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Dear Neighbors:

As we begin a new year, our membership committee and Board members are busy contacting neighbors to join or renew their membership in the West Lane Place Civic Association. The term is January through December each year and the cost of a yearly membership is nominal. Though small, your dues are important. Your membership supports the efforts of the Board of Directors who will donate their time again this year, working to improve our neighborhood.

I believe knowing your neighbors is important. Besides the personal enrichment you enjoy from knowing the people who live near you, it is good to be able to contact them in case of an emergency or security issue. I encourage everyone to know your immediate neighbors and know them well enough to be able to contact them when you need to.

West Lane Place is beautiful because we all have pride in our homes. We maintain our gardens; we keep our houses in good condition; we respect the neighborhood and refrain from disfiguring it with junk and clutter. Being part of the civic association is an extension of that pride and respect.

Besides publishing and distributing this newsletter, the WLPCA urges local officials to provide services that benefit our neighborhood. We organize activities that provide opportunities for neighbors to know one another. We improve our infrastructure in small ways and press City and County officials to make improvements in large ways. We increase security here through Crime Watch, (**volunteers needed!**) alerts, and communications with HPD. We keep you in touch with each other through the WLPCA Directory.

In this issue, you will find an application for 2023 membership in the West Lane Place Civic Association. Please take a minute right now to join if you haven't yet, renew if you already joined, and send your check today so we can continue to make West Lane Place one of the best places to live in Houston.

I wish you a safe and prosperous new year,

Fisher Trigg,
 President of WLPCA

Inside this issue:

West Lane Place Construction Requirements
by Pat Holmes, page 2

My Tree Hangs Over My Neighbor's Yard. What Should I do? *by Fisher Trigg, page 2*

Flock Cameras, *by Gilda Bayegan, page 4*

Recycling Schedule for WLP, *page 4*

Announcements, *page 4*

This newsletter is published and delivered to you
 by the West Lane Place Civic Association

The views and opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s) of each article, and not necessarily those of the WLPCA.

Please contact Phyllis Maddox concerning any problems you may experience receiving your newsletter.

West Lane Place Construction

Requirements *by Pat Holmes, Mid Lane*

In order to avoid possible delays and unnecessary expense, residents should comply with applicable neighborhood and City of Houston requirements before commencing a construction or remodeling project.

West Lane Place was developed in three phases, each of which has its separate and distinct deed restrictions. They are: **West Lane Place** (between Westheimer and W. Alabama); 77 of the 90 original lots in **West Lane Annex** (between W. Alabama and Bash) and **West Lane Place Section III** (between the northern entrance to Bash and Richmond excluding the lots on Richmond itself.) The deed restrictions that apply to your property should have been delivered to you by the title company when you purchased your house. They also are posted on the website, WLPCA.org.

In addition to the deed restrictions in each of the three subdivision, many gated or developed communities have their own supplemental deed restrictions. Residents should have received copies from the title company of those restrictions, too.

Each of the three subdivisions of West Lane Place has a deed restriction enforcement committee. **A resident planning to build on or make structural, electrical or mechanical improvements to his property must submit plans to the respective deed restriction enforcement committee prior to commencing construction in order to receive their required approval.** For current information as to who is the head of the committee with respect to your property, please consult our website, WLPCA.org.

The City of Houston also has requirements for approval of plans for construction or remodeling of real property within the City. **Plans must be submitted for approval prior to commencement of work in order to obtain applicable permits.** The City of Houston Permitting Center is located at 1002 Washington Avenue (**www.houstonpermittingcenter.org**) and can be reached at **832-394-9000** for information as to their requirements.

Approval of plans by the applicable deed restriction enforcement committee and all required City permits, as well as any required waivers from neighbors with legal rights who would be infringed upon, must be obtained prior to commencement of

construction. Failure to obtain these required approvals can be costly and result in the demolition of any structures erected without approval.

None of the information in this article is new. In order to protect the property values of our beautiful neighborhood, it is in the common interest for all of us to be aware of the restrictions and abide by the rules.

My Tree Hangs Over My Neighbor's Yard **What Should I do?** *by Fisher Trigg, Bash Place*

As a homeowner, are you responsible for damage caused by a tree on your property that falls on your neighbor's home or other property? The answer is usually No with exceptions.

Most tree and branch falls are weather related and, therefore, Acts of God in which case the injured property owner should file a claim with his insurer for the damage. However, **if it can be argued that the tree's owner was negligent and failed to properly maintain his tree by removing its dead limbs, then the damaged party or his insurer may seek reimbursement from the tree owner.**

Keeping this exception in mind, **homeowners should check their trees regularly and have them inspected by a professional at the first sign of disease or other health issues.** Whether a tree is causing damage or not, if its branches extend beyond your property line, **your neighbor has the right to trim your tree up to the property line.** Additionally, many cases make it clear that a **property owner's interest in trees is subservient to a public utility's easement right to trim and remove trees** that interfere with the necessary and reasonable operation of the utility.

A "boundary tree" is one located on the common property line of adjoining property owners. Both parties have an interest in that tree and are "tenants in common." Neither party may remove the tree without the consent of the other, nor cut away the portions that extend onto his property if cutting would result in harm to the boundary tree.

I offer this basic information as a general guide, not as legal advice. Do not rely on my interpretation of the law. If adjoining property owners are unable to agree about a tree, or if a tree poses risks and your rights or obligations are an issue, it is best to seek the advice of an attorney.

Flock Cameras by Gilda Bayegan, Mid Lane

Our District G Councilwoman, **Mary Nan Huffman**, informed us last spring that the City of Houston purchased **Flock cameras capable of reading license plate numbers, identifying suspicious vehicles, and alerting nearby law enforcement of the location of those vehicles.** The program has been implemented with startling results.

The City awarded District G fifty cameras, the maximum number given to any district. **With the additional private participation of HOAs and businesses in District G, our district is reported to have more saturation of these cameras than any other district in Houston.** Since installation of the Flock cameras, **four people wanted for murder were apprehended in District G** (the murders were committed elsewhere.)

Mary Nan Huffman hoped to recommend installing a camera at the intersection of Westheimer and Mid Lane. When the program was implemented, however, **placement of the cameras was determined not by our councilwoman but by HPD based on their study of the loci of highest traffic and criminal activity.** Final locations of the cameras are not available to the public in order to prevent criminals from avoiding or destroying them.

As of printing, there was no Flock camera at the Westheimer intersection, but we are asking HPD to reconsider this intersection as a potential location. Ideally, we would have cameras placed at all three entrances to West Lane Place: Westheimer and Mid Lane, West Alabama and Mid Lane, and Richmond and Mid Lane. If so, we could keep a record of every vehicle that entered our neighborhood, as well as a direct alert to HPD of each identified suspicious vehicle that came here. The most we can hope to get from the City is one camera at Westheimer, if we can persuade HPD to put it there. We would have to pay for the two extra cameras at the very least.

In the past, our Security Committee investigated various private programs to improve security in West Lane Place. **Private security patrol** such as the SEAL team that patrols Afton Oaks would cost tens of thousands of dollars per year and was impossible to implement in WLP due to the diverse structure of our neighborhood. We could hire off duty **constables or sheriffs** to patrol here, but that program would not provide around the clock protection and also would cost tens of thousands per

year. They found that **if we purchased and installed a monitored camera system on our own, the cost for that equipment and service would be prohibitively expensive,** also estimated to cost tens of thousands per year.

Because all these systems were impossibly expensive, the WLPCA gave up back then. The Flock program, however, is offered through the City of Houston at a greatly reduced cost. Each monitored camera would cost us \$2,500 per year. If the City puts a camera at Westheimer, our cost for two other cameras would be \$5,000 per year. If not, our cost for all three cameras would be \$7,500 per year, or approximately \$25 per year per household.

The WLPCA does not collect enough dues to undertake this expense, so it will be up to WLP residents if we are to have it. Please think about how much you would be willing to contribute to increase our security so that when we revisit the plan again, you will have investigated on your own and decided whether you would be willing to support our participation.

Here's the email I received from Mary Nan Huffman on January 4:

"Gilda,

The 50 Flock Automatic License Plate Reader (ALPR) cameras were installed at locations selected by the Houston Police Department's crime analysts across our district. To be fair to all the constituents in the district and to be most effective in fighting crime- HPD strategically selected the locations based on a number of criteria including traffic volume and crime trends. According to HPD, this is the largest deployment of this technology in the country, and it's already yielding positive results. I received a call from an HPD Sergeant who said that four murders have already been solved because of the cameras in District G and a ring of violent aggravated robbers were apprehended last week! I told him to keep us updated with some of the stories so we can let people know.

HPD also stressed the importance of not publicly releasing the locations of the cameras because we don't want bad guys to intentionally avoid the cameras. We have more cameras in District G than any other location in the City of Houston. ... Includ[ing] all the private businesses and HOAs that have installed cameras too, [w]e are the most saturated District of Flock Cameras in the City of Houston."

Recycling, Heavy Trash, and Tree & Limb Pick-up Schedule for WLP

“Junk Waste” is defined as “items such as furniture, appliances, and other bulky material.”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

JANUARY

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24		26	27	28
29	30	31				

FEBRUARY


Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	9	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	J	23	24	25
26	27	28				

MARCH

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	9	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21		23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

APRIL

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	J	27	28	29
30						

 = Tree waste; **J** = Junk waste pick up

Weekly household trash pick up on Mondays. NOTE: Recycling is every other Monday, on highlighted days in boxes. Please have your bins out on the curb by 7 am and in by 10 pm.

“Tree Waste” is defined as “clean wood waste such as tree limbs, branches, and stumps (lumber, furniture, and treated wood will NOT be accepted.)”

Download the HTX Collects App

Never miss a trash or recycle collection day again! Download the new Houston Solid Waste service reminder app, HTX Collects from the iOS App and/or Google Play store, or directly from the City’s website at:

<https://houstontx.gov/solidwaste/htxcollects.html>

Use the app to receive service day reminders and notices if your collection service may be delayed. You can choose to receive alerts via mobile notifications, email, or phone call. You can even add your collection days to your personal iCal, Google or outlook calendar.

New Sidewalk on Richmond Ave.

Did you notice the work on the south side of Richmond that’s been hindering traffic lately? When the dust clears, we will have a new sidewalk leading to the East-bound bus stop in that section. This long overdue maintenance is the result of constant requests and reminders by our neighbor on Mid Lane, **Brian Teichman**, a former WLPCA director. For the last three years, Brian has been after the City of Houston to bring our sidewalks and street crossings up to usable standards, and this sidewalk is one of the physical results of his lengthy commitment to that effort. **Thank you, Brian!**

Hydrate our Officers

We all know crime is rampant and all around us. Our Houston Police officers are the bulwark between us and those who would cause us harm. We learned recently that the City of Houston does not provide bottles of water to our officers while they are on patrol, even during the hottest weather.

Former WLP resident and our HPD liaison, Mike Weingart, has asked us to consider donating water to our officers, and he sent us a form to do so. You can find the donation form on our website, www.WLPCA.org. at this link:

https://wlpca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/WLPCA_HYDRATE_OUR_OFFICERS_form.docx

A REMINDER: To increase police presence in West Lane Place, please REPORT EVERY INCIDENT to HPD no matter how small! The more incidents we report, the more HPD assigns patrols here.

ISO Crime Watch Volunteers. Our Crime Watch program is still severely shorthanded, and we continue to search for volunteers. This program is designed to **reduce crime through awareness**. It is **not** a program in which volunteers confront any suspicious person.

Contact Security Chair, Mohammad Bayegan, mohawk@msn.com, for information.