

Volume 2, Issue 1

February 2006



OLD BRAESWOOD PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION

Old Braeswood News

A Letter from the President

Dear Old Braeswood Neighbors:

Much has happened since our last newsletter. The 2006 executive board was elected by acclamation at the well attended annual meeting. The meeting was graciously hosted by Fran and Tom Callahan at their beautiful home. Anne Clutterbuck a near neighbor, and our new representative on city council attended, and pledged her support in city government. Kirby construction continues, endlessly it seems, but our phase of this project should be over by June. Our manager, Evalyn Krudy, has lobbied on many fronts to minimize neighborhood inconvenience.

With increased membership support we will accomplish our goals for 2006—so please join.

1. We will shortly have a new neighborhood directory thanks to Sally Miller's efforts.
2. We will design and implement a comprehensive long-term tree planting program. This beautification effort will be chaired by Carroll Shaddock.
3. We will continue the park beautification and refurbishing program headed by Chris Robins.
4. We will continue to work with neighbors to develop clear guidelines for new home construction projects, chaired by Marilyn Archer.

As always, we will continue to lobby government to maintain and protect Old Braeswood as an outstanding Houston residential community. Thank you all for your continuing efforts on behalf of Old Braeswood.

Bob Birenbaum

President

2006 Membership drive underway!

It's time for our annual membership drive. Inside this edition of the Old Braeswood News you will find many informative articles about our neighborhood and the immediate area surrounding Old Braeswood. Also included is an annual membership form and a reply envelope. Please take a few minutes to make your annual contribution. Your association relies upon your voluntary contributions to support our many activities. Collectively these activities help preserve and enhance our property values and maintain the special character of our historic neighborhood.

More Houstonians are beginning to take notice of Old Braeswood's location, quality construction, unusually large lot sizes, excellent public schools, and proximity to some of Houston's best amenities. Yet homes don't turn over frequently here, because as you know, once you've made Old Braeswood your home you'll never want to leave. Please contribute now to keep Old Braeswood the neighborhood you want to call home for years to come.

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Save the date!

**OBPOA Members Meeting
April 14, 2006 at 7 p.m.**

**District C CIP Meeting
March 8, 2006 at 7 p.m.
@ the Rice School**

Kirby construction update

Texas Sterling Co. (TSC) will continue to receive and install dual 12' x 12' box sewers (14' x 14' outside dimension) along the East side of Kirby Drive to 100 feet south of Dorrington through the end of February. A second crew was added in January to help keep the project on schedule. Paving of the east main lanes is complete through Glen Haven and will continue northward following the box sewer installation. After the east side main lanes are completed, traffic will be shifted to the new pavement on the east side, and reconstruction of the west lanes will begin. Segment 1 is expected to be completed in June.

TSC has also completed the installation of two 45 lineal feet of hand dug tunnels, which were installed in an effort to protect roots of some of larger existing trees along Kirby Drive. The dual boxes have been installed through these tunnels. Existing storm sewer bypass discharge lines have been removed along Glen Haven and Bellefontaine with water being pumped into the new storm sewer boxes behind the current work zone. TSC also continues to coordinate temporary overhead utility line relocations with Centerpoint and SBC.

But don't expect peace and quiet until well into summer! The digging and box sewer installation on the east side of Kirby will resume in early spring when Total Contracting, Inc., the new contractor for Segment 2, arrives with more large scale equipment and a new load of boxes. Segment 2 stretches from 100 feet south of Dorrington to 100 ft. south of Swift. As Marty Cristofaro, Senior Program Director for the Storm Water Management Program (SWMP), said with a wink at the University Place Town Hall meeting on January 26, "It's going to get worse. Much worse." With two contractors working at opposite ends of Kirby from Brays to Holcombe, there will be much more noise and construction activity.

"It's going to get worse. *Much worse.*"

Marty Cristofaro, Program Manager for SWMP

So far, traffic has not been a major problem, but we should see much more of it in our neighborhood on Morningside and Greenbriar as the project crosses Holcombe. Traffic Engineers have worked out a plan to maintain traffic in all directions at the Kirby/Holcombe intersection, but there will inevitably be some rather significant traffic problems during this time. Once crews cross Holcombe, the right-of-way narrows by more than 25 feet. Two lanes of traffic will be maintained in segment 2, but one lane of traffic will close temporarily during delivery periods of concrete, box sewers, and other materials, between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Old Braeswood wishes to thank the Segment One team, especially Steve Fenney with TCB and Gerald Smith with Weston for being so responsive to our neighborhood. Your association will continue to work with the project team to troubleshoot problems that may arise. Your continued cooperation and patience during this time is appreciated.

Bellefontaine replat wrap up

We received quite a few calls this past fall about the notice of public hearing to replat a property in the 2300 block of Bellefontaine. Replatting is the process through which property is subdivide. The request submitted by the Bellefontaine property owner was to subdivide the 120 ft. wide lot into two ~ 60 ft. wide lots. The hearing was held before the City of Houston Planning Commission on Thursday, December 22, 2005, and the replat request was granted.

Old Braeswood consists of three separate sections with three different sets of deed restrictions. The deed restrictions governing this property, located in both Braeswood Extension and in Braeswood Addition, require that lots have a minimum width of 60 ft. For a map of Braeswood sections visit our website at www.oldbraeswood.com. After extensive research and resurveying it was concluded that each of the resulting lots were in excess of 60 ft. Future plans for the lots have not been determined as of press time.

Holcombe Square Project

The City of Houston Planning and Development Department, in partnership with the Main Street Coalition and the South Main Alliance, has secured federal funding to design a "pedestrian friendly" plaza in one of the busiest transit and pedestrian crossings in the Texas Medical Center area.

This "pedestrian friendly" plaza, known as Holcombe Square, would border Holcombe Boulevard from Main Street to Fannin Street, connecting the Wortham Fountain; the campuses of Texas Children's Hospital, The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, Texas Woman's University; and the office and hotel corridors on Travis Street, Main Street and Fannin Street north of Holcombe Boulevard.

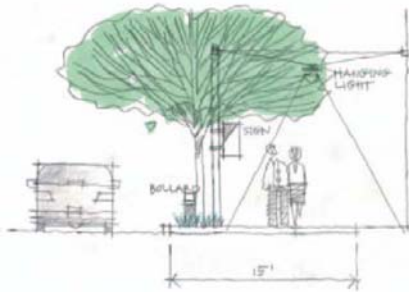
The goals of the project are to create a safer, more human-scaled space, an attractive pedestrian/transit friendly environment; establish a clear separation between pedestrian and automobile movements; improve access to transit; create an entrée into the Medical Center area of the Main Street Corridor; and strengthen the identity of the District through a vocabulary of design motifs, materials and colors for surrounding area streetscape that can be implemented within the Project area.

Public input sessions were held on August 11 and December 14, 2005 at the Hornberger Center Illustrations and streetscape design plans were presented by Keiji Asakura of Asakura Robinson Company.

Included below are diagrams and design elements from the "Kit of Parts for Holcombe" developed by the design team and which are reprinted here with the permission. These elements include striped and lighted pedestrian crossings, pedestrian lighting, landscaping, trees, increased pedestrian visibility bollards at pedestrian crossing. For additional information about the Holcombe Square Design Project, visit http://www.houstontx.gov/planning/planning_studies/holcombe_sq/hol_hme.htm. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Tom Cooney by phone or e-mail at 713.837.7763, or Thomas.Cooney@cityofhouston.net.



Count-Down Pedestrian signals, easy to find crossing buttons, and pedestrian lighting are being considered for this project.



Hanging lights over wide sidewalks provide optimal lighting and enhance pedestrian safety.



Trees and bollards provide a buffer between pedestrian and traffic.



Lighted crossing areas and permanent striping for crosswalks

Roberts Elementary School construction update

A construction and renovation project at Roberts Elementary was in full swing over the summer and is now complete. The project was funded as part of HISD's Bond Program. Its purpose is to update the beautiful 1936 school building and bring essential systems, such as electrical, plumbing, drainage, and climate control, up to current codes and standards. Best of all, the temporary buildings adjacent to the playground will be removed.



Old Braeswood Park Corporation Announces “Park Patrons” Group

Old Braeswood Park Corporation has announced the formation of the “Old Braeswood Park Patrons”, a group of about fifty area residents who will support the maintenance of Old Braeswood Park with pledges for multi-year donations.

“We have a continuing need for financial support”, said Bob Thompson, Park Corporation president. “Each year the park requires about \$4,000 to pay for water and grounds maintenance. Any repairs or improvements are extra. We expect the Park Patrons to defray most of these annual costs. Then we can avoid frequent solicitations.”

Old Braeswood Park Corporation was formed to raise funds to support the park. It is qualified as a charitable organization exempt from federal taxes under Section 501 C (3), IRC. Donations to the park corporation are ordinarily tax deductible for the donor.

A special mailing was sent to previous park donors this past December. If you did not receive this mailing but would like to join the Park Patron call 713-807-1787 to request a donor form.



Peyton Pivec (left) and brother Pryce (right) have never missed a Park Party.



*Lasting friendships are made at old Braeswood Park
Left to right Isabel Long, Olivia Cusack, Lydia Long*

Park volunteers needed

The Park Committee is looking for people to serve on the committee as volunteers to help organize and staff upcoming park events. Persons interested in volunteering on this committee are urged to call or e-mail Christine Robins at 713-669-0442 or ChristineRobins@hotmail.com. A meeting to discuss ideas, etc. will be scheduled within the next month.

Park Pavers to be installed this spring

The order for the park pavers has been placed. Thanks to all of those that generously purchased pavers. Your purchase helps fund the upkeep of the park. A brief reception is planned for all those who purchased the pavers once they are all installed.



-Park Pals Becky Pivec (left) and Chris Robins (right) set up for the Park Party

2006 Directory Underway—Sponsors needed!

The 2006 edition of the *Old Braeswood Directory* will be published in March and will be distributed to all members in April. We are actively seeking sponsors. If you own a business please consider utilizing the directory to promote your business and to support your neighborhood. Sponsorship rates are listed to the right of this article.

Please support our
newsletter and
directory sponsors!

Please return the enclosed membership form with your current contact information by March 1, 2006. Be sure to fill out the form completely and check the boxes on the right hand column to let us know what information should or should not be included in the directory.

Then, look for a directory confirmation letter in your mail in the next few weeks. This letter will include a proof of your directory listing. Please return any corrections to us immediately.

Volunteers are also needed to assist with calling neighbors to verify telephone numbers. Please contact Sally Miller at 713-669-5858 about sponsoring or volunteering.



Rates

\$30	Bus. card /qtr pg
\$60	Half pg. interior
\$120	Full pg. interior
\$250	Inside back
\$300	Inside front cover
\$500	Back cover

311 - You are part of the process

Often as we bounce across a pot hole or see a street sign leaning into our path or something else that is not right, we think "why don't they fix it". They, in this case, is often the City of Houston, but it may also be Harris County, TXDOT or another agency.

Those agencies count on each of us to help by pointing out those things that need to be fixed. There is no department with employees on the tax payer's payroll who drive around looking for problems and reporting them. That's our job as citizens.

*"Call 311 to report
potholes and other non
emergency issues that
need attention."*

You can make a difference in the Old Braeswood and the University Place area by reporting those things to the City of Houston's 311 phone line or send an email to 311@cityofhouston.net. The email is great as there is no waiting. Plus you'll get an acknowledgement and later a response giving you notice that the problem has been resolved or referred. If the issue belongs to another agency then it is forwarded to that agency. The system has improved dramatically since its inception a few years ago, with very short hold times if any.



Old Braeswood's own Three Stooges : (left to right) Cade Cusack, Daniel Helmuth, Sam Helmuth,

Welcome new neighbors!

Please help us extend a warm welcome to our neighbors:

Lee J. Canalito 7300 S. Main
Raphael E. Pollock 2500 Bluebonnet
Ryan and Allison McConnell 2500 Glen Haven
Dory & Carroll Shaddock 2300 Underwood
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Shaddock 2300 Bluebonnet

Please notify Welcome committee co-chairs Anne Huete and G.G. Hsieh of any new neighbors by calling 713-807-1787.



*Finn Dutt, One
of our newest
neighbors, en-
joys his first
park party.*

Brays Bayou Update by Susan Teich

This is my first contribution to the newsletter as your POA Board representative for flood control issues. Len and I moved to Glen Haven one year ago. I invite anyone with a question about flood control or drainage to email me (steich@houston.rr.com).

There are many citizen groups working on drainage, and several of particular importance to Old Braeswood. I attend their meetings, and welcome anyone interested to accompany me.

Project Brays provides six-month updates at breakfasts hosted by the Flood Control District. One aspect of the project is construction of four regional storm water detention basins, to contain runoff and allow controlled release into the bayous. The exciting news is that each basin has the potential to become a major park for recreation and nature conservancy. Federal recreational grants are available, up to 10% of the cost of the flood control project, but they must be matched by the locality. There will be many opportunities for residents of Old Braeswood to come forward as volunteers to raise funds for this purpose.

The Brays Bayou Association meets the third Monday of each month. It is a citizens' coalition for watershed management, with members (such as Old Braeswood POA) conducting their own activities. The Association itself acts primarily through letters, telephone calls, and interviews with government officials.

The Willow Water Hole Green Space Conservancy (WWGC) meets quarterly. One of the four detention basins in Project Brays is a 280-acre project, located near U.S. 90-A and South Post Oak and linked to Willow Water Hole, a tributary of Brays Bayou. This is the detention basin closest to Old Braeswood and the one where recreational development will do most to enhance our quality of life. WWGC formed to promote creation of a major park there. The park will be completed in 2010. It will be called Willow Waterhole Park and maintained by the Parks Dept.



Calendar

DISTRIC C—CIP MEETING Wednesday, March 8, 2006 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Rice School, 7550 Seuss Lane.

APRIL MEMBERS MEETING — Old Braeswood POA invites you to the April Member's Meeting to be held April 14, 2006 at 7 p.m. Location TBA.

RICE DESIGNS ALLIANCE SERIES: MAYOR LEAGUE

February 8: Joe Riley, Mayor of Charleston, South Carolina; Co-Founder - Mayors Inst. for City Design

February 15: Bill White, Mayor of Houston, Texas

February 22: John Norquist, Former Mayor of Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Congress for the New Urbanism

Lectures begin at 7 p.m. in the Brown Auditorium at the Museum of Fine Arts. Tickets (upon availability): \$7 RDA, MFAH members / \$5 Senior citizens 65 and older / \$3 Students with ID / \$10 Others. Call 713-348-4876 for reservations.

Block Captains & welcome volunteers needed

Co-Chairs Anne Huete and G.G. Hsieh invite you to become a block captain. Block Captains play an important role by helping to welcome our new neighbors to Old Braeswood and providing them with helpful information about our neighborhood. For more information call the office at 713-807-1787.

Membership corrections

Thank you to the following 2005 members who were left out of the September newsletter or who were listed out of alphabetical order. Please accept our apologies for the clerical error. Your support is sincerely appreciated!

Joel & Paula Lewis (Patron)
Maureen & Pat Swanson (Regular)
Leonard & Susan Teich (Regular)

Primary elections March 7, 2006 Volunteers needed

Mark your calendar for the March 7 primary elections! The polls will be open at 2337 Gramercy Blvd. for both parties.

Volunteers are needed to help with the Democratic primary. Interested volunteers should contact Joann Brodsky at 713-666-4772 or send email to ninne@aol.com. Ann Garnett, the Republican precinct chair, can be reached at 713-661-3697.

Holcombe stakeholders discuss beautification

Business stakeholders along Holcombe recently met with University Place Super Neighborhood leaders for the first of a series of discussions about beautification of Holcombe Blvd. from Main to Kirby. The meeting was attended by representatives from the TMC, the South Main Alliance, Old Braeswood, Bernstein Realty (owner of the CVS center at Greenbriar and Holcombe), and other property owners.

Landscape maintenance agreements for the Holcombe esplanades, reducing the number of and location of news stands, regular servicing of trash containers at METRO stops, graffiti removal and cracking down on panhandling were cited as priorities. It was agreed that the two most important issues to be addressed in the immediate future are: (1) signage control & street clutter; and, (2) tree-planting & landscaping around parking lots. *To jump start the beautification efforts, Old Braeswood will raise funds for tree planting on Holcombe this spring.* Please support this project with a generous contribution. See the *Tree Order Form* enclosed.

Thanks to Old Braeswood's Melissa Rubenstein Levin for serving as the catalyst for this meeting, and to University Place for coordinating the stakeholders. We hope to see beautiful things happening on Holcombe soon!

2006 Officers & Chairpersons

President	Bob Birenbaum
1 st Vice Pres	Paul Mansfield
2 nd Vice Pres.	Glenn Cunningham
3 rd Vice Pres.	Becky Pivec
At-Large #1	Dee Murray
At-Large #2	Lori Machiorlette
Treasurer	Suzanne Edwards
Secretary	Joyce Mehaffey
Past President	Agelia Pérez McGowar
Arch. Review	Marilyn Archer Colleen Elliott Howard Merrill
Enforcement	Bob Thompson
Block Cptns & Welcome	G.G. Hsieh Anne Huete
Directory	Sally Miller
Flood Control	Susan Teich
Newsletter	
Park	Christine Robins
Photographer	Becky Pivec
Security	Aliza Dutt
Traffic and Parking	Marjorie Perlmutter
Trees	Carroll Shaddock
Webmaster	Fritz Weiss
University Place	Kathy Lord
Office Manager	Evalyn Krudy



OLD BRAESWOOD PROPERTY
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