local matters.

These are but a few of our highlights. Then, there is the downside. There are problems that persist that are common to many neighborhoods. Many drivers still speed on our streets and fail to observe stop signs and pedestrian crossings. Bandit signs are still posted on utility poles, city fences, and traffic signs. Our park and streets are still littered. Loose dogs roam our streets and illegal fireworks explode each New Year and July 4th. Fortunately, graffiti is not a huge problem, but it still happens.

There has been a downturn with our members. When I began, our membership was under 100. I wanted to get the number up. In 2014, membership reached 220. Now, it's under 100 again. Our meetings would hold over 30 attendees. Our 2004 holiday party had 60 attendees. Those numbers dropped. We discontinued parties and National Night Out because of lack of attendance. Our Centennial Garden crew has dropped to only a couple of members, leaving us to rely on outside volunteers. I heard recently that if you think you are leading but no one is following, you are just out for a walk.

I have enjoyed serving as WLCA's president. I am grateful to my wife Ester for sharing in managing the business of this association. There have been others during these past 18-plus years who stepped up when needed. I thank them for their contributions. In 2016, I added the motto "Keeping Woodlawn Wonderful" to our newsletter masthead. When I was first asked to run for president, I said that I don't even know what we do. Putting it in a few words, the motto says it all. Our park and community are unique and special. I hope I have done my part in keeping it that way.

Scheduled 2021 WLCA Meetings

May 25, Jun 29, Jul 27, Aug 31, Sept 28, Oct 26, Nov 30

All at 6:30 pm; location to be announced

**Woodlawn Lake
Community Association**

PO Box 28374
San Antonio TX 78228



JULY 4th AT PARK PENDING

At the time of this writing, it is unclear whether the annual 4th of July celebration at Woodlawn Lake Park will take place this year. We have yet to receive a confirmation one way or the other from the City or from the San Antonio Parks Foundation, sponsor of the event. Last year the event was cancelled because of the pandemic. However, as more individuals are vaccinated against COVID-19, many rules of the past year are being relaxed.

Should the event take place, it will be on Sunday, July 4th, from 11am to 9:30pm. It might be as before or modified in some manner. Even if held, WLCA urges our members to avoid the park and view the fireworks from the safety of their homes. The Center for Disease Control recommends that you continue to avoid large in-person gatherings, even if you are vaccinated.

This letter was printed in the Express-News on July 11, 2010. A decade later, the same problems repeat each 4th of July.

I went for my morning jog at Woodlawn Lake Park last Monday (July 5th) and couldn't believe the trash. This is the worst I've seen in 10 years of July 4th celebrations at Woodlawn Lake Park. I spotted 16 12-pack beer cartons along the foot path.

I wish the Express-News and TV stations would advise and counsel holiday visitors to the park in my backyard.

• *First, find alternate ways to get here. Walk, bike, take the bus. VIA could help. Six of its lines come to or near the park.*

• *Second, carry trash bags. The trash cans and recycling receptacles at the park are OK most days of the year, but not for the 4th. Many people take and use plastic bags, but they leave them at the park. Although animals at the park must be on a leash, many are not. They tear through the bags before they can be picked up, looking for leftovers and food scraps.*

• *Third, alcohol is prohibited. Enough said.*

• *Fourth, there are no containers for spent charcoal. If you grill, take foil. Don't dump your coals on the grass.*

• *Fifth, pick up after yourself. Be nice to people who live around the park and carry your trash to your cars and dispose of it properly at home.*

This advice would work for events in other parts of town. I guess it's easy to get caught up in the moment and forget we're part of a greater community that must respect each other.

Finally, as we complain about taxes, ask yourself if your actions and negligence are costing us increased labor costs and lost recycling opportunities.

Alejandro Soto, president, Woodlawn Lake Community Assoc.

WLCA has discussed these issues with the event sponsors, SAPD and Park Police, Parks & Recreation, and Council representatives for Districts 1 and 7 (in which the park is located). We hope that if the event does take place, that our concerns will be addressed and our park and community will be kept clean and safe.