

## December 2004 General Meeting

The next meeting of the Willow Meadows Civic Club is Tuesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m., in the Chapel at the Willow Meadows Baptist Church. This is the **Annual Civic Club Elections Meeting**. Please join your neighbors at this important meeting!

# Willow Meadows News

[www.WillowMeadows.Org](http://www.WillowMeadows.Org)

**December  
2004**

**Inside this  
issue:**

Phone Directory	2
Treasurer's Report	3-4
Neighborhood Schedule for Heavy Trash and Recycling	4
2005 Proposed Budget	5-6
WMCC 2005 Meeting Schedule	6
Security Issues	7-8
Babysitting Co-Op; Yards of the Month	8
Maintenance & Beautification: Report, Tree Issues, Trash Fines	9-10
Trash Talkin' - Revisited	11-12
Quiet Zone Delays	12
Advertising	13-16

## From The Acting Newsletter Editor

To my neighbors in Willow Meadows,

At the General Meeting on Tuesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, we will be collecting and counting the last few WMCC election ballots for 2005 and reporting on the ballot results for election of WMCC Officers and Board Members and the votes on the Operating and Capital Budgets. Seeing a large turnout there would be a gratifying experience in these transitional days.

As Acting President Tom Orem has informed you, in his cover letter accompanying the official WMCC ballots for 2005, that both President Charles van Ravenswaay and Security Committee Chair Bill Warden have recently resigned. For health reasons, Director Charles Cohen had stepped down from At-Large Position 4 earlier this year. This position was recently filled by Jim Schroeder.

In the current election cycle for 2005 there are candidates for all positions except that of Treasurer; Secretary; and At-Large director, Position 4. In the time since the nominations at the September General Meeting, Jim Schroeder has come forward to run for the Treasurer's position; and we ask that you please vote for Jim as a write-in candidate for Treasurer. If anyone else would like to step forward at the December General Meeting and volunteer for either of the remaining open positions, please do so. The Security Chair position is in transition. As is also obvious, there is vacancy in the Newsletter Editor position. Any WM resident is welcome to volunteer to fill this vital post. If you are one of those folks interested in this position, in the noblest spirit of volunteerism, your neighborhood needs you!

May you find the articles contributed this quarter useful and illuminating. A bit of the plentiful content submitted has been deferred to upcoming editions. Future issues may include articles on youth volunteerism in WMCC, neighborhood networks to check on the elderly, persistent dog leash issues, and pointers on building driveways above our very moisture sensitive soil.

I enjoyed seeing many of you and serving Sno-Cones to your children at our Neighborhood Night Out in early November and am looking forward to seeing all of you at the General Meeting on December 14<sup>th</sup>!

Sincerely,

*Stephen C. Ponaszek*

At-Large Director, Position 1, and Acting Newsletter Editor for the WMCC

**Willow Meadows Civic Club, Inc.**

P.O. Box 35551

Houston, Texas 77235

**2004 Willow Meadows Civic Board Members & Committee Chairs**

<b>Acting President</b> Tom Orem (713) 551-9535	<b>At-large Pos. 1</b> Stephen Polnaszek (713) 721-8425
<b>Vice-President</b> Vacant	<b>At-large Pos. 2</b> Emory Glover (713) 729-0445
<b>Treasurer</b> Ken Anctil (713) 721-7212	<b>At-large Pos. 3</b> Charles Rusciano (713) 721-3136
<b>Secretary</b> Sondra Ludwick (713) 723-1595	<b>At-large Pos. 4</b> Jim Schroeder (713) 729-5914
<b>Security</b> In Transition	<b>Beautification</b> Kay Adams (713) 729-9669
<b>Deed Restrictions</b> Charles Cohen (713) 885-0883	<b>Architecture</b> Robbie Chase (713) 723-6468
<b>Acting Newsletter Editor</b> Stephen Polnaszek (713) 721-8425	<b>Webmaster</b> Benjamin LaGrone (713) 723-9358

**Political Directory**

As a courtesy to our residents, we are providing you the most common "gripe" numbers so that you can make your voice heard on the issues of concern to you.

**County Commissioners**

**Precinct 1, Outside the Loop**

(El Franco Lee) (713) 755-7715

**Precinct 3, Inside the Loop**

(Steve Radack) (713) 755-6305

**Houston City Council**

(Mayor White's Office) (713) 247-1888

(Mark Goldberg, Dist. C) (713) 247-2004

(Michael Berry, At Large) (713) 247-2006

**Houston Solid Waste Mgmt** (713) 837-9100

Dead Animals (713) 669-7900

Heavy Trash (713) 551-7300

**Texas State Representative** (512) 463-0518

(Al Edwards, Dist. 146) (713) 741-8800

**Texas State Senator** (512) 463-0113

(Rodney Ellis, Dist. 13) (713) 236-0306

**HISD Board of Education (Dist. 5)**

(Diane Johnson) (713) 892-6121

***USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS***

<b>Emergency</b>	<b>911</b>
<b>WM Security Patrol</b>	<b>(713) 447-0200</b>
<b>Animal Control</b>	<b>(713) 238-9600</b>
<b>Garbage Pickup</b>	<b>(713) 551-7300</b>
<b>Heavy Trash Pickup</b>	<b>(713) 551-7320</b>
<b>Odor Hotline</b>	<b>(713) 837-0600</b>
<b>Street/Light Maintenance</b>	<b>(713) 837-0600</b>
<b>Water/Sewer Repairs</b>	<b>(713) 837-0600</b>
<b>Weeds Blocking View</b>	<b>(713) 525-2525</b>
<b>Harris County Flood Control</b>	<b>(713) 684-4197</b>



## Treasurer's Report, By Ken Ancil

Below and continuing on the next page are the unaudited financial results and a comparison of the financial results to the budgeted amounts for the Willow Meadows Civic Club, Inc., for the nine month period ended Sept. 30, 2004.

<b>Willow Meadows Civic Club, Inc.</b>		<b>Actual v. Budget Report as of 9/30/2004</b>			
	<b>Budget</b>	<b>As of</b>	<b>% Spent</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>As of</b>
	<b>FY04</b>	<b>9/30/2004</b>	<b>To Budget</b>	<b>FY04</b>	<b>9/30/2004</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>					
<b>Bank Charges</b>	300	80	27%		
<b>Deed Restriction Enforcement</b>					
Enforcement/Support Services	9,360	6,407	68%		
Legal Services/Filing Fees	7,500	0	0%		
<b>Beautification</b>					
Monument Planting & Foliage	500	0	0%		
Mowing	6,600	4,245	64%		
Yard of the Month	300	300	100%		
<i>NEW: Curb Number Project</i>				5,000	
<b>Mosquito Spraying</b>	4,700	1,215	26%		
<b>Security Expense</b>	88,000	55,178	63%		
<b>New Patrol Vehicle</b>					5,118
<b>Postage &amp; Mailing</b>					
Mail/Postage Expense	1,500	265	18%		
PO Box Rental	85	68	80%		
<b>Printing</b>					
General Printing	3,000	1,148	38%		
Security Stickers	650	0	0%		
WMCC Annual Directory	1,500	0	0%		
<b>Charitable Donations</b>					
Red Elementary PTO	300	0	0%		
United Orthodox Synagogue	300	0	0%		
Willow Meadows Baptist Church	300	0	0%		
Braes Bayou Association	200	0	0%		
Houston Homeowners Assoc.	50	0	0%		
<b>Miscellaneous Expenses</b>					
Accounting/Bookkeeping Services	3,900	2,418	62%		
Insurance for Board	1,400	100	7%		
Office Supplies	125	19	15%		
Neighborhood Night Out	3,000	0	0%		
Storage	850	621	73%		
Welcome Packages	500	220	44%		
Web Site Hosting	400	35	9%		
Other	1,000	0	0%		
Monument Repairs	-				3,833
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>136,320</b>	<b>72,319</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>8,951</b>
<b>REVENUES</b>					
Annual Assessment	135,000	116,432	86%		
Refund Amounts*	-	250	0%		
Transfer/Refinance Fee Income	3,000	4,650	155%		
Interest Income	2,200	2,001	91%		
Advertising Revenue	2,000	0	0%		
Other Revenue**	-	17,893	0%		
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>142,200</b>	<b>141,226</b>			<b>-</b>
<b>OPERATING SURPLUS or (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>5,880</b>	<b>68,907</b>			<b>8,951</b>
<b>Total Surplus / (Deficit)</b>			59,955		

**Treasurer’s Report**, continued

- \* 2003 Damage Deposit: NNO at Willow Park
- \*\* Other Revenue

City of Houston matching grant for Monuments = \$4500  
 Insurance Settlement: Auto Accident at Monument = \$8923  
 Insurance Settlement: Patrol Vehicle Loss = \$4470

Officer Holiday Fund Donations = \$2,395

Additionally, our ledger balance on September 30, 2004, was \$222,114.00.



**WILLOW MEADOWS NEIGHBORHOOD SCHEDULE, December 2004 through February 2005**

**Remember: Trash cans and yard clippings are NOT to be placed out at the curb more than 24 hours before scheduled pick-up! Heavy trash may be placed out no earlier than 6 p.m. the Friday before pick-up!**

December 6th	Green-bin Recycling (Outside of the Loop)
December 7th	Heavy Trash (Outside of the Loop)
December 7th	Green-bin Recycling (Inside of the Loop)
<b>December 14th</b>	<b>General Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at WMBC</b>
December 20th	Green-bin Recycling (Outside of the Loop)
December 21st	Green-bin Recycling (Inside of the Loop)
December 23rd	Heavy Trash (Inside of the Loop)

January 4th	Heavy Trash (Outside of the Loop)
January 4th	Green-bin Recycling (Outside of the Loop)
January 4th	Green-bin Recycling (Inside of the Loop)
January 17th	Green-bin Recycling (Outside of the Loop)
January 18th	Green-bin Recycling (Inside of the Loop)
January 27th	Heavy Trash (Inside of the Loop)

February 1st	Green-bin Recycling (Inside of the Loop)
February 1st	Heavy Trash (Outside of the Loop)
February 14th	Green-bin Recycling (Outside of the Loop)
February 15th	Green-bin Recycling (Inside of the Loop)
February 24th	Heavy Trash (Inside of the Loop)
February 28th	Green-bin Recycling (Outside of the Loop)



Outside of the Loop regular garbage pick-up day is **MONDAY**.  
 Inside of the Loop regular garbage pick-up is **TUESDAY**.  
**GARBAGE STICKERS ARE AVAILABLE AT SELLERS BROS. ON STELLA LINK.**  
**CALL AHEAD TO CHECK FOR AVAILABILITY (713) 666-4417.**

### 2005 Proposed Budget

		Operating			Capital	
		Budget	Budget	% Change	Budget	Budget
		FY04	FY05	for FY05	FY04	FY05
<b>EXPENSES</b>						
<b>Bank Charges</b>		300	300			
<b>Deed Restriction Enforcement</b>						
	Enforcement/Support Services	9,360	9,360			
	Legal Services/Filing Fees	7,500	7,500			
<b>Beautification</b>						
	Monument Planting & Foliage	500	2,500	400%		
	Mowing	6,600	7,800	18%		
	Yard of the Month	300	300			
	Curb Number Project				5,000	0
	Sprinkler Systems on Braeswood & Belfort				0	6,500
<b>Mosquito Spraying</b>		4,700	5,250	12%		
<b>Security Expense</b>						
	Wages		76,804			
	Vehicle & Laptop (fuel, cell phone, oil chgs, etc)		7,237			
	Vehicle Maintenance (Major Repairs)		2,000			
	Insurance Costs (Security, Auto, Wrk Comp)		9,940			
	<b>Security Operating Subtotal</b>	88,000	95,981	9%		
	New Vehicle				0	5,400
<b>Postage &amp; Mailing</b>						
	Mail/Postage Expense	1,500	1,500			
	P.O. Box Rental	85	85			
<b>Printing</b>						
	General Printing	3,000	3,000			
	Security Stickers	650	650			
	WMCC Annual Directory	1,500	500	-67%		
<b>Charitable Donations</b>						
	Red Elementary PTO	300	300			
	United Orthodox Synagogue	300	300			
	Willow Meadows Baptist Church	300	300			
	Braes Bayou Association	200	200			
	Houston Homeowners Assoc.	50	50			
<b>Other Expenses</b>						
	Accounting/Bookkeeping Services	3,900	5,100	31%		
	Insurance for Board	1,400	1,600	14%		
	Office Supplies	125	200	60%		
	Neighborhood Night Out	3,000	3,000			
	Storage	850	850			
	Welcome Packages	500	500			
	General Meeting Marketing	-	200			
	Web Site Hosting	400	400			
	Other	1,000	1,000			
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>136,320</b>	<b>148,726</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>11,900</b>

(Continues on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

Willow Meadows Civic Club, Inc.		Budget Comparison: FY04 & Proposed FY05				
		Operating			Capital	
		Budget FY04	Budget FY05	% Change for FY05	Budget FY04	Budget FY05
<b>REVENUES</b>						
<b>Annual Assessments</b>						
	Dues from FY05 Assessments		16,100			
	Collections on Overdue Assessments		13,900			
	<b>Total Assessment Revenue</b>	135,000	130,000	-4%		
	Refund Amounts*		250			
	Transfer/Refinance Fee Income	3,000	4,000	33%		
	Interest Income	2,200	3,000	36%		
	Advertising Revenue	2,000	2,000	0%		
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>		<b>142,200</b>	<b>139,250</b>	<b>-2%</b>		
<b>OPERATING SURPLUS or (DEFICIT)</b>		<b>5,880</b>	<b>(9,476)</b>			
<b>Total Budgeted Surplus for 2004</b>		<b>880</b>				
<b>Total Projected Deficit 2005 (paid for by surplus funds on account)</b>				<b>(21,376)</b>		
* 2004 Damage Deposit: NNO at Willow Park						

The proposed 2005 Operating Budget expenses are increased 9% from 2004, and the revenues are projected to run 2% lower next year. The proposed Operating Budget has increased to accommodate additional spending, primarily on security. We will be out-sourcing more of the Treasurer's detailed duties and spending more on the esplanade beautification. In addition, we are also projecting an increase in the wages paid to our security employees. Finally, the Capital Budget includes a request of \$11,900 for a combination of updated security car and beautification projects. As in the past, the new security car will still be used, but it will replace our oldest one with a car with fewer miles.

The esplanade beautification project will add a sprinkler system to both the South Braeswood esplanade and the esplanade on West Belfort near the Baptist church. Both of these locations have our remodeled monuments on them, so the addition of the sprinkler system will enhance the look around the monument and the entire esplanade area. Additionally, while there are no guarantees, the Maintenance and Beautification committee will be applying for a city grant to help recover some of the costs for this work.

With our strong financial position we will not have to increase dues even with the increased spending in the proposed budget.



**Willow Meadows Civic Club 2005 General Meeting Schedule**  
**March 8th at 7:00 p.m.**  
**June 14th at 7:00 p.m.**  
**September 13th at 7:00 p.m.**  
**December 13th at 7:00 p.m.**

# Security Issues

By Charles Rusciano & Ken Anctil, two Members of the 2004 WMCC Board

## Background

Recently, there has been some controversy concerning our security program. Bill Warden, security chairman, has resigned from his position. It is clearly understood that Mr. Warden has worked extremely hard at this post, which is very demanding in its scope and importance. There were things which needed attention with efforts to upgrade, repair, and set on course matters in the security program. Everyone on the Board, and every resident, we believe, wants security to be the primary focus of effort and funding.

Each year before our amended deed restrictions (pre-1999), security budgets increased 5% annually. At that time, we had a patrol of Precinct 7 Constables working off-duty under a contract between WMCC and Harris County. In 1995, our security tab was \$49,155. Ten years later, we are nearly double that amount.

In 2001 we began questioning the wisdom of utilizing Precinct 7 Constables. The Security Committee took the contract, carefully analyzed it, and approached the County Attorney about the problems we had experienced. We learned that there was nothing that could be done to change the system; government does not budge from its entrenched positions. We learned how we were actually sharing time with other neighborhoods, yet paying as though we were the sole employer. We were paying for the patrol Constable's sick time and vacation time, even though we received no patrol hours for it. It wasn't fair, it was not cost-effective, and most of all it was not accountable. Momentum instantly shifted to the idea of self-management. It is important to note that all alternative ideas were explored, including the consideration of contracting with a private security company. That was a suggestion which was not well received by most. The idea which caught on was the one we now have, where we own our patrol car, hire off-duty licensed peace officers and schedule the times for patrol.



When the civic club developed the new security system (maintained, owned and operated by WMCC) with our own patrol cars, we began implementation of a very complex management activity to be maintained by our volunteer Board management system.

## New Concept

Bill and the Security Committee issued a very ambitious proposal, published in the last newsletter (Sept. 2004). It was presented at the general meeting. Perceptions of the type of reception it received were mixed. Some questions showed concern; others may have implied approval. The matter was not an item submitted to the general membership for a vote. After consideration, the Board met in October and voted against the proposal for budget concerns, it's complexity of management, the many state regulations we would be forced to comply with (as WMCC would have to become a regulated and Texas approved security agency), and the fact that most patrol hours would no longer be performed by off-duty HPD officers. Instead, most of the employees

*(Continued on page 8)*

(Continued from page 7)

**Security Issues (continued)**

patrolling the neighborhood, in a car that could no longer display "Police," would be paid at a rate of less than half that of the HPD officers. Those of us with concerns about these changes felt that we would be entrusting the safety of homeowners and the security of our homes to a type of employee that might possibly have greater turnover, less training, and a lesser ability to handle problems.

Ken Ancil, Stephen Polnaszek, Charles Rusciano, and another Board member voted to ask the security committee to instead submit a budget and program structure in line with the previous year's budget. In essence, this vote did not accept the Security Committee's proposed plan. The plan was viewed by those not in favor as one filled with ambitious new issues with which we do not believe we are prepared to cope, new concepts which we are unsure of, and cost increases which would be a radical departure for normal security expense increases. (The proposal was projected to create a 20% increase, and many of us believed that cost overruns would extend that beyond the projected figure.) Additionally, the plan called for the majority of patrol hours to be staffed by "security guards" instead of keeping all patrol hours with licensed peace officers. Mr. Warden has chosen to resign—presumably because of that Board vote.

We are now aware that a petition is being circulated to call for a Special Meeting of the Association to discuss the Security Program. We thought you should be aware of the matter as well. As we already have a General Meeting scheduled in December, the earliest a special meeting could possibly happen would be early next year.

We will get through this; we thought you should know. Bill Warden has every right to advocate and solicit his ideas to the membership—even if those ideas are contrary to the vote of the Board. Those of us who disagree believe we have the right to inform and present our opinions and the reasoning supporting our decision to the membership. Security remains in place as the highest priority of the Board. With the proposed 2005 WMCC budget our membership will be voting to approve or disapprove additional security patrol hours and a "newer" used car to replace our oldest one, changes which are set for immediate implementation upon budget approval.

9-1-1 is still the absolute emergency number to use. Our WMCC paid patrols will respond to security number calls when there are officers on duty to take those calls.

**Willow Babysitting Co-Op**

How does a few hours of free time sound? Time to run errands, have a hair appointment, or simply just relax? The Willow Babysitting Co-Op is looking for new members. Mom's trade babysitting time and share in great friendships. Call Nanette Monte at 713 723-0474 or Cynthia Adamson at 713-721-6347 for more information. We look forward to hearing from you.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO RECENT YARD OF THE MONTH WINNERS!**

September 2004: 9011 Cliffwood  
November 2004: 10402 Willowisp



## MAINTENANCE & BEAUTIFICATION

by Kay Adams, Chair



The Maintenance and Beautification Committee achieved the following goals for 2004:

- ◆ Maintained and made improvements on our three adopted esplanades;
- ◆ Built and maintained the three flowerbeds at the three large entrance signs;
- ◆ Rebuilt one of the entrance signs after it was demolished as collateral damage in a car accident;
- ◆ Began the curb number project, which is not finished as of the writing of this article. In addition to the touch ups and corrections made throughout the neighborhood, old curb numbers are yet to be sandblasted;
- ◆ Continued to manage the mosquito control program, and
- ◆ Maintained all the entrance signs throughout the year, with repainting the gold letters in the works and, when that is accomplished by the first week of December and the granite is polished and the stone is cleaned once more, we will place the heavy duty sealant on all the signs.

In addition, the white bricks alongside the front of one of the signs at McDermed and Willowisp are being removed.

For 2005, the Maintenance and Beautification Committee is looking forward to implementing the following programs to ensure that the neighborhood remains attractive throughout the year. The funds we requested must be approved by the homeowners as part of the operating and capital budgets proposed for 2005. The programs include:

- ◆ Building a solar or battery powered sprinkler system to water the flowerbeds at the entrance signs at West Bellfort and Greenwillow as well as at the South Braeswood entrance sign. We plan to submit an application for a City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department grant to pay for half of the costs associated with this capital improvement project in January. The City of Houston provides free water to adopted esplanades.
- ◆ Award a landscaping company the flowerbed maintenance contract so that the flowerbeds are maintained year round and annuals are planted four times a year. We will wait for the sprinkler systems to be in place before beginning this program. As an aside, the entrance sign at West Bellfort and Nenana, by the Randall's entrance, already has a sprinkler system that is owned by the Meyer Corporation. Fred Meyer gave us permission to use that sprinkler system for our flowerbeds about two years ago.
- ◆ Continue mowing the three separate adopted esplanades and continue cleaning trash at the underpass of IH610 and Greenwillow.
- ◆ Continue the mosquito control program, with the knowledge that the price of the chemical, not the labor, is increasing for 2005.
- ◆ Develop volunteer clean-up days for South Post Oak Road and West Bellfort and at South Post Oak Road and McDermed.
- ◆ Continue to support the efforts of the Willow Park Committee and help in any way we can, except financially, unless the Board decides otherwise, should the need arise;

*(Continued on page 10)*

*(Continued from page 9)*

- ◆ Continue to think of new ways to improve the neighborhood, such as an idea of planting a cactus type of flowerbed at the corner of South Post Oak Road and West Bellfort in an effort to cut down on the panhandling that occurs at that intersection.
- ◆ Continue to support efforts, as well as doing our part, to help to contribute to beautifying Houston.

All of us in the Maintenance and Beautification thank all the homeowners for the compliments on the signs and for the support shown to our committee's efforts. Finally, all of us wish each of you a happy holiday season and a prosperous and healthy new year.

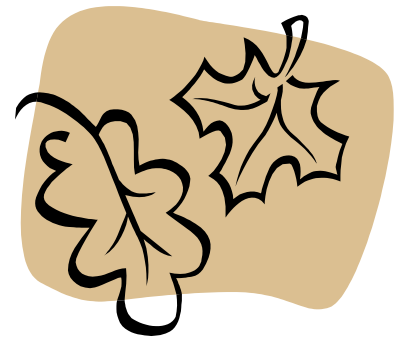
### **HEAVY TRASH WARNING**, by Kay Adams

As a reminder, placing heavy trash out early can cost you a \$300 fine set by the City of Houston. I have heard of a few homeowners that have at least received a warning recently. Please make sure to not set limbs out too early on your own curb. Should you be trimming your trees that run alongside West Bellfort and then place the limbs on the sidewalk thinking the city will pick them up, well, the city will not pick them up. You could face receiving a fine and still having to remove the limbs from the public right of way.



So, the easiest thing to do is (1) hire someone to cut the limbs and properly dispose of them, or (2) call Gold Rose Landscaping at (713) 413-1816 to get their pricing on removing the limbs as they mow the area, (3) dispose of the limbs at the nearest neighborhood depository, which is located on Sunbeam near the corner of Cullen and Airport Blvd., just east of 288.

Whatever you decide to do, please remove any limbs you cut that fall onto the sidewalks on West Bellfort as many homeowners have complained of being inconvenienced in having to step off the sidewalk as they go for their walks. Due to these complaints, and to the fact that anyone can call 311 and report the heavy trash to the city, you may easily face a hefty fine.



### **OVERHANGING TREE NOTICE**, also by Kay Adams

Complaints from neighbors have been communicated to us regarding some limbs that are hanging quite low onto streets in our neighborhood causing scratches on many vehicles, SUVs and sedans alike. Please take notice of your trees and trim them back from the street.

Other complaints have been communicated regarding limbs hanging thickly over many streetlights in our neighborhood, causing visibility to be lowered. So, again, please take notice of your trees to see if the trees on your lot need to be trimmed back as to not interfere with the streetlight's function.

## Trash Talkin' - Revisited

by Charles D. Rusciano

One year ago, we published in the Willow Meadows News an article about the new trash policy. It was a comprehensive advisory and merits repeating, especially in light of recent changes.

### Trash Cans and Extra Trash

City of Houston trash policy dictates that each person is allowed one trash can at the usual cost included in your water bill. If you need two cans, request one and it will be provided for you for an extra \$7.50 per month. You will be issued a **special sticker** – not to be confused with the “tags for bags” sticker. If you already have an extra can, when you place both out by the curb, one will be confiscated. (One can per household unless you pay extra.)

Yard clippings in a disposable bag are not considered “extra” trash. They will be picked up without a sticker. For your extra trash – placed out beside your can -- you can place it in a bag or box with a \$1.00 trash sticker on it and it will (should) be picked up. Without the sticker, expect it to be left behind. Stickers can be purchased on line at the City of Houston website: [www.cityofhouston.gov](http://www.cityofhouston.gov) or by dialing “3-1-1” and placing an order over the service line. They can also be purchased at our local KROGER or at SELLERS BROTHERS. (It’s cheaper at the grocery store - \$1.00 each.) Using the web site will be a bit more involved and more expensive – 5 tag minimum with a \$3.00 service charge.

On the website, remember the following: 1) choose “Departments” at the top; 2) select “Solid Waste Management” - home page on the left column; 3) select “Extra Capacity”. From there, you will need to download the “Tags for Bags Service Request Form” shown at the top of the page, not the “download form” link which is located further down on the page. (My experience repeatedly failed using the “download form.”)

### Yard Clippings

As stated, the policy on yard trimmings has not changed. Place them in a plastic bag or large paper bag. Size limit per bag: 35 gallons or 50 pounds. Sticks and branches must follow the guidelines of City Code Sec. 39-64: in tyed or contained bundles; no longer than 4 feet; no wider than 18 inches in diameter; and no more than four bundles. If you have more than 4 bundles, better get out those stickers. Branches cannot be thick; there is a three-inch diameter limit. Larger ones should be placed out on heavy trash day.

### Cardboard Boxes - News Flash!

**Cardboard used to be forbidden as a recyclable item.** Now, it is being treated differently by the City. You may now fold up corrugated boxes, which are smaller than 3' x 3', and place them under your green recycle bin. You may also dispose of them on heavy trash pick-up at the beginning of the month. Please STOP placing the cardboard in the ABATIBI (that’s the company name) bins at Willow Meadows Baptist Church.

That company does not want your cardboard. Recommendation: Throw cardboard away in your trash can. Cutting, bending and stomping on the boxes can usually reduce them to a size which will fit in your trash can. **It is pure trash** – pardon the oxymoron. It can hold your yard clippings or branches because it is disposable. Some of the garbage collectors are not well versed in the trash policy when it comes to using boxes for yard waste. If they pass you up, call and complain. (3-1-1 will get you there.)

### Christmas / Hanukkah Trash

What to do with all the holiday trash -- such a problem. Here is what ‘Muni Waste’ recommends: (1) Boxes and wrappings need to be placed inside the city trashcan as much as possible. (2) If you have more, get the stickers ready if boxes are larger than 3' x 3'. TV or computer boxes which may be difficult to fold or bend may have to be placed beside the can . . . with a sticker on them. (3) Check with the city trash website, or listen to your local TV news coverage for announcements on disposing of trees.

(continued on page 12)

*(continued from page 11)*

The tree mulching program receives lots of press after Christmas day.

**PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU DO NOT VIOLATE CITY CODES:**

1. Do not place trash out on the curb prematurely. For all pick-up dates, you are not supposed to place trash out until 7 PM on the evening prior to the pick-up date.
2. For heavy trash, City Codes state that placing the trash out by the curb may not take place sooner than the Friday before scheduled pick-up.
3. Schedule tree trimming and disposal of bulky heavy trash for the end of the month or the weekend before heavy trash day. (We publish these dates in the news. Cut it out and place it on your message board; it will come in handy.)

Enforcement of this law is being stepped up. Licensed officers may ticket you if you fail to comply. The Board agrees that it is unsightly to be placing your trash out and leaving it out for days prior to the pick-up date. Everyone needs to respect the fact that most people choose to live in Willow Meadows because they enjoy peaceful, safe, and pleasant surroundings that we work hard to maintain.

Neighbors: The new reporting system for trash violators is to use the "311" hotline. Be my guest.

***Late-Breaking Railroad Crossing "Quiet Zone" News (thanks to Sondra Ludwick) from***

**The U.S. Department of Transportation Office of Public Affairs Washington, D.C.**

**Effective Date of Proposed Rule Allowing for Train Horn "Quiet Zones" Moves to April 1, 2005**

The effective date of the proposed rule from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) that allows communities to establish train horn 'quiet zones' will be moved to April 1, 2005, from the previously published date of December 18, 2004, according to an agency announcement in the *Federal Register*.

"We are firmly committed to providing communities nationwide with a fair, flexible, and workable rule that will address concerns over noise created by train horns," said FRA Acting Administrator Betty Monro. "We are especially sensitive to the concerns of communities with pre-existing whistle bans who want to maintain the quality of life to which they have become accustomed."

The Interim Final Rule (IFR) on Use of Locomotive Horns at Highway-Rail Grade Crossings was issued late last year. It requires trains to sound their horns on approach to, and while traveling across, public highway-rail crossings. However, the train horn can be silenced within a 'quiet zone' provided safety measures are in place at the affected crossings.

Because the IFR generated significant interest from communities across the country, the FRA extended the public comment period by two months. Approximately 1,400 comments were submitted for review.

FRA had planned to issue the Final Rule last month, but the analysis and consideration required of each comment made meeting that schedule difficult. The Final Rule will now be issued in January and becomes effective on April 1.

The comments received can be grouped into several broad categories, including, but not limited to: states and railroads seeking a greater role in the quiet zone development process, communities seeking recognition of existing partial whistle bans, and communities seeking recognition of whistle bans created after October 1996.

More information about the Interim Final Rule is available at [www.fra.dot.gov](http://www.fra.dot.gov).

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