
Willow Meadows News

August 1998

September Meeting

The next meeting of the Willow Meadows Civic Club is Tuesday, September 1, 7:30 p.m. at the Willow Meadows Baptist Church. Please come and take part in what is going on in your neighborhood.

From The President

Dear Willow Meadows Residents:

You are now receiving the final deed restriction proposal and the opportunity to bring our neighborhood into the next century. It is vitally important that you carefully read these restrictions and we hope you vote in favor of these restrictions when your neighbor comes by for your signature in the next month. We have spent hundreds of hours of many people's time to try and draft a sensible, meaningful way of uniting the 18 sections which comprise Willow Meadows. Now is the time for you to vote.

We have GOOD NEWS about the Stella Link/South Main "Village Plaza Seniors" low-income housing project: once again, the Encinas Group, who was attempting—for the third time—to develop a low-income housing unit in the empty land bordering Stella Link, South Main, and Willowbend, has withdrawn their proposal. I expect them to try again. We shall see.

We are thinking towards the future, so please pay attention to a special piece of information inside about a possible "Web-site" for Willow Meadows. As a board, we will carefully examine cost and use issues to determine if it is a wise way to spend money.

I have been privileged to be a part of the Braes Bayou Little League (BBLL) this past season. I am happy to report that a large tract of land is being cleared on Stella Link, just north of West Belfort, for a large athletic field complex. For our neighborhood, this is the best possible use of this land. No slum housing, no additional shoddy apartments, no industry; just well-managed sports centers for youth.

One of the few benefits of the extreme dry weather is that mosquitoes have not been as much a problem as usual. We will keep a close eye on the spraying schedule. Enjoy the remainder of the summer. Please vote **YES** for the Amended Deed Restrictions.

Most sincerely,

Charles D. Rusciano

1998 Willow Meadows Civic Club Officers and Executive Board			
President:	Charles Rusciano (721-3136)	Security:	Mac Leichtman (723-4492)
Vice President	Chris Brouwer (723-9235)	Beautification:	position open
Treasurer:	Andrew Strong (723-6923)	Deed Restrictions:	Doug Koy (723-0067)
Secretary:	John Kirtley (728-3057)	Architecture:	Rob Chase (723-4878)

TREASURER'S REPORT

This report summarizes the income statement for the Willow Meadows Civic Club through the middle of July, relative to our full year budget for 1998. As you know, our primary source of revenue is your dues, so please submit your annual dues of \$150 as soon as possible to: Willow Meadows Civic Club, P.O. Box 35551, Houston, TX 77235.

Category/Description	Jan. 1-July 13, '98	1998 Budget
REVENUES		
Dues	\$ 77,470.00	\$81,000.00
Interest checking	0.00	0.00
Interest savings	2,478.77	4,000.00
Advertising	380.00	500.00
Other Income	0.00	0.00
Total	\$ 80,328.77	\$85,500.00
EXPENDITURES		
Bank charge	\$ 75.00	\$ 50.00
Donations	0.00	500.00
Miscellaneous	37.00	1,000.00
Mowing	2,624.96	4,400.00
Pest control	625.00	4,200.00
Postage	388.44	800.00
Printing	0.00	1,500.00
Security	36,639.64	62,803.44
Supplies	100.62	150.00
Legal Services	1,280.55	3,000.00
Total	\$ 41,771.21	\$78,353.44
SURPLUS	\$ 38,557.56	\$7,146.56

NEWS ARTICLES WELCOME

We will always welcome any ideas or news you may have for the Willow Meadows newsletter. We believe this newsletter should be used for communicating anything of interest to our neighborhood. Please contact Chris Brouwer if you want to contribute a news item.

THEY JUST WON'T QUIT!

Many of you are aware of the saga of the developers looking for any type of special financing to help build an apartment complex in the area of Stella Link, Willow Bend and South Main. Thanks to some alert neighbors and feedback from State and City officials, we had successfully defeated attempts at City, State and Harris County considerations for tax breaks, exemptions, etc. We had hoped this saga was over earlier this year, but once again the developer came up with a plan for an assisted living complex, again seeking special government considerations to make this project more viable. Our neighbors in Westwood were very concerned and enlisted support from us to stop the development. We appointed a committee at the last meeting, headed up by William Plant. We were made aware of an important meeting on June 13th, and Mr. Plant, Charles van Ravenswaay, and Emory Glover were representing our neighborhood, ready to speak, if necessary. This time, the developer withdrew his request on the day of the hearing. Let's hope they finally get the message that we don't want any such project built in our area that requires government tax breaks to make it economically attractive. If the project is such a good idea, it should be able to stand on its own feet. Thanks again to all concerned Willow Meadows neighbors who have helped fight this issue for the third time.

PLEASE PICK UP THOSE SIGNS!

Almost every weekend of the year, someone has a garage sale in our neighborhood. Please remember that more than two sales per household per year are a violation of Texas law and our deed restrictions. AND...please remember to pick up your signs after your sale. They are an eyesore! Meyer Park and Willow Meadows pay to have our esplanades mowed and trimmed, and then they are spoiled by a wet, windblown sign slowly decaying in the middle of the street. Neighbors, please don't be too shy to go pick up signs that are left near you. In addition, don't hesitate to remove postings from utility poles, as such notices are illegal. We don't want to stop anyone finding their lost dog, but after some time, we need to clean up those poles. You are doing us all a service and we thank you.

AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Willow Meadows got some much needed rain on the night of July 17, but we just missed a hard hit from Mother Nature. We did lose a few gorgeous trees in the neighborhood, but just to the east of us, along Stella Link from Braeswood to Loop 610, there was lots of damage, with numerous big trees destroyed, roofs damaged, fences blown down, and lots of other nuisance damage to signs, etc.. We understand nobody was seriously injured, but a new home under construction in the Linkwood area was completely destroyed.

In the immediate neighborhood, we are excited about the plans of the United Orthodox Synagogue, at South Braeswood and Greenwillow. They are about to undertake a major project to upgrade all the facilities, beginning this month. Most significant is an 11,000 ft² expansion to the south side of the current facilities. The new addition will include a social hall, and the synagogue will also be expanding the sanctuary. We understand that additional parking will be added south of the playground facilities.

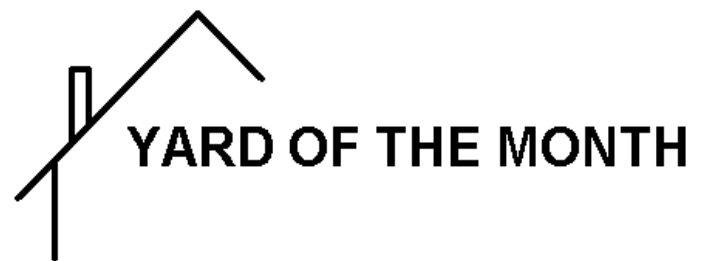
You may have noticed that the Meyer Park driving range is no more. In fact, most of the fill dirt had been removed as we went to press, bringing the site down to a level developing surface. In addition, the "hill" between the cinema and the apartments has also been leveled for future development. We still have no word from the Meyers regarding any firm development plans for this site.

While Wolfe Nurseries went out of business, we were pleased to see that Teas Nursery has taken over the Beechnut location. We should continue to find beautiful plants and trees to make our yards beautiful.

We were pleased to learn that the 75-acre tract of land being cleared on the east side of Stella Link, just north of West Bellfort, is a part of the efforts of the Stella Link Redevelopment Association. SLRA is developing two tracts of land for athletic fields: one between Mark Twain and Pershing schools; the other at Stella Link and W. Bellfort. These fields will be the home of West University Little League, West University Soccer, West University Softball, and Braes Bayou Little League (BBL). This \$7.5 million project should be nothing short of first class.

BBL is looking for corporate sponsorship and general donations for its obligations. Just as Red Elementary deserves our support, BBL is equally worthy. Contact them if you can offer financial assistance (726-9157).

The Stella Link Shopping Center and the shopping center at Stella Link and South Braeswood have now been updated. A Conn's center has moved into the old Cloth World, and we notice that the Bellaire Café is ready to open in the old Jack-in-the-Box location. Up on North Braeswood at Stella Link, additional construction is underway. The long abandoned site of an old bank and corner gas station is about to become a large gas station/convenience center, while across the street, we understand that Walgreens may soon have a large freestanding building, with a strip behind it comprising the Block Buster Video and the previously displaced restaurants. Obviously, developers continue to believe in our neighborhood.



We regret to inform you that with the loss of Wolfe's Nursery, we failed to find another business to donate gift certificates, and we did not award any Yards of the Month since March. **THE CIVIC CLUB IS SEEKING A VOLUNTEER TO ASSUME THE BEAUTIFICATION ROLE. PLEASE CALL CHARLES RUSCIANO IF YOU ARE INTERESTED.** We hope to rectify this situation in the next few months. We appreciate all of you who are working so hard to keep your yards beautiful in spite of the lack of rain and the excessive heat. As a tip to those of you whose yards are still alive, an application of pest control to thwart cinch bugs would be ideal at this time of year, as they thrive in this dry heat, and love to eat our lawns, usually starting from the curbs and hot driveways. Don't forget that mulching not only makes your beds look better, but it also helps retain moisture and keeps roots cooler.

GARBAGE REMINDERS

IMPORTANT REMINDER! The whole neighborhood has a new trash pick-up day. Everyone now has trash pick-up on **MONDAY**. It is important to keep in mind the various rules and regulations regarding garbage pick-up and recycling. This information is provided to you in hopes that you will adhere to city ordinances and help the neighborhood achieve exemplary conduct reflecting pride in our neighborhood.

Here are some of the most important rules and regulations:

1. Do not place garbage cans and bagged clippings and leaves on the curb until 6:00 p.m. the day before pick-up day. (Complaints about violations may be phoned in to the SW Division Office or the Community Outreach Inspector at 865-4177. Violators will be issued a first warning, then fines can be imposed from \$50 - \$2,000. It is not worth the risk.) **PLEASE ADHERE TO THE RULES.**
2. Yard clippings must be placed in separate bags. No other materials are to be placed in the bags--even paper is not allowed. The bags should not weigh more than 50 pounds, and the bags should be placed at least 3 feet from the garbage cans.
3. Heavy trash is picked up on the fourth (4th) Wednesday of each month. On weeks where there is a Monday holiday, the pick-up day will be moved to the Thursday after the scheduled Wednesday pick-up. **NOTE:** Concrete, bricks, sheetrock, or plaster are not to be including in "heavy trash" pick-up.
4. Used motor oil and used oil filters only may be placed in the recycling bin. Place oil in a sealed plastic container (plastic milk or water jugs) and included in the recycling bin. Used tires are also permitted to be placed with the recycling bin.
5. **DO NOT** place "hazardous waste" materials in the recycling bin or in your garbage can. "Hazardous waste" includes antifreeze, batteries, fuel oil,

paint, paint thinner, pesticides or household cleaners. (See the information below about the Westpark Consumer Recycling Center for how to dispose of these wastes.)

RECYCLING SCHEDULE

PLEASE NOTE! We have been advised that the recycling schedule may be changed in the next few months, but we don't have any details yet. Until further announcement, please use the following schedule for recycling:

August 18, September 1, 15 & 29, October 13 & 27, November 10 & 24.

Acceptable materials for curbside recycling include aluminum and tin cans, #1 and #2 plastics, glass bottles and jars, telephone books, newspapers, magazines and used motor oil.

Don't forget: **Heavy trash pick-up** is the **fourth** Wednesday of every month, which is not necessarily the last Wednesday, as some of you learned in July. It is a violation of City ordinance to put heavy trash out for pick-up earlier than the weekend preceding scheduled collection. The schedule for the coming months is:

August 26, September 23, October 28 and November 25.

NASA OPEN HOUSE

The Johnson Space Center will host its fourth annual open house on Saturday, August 29. This free event showcases the people, equipment and facilities at the heart of America's human space flight program. Open House is the only time that families can visit many facilities at the Space Center and Ellington Field not normally open to the public. This one day event runs from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and coincides with the Ballunar Liftoff Festival weekend held on the NASA grounds. For more information, call 281-244-5312.

DEED RESTRICTIONS

The Deed Restriction Modernization Project moves ahead! Along with the delivery of this newsletter, you should have received the final version of the amended Deed Restrictions for Willow Meadows. These are the results of two neighborhood surveys, as well as numerous civic club meetings on the various issues. Following all your input, a volunteer team spent hundreds of hours reviewing, compromising, and piecing together what we believe will be strong enough deed restrictions to take Willow Meadows into the next century. It is very important that you read the Deed Restrictions carefully, and during the month of September, volunteers will come to your door requesting your signature of approval of these amendments.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! If you have any time available to help knock on doors to get signatures for the amended Deed Restrictions, we would appreciate your help. Please call Chris Brouwer at 723-9235 for details. **SIGN EARLY:** You can sign your approval of the deed restrictions at the September Civic Club meeting. We will have volunteers there to help you out. Since we have already spent many hours in discussing these restrictions at previous meetings, we do not plan to prolong this September meeting with general discussions, but if you have any particular questions on the restrictions, our volunteers will address these for you individually.

What do these restrictions include? In brief, here are the main changes:

1. New home construction will be permitted up to 2 ½ stories. This was one of the original requests from many neighbors which started this revision process. We believe new construction may occur in coming years, as it has around us, and people wish to construct larger homes. We intentionally put some restrictions on side setbacks and ground coverage to avoid overcrowding of lots.
2. Dues will become mandatory. Nobody likes to be forced to do anything like this, but the majority of your neighbors have spoken that we should maintain our neighborhood in respect to security and upkeep, and that takes money. While 70% of us pay our dues regularly, we believe mandatory dues will more correctly spread the burden of these services. In spite of some protests, we still believe the benefits of the security and other aspects of these dues help increase our property values by

much more than the amount of the dues. Waivers will be granted for hardship, but we were advised that we could not selectively grant full exemptions without risking lawsuits, so we have to maintain the lien option to recover the funds at the time houses are sold. We have eliminated the foreclosure clauses which caused some earlier concern.

If you have any other questions regarding the deed restriction project, or if you have some time to help us in the final steps of this project, please feel free to call any of the Civic Club board members.

We must remind everyone that the original deed restrictions ARE STILL IN FORCE in Willow Meadows until such time that the amendments are approved by a majority. That means set back limitations, second story restrictions, and all other aspects of the original deed restrictions are still in force. Any previous violation does not set a precedent and indicate the Deed Restrictions are void. All plans which affect the outward appearance of the house MUST be reviewed by the Architectural Committee. While some people have taken their chances and proceeded without review, they risk to have the City later condemn their project and they can force it to be removed. Regarding one home which constructed an addition beyond their setback limitations, we understand the City of Houston Legal Department originally decided not to pursue the case because of errors the City had made at the beginning, but we are discussing our options with our lawyers to pursue this violation.

A Deed Restriction Complaint Form is included in this newsletter so that you can indicate any suspected infractions of deed restrictions. Please remember that the Civic Club is not searching the neighborhood looking for infractions, but if you report anything, we will investigate and take appropriate actions.

<p style="text-align: center;">1998 CIVIC CLUB MEETINGS SEPTEMBER 1 DECEMBER 1</p>

WILLOW MEADOWS on the INTERNET?

The Civic Club is evaluating the development of a Willow Meadows Web Page on the internet. Some

neighborhoods around Houston, including the Heights, have had great response to their own web page where residents can keep up to date with the latest neighborhood information. With our own web page, we could post all the latest news, including newsletters, deed restrictions, neighborhood security reports, e-mail addresses for officers and neighbors, as well as a forum for discussion of ideas for our neighborhood. The options are limitless. The costs associated with constructing and maintaining such a site would be partially offset by lower printing costs (less newsletters, etc.). Are you are interested in this web page? If yes, please send an e-mail to Andrew Strong at astrong@cg-law.com voicing your support. Our decision to go forward with this initiative depends on the responses received.

While on the subject of the internet, here are a few web sites of interest you may wish to explore:

- City of Houston:
<http://www.ci.houston.tx.us>
- Online Permitting System:
<http://houston.onlinepermits.com>
- Citizens Environmental Coalition:
<http://space.rice.edu/~cec>

CIVIC CLUB DUES

This is a reminder that Civic Club Dues are payable at the first of each year. We recently sent out reminder notices to those on record as not having paid. If you received this notice in error, please contact our Treasurer to clear up our records. We are slightly ahead of last year at this time, with more than 67% of all households paying their dues. How about the rest of you? You too benefit from the constable patrol, as well as the mosquito spraying, the esplanade maintenance, and this newsletter, as well as all the behind-the-scenes work by your volunteers. IF you haven't paid your dues yet, or if you misplaced your dues notice, please make your check for \$150 payable to Willow Meadows Civic Club, and mail it to P.O. Box 35551, Houston, TX 77235. Don't forget to indicate how many security stickers you would like. For your information, here are the percentages of dues paying members by street through mid-July. How is your street doing?

- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| Breakwood: 53% | O'Meara: 69% |
| Cheena: 77% | Osby: 68% |

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Cliffwood: 61% | Piermain: 73% |
| Firestone: 76% | Sarong: 70% |
| Greenwillow: 69% | Silverwood: 88% |
| Knickerbocker: 68% | Waynesboro: 53% |
| Lemac: 67% | Wigton: 60% |
| Lymbar: 90% | Willowgrove: 83% |
| McDermed: 60% | Willowisp: 40% |
| Meyerwood: 62% | Woodvalley: 57% |
| Nenana: 71% | |

ADVERTISING

We would like to remind you that the Willow Meadows newsletter will accept advertising to help defray the costs of printing and other civic club expenses. If you have a local business or provide a service useful to our neighbors, you may want to let us know about it. To encourage participation, we have reduced our prices, as indicated below. We generally go to print the first week of February, May, August and November.

- Half page: \$50 each edition
- Quarter page: \$25 each edition
- Eighth page: \$15 each edition

Please contact Chris Brouwer at 723-9235 if you are interested to place an advertisement.

SECURITY REPORT

Once again, we have been fortunate that crime has been relatively minor, in spite of it being the peak summer "trouble" months. We wish to once again express thanks to Precinct 7, and Sgt. Cerda for continued cooperation and responsive assistance with information. Here are the significant incidents during this reporting period:

- 1) May 2 – 10000 Block of Cliffwood. Stolen car reported to HPD and constables. No suspects or witnesses to this nighttime auto theft.
- 2) May 2 – 4300 block of Lemac. A burglar was arrested sleeping in complainants car after burglarizing several vehicles and houses in the area.
- 3) June 17 – 4300 block of Firestone. A neighbor disturbance was settled at the scene.
- 4) June 19 – 4300 block of Woodvalley. A neighbor disagreement was settled at the scene.

5) June 22 – 4300 block of Meyerwood. A neighbor disagreement was settled at the scene.

6) July 7 – Three motor vehicles were burglarized, with windows broken on the vehicles, at 4400 block of McDermed, 4300 block of Waynesboro and 4300 block of O’Meara. No suspects or witnesses to this early morning spree.

7) August 1 – 4300 block of Sarong. Graffiti on a garage was reported. No additional information as we went to press.

Please keep your eyes and ears open. When in doubt, call. It never hurts to have the Constables come out and check out suspicious persons.

USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

PRECINCT 7 CONSTABLES:	643-6602
EMERGENCY:	911
POISON CONTROL:	654-1701
MAYOR’S OFFICE:	247-1888
MARTHA WONG, DIST. C:	247-2004
ODOR HOTLINE:	783-4348
WATER/SEWER REPAIRS:	754-0600
NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTION:	525-2525
TRAFFIC LIGHT/SIGN REPAIRS:	865-4000

WILLOW MEADOWS DEED RESTRICTION COMPLAINT FORM

All deed restriction complaints are reviewed and appropriate steps taken for enforcement. Complainants are advised in writing of the Board’s actions on their complaints. Please mail in the form below to report suspected violations.

**WILLOW MEADOWS CIVIC CLUB
P.O. BOX 35551
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77235
DEED RESTRICTIONS COMPLAINT FORM**

NAME OF
COMPLAINANT _____ DATE _____

ADDRESS _____ TELEPHONE _____

NATURE OF COMPLAINT: (Please be specific - Give Names, Addresses, Dates, Details)

If legal action would be required, are you willing to be a complainant and appear in court as a witness if absolutely necessary? _____

WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD!

Almost two years ago, some of you suggested we should prepare a “welcome” package for new neighbors to introduce them to the neighborhood. Unfortunately, some local business people who indicated they might contribute some coupons or gift certificates to put in these packages didn’t come through, so the program stalled out. Well, better late than never, we are pleased to announce that we have just begun this program, with our first few welcome packets going out this month to new neighbors who have purchased homes in the Willow Meadows neighborhood in recent months. Our package includes a welcome letter, the latest newsletter and the latest neighborhood directory (updated every two years), as well as a gift certificate to Krogers on West Bellfort at South Post Oak. We plan to review the list of sold homes every 3 months and issue our welcome packages. You can help us, by letting us know if a house is sold by owner without use of a realtor, because we are currently limited to the public records of MLS for home sales information. Please call Chris Brouwer at 723-9235 if you know of such a home sale, or if you have any business coupons to include in these packages. Many thanks to our local Kroger manager, Bill Underwood, for his generosity towards this program!

HUGH RAFFERTY APPOINTED

We are pleased to announce the official appointment of Hugh Rafferty as our neighborhood representative to the Braes Bayou Association, following your vote at the June meeting. The primary focus of the Braes Bayou Association is to discuss means to alleviate flooding along the Braes Bayou watershed. Many of you know that Hugh has donated countless hours to the subject of flooding in our region and he has done a great deal of study on our region in order to keep current with events, ideas and projects proposed in our area that may affect our neighborhood flooding. Hugh will continue to be a great asset to our community as our representative.