

TAKE PART IN WHERE YOU LIVE!

Coming to our monthly meetings gives you an opportunity to find out what's going on and helps us to know your problems and concerns. Join us on the second Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at Candlelight Park, 1520 Candlelight Boulevard, at the intersection of Oak Forest and Candlelight. If you have not already paid your voluntary dues for 2005, please send your check for \$20 to: OFHA INC., P.O. Box 920561, Houston, TX 77292-0561.

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DO YOU WANT A TOLLWAY THROUGH OAK FOREST?

Thanks to Oak Forest residents and OFHA
volunteers, it may not happen...for now.

OAK FOREST HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

SPRING 2005

OAK FOREST IS DEED RESTRICTED

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

from Greg Ryden

Let me preface this article with the fact that it has been written pre March 29th Town Hall Meeting with the H-GAC. At that meeting we are hoping to have an affirmation from the Harris County Toll Road Authority (HCTRA) that there are no plans to construct a 4-lane toll road along the Burlington-Northern Santa Fe rail line. I base this on that we have been told by both State Rep Dwayne Bohac's office and District A Council Member Toni Lawrence's office that within the past few weeks that HCTRA has abandoned its plans for such a toll road along that corridor. It however does not change the fact that if at any time in the future (10-20 years out) that if HCTRA decides to construct that toll road, it needs neither the approval of the city council nor city residents to construct it. It is an issue that will continually need to be monitored.

In any regard, the OFHA and its members sincerely appreciate the help and patience of both State Rep. Dwayne Bohac and City Council Member Toni Lawrence and their staff in helping to address these issues and concerns. Neighborhood quality of life issues will always continue to be a heated and volatile topic and we appreciate that they understand that.

In the coming years, the transportation landscape of Houston will be changing. The Houston-Galveston Area Council has a plan to add thousands of lane miles to the Houston area.

Anyone that has ever driven the highways during rush-hour knows this will be a good thing. There is a clear indication to everyone on the road that more lanes are needed. The unfortunate circumstance in this scenario is that the plan does not only involve the addition of highway miles. Many of these miles are going to come right through our neighborhoods in the form of wider and longer local thoroughfares.

Oak Forest will be substantially affected by the H-GAC's proposal, not only by the addition of more roads and traffic, but also by the potential that eminent domain must be considered to widen some of the roads. Oak Forest residents could stand to lose several hundred homes from the neighborhood.

The H-GAC will implement these plans through the local governments with the revenue to construct the projects. In our case, those groups are the City of Houston and Harris County. The public will get revealed these projects in three year intervals through the H-GAC's TIP (Transportation Improvement Program). It is very similar to the City of Houston's CIP (Capital Improvement Plan)

Continued on page 3

VOLUNTEERS DRIVE OFHA

by Zack Derryberry

The OFHA is not your typical Homeowners Association. We are operated by Oak Forest residents who have volunteered to maintain and protect our neighborhood, not by a faceless management company that measures the height of your lawn on a weekly basis. The OFHA understands that the neighborhood is made up of many individuals, but at the same time we appreciate the importance and responsibility of living in a community such as ours.

Membership in the OFHA is only \$20 annually and is voluntary. Your membership dues are payable each January and memberships are effective January 1st through December 31st. Year to date, the OFHA has 471 paid memberships totaling \$10,541 in membership dues and donations. This is only a small fraction of the total households in Oak Forest. Take part in where you live. Your membership dues are vital to the Association's success and for the betterment of your neighborhood.

We encourage each of you to join the OFHA and become an active member. How else could \$20 go so far toward protecting and enhancing one of your most valuable assets? Please take the time and join the Oak Forest Homeowners Association today. Thanks for your support.

NOTOLLWAY.ORG - KNOW THE FACTS

In response to the proposed Northwest Corridor Tollway, Oak Forest residents have launched a website to help coordinate efforts and distribute information. The site has a breakdown of the facts, recent news articles, pertinent contacts and information on how you can help. With a few clicks of a button, notollway.org also allows you to let your area leaders know how you feel about a tollway through Oak Forest. Visit www.notollway.org now and let your voice be heard.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Oak Forest Homeowners Association meetings are held the second Monday of each month at the Candlelight Community Center located at 1520 Candlelight Boulevard at 7p.m.

Dates of upcoming meetings are:

- **April 11th** - Speaker - Citizens Transportation Coalition
- **May 9th** - Speaker - HPD Speaking About Recent Gang Activity
- **June 13th** - Speaker - State Senator John Whitmire

WE NEED YOUR HELP...LITERALLY!

by Andrea Warren

Residents actively volunteering is what makes Oak Forest a great neighborhood. There are many projects that we are not able to work on because we don't have enough volunteers. WE NEED YOU TO VOLUNTEER!

Our homeowner's association is not a faceless management company; it is residents like you managing the finances, writing the articles in each quarter's newsletter, maintaining deed restrictions, planning social events and more.

Together, we maintain a community you can be proud to be part of, and to which you can contribute your time and talents in any of the following areas:

- Architectural Committee
- Deed Restriction Committee
- Beautification Committee

(Monthly Beautification Saturdays with projects including esplanade improvements, tree plantings and graffiti clean-up)

- Oak Forest Book Club
- Citizens On Patrol
- Quarterly Newsletter
- Public Relations Committee
(Oak Forest Movie in the Park, quarterly Beautiful Home Award and other possible events)
- Yahoo Newsgroup and more.

Whether you own or rent your home, you can volunteer in any of these areas by contacting any member of a committee or our Board of Directors. You can send an email to andrea@ofha.org or call me at 713-385-7707 to talk about opportunities.

Because we are based solely on volunteers, we encourage you to spend time on an established project or contact OFHA's President to start one of your very own! Though we all have tremendous demands upon our time, Oak Forest is only as great as our volunteers.

YAHOO NEWSGROUP

The Oak Forest Yahoo newsgroup is the fastest, most efficient method to get information on activities in the Oak Forest community. The group provides notices to residents of upcoming events and provides a place to ask questions or raise issues of interest to the Oak Forest community. Membership is restricted to residents and property owners only, and the group is moderated.

To subscribe, send an email to OFHA-subscribe@yahoogroups.com or email us a hotline@ofha.org

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OAK FOREST'S BEAUTIFUL HOME WINNER FOR SPRING 2005

The winner of OFHA's Spring 2005 Beautiful Home Award is the home of Edgar Quaid. The home is located at 2130 Lamonte.

The Oak Forest Homeowners Association is committed to improving the beautification of our neighborhood. Because Oak Forest has long since surpassed its fiftieth birthday, many of its homes are in need of restoration and beautification. We are grateful for the efforts of our homeowners to enhance the aesthetics of their homes and yards, and in turn, enhancing the value of our collective neighborhood.

We invite our neighbors in Oak Forest to take a look at our Beautiful Home winner and get inspired to make their own house a Beautiful Home!

Please submit your nominations for next quarter's winner by email to Andrea Warren, Public Relations Committee Chairperson, at andrea@ofha.org or by phone 713-688-OFHA.

VIEW THE WINTER 2005 BEAUTIFUL HOME ONLINE
www.ofha.org/beautifulhome

BEAUTIFICATION SATURDAY

The last Saturday of the month is when residents from around Oak Forest meet up and take part in the upkeep of our community.

We need more volunteers. If your interested in improving the natural beauty of your neighborhood, then you should help. We recently planted grass and reorganized bushes on Ella Boulevard. We are also trying to have another tree planting before the end of Spring.

The only way we will be able to accomplish these goals is through the financial support of residents and volunteers with a "hands on" attitude. So support us by joining OFHA and volunteering for our next Beautiful Saturday. Again, it's the last Saturday of every month. To find out more, contact Wes Jones, Beautification Chair, at wes@ofha.org.

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President's Message / Continued from page 1

The only street affected in the upcoming TIP 2006-2008 is Ella. Ella will be widened from 2 to 4 lanes from Pinemont to West Little York and north of that to have Ella extended in separate pieces to eventually make the road continuous from 610 north to FM 2920. This work will occur like on all other streets, in fragmented intervals over many years that will eventually lead to the long commuter thoroughfare, similar in stature and traffic volume to Westheimer and Richmond.

One of the largest looming projects is that of the Harris County Toll Road Authority's Northwest Corridor Tollway. This project will bring 4 new lanes of elevated street traffic down from Tomball through the existing BNSF rail line and terminate at T.C. Jester and 610. Right now the city is as powerless as we are to stop a toll road coming through the city, unless the proposed path involved city lands and they don't. The toll road would not have any connection to city funds now or in the future. It would all be funded by HCTRA and their issuance of bonds and toll revenue. The only way that we could have a say in the construction of a toll road would be built or not is with state legislation being passed that would allow city residents to vote up or down a toll road or its funding through the city limits.

The Citizens' Transportation Coalition (CTC) has put together a draft document that outlines that we as Houston residents should approve all toll roads proposed to enter the City of Houston city limits. In order for this to happen, we will need the state legislature to pass a bill. In order for that to happen, we need to press or state reps and state senators about getting this legislation. It seems that the City itself was caught somewhat unaware about this bit of the H-GAC 2025 document, in that the Harris County Toll Road Authority (HCTRA) does not need the approval of the city to build a toll road through it. I encourage you to attend their meetings, see their website: In addition to this, HCTRA will be announcing in the coming months that it will have the financing for the new toll roads. We need to act quickly and decisively.

Apart from the passage of a bill from the state, or an amendment to vote on, pressure will need to be applied from us, the taxpayers and residents to the Harris County Commissioner's Court, specifically Judge Eckels and Precinct Four Commissioner Jerry Eversole.

This is an issue that the neighborhood cannot afford to watch from the sidelines. We need everyone's support and the support of your neighbors who may not even know about it yet. We need to let the H-GAC know how we feel and that we don't want to

compromise our neighborhood's integrity for the transportation needs of those outside of it. They'll come around in the face of the numbers.

I urge you to please contact the local and state representatives and ask them to take action against our neighborhood being split up by massive road projects. This action may seem very early, but if we exert our opposition to it now, in the earliest of stages, then we might be able to keep our neighborhood in one piece.

For more detailed information on the proposed Northwest Tollway, including additional maps and contact information, go to www.notollway.org. Click on the on the "Let Your Voice Be Heard" link to send an automatic email to those in charge of making transportation decisions for Harris County and the City of Houston.

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HOMEOWNERS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING CURBS AND GUTTERS?

by Mary Savage

Attention all homeowners! It has been called to our attention recently that there is a City Ordinance, 40/82-92, that you should be aware of. It makes homeowners responsible for all repairs to gutters, curbs and sidewalks in front of their house! The City chooses the contractor, because the repairs have to meet City standards, then bills the owner.

City Council passed this ordinance in 1968 and we do not know if it has ever been enforced, but we feel it should be deleted now by the current Council to release homeowners from any possible liability. The City can then make repairs as their budget permits. We have been told since the City's budget is tight there is probably nothing that can be done about this ordinance at the present time although admittedly it is "not right." You can make a copy of this ordinance at the Oak Forest library. City department heads were not aware of this ordinance until it was brought to their attention! After seeing the two tomes of City Ordinances at the library, that is understandable!

If you want to see this ordinance abolished, email Council Member Toni Lawrence at districta@cityofhouston.net or call her office at 713-247-2010.

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