



Greater Mission Bend Area Council On-Line Newsletter

Providing a Voice for the Citizens of Greater Mission Bend

GREATER MISSION BEND AREA COUNCIL UP-DATE

December 2009



Harris County Judge Ed Emmett, Bob Leitner (V.P. GMBAC), Fort Bend County Judge Robert Hebert

Comments from the President

By Mike Martin - President

The year 2009 will stand as an historically significant year in the life of our community. As I pause to reflect on the accomplishments of the past year, I find one thought echoing over and over in my mind, "Did we really do it?" Did we really succeed where others before us have failed? Did we finally manage to succeed where other equally able people, who worked as hard as we worked, failed to succeed? These thoughts just keep bouncing around in my head, over and over.

And each time I ask myself some variant of this question, I get the same answer. Yes! Yes! And Yes! We did succeed. We did manage to accomplish what has been attempted on several occasions over the past 30 years. Yes! We did it. Then I hear the questions one more time. "Did we..."

I realize that many reading this newsletter will not appreciate the

(Continued next Col.)

magnitude of this accomplishment. Some will surely not even know what this guy is babbling about. So let me take a minute to bring everyone up to speed and, hopefully, help you appreciate what "we" accomplished this year.

To begin with, like some of you, I am a long-time resident of the

Mission Bend-Clayton neighborhood. My wife and I moved here in 1978, and have been here ever

since. Like many of you, we have noticed many changes occurring in this area over the past 30 years. Sadly, many of these changes are not for the better. All neighborhoods seem to decline in many ways as they grow older, and Mission Bend and Clayton are certainly not exceptions. I won't devote too much time detailing those changes. Just drive around the area and you will see them for yourself.

The one issue that seems to grab everyone's attention is crime. As neighborhoods grow older, they are at risk for having an increased crime rate and I am afraid that our area is not an exception. Many of the middle-class families, who originally settled this area, have left.

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Meet the Sheriff's

Adrian Garcia - Harris Co.

&

Milton Wright - Fort Bend

January 16, 2010

Mission Bend

United Methodist Church

3710 HWY 6 South

10:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

GMBAC Board Members

Donna Kinerd

Clayton, Sec. 1, 2

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Chuck Machauer

Clayton Woods

*

Veronica Rogers

Great Oaks South

*

Michelle Gabel

Keegan's Ridge

*

Wayne Thompson

Kingsbridge Com. Assoc.

*

Kingsbridge Village

Jodie James

*

Bob Leitner

Mission Bend Civic

*

Mike Martin

Mission Bend HOA

*

Joyce Nible

Mission Bend South

*

Kevin Jackson

Parkside @ Clayton Park

*

Dianne Williams

Wingate HOA

*

At Large Members

Winetta Billings

Terry Blair

Bert Garner

The Greater Mission Bend Area Boundaries:



Newsletter Ideas Welcomed!

Please email

pictures & articles to:

GMBACouncil@SBCGlobal.Net

This will be a monthly newsletter filled with information that relates to the Greater Mission Bend area as well as "News You Can Use!"

GMBAC Contact Information

Email

To receive Newsletters & Up-Dates, please send us your email address to:

GMBACouncil@SBCGlobal.Net

Mailing Address

P.O. Box 720692

Houston, Texas 77272

Join the LinkedIn Group

<http://www.linkedin.com/>

Join the Facebook Group

<http://www.facebook.com/>

Fax Number

713-634-2861

Website & Blog

Coming Soon!



Happy Holiday's

From The

Greater Mission Bend

Area Council

(Continued from Pg. 1, Col 2)

We all know the story: "Gone to Katy." Many of the single-family homes in our area are now, practically speaking, multifamily dwellings. Just count the cars parked in the driveway and on the curb in front of so many homes. Many homes that were privately owned, are now rental property. Some of these property owners are responsible people who work to monitor their renters and to maintain their properties. Sadly, many do not make this effort, and we all suffer.

Commercial interests are moving into our neighborhood, which bring blight to our area and we are helpless to stop or to control them. And the list goes on. Maybe the thought of urban blight is something you would rather not consider. Some of our neighbors have already considered these challenges and have opted to sell their homes and move to other, newer neighborhoods. However, many were shocked to find that relocation did not help them escape this problem. When they put their homes on the market, they found that the value they had assumed for their home was in fact not realistic. One friend, who decided to move, finally sold his home for \$30,000 less than the appraised value on which he had been paying taxes. I call that "the high cost of education."

I share this information as background to tell you that many in this area made a decision to do something besides complain. We banded together and we organized. We organized the homeowners associations, in the Mission Bend and Clayton area. We formed a council of 13 homeowners associations, which collectively represent around 25,000 people. We called this organization the Greater Mission Bend Area Council. Our efforts drew media attention and we were featured in several stories in the Houston Chronicle. And Channel 13 took notice of our work and did a special, which shared our story with the entire city.

And public officials took notice of our efforts. Recently we had the county judges from both Harris County and Fort Bend County come and speak to our members. Ed Emmett and Bob Hebert were impressed enough with our efforts to take time from their busy schedules and come and sit down and talk with us. Imagine having these two county judges in the same room at the same time, listening to our concerns and offering their advice to us. Priceless, as the commercial says. But we didn't stop there. State Senator Joan Huffman also came and met with us. In January, we plan to have the sheriffs from both counties meet with us. Stay tuned. We'll offer that as a public meeting and encourage all our

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citizens to attend.

We are a fledgling organization and we still have a long way to go to meet any of the challenges which our community faces. But we are off to a good start. We have strong support in the community for our work. The coming year will be very important for our efforts as we begin to develop an action plan to confront the problems of our aging community. Stay tuned. As they say, the best is yet to come.

Greater Mission Bend Area

Real Estate Market Report

By Donna Kinerd - Broker

With a great deal of fine tuning of the search criteria in MLS I was able to determine the sales and leasing activity for the Greater Mission Bend Area. Below is the activity for October of 2009 as it compares to the same period in 2008.

- 51 homes sold which was 8 more than in October of 2008.
- 16 of the 51 sold were foreclosures, 6 fewer F/C than in October of 2008.
- The median sales price for a non-foreclosure was \$56 per SF compared to \$62 per SF in 2008 but were on average 6 years older.
- In October 2009, the days on the market was 86 compared to 115 for the same period in 2008.

As of the end of November, 2009, there are 195 active sales listings, 10 of which are foreclosures.

Rental Activity

- 27 homes leased in the month of October, which compares to the activity at this time a year ago. The rental rate remains at \$0.61 per square foot. As of the end of November, there were 54 active lease listings.

Houston Area Sales Activity vs. GMBA

The median price for homes sold in the greater Houston area in October 2009 was \$94 per SF compared to the \$56 per SF for the GMBA.

In October 2009, the days on the market for the Greater Houston area was 78 compared to 86 for the GMBA.

For full market reports as well as property listings and other information relating to the Houston area real estate market, go to <http://www.har.com/>

Elected Officials Representing Greater Mission Bend

Ft. Bend Co. Commissioner Andy Meyers,
Precinct 3 (281/494-1199)

<http://www.andymeyers.com/>

Harris Co. Commissioner Steve Radack,
Precinct 3 (713/755-6306)

<http://www.co.harris.tx.us/Pct3/>

**Fort Bend County Judge
Robert Hebert**
(281/341-8608)

<http://www.co.fort-bend.tx.us/>

**Harris County Judge
Ed Emmett**
(713/755-4000)

<http://www.judgeemmett.org/>

**State Senator, Dist. 17
Joan Huffman**
(713/662-3821)

<http://www.senate.state.tx.us/>

**State Senator, Dist. 18
Glenn Hegar**
(281/391-8883)

<http://www.senate.state.tx.us/>

**State Rep. Dist. 28
John Zerwas**
(512/463-0657)

<http://www.johnzerwas.com/>

**State Rep. Dist. 149
Hubert Vo**
(281/988-0212)

<http://www.hubertvo.com/>

Texas Legislature Online
<http://www.legis.state.tx.us/>

State and Local Government

State of Texas

<http://www.texasonline.com/portal/tol>

Harris County Government
<http://www.co.harris.tx.us/>

Fort Bend County Government
<http://www.co.fort-bend.tx.us/>

Making Ends Meet

Free Credit Reports

The Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) requires each of the nationwide consumer reporting companies " Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion " to provide you with a free copy of your credit report, at your request, once every 12 months. To order, visit <https://www.annualcreditreport.com/cra/index.jsp>

Or call 1-877-322-8228. You may order your reports at the same time, or stagger them.

Area Job Source Hot Line

713-533-9675

Can't Afford to Eat Out!!

Quick & Easy Recipes

<http://www.foodnetwork.com/quick-and-easy/index.html>

Share your favorite Quick & Easy Recipes

Sustainable Living's Mission

Provide education and resources to those living in the Greater Houston area with limited or no knowledge about the environment and sustainable living. Some of our focuses include recycling, alternative transportation, organic/local foods and childhood education. http://sustainliving.org/drop_and_swap.html

Make a 30-Second Video for FREE!!

<http://animoto.com/>



Candle Stick Plant

Collect Seeds and Save \$\$\$

By Donna Kinerd:

Many plants produce seeds in the Fall. Some plants produce seeds after flowering at other times of the year.

Next spring, you may want to purchase bedding plants for front yard flower beds because it is an instant fix.

But, a pot of flowers grown from seeds collected from this year's flowers will be a nice addition to the back yard or even a nice gift for someone.

The Candle Stick Plant, pictured above, bloomed most of the summer and has now produced lots of seed pods.

Candle Stick Plants and many other small-to-medium sized trees/plants grow very fast. For additional information on this plant do an on-line search.

Pride of Barbados, Orchid Trees, Confederate Rose Trees and numerous other fast-growing seed producing trees/plants grow in our area.

There are many internet sites that give instructions on collecting and storing seeds; but, a general rule of thumb is to let the flowers or seed pods dry on the plant. You do need to watch them daily when they start drying because if you wait too long, the seeds will fall off or blow away.

There are several on-line seed/plant trading sites. I belong to one and have traded seeds from as far away as England. It is fun and a great way to save money on seeds and plants which, we all know, can be very expensive. Keep an eye on the neighbor's yards. They probably have plants going to seed and would be happy to have you collect a few seeds.

If you would like some free Candle Stick Plant seeds, send an email to me DonnaKinerd@SBCGlobal.Net and I will give you an address where to send a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Share Your Money Saving Ideas!

Send them to:

GMBACouncil@SBCGlobal.Net

Eve Exams for Seniors with

No Out-of-Pocket Costs

Provided By: Winetta Billings, M.D.

EyeCare America (ECA), a public service program of the Foundation of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, provides no-cost eye care to medically underserved seniors through a pool of more than 7,000 volunteer ophthalmologists throughout the U.S.

One of the primary barriers to receiving medical eye care, especially for seniors, is being able to afford the co-payment. ECA Volunteer ophthalmologists accept Medicare and private insurance, waiving co-payments and unmet deductibles.

<http://www.eyecareamerica.org/eyecare/care/senior-eyecare.cfm>

Tips & Tricks

Free Directory Service for Cell Phones

Cell phone companies are charging us \$1.00 to \$1.75 or more for 411 information calls. Most of us do not carry a telephone directory in our vehicle, which makes this situation even more of a problem. When you need to use the 411 information option, simply dial: (800)FREE411, or (800) 373-3411 without incurring any charge at all. Program this into your cell phone now. This is sponsored by MacDonald's.

Share Your Tips and Tricks

Give a Day & Get a Disney Day

BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2010, when you sign up here to volunteer a day of service with a participating organization (and your service is completed and verified), you'll get one-day admission to a Walt Disney World® or Disneyland® theme park, FREE! We want to inspire one million people to volunteer a day of service. Copy & paste the web-site address below to your web browser for full details.

http://disney.parks.disney.go.com/disney.parks/en_US/WhatWillYouCelebrate/index?name=Give-A-Day-Get-A-Disney-Day

Swine Flue Vaccination Information from the State of Texas

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/>

Tax Credits Provide Outstanding Opportunities for Home Buyers

The Worker, Homeownership, and Business Assistance Act of 2009 has extended the tax credit of up to \$8,000 for qualified first-time home buyers purchasing a principal residence. It also authorized a tax credit of up to \$6,500 for qualified repeat home buyers.

<http://www.federalhousingtaxcredit.com/>

Deed-for-Lease Program

Fannie Mae Servicing Guide Announcement 09-33 introduced the Deed-for-Lease Program (D4L), allowing qualified borrowers (or tenants) with properties transferred through deed-in-lieu of foreclosure (DIL) to remain in their home by executing a lease in conjunction with a DIL. Read More:

<https://www.efanniemae.com/sf/servicing/d4l/>

Non-Emergency

Harris Co. Sheriff

281 463-2648

Fort Bend County Sheriff

281 341-4665

Emergency 911

Useful Resources

- Alief ISD
<http://www.aliefisd.net>
- Fort Bend ISD
<http://www.fortbend.k12.tx.us/>
- Houston Association of Realtors
<http://www.har.com/>
- The People Lawyer
<http://www.peopleslawyer.net/>
- Texas State Library
<http://www2.tsl.state.tx.us/apps/lrs/agencies/>
- Houston Better Business Bureau (BBB)
<http://houston.bbb.org/>
- Harris County Public Health & Environmental Services
<http://www.hcphe.org/>
- How to do almost anything
<http://www.ehow.com/>

Kids Corner

The Houston Museum of Natural Science at Sugar Land opened to the public on Saturday, October 3, 2009. Read More:

http://www.hmns.org/education/sugar_land.asp

Lowe's and Home Depot offer free

"How to Clinic" for kids.

Lowe's of W. Houston, TX.

15555 FM529

(281) 855-7888

Home Depot W. Houston

#585 2828 South Highway 6

(281)870-9369

Holiday Recipes & Other Fun Stuff for Kids of all Ages!

<http://www.northpole.com/>



Hurricane IKE Insurance Claims Dispute Mediation Program

The Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) invites you to mediate your Hurricane Ike residential property insurance claim dispute through a pilot program with three participating insurers: AAA Texas, Allstate, and Farmers.

<http://www.trucemedia.com/>

Not able to obtain insurance at a reasonable rate?

Contact the Texas Dept. of Insurance

<http://www.tdi.state.tx.us/> or

<http://helpinsure.com/>

Xerox Is Doing Something Cool

Provide By Laura Beth Jackson

If you go to the web site below, you can pick out a thank you card and Xerox will print it and it will be sent to a soldier that is currently serving in Iraq. You can't pick out who gets it, but it will go to a member of the armed services. No strings attached! It is FREE and it only takes seconds and is a wonderful way to say "Thank You" to our soldiers.

<http://www.letsaythanks.com/Home1024.html>



McClendon Park Update

McClendon Park has been opened almost a year now. It would be interesting to know how many thousands of visitors it has had. If you drive by on a beautiful Sunday afternoon, you will see a full parking lot and cars lining the street.

The trail/exercise stations are used from early morning until dark by many of the same people everyday. The splash pad has brought so much joy and heat relief to so many park visitors from 6 months of age to adults. There have been many chickens and briskets cooked and enjoyed off the barbeque pits. The pavilion has been the party place every weekend for birthdays and family gatherings. The kids have all put the playground equipment to the test (and some adults). The rocks have been the jumping off place for many and the tire swing goes around endlessly. Even the handicap swing has been tried by many kids. The sand volleyball has been the site of many games and the frisbee golf has even had some players. The soccer teams have been enjoying the field. The boardwalk has had its share of problems with some design flaws, which should be corrected soon. The amphitheater/stage has not seen much use, despite the great sound that can be produced there.

The graffiti/vandalism have been an ongoing problem. It is everyone's responsibility to call the Sheriff's Dept. if they see vandalism happening. The park is for everyone to enjoy and belongs to all of us.

National Flood Insurance Program

Knowing your relative flood risk level can help you assess your risk of financial loss. Once you understand your risks, you can talk with your agent to establish a coverage amount that's right for you. Read More:

<http://www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart>