

February 1, 2003

Volume 2, Issue 1

SLNA Newsletter

South Lamar Neighborhood Association www.southlamar.org

Next Meeting: February 20th 7:00 to 9:00 pm
Presentation of "Kinney Mues" Site Plan
Unity Church Youth Education Annex -- 2806 del Curto

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State of the Neighborhood by Kevin Lewis, SLNA President

We South Lamar neighbors are fortunate to live in a great place. Like much of the city around it, our neighborhood blends the stately with the modest, the relaxed with the driven, beauty with convenience. And like Austin at large, we face the challenge of many others' desire to join us here. The development report in this newsletter reinforces what we already sense: our area is growing and changing at a brisk pace. But with the challenge comes opportunity. In this time that is grave in so many ways, we have a chance to stand up and speak—with neighbors, with developers, with city officials—about how we'd like to see our area grow.

Development poses serious problems. Our property values will continue to increase, and with them taxes. (10% per year means doubling in 7 years.) Our streets will be more crowded, our need for sidewalks even greater. More concrete can mean more flooding and more pressure on our environment. Our area, so recently a semi-rural outskirts, is well on the way to becoming a semi-urban enclave.

As usual, change finds us startled and not quite ready. We know it's coming, but have to think about what we want and how to go about achieving it. Change is as predictable as the weather; arguing its validity is as effective as yelling at the sky. It will happen, but just how we deal with it, we can discuss. It's up to us to do something rather than just wait for it to rain.

As we've seen in other cases, developers have a lot of power and many rights. We have limited tools, but we're lucky to live in a place that allows for citizens' input. Negotiating development is often difficult, but often I'm struck with how much the staff and elected officials care about what we "just folks" want. The odds may be institutionally stacked against us, and we will disagree with some results, but just showing up can make a huge difference.

Our challenge is to find our collective voice and use it most effectively. We must learn our options and tactics, and use them diligently. We must deal openly and positively with developers, challenging them to be as open and positive with us in turn. We must decide what improvements in the area are most important: do we want parks, sidewalks, walkable, neighborhood-friendly retail? It's up to us to ask for it.

I appreciate the chance to contribute as your new SLNA president. We owe a great debt to Bryan King, our founding president, and all the 2002 Officers for their efforts. We're lucky to have another strong group of officers who will continue to give their time and effort to improving our area. Our home will only be as good as we make it. The SLNA will only be as effective as the members who constitute it daily. By our action or inaction we will create the community in which we will live tomorrow.

You're In Deep: Dues Due - OR - Time To Pay Your 2003 SLNA Membership Dues by Bill Stoughton, Treasurer

SLNA membership dues are payable at the beginning of each calendar year, so it's time to renew your membership for 2003 if you haven't already done so. If you've never joined SLNA, now's the time to do it, so you can enjoy the benefits of membership for the **entire** year. What are those benefits, you ask? You'll get:

- The opportunity to cast your vote at the SLNA membership meetings
- The warm fuzzy feeling of knowing you're helping our neighborhood
- The chance to win A BRAND NEW CAR!!! (OK, I'm kidding about this one)

The basic SLNA membership fee is \$10. Or you can be a "Big Bubba" or "Big Bubbette" by contributing \$20 or more -- membership privileges are the same, but your warm fuzzies will increase exponentially! You may also request a "Hardship Waiver" of the fee, meaning you still need to complete the Membership Form, but the Executive Committee can grant a fee waiver each year.

The Membership form is on the back of this newsletter, and details about SLNA membership are at www.southlamar.org. Or feel free to contact any Officer if you have questions – phone numbers are listed on the back page.

SLNA Development Update by Carol Gibbs & Bryan King

Ravey Street – “Kinney Mues” (former Mary Lee Foundation property) -- Architects **Nathan Munk** and **Sinclair Black** (Wellstone Partners) will present their plans to the SLNA at the February 20th meeting. They plan to work within the site’s current zoning (SF3) and build 8 Single-Family Attached units (sold as 16 separate residences). They intend to preserve all the major trees and make it a very neighborhood-friendly property. Conversations with Mr. Munk suggest that these guys just might be the kind of developer SLNA will enjoy working with, and Sinclair Black has a good reputation as a neighborhood preservationist. Both men seem to be in a totally different league from those we have been dealing with for the past two years. Please come to the meeting to see their plans, ask your questions, and hopefully be impressed with this new “neighbor”.

Morgan Lane at Banister - Auto Body Shop... At first look, the plans for this development seem to be as neighbor-friendly as we can hope for. It meets the current zoning for the property (which means we really don’t have an avenue for protest); they do not appear to be planning any vehicle access to Morgan Lane. There is some confusion about the zoning of the small strip of property that fronts Morgan, but it is in the buffer area and will probably not be an issue.

2414 Thornton Rd - Condo development – Since being denied the zoning variance at the November Board of Adjustments (BOA) hearing, Mr. Cutsinger has yet to present a new set of plans that would comply with the current zoning. He is now trying to get “administrative approval” of the variance that the BOA did not support.

Lamar Storage at Kinney Rd & S. Lamar – We have not seen any action by the developers since December, when several neighbors met with City Staff to express concerns about the site. Our two biggest concerns are (1) the developer hopes to meet the parking space requirement with the majority of their parking being “offsite” at a nearby business, and (2) their only street access is onto Kinney Road, which would bring moving vans into the neighborhood.

Russell's Bakery - Lamar at Bluebonnet – the Zoning & Platting (ZAP) Commission’s recommendation for the back half to be changed from “SF-3” to “GR with Conditional Overlays” goes to City Council on **Feb. 13th**. While this recommendation is more agreeable than the “CS” originally requested by the Owner, the Neighborhood is requesting an even more restrictive “LO” zoning. “LO” would still accommodate a neighborhood-friendly business such as Russell’s Bakery, but would help prevent over-development at a later date, which is a major concern because of the surrounding commercial property that is already up for sale.

Del Curto at Bluebonnet (the big "Commercial Property For Sale" sign) – this is the same realtor that is representing the trailer park owners. They are trying to amass a large block of property (several acres) for commercial development. We need to continue watching this one, and share any news anyone hears! We do not want a huge retail development and parking lots abutting del Curto!

Thornton Road at Oltorf – it appears that the four little houses that were on the market forever have finally been sold, and are being renovated. Could it be we’ve been spared the assault of another developer?

Learn Your LEGAL RIGHTS at 9th Annual FREE SEMINAR

Saturday, Feb. 22nd 8:30 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. UT Law School: San Jacinto & 26th (Dean Keeton) St.

Classes are available on a first-come, first-served basis, so REGISTER A.S.A.P.: www.travisbar.com or call 472-0279.

Schedule (Saturday, Feb. 22):

- 8:15 a.m. Doors Open
- 8:30 a.m. Orientation
- 9:00 to 10:15 a.m. First Class
- 10:30 to 11:45 a.m. Second Class
- Noon to 1:15 p.m. Third Class

Topics: (not all offered at every class time. See detailed schedule at www.travisbar.com or call 472-0279)

- Family Law: Taking Care of Yourself and Your Loved Ones – Divorce, Custody, Grandparent's Rights
- Consumer Law: Deceptive Sales and Identity Theft
- Small Business Law: What You Need to Know When You Are the Boss
- What All Employees & Employers Need to Know -- Hiring & Firing, Discrimination, Compensation
- How to Protect Your Art: Legal primer for Writers, Film Industry Professionals, Musicians
- Health Insurance: Doctors, Drugs and HMOs -- Fighting Denials of health coverage
- Elder Law: Legal Issues for Seniors & their Caretakers
- Mediation: Alternatives to a Court Battle -- Resolving legal disputes outside the courtroom
- Personal Bankruptcy: What Are Your Options?
- Wills and Estate Planning: Preparing for Your Future
- Landlord/Tenant: Your Rights and Responsibilities
- How to Get Government Records -- What information is public under Texas law, and how to get it
- Special Education: How to Advocate for Your Special Needs Child
- Homeowner's Insurance: What if My House Has Mold? -- Your rights in dealing with your insurer

Tours of the UT Law Library – Noon and 1:30; Learn how to use the UT Law Library for legal research. Tour sizes limited. Available on a first-come, first-served basis.

BARK ! BARK !! BARK !!! Ordinance"

by Carol Gibbs, former dog owner and unwitting offender of the "Noisy Dogs

Some canine behavior problems can have far-reaching consequences, affecting more than just the dog's owner. Incessant barking (more than the occasional squirrel-induced barking) can challenge the sanity of neighbors who work from home, have a newborn baby, or simply want a good night's sleep. Besides basic boredom, loneliness, and other behavioral issues, dogs can be driven to barking by inhumane living conditions.

If you want to better understand why a dog barks and things to try, go to www.ddfl.org/behavior/barkingdog.htm. This site discusses causes such as Social Isolation, Frustration, Attention-Seeking, Territorial/Protective Behavior, Fears & Phobias, and Separation Anxiety, as well as Bark Collars.

The City's "Noisy Dogs Ordinance" (Austin Code Ordinance 3-3-6) states "It shall be unlawful for any person to keep or harbor any dog which makes frequent or long, continued noise which is disturbing to persons in the neighborhood who have **normal nervous sensibilities**."

To the Owners of an Outdoor Dog:

- If a neighbor has ever mentioned that your dog barks a lot, realize that he/she is probably not fabricating the disturbance. Realize they have probably been putting up with it for some time, since it often takes a while to work up the nerve to "complain".
- Ask neighbors if they've noticed a pattern: Does your dog bark only at night or while you're at work? Only on weekends or Trash Day? If it is "always" barking, your best resource may be an anti-barking collar that emits a mild "shock" each time it barks – before too long, it will quit barking for "no reason", and save it for the right reasons, like when someone is breaking into your house!

To the Neighbors of a Barking Dog:

- Give the dog's owner the benefit of the doubt: if you haven't told them, they may have no idea their dog is creating such a nuisance, since many dogs bark **because** the owner is not around. Talk to the owner in person, but only after you have cooled off. If other neighbors are also bothered, encourage them to also talk to the owner.
- If your attempts to resolve your concerns with the owner fail, you can call APD's Non-Emergency **311** OR file a formal "Barking Dog Complaint": go to <http://www.southlamar.org/resources.htm> under **Other Documents**, print the Complaint Form and follow the directions for submitting it to Municipal Court.

Additionally, the City Council recently passed a "**Restraint Requirements for Dogs on Private Property**" Ordinance:

If a dog is tied up for more than **8 hours** in any 24-hour period, the chain or tether **must**: have swivels at both ends, be at least 10 feet long & weigh no more than **1/18th** (approx. 5%) of the dog's weight (a 5-lb chain for a 100-lb dog); attach to a properly fitting collar or harness, not tied directly around the dog's neck; attach to a **pulley/trolley-mounted cable** less than 7 ft above the ground (i.e., a clothesline, not a tree); and allow the dog access to shelter and water at all times, without getting tangled with other objects.

Call 311 to report a dog being restrained in an inhumane manner. Animal Control will send an officer to the home. This ordinance will soon be viewable at <http://www.southlamar.org/resources.htm> under **Volume I and Volume II, Code of Ordinances**.

KUNG FU ACADEMY Ad 3 ½"w X 2"h

CHANGOS Ad 3.5w X 4.5h

OFFICE DEPOT Ad 4h X 5w

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SLNA SOCIAL HOUR EVERY FRIDAY . . . JOIN US !

We start gathering about 6:00pm and usually stay till 7:30 or 8:00. We've been known to gather at Maria's Taco Xpress, Chango's, Artz Ribhouse, La Feria, and other restaurants in the greater 78704 'hood. Each week the location is posted at www.southlamar.org. If you don't have web access, just call an Officer (listed to the right). We always know by Thursday where we'll be gathering on Friday.

Membership in the Association shall be open to all residents or residential property owners within these boundaries:

North - Oltorf;
South - Ben White;
East - Union Pacific Railroad;
West - S. Lamar / Manchaca;

Membership in the Association shall be issued on the basis of residency and payment of annual dues. Persons meeting the above criteria but who are unable to pay membership dues may request a reduction in dues or a waiver. The privilege of introducing motions and voting shall be limited to those who have joined the Association at least ten days prior to any regularly scheduled or special called meeting. Complete bylaws are available at www.southlamar.org and will be available at regular meetings.

South Lamar Neighborhood Association

Member Information: Current Member _____ New Member _____

Please complete the following information. Couples, please use both first names.

NAME(S): _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

AREA CODE & PHONE NUMBER: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

If you do not live in the SLNA, please note the address of the property you own in the SLNA:

Dues \$10 per year per household

Or be a "Big Bubba/Big Bubbette": \$20 (or more) per year

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

☐ Request hardship waiver of Membership Fee

Make checks payable to South Lamar Neighborhood Association

Mail to Bill Stoughton, 3200 South Oak, Austin, TX 78704

Check out the SLNA Website at www.southlamar.org