

## December 2005 General Meeting

The next General Meeting of the Willow Meadows Civic Club will be at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, December 13, in the Chapel at the Willow Meadows Baptist Church. Please join your neighbors at this meeting!

# Willow Meadows News

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

## December 2005

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## From The President

As the year comes to a close, it seems appropriate to give thanks for many things. I am personally thankful for my family, my friends and fellow volunteers here in Willow Meadows, and to the community of Willow Meadows itself.

It also seems appropriate for the Willow Meadows Civic Club to give thanks. We thank the outgoing Board Members who have done so much for us this year and will not be returning to the Board in 2006. As Treasurer, Jim Schroeder worked tirelessly to maintain the organization's books, clear up the vast majority of the past debt owed to us, and generally work tirelessly in a position that, while not very exciting, is crucial to our operations. WMCC extends our thanks to him for the MANY hours he has spent.

WMCC is also grateful for the two years of service that Tom Orem has given to the organization as vice-president. He has tirelessly given us the benefit of his experience, time, and advice throughout these past two years.

One of the significant projects which WMCC took on this year was to ask you what you were thinking about WMCC. To that end, a survey was sent out in August. We have received responses from 369 homeowners, a response rate of 45 percent. Overwhelmingly, you told us that security was important, and that the security program should continue with its current basic structure with an increase in hours, if possible. Our budget for next year reflects what you told us. For more details, please see the survey results, which begin on page 9.

By now, you should have received your ballots for the election of Directors and vote on our budget for 2006. Please make your voice heard by mailing in your ballot if you are unable to make it to the December 13<sup>th</sup> General Meeting. Of course, we hope to see you there.

*Ken Anttil*, President

## Willow Meadows Civic Club, Inc.

P.O. Box 35551, Houston, Texas 77235

2005 Willow Meadows Civic Board Members and Committee Chairs

<b>President</b> Ken Anctil	(713) 320-1462	<b>At-large Pos. 1</b> Stephen Polnaszek	(713) 721-8425
<b>Vice-President</b> Tom Orem	(713) 551-9535	<b>At-large Pos. 2</b> Emory Glover	(713) 729-0445
<b>Treasurer</b> James Schroeder	(713) 729-5914	<b>At-large Pos. 3</b> Charles Rusciano	(713) 721-3136
<b>Secretary</b> Shari Mauthner	(713) 721-8313	<b>At-large Pos. 4</b> Margo Barvin	(713) 728-3053
<b>Security</b> Jonathan Quander	(832) 423-8993	<b>Beautification</b> Kay Adams	(713) 729-9669
<b>Deed Restrictions</b> Charles Cohen	(713) 885-0883	<b>Architecture</b> Garry Weisman	(713) 721-1250
<b>Newsletter Editor</b> Marc Bernabo	(713) 726-1973	<b>Webmaster</b> Benjamin LaGrone	(713) 723-9358

### Political Directory

These are the phone numbers of the elected officials most frequently contacted about state and local government issues:

**County Commissioners:**

Precinct 1, El Franco Lee  
(Outside the Loop) (713) 755-7715  
Precinct 3, Steve Radack  
(Inside the Loop) (713) 755-6305

**Houston City Council:**

Mayor Bill White (713) 247-1888  
Mark Goldberg, District C (713) 247-2004  
Michael Berry, At Large (713) 247-2006

**Texas State Representative** (512) 463-0518  
Al Edwards, District 146 (713) 741-8800

**Texas State Senator** (512) 463-0113  
Rodney Ellis, District 13 (713) 236-0306

**HISD Board of Education**

Diane Johnson, District 5 (713) 892-6121

### Useful Phone Numbers

<b>Emergency</b>	<b>911</b>
<b>WM Security Patrol</b>	(713) 447-0200
<b>Animal Control</b>	(713) 238-9600
<b>Dead Animals</b>	(713) 669-7900
<b>Garbage Pickup</b>	(713) 551-7300
<b>Heavy Trash Pickup</b>	(713) 551-7320
<b>Odor Hotline</b>	(713) 837-0600
<b>Street/Light Maintenance</b>	(713) 837-0600
<b>Water/Sewer Repairs</b>	(713) 837-0600
<b>Weeds Blocking View</b>	(713) 525-2525
<b>Harris County Flood Control</b>	(713) 684-4197
<b>Other City services</b>	311

## What Does a WMCC Board Member Do?

By Shari Mauthner, Secretary, and Charles D. Rusciano, At-Large Board Position 3

With elections coming up at the December general meeting, it seems timely to describe the operations of the Willow Meadows Civic Club (WMCC) and the volunteers who make it work. Prior to 1999, WMCC was financed by voluntary contributions. Since then, mandatory dues were implemented, and there has been a continual development and refinement of the way the Civic Club crafts budgets, handles complaints about procedures and protocols, develops by-laws to insure fairness, provides access to information, and responds to suggestions.

The management of the Civic Club is a very complex process. We have a budget which exceeds \$100,000 annually. Although we do outsource some functions such as certain payroll and bookkeeping tasks, there is a great deal of day-to-day management required to ensure the smooth running of the Civic Club. Board members and chairpersons—all unpaid—handle security and maintenance, publication and dissemination of information, and accounting functions that include verifying invoices and paying for mosquito spraying, mowing, car maintenance for security patrols, and a myriad of other details. Each day there is someone on the WMCC Board doing something to manage Civic Club business. Dues need collection. Legal obligations need to be handled. Tax returns must be filed. Payroll checks must be cut and payroll taxes paid. Insurance for various matters must be secured and maintained. All of these Civic Club functions are performed by unpaid community volunteers.

### Overview

As the governing board of the WMCC Association, the *Board of Directors* is composed of a four-member *Executive Committee* (comprised of the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer) and four *At Large* positions. All these individuals are residents of our community, elected by a general ballot vote at the December General Meeting. The President and Executive Committee collaborate to select the *Chairpersons* of the six *Standing Committees*—Security, Architectural Control, Maintenance and Beautification, Deed Restrictions, Newspaper Editor, and Webmaster.

The *By-Laws* and the *Deed Restrictions (Restrictive Covenants)*—the documents by which we govern our organization—spell out guidelines and duties for each position. All residents should examine these documents to see how detailed and involved the management of the Civic Club truly is. They are on the Willow Meadows Website at [www.willowmeadows.org](http://www.willowmeadows.org).

The Civic Club conducts quarterly *General Meetings*, normally held at Willow Meadows Baptist Church, and the Board of Directors meets monthly during the other eight months of the year. In addition, *Special Meetings*—such as the Security Meeting we held last February—are called when a particular problem or issue arises that needs ‘special’ or immediate attention.

### Board Members

The *President* is one of the most visible figures on the Board. According to the By-Laws, the president’s duties include: presiding at all meetings, appointing Committee Chairs, and acting as a member of all Association Committees. Considering that there are six standing committees and most years at least two active ad hoc committees, this duty alone keeps the President running. In practice, the President must ensure the smooth running of the organization. This can include everything from coordinating chairpersons’ activities with the goals of the board, ensuring that agendas for meetings match the goals for that meeting, mapping out strategic priorities for the year, communicating with other organizations or officials, handling calls from homeowners, or interviewing potential employees. Realistically, the President’s duties can take anywhere from 5-10 hours per week, depending on the current activities of the Civic Club, the Board, and the committees. Each year the Board has operated, the President, on several occasions, has had to put in 10 – 15 hours in some weeks. (That service is invaluable.)

In the absence of the President, the *Vice-President* has all the power and prerogatives of the President and serves, upon request of the President, as the official representative of the President at all standing Committee meetings.

The *Treasurer* is one of the most vital and busiest members of the Board. The By-Laws state that “It is the duty of

the Treasurer to receive all monies and to keep same on deposit in one or more banking institutions insured by the United States federal government (FDIC or FSLIC) approved.” In addition, “the Treasurer must report the financial status of the Association at all General Meetings of the Association, Board of Directors meetings or whenever requested by the Executive Committee.” Sounds simple, but in reality the Treasurer (an unpaid volunteer) is responsible for a laundry list of duties which includes—but is definitely not limited to—the following:

- Ensure that all Civic Club expenses comply with approved budgets
- Maintain and handle all financial accounts
- Ensure that all Civic Club accounts are accurate and up to date
- Ensure the accurate and timely processing of Accounts Payable to maintain the credit of the organization
- Minimize costs and pay appropriate state sales taxes
- Ensure timely deposits of all Accounts Receivable
- Provide the Maintenance & Beautification committee with new homeowner data
- Input all Payroll data for all WMCC employees
- Verify employee pay and payroll taxes
- Review tax returns
- Attend outside audits (generally four per year)
- Report financial affairs to the Board and membership
- Provide data to homeowners regarding assessment status
- Provide data to realtors and title companies regarding assessment payment status
- Ensure that we adhere to the Texas Property Code regarding homeowner’s data
- Produce resale certificates for homeowners and realtors
- File lawsuits and appear in court when necessary for delinquent assessments.

The By-Laws state that the *Secretary* will record resolutions and proceedings of all Civic Club meetings in a permanent record and issue meeting notices. Demands for more detail and accountability have seen the secretarial position become more important. Regulations governing Homeowner Associations have become more precise, requiring that WMCC document far more detail than in previous years. In documenting meetings, the Secretary continually attempts to provide specifics without making them so specific as to emulate the “Congressional Record.” It takes significant time each month to take notes, transcribe them, provide copies for review, amend the notes as needed, and then provide electronic copies to the Webmaster for posting online, for every General, Special, and Board meeting. In addition, the Secretary secures the dates and meeting locations for all meetings, ensures that the General Meeting notification signs are posted in the neighborhood, and maintains other required documentation, such as the Policies and Procedures Manual.

The four *At-Large Members* are elected representatives who have no defined or specified duties in the By-Laws. Most have taken on participation and leadership on committees, or have tackled individual management issues and special projects. The At-Large Members are expected to be active participants in the various Civic Club meetings.

### **Standing Committees**

The *Standing Committees* and the Chairpersons play a vital role in the operation of the Civic Club. The appointed Committee Chairs rely primarily on volunteer help from the WM community to accomplish the tasks associated with the committee’s regular duties and special projects. Committees meet regularly to discuss tactical and strategic planning. The President may also create special committees—referred to as ad hoc committees—to accomplish unique projects. An example of a recent ad hoc committee is the Ad Hoc Survey Committee, which was charged with designing, collating, and analyzing the Security Survey that was distributed a few months ago.

The *Security Committee* oversees the single largest budgetary expenditure area and requires many hours of hands-on supervision from its Chairperson. We hire and pay HPD officers to patrol the neighborhood. We own and maintain the two automobiles used for the neighborhood patrols. Shifts must be scheduled and covered. Crime reports and special concerns must be compiled and distributed. The Security Chair acts as liaison to the hired security provider, coordinates all matters as needed to maintain and monitor all security issues on behalf of the Association, and ensures that critical security information is reported to the Board and residents. Discussions and

meetings for this committee are vital and the Security Chair logs in many unpaid hours weekly.

To maintain property values and ensure that our neighborhood remains in prime condition, Deed Restrictions compliance requires constant attention. The *Deed Restrictions Committee* is charged with monitoring deed violations, investigating and reporting on observed violations, and recommending courses of action to the Board of Directors. This committee has the assistance of the only paid employee (other than the Security Officers) of the Civic Club—the *Deed Restrictions Delegate*. The neighborhood is surveyed several times monthly by the Deed Restrictions Delegate to check for violations. A database of past and current alleged violations is maintained. Letters and notices are routinely sent to violators requesting compliance with city ordinances and our deed restrictions. If non-compliance continues, matters elevate to more involved processes, i.e., reports to city departments for enforcement and enforcement actions taken by our Civic Club.

The By-Laws charge the *Maintenance and Beautification Committee* with receiving and submitting proposals for improvement projects to the Executive Committee, maintaining the *Yard of the Month* program, and referring deed restriction matters to the Deed Restrictions Committee. This committee is not just about ‘beautification’. Maintenance and Beautification takes an active roll in assuring that esplanades are maintained; this includes handling health and safety issues such as the removal of overhanging limbs and accumulated trash. This committee also handles special projects which require the chairperson to actively pursue grants and matching funds from city sources, thus reducing money the Civic Club must spend to initiate various projects. Another vital aspect of this committee is mosquito spraying during the warmer months as need arises. (As an aside, while we frequently receive complaints about mosquitoes carrying off small animals, from our experience living in Houston, problems often lie with standing water, open buckets filled with stagnant water, and low-lying areas under storage sheds which stay moist and cool. Residents should monitor their yards for these situations, all of which are excellent breeding grounds for mosquitoes.)

Architectural control plays an important role in maintaining the look and feel of our community. The *Architectural Control Committee (ACC)* is in charge of reviewing plan submissions and communicating to applicants approval or denial of their plans. All WM residents are required to submit plans for any new home construction and any home improvement projects that require a city permit. The ACC must be given the opportunity to review the plans and decide whether they comply with Deed Restriction guidelines. In the recent past, we have had trained and licensed architects volunteer to serve as chairs of this committee.

The final standing committee, the *Public Relations Committee*, is responsible for promoting the good public image of the Association; it is Co-Chaired by the Editor of the WM Newsletter and the Webmaster of the WM Website. The Committee is responsible for managing the publication of the Willow Meadows Newsletter, overseeing the WM website, and securing and monitoring advertising. As with the other standing committees, this committee relies totally on resident volunteerism to submit articles for the newsletter and the Website, and to distribute the quarterly newsletter.

One short article such as this cannot possibly cover all the work accomplished by our Board members, Chairpersons, and volunteers. While we are fortunate to have a wealth of skilled people to help run the organization, we *always* need more volunteers. The Newsletter requires articles to be submitted and volunteers to distribute it. Our Website requires updating, monitoring, and new articles. Ad Hoc committees, such as the By-Laws and Survey Committees, need members. Special projects like the Neighbor’s Night Out need volunteers to plan and execute the function.

Our Willow Meadows community has more than 820 homes in it. That is larger than some small towns. Many towns do not pay their mayor or city council members. What they donate to their organizations is called ‘volunteerism.’ And volunteerism is necessary to keep clubs, governments, and nations moving forward to assist in maintaining our community and our way of life and our living standards. If you are ever tempted to think *nothing* is being done by the Civic Club, we challenge you to volunteer your service for a one-year term. We always need help, and it’s a good way to meet your neighbors. They really are pretty nice people!

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## Treasurer's Report

By Jim Schroeder, Treasurer

Below and continuing on the next page is an unaudited comparison of our financial results to the budgeted amounts for the Willow Meadows Civic Club, Inc. This is for the year 2005 and contains year-to-date actual figures through October 31, 2005. As always, any member desiring additional information on the attached report or other functions of the treasurer's position may contact me by e-mail at [treasurer@willowmeadows.org](mailto:treasurer@willowmeadows.org).

<b>Willow Meadows Civic Club Inc.</b>			
<b>Budget vs. Actuals: FY05 - FY05 P&amp;L</b>			
<b>January - December 2005</b>			
<b>Actual Figures as of October 31, 2005</b>			
	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>Percent of Budget</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Advertising Revenue	1,960.00	2,000.00	98.00%
Annual Dues		0.00	
FY05 Assessments	117,310.87	116,100.00	101.04%
Prior Years Collections	15,440.13	13,900.00	111.08%
<b>Total Annual Dues</b>	<b>\$ 132,751.00</b>	<b>\$ 130,000.00</b>	<b>102.12%</b>
Late Fees	267.55	0.00	
Transfer / Refinance fees		4,000.00	0.00%
Refinance fees	1,450.00	0.00	
Transfer Fees	3,375.00	0.00	
<b>Total Transfer / Refinance fees</b>	<b>\$ 4,825.00</b>	<b>\$ 4,000.00</b>	<b>120.63%</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 139,803.55</b>	<b>\$ 136,000.00</b>	<b>102.80%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Accounting/Bookkeeping Services	2,200.00	5,100.00	43.14%
Bank Service Charges	132.23	300.00	44.08%
Braes Bayou Association	200.00	200.00	100.00%
<b>Total Enforcement/Support Services</b>	<b>\$ 8,411.00</b>	<b>\$ 9,360.00</b>	<b>89.86%</b>
General Meeting Marketing		200.00	0.00%
General Printing	2,028.31	3,000.00	67.61%
Houston Homeowners Association		50.00	0.00%
Insurance for Board		1,600.00	0.00%
Legal Services/Filing Fees	452.90	7,500.00	6.04%
Mail/Postage Expense	1,095.68	1,500.00	73.05%
Monument Planting & Foliage	180.00	2,500.00	7.20%
Mosquito Spraying		5,250.00	0.00%
Mowing	4,988.00	7,800.00	63.95%
Neighborhood Night Out	2,449.00	3,000.00	81.63%
Office Supplies	146.53	200.00	73.27%
PO Box Rental	68.00	85.00	80.00%
Red Elementary PTO		300.00	0.00%
<b>Total Security</b>	<b>\$ 85,647.62</b>	<b>\$ 95,981.00</b>	<b>89.23%</b>

	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>Percent of Budget</b>
<b>Security Stickers</b>		650.00	0.00%
<b>Storage</b>	690.00	850.00	81.18%
<b>United Orthodox Synagogue</b>		300.00	0.00%
<b>Website Hosting</b>	142.39	400.00	35.60%
<b>Welcome Packages</b>		500.00	0.00%
<b>Willow Meadows Baptist Church</b>		300.00	0.00%
<b>WMCC - Other</b>	250.00	1,000.00	25.00%
<b>WMCC Annual Directory</b>		500.00	0.00%
<b>Yard of the Month</b>	300.00	300.00	100.00%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 109,381.66</b>	<b>\$ 148,726.00</b>	<b>73.55%</b>
<b>Net Operating Income</b>	<b>\$ 30,421.89</b>	<b>\$ -12,726.00</b>	<b>-239.05%</b>
<b>Other Income</b>			
<b>Interest Income</b>	2,943.61	3,000.00	98.12%
<b>Other Income</b>	250.00	250.00	100.00%
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>\$ 3,193.61</b>	<b>\$ 3,250.00</b>	<b>98.26%</b>
<b>Other Expenses</b>			
<b>Other Expenses</b>	-220.66	0.00	
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>\$ -220.66</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>	
<b>Net Other Income</b>	<b>\$ 3,414.27</b>	<b>\$ 3,250.00</b>	<b>105.05%</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$ 33,836.16</b>	<b>\$ -9,476.00</b>	<b>-357.07%</b>
<b>Bank account ledger balance October 31, 2005:</b>	<b>\$ 228,933.20</b>		
<b>Total past due accounts October 31, 2005:</b>	<b>\$ 5,082.03</b>		
<b>FOOTNOTE:</b> The approved capital budget for 2005 includes \$11,900 for a combination of updated security car and maintenance and beautification projects. None of these funds have been spent or committed under contract to date.			

## 2006 Proposed Budget

Below and continuing on the next page is the proposed operating and capital budget for 2006 as approved by a majority of the Board of Directors. The major changes from 2005 are in the area of security due to overall increases in expenses and an increase in our weekly patrols from 56 to 64.5 hours. It is anticipated that the budget deficit will be covered by available surplus Civic Club funds.

	<b>Operating Budget</b>		
	<b>Budget FY 05</b>	<b>Budget FY06</b>	<b>% Change FY06</b>
<b>Income</b>			
<b>Advertising Revenue</b>	2,000.00	2,000.00	----
<b>Annual Dues</b>			
<b>Current Year Assessments</b>	116,100.00	117,000.00	+0.8%
<b>Prior Years Collections</b>	13,900.00	3,000.00	-78.4%
<b>Total Annual Dues</b>	<b>130,000.00</b>	<b>120,000.00</b>	<b>-7.7%</b>
<b>Transfer / Refinance Fees</b>			
<b>Refinance Fees</b>			
<b>Transfer Fees</b>			
<b>Total Transfer / Refinance Fees</b>	<b>4,000.00</b>	<b>4,000.00</b>	<b>----</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>136,000.00</b>	<b>126,000.00</b>	<b>-7.4%</b>

	<b>Operating Budget, Continued</b>		
	<b>Budget FY05</b>	<b>Budget FY06</b>	<b>% Change FY06</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Accounting / Bookkeeping Services	5,100.00	6,900.00	+35.3%
Bank Service Charges	300.00	300.00	----
Braes Bayou Association	200.00	200.00	----
Total Enforcement/Support Services	9,360.00	10,924.00	+16.7%
General Meeting Marketing	200.00	200.00	----
General Printing	3,000.00	3,000.00	----
Houston Homeowners Association	50.00	50.00	----
Insurance for Board	1,600.00	1,600.00	----
Legal Services / Filing Fees	7,500.00	8,500.00	+13.3%
Mail / Postage Expense	1,500.00	2,000.00	+33.3%
Monument Planting & Maintenance	2,500.00	2,500.00	----
Mosquito Spraying	5,250.00	4,140.00	-21.1%
Mowing	7,800.00	7,400.00	-5.1%
Annual Civic Club Picnic	3,000.00	3,200.00	+6.6%
Office Supplies	200.00	300.00	+50.0%
P.O. Box Rental	85.00	85.00	----
Red Elementary PTO	300.00	300.00	----
Total Security	<b>95,981.00</b>	<b>118,544.00</b>	<b>+23.5%</b>
Security Stickers	650.00	650.00	----
Office/Storage	850.00	850.00	----
United Orthodox Synagogue	300.00	300.00	----
Website	400.00	1,200.00	+200.0%
Welcome Packages	500.00	500.00	----
Willow Meadows Baptist Church	300.00	300.00	----
WMCC – Other	1,000.00	1,000.00	----
WMCC Annual Directory	500.00	1,272.00	+154.4%
Yard of the Month	300.00	300.00	----
Total Operating Expenses	<b>148,726.00</b>	<b>176,515.00</b>	<b>+18.7%</b>
Net Operating Income	<b>-12,726.00</b>	<b>-50,515.00</b>	<b>-296.9%</b>
Other Income			
Interest Income	3,000.00	3,600.00	+20.0%
Other Income	250.00	----	----
Total Other Income	<b>3,250.00</b>	<b>3,600.00</b>	<b>+10.8%</b>
Other Expenses			
Net Other Income	<b>3,250.00</b>	<b>3,600.00</b>	<b>+10.8%</b>
Net Income	<b>-9,476.00</b>	<b>-46,915.00</b>	<b>-395.1%</b>

	<b>Capital Budget</b>		
	<b>Budget FY05</b>	<b>Budget FY06</b>	<b>% Change FY06</b>
Beautification Sprinkler System	6,500.00	6,500.00	----
Replacement New Vehicle	5,400.00	8,170.00	+51.3%
Total Capital Expenses	<b>11,900.00</b>	<b>14,670.00</b>	<b>+23.3.3%</b>
Total Projected Deficit (paid by surplus funds)	<b>-21,376.00</b>	<b>-61,585.00</b>	<b>+188.1%</b>

## Neighborhood Survey Results

The Civic Club Board of Directors formed an ad hoc committee this summer to survey the neighborhood about security and other matters to get a sense of the residents' desires. Of the 823 homes in Willow Meadows, responses were received from 369, which is 45 percent. The answers were as follows:

1. What is your perception of the level of crime in Willow Meadows as compared to surrounding neighborhoods?

Much lower,	65	(19%)
Lower,	102	(30%)
Average,	134	(39%)
Higher,	26	(8%)
Much Higher,	13	(4%)

2. Please state the level of priority which should be given to security management by the Board.

Much lower,	5	(1%)
Lower,	3	(1%)
Average,	63	(18%)
Higher,	112	(33%)
Much higher,	160	(47%)

3. Currently we are budgeted for 56 hours of armed, Texas peace officer (HPD) security patrol per week, costing us \$96,000 annually, which is 64.5% of our operational budget. Please indicate your opinion of the effectiveness of the security efforts.

Ineffective	10	(2%)
Somewhat ineffective	33	(10%)
Average	142	(42%)
Somewhat effective	122	(36%)
Effective	33	(10%)

4. Do you believe that we should spend less money for security or more money for security?

Much less	11	(3%)
Less	5	(1%)
Same	127	(38%)
More	85	(25%)
Much more	107	(32%)

5. Proposals have been made to consider utilizing different types of security personnel – private security guards, armed and/or unarmed, or a combination of licensed peace officers (HPD) and private security guards. For each concept, please indicate your preference for type of security to be utilized.

Choice A, Off-duty, licensed and armed peace officers (HPD), our current program.

Strongly opposed	10	(3%)
Opposed	8	(3%)
Neutral	20	(6%)
Prefer	59	(18%)
Strongly prefer	224	(70%)

Choice B, Unarmed private security guards

Strongly opposed	185	(70%)
Opposed	24	(9%)
Neutral	31	(12%)
Prefer	12	(5%)
Strongly prefer	11	(4%)

Choice C, Armed private security guards

Strongly opposed	120	(46%)
Opposed	40	(15%)
Neutral	67	(26%)
Prefer	22	(9%)
Strongly prefer	10	(4%)

Choice D, Armed and unarmed private security guards

Strongly opposed	145	(57%)
Opposed	45	(18%)
Neutral	38	(15%)
Prefer	14	(6%)
Strongly prefer	11	(4%)

Choice E, Combination of licensed peace officers (HPD) and private guards

Strongly opposed	81	(31%)
Opposed	26	(10%)
Neutral	52	(20%)
Prefer	56	(22%)
Strongly prefer	45	(17%)

Choice F, No security patrol at all

Strongly opposed	255	(96%)
Opposed	4	(1%)
Neutral	2	(1%)
Prefer	2	(1%)
Strongly prefer	2	(1%)

6. Bearing in mind that increasing the amount of security may soon require the Board to increase dues to pay for the security program, if you would be willing to pay higher dues assessments for increased security, please indicate how much more.

None	82	(26%)
5 %	33	(10%)
10 %	53	(17%)
15 %	26	(8%)
20 %	31	(10%)
25 %	50	(16%)
Other amount*	42	(13%)

\*One person entered 12%, one person entered 150% and the others ranged from 30% to 100%.

7. If you would like the Board to maintain the current dues assessment level and simply divert more of the budget to security to increase coverage, please indicate how much more of the budget (based upon current assessments of \$150/homeowner) you would recommend the Board to utilize.

0 %	68	(19%)
5 %	26	(7%)
7.5 %	12	(3%)
10 %	50	(14%)
12.5 %	9	(3%)
15 %	20	(6%)
Other amount*	17	(5%)
Board use its discretion	151	(43%)

\* Other amounts ranged from -100% to +100%.

8. Would you support the following changes in dues for changes in security services? (Indicate a "Yes" for

only one choice. You may answer "No" for as many items as you wish.)

- A. \$100 per household increase for an additional 56 hours per week of patrols by off-duty HPD officers (This would mean dues of \$250 per year instead of \$150.)
 

Yes	108	(37%)
-----	-----	-------
- B. \$200 per household increase for 24 hours per day security from off-duty HPD officers (This would mean dues of \$350 per year instead of \$150.)
 

Yes	55	(19%)
-----	----	-------
- C. Costs appropriate to using unarmed private security personnel instead of off-duty HPD for increased hours of coverage – up from 56 hours to 100 hours per week. (This would result in a dues increase which may be 5 – 10 %.)
 

Yes	45	(15%)
-----	----	-------
- D. No support for increased dues to fund additional security patrol hours.
 

Yes	84	(29%)
-----	----	-------

9. Please express your concerns about utilizing security guards who would not have the power to arrest lawbreakers at the point of confrontation, which off-duty HPD officers are able to do.

Not concerned	19	(6%)
Concerned a little	9	(3%)
Neutral	36	(11%)
Concerned	49	(14%)
Very concerned	223	(66%)

10. Do you believe that 24-hour patrols of any type would eliminate crime in the neighborhood?

Yes	31	(9%)
No	305	(91%)

11. Do you believe that 24-hour patrols of any type would significantly reduce crime in the neighborhood?

Yes	249	(77%)
No	75	(23%)

12. How well do you think that Deed Restrictions are being enforced?

Under-enforced a lot	25	(8%)
Under-enforced a little	53	(17%)
About right	188	(60%)
Over-enforced a little	35	(11%)
Over-enforced a lot	11	(4%)

## Some Comments on Neighborhood Survey Results

By Stephen Polnaszek, At-Large Board Member  
and active participant in the Security Committee and the 2005 Survey Committee

What follows pulls information from the comments the 369 residents wrote on the neighborhood surveys they returned to the 2005 Survey Committee. The complete list of comments is 24 pages long and has been circulated to the WMCC Board and Committee Chairs. Not every issue brought up in the comments is included, but the sampling covers many of the most frequently mentioned or important issues. This article does not do justice to the huge number of comments which you, the homeowners, shared with us. We are working our way through them and hope that you will see positive results in the months to come.

As of the time of this analysis, about 45% of Willow Meadows households had responded to the neighborhood survey. Of the 369 surveys received, 162 included comments which varied in length from a short phrase written in the margins to one household whose comments ran onto an additional page. Of the 162 who made some comments, 52 of these surveys were submitted anonymously while 120 households expressing written opinions graciously identified themselves.

Many of the comments written in the margins were amplifications on the choices made to specific questions, although some expressed the sentiment that they did not have enough information to properly make an informed choice. Several of these "margin" comments either contradicted the choice(s) made or showed that the respondent had mixed feelings about the selection(s) made.

As seen in the results in the previous article, the overwhelming majority of respondents wanted increased funding for the security program (e.g., 74% of respondents to Question 6 supported some level of increased dues to support increased security efforts). With so much sentiment expressed there and in responses to other questions in support of stepped-up security patrol efforts, the emphasis of the rest of this article will be on other areas of interest to our homeowners which were mentioned in the comments submitted on the survey. These are my opinions and may not reflect those of the Board members and Committee Chairs.

A couple of respondents noted the amount of money that the WMCC has in the bank and therefore strongly felt that dues should not be raised under these circumstances. The Board has been of like mind for some time and will deplete a portion of the money in the bank before raising dues, as seen in this year's budget and in the 2006 budget which runs a deficit to effect that drawdown.

That should also satisfy, in the short term, those 26% of respondents who voted against any increase in dues in Question 6. Quite a few of the comments echoed those sentiments against increasing dues. Those clamoring for large increases in security spending need to appreciate that we have in our neighborhood a sizable number of long term, elderly, and/or modest fixed-income residents who would find dues increases to be burdensome. We are a neighborhood of many mixes: age, income, ethnicity, religion, etc. One's emphasis should be on getting along with others while appreciating that not everyone may share your viewpoints on many issues. Those who strive to increase their property values and/or home sizes should respect those retired folks (and some others) who have been here a long time and want their comfortable but modest home not to become an increasing financial/tax burden. The Board and the residents need to keep these opposing forces in mind so that fairness to long term residents can co-exist with the unavoidable rise in value of Willow Meadows properties.

Back to more straightforward concerns, several residents rightly complained about the slow implementation of the mosquito spraying program this year. Once the snafu over the liability/insurance coverage was eventually handled, we did get the spraying going and hope to never repeat this delayed spraying situation again.

Some of the comments had me scratching my head. Quite a few folks said that they never/hardly ever see our security patrol performing their duties. Well, as someone who walks a four mile neighborhood perimeter six times a week and does a lot of short drives to various places throughout the neighborhood at various times during the day

and night, I see our officers patrolling frequently throughout the week, going up and down all of our streets. I feel safe enough to walk occasionally very late in the evening and often see them on these strolls about 11 p.m. to midnight. Related to the patrol visibility issue, a number of respondents expressed concern about seeing the patrol cars parked in the same places at the synagogue and the church, often both being not in service at the same time. Well, despite the fears expressed, the neighborhood has not been overrun with crime because we do not have 24/7 patrol coverage. Our patrol times vary enough during any week that no criminal can predict that both of the patrol cars that he/she just saw parked will not be back in service shortly.

Several residents expressed concerns about the delayed renovation of Willow Park. The Board has discussed ways to help with fund raising. We are awaiting an update on how much help will be needed and under what time table before committing to a plan of action.

While 60% of respondents to Question 12 felt that enforcement of the deed restrictions was just right, some folks still gave us an earful. A number of folks complained about neighboring properties not being adequately kept up and asked that enforcement be increased. Others said that deed restriction enforcement was overly harsh or selective. We will have the Deed Restrictions Committee look over the pertinent comments to see if some of these folks on both extremes can have their concerns handled.

Rolling up diverse comments about arrest metrics, traffic violations, and perception of crime levels in the neighborhood, it would appear that the Civic Club needs to improve the effectiveness of its communications about the success of the current security program. The Security Committee may work on ways to better communicate the results of the Security Patrol program as they continue to manage the security operations. Also, a number of specific instances of crime and safety issues were raised, and these merit follow-up by the Security Committee and/or our off-duty HPD officers. Luckily most (but regretfully not all) of these came from non-anonymous respondents.

Several respondents rightly complained about the shopping carts being left at the bus stops on West Belfort. Complaints from residents to the appropriate businesses over the years have not met with much success. Perhaps a committee or subcommittee to a previously existing committee needs to be formed to work on strategies to obtain better results in regularly cleaning up these eyesores.

Numerous complaints about the WMCC website were received. The Board is taking action to improve the website situation in 2006. Several errors that we have made in the neighborhood directory were pointed out and we will endeavor to correct them in the 2006/2007 edition.

Despite the hundreds of people who attend our annual picnic, others complain that we should not be doing social events like that. We intend to keep having these events because of the large degree of support shown and because these face-to-face interactions outside of the structured quarterly meetings serve as yet another way for homeowners and their families to inform the Board and committee chairs of issues of concern.

There were some complaints about the survey:

- A couple of respondents wanted us to provide them with facts, not ask about their perceptions. That strikes me as contrary to what a brief survey should do. In our quarterly reports in the Newsletter we provide data on Civic Club and committee finances and activities. We wanted to find out about how well those activities and your priorities coincided and in which directions we should be heading when alternatives were under consideration.
- Others rightly chastised us about not offering a return to the constable patrols as an alternative to off-duty HPD and private security guard options. As a member of the Survey Committee I admit that that was an unfortunate oversight. We were so fixated on comparing the current program structure with the blended private security guard alternative proposed last year, that the constable option never made it onto our radar. Mea culpa.
- The other major issue was the ranking system used in Question #13. Since higher numbers were used to indicate choices that were labeled "higher," "more," and "strongly prefer," I convinced the committee to

continue in that numerical vein. Well, when it came to ranking in Question 13, many of you found specific instructions for "4" as the highest priority to be counter-intuitive. We will take that lesson into future surveys.

A number of you mentioned forming citizen patrols or forming neighborhood watch groups. These suggestions will be forwarded to the Security Committee, although follow-up with the anonymous respondents will be difficult. Complaints about the effectiveness of our current answering service continued. This issue is wrestled with at the Security Committee meetings. Residents who know of high quality, affordable answering services are encouraged to pass along recommendations to the Security Committee.

Aspects of the work of the Maintenance and Beautification Committee came up for some comment. The curb number project took some heat. Let's consider that a learning experience that points the way to a better effort in the future. Landscaping by our entrance markers was mentioned as needing improvement. The Board continues to work toward getting the delayed irrigation systems installed next year, although using drought resistant plants is often mentioned as an alternative.

Many one-off complaints were included in the survey responses. They ranged in validity from ludicrous to insightful and valuable. While most comments were of a critical or complaining nature, it was gratifying to see several complimentary comments directed to the Board. Thank you for that!

A lot of this criticism, justified or not, amounted to the usual suggestion that somebody, the Board or some committee, do something about some matter. It would have been nice to see more offers of help to get these matters moving rather than just trying to get somebody else to do something about them. Many of the suggestions were greatly appreciated, but the current Board and Committees need more help with the various functions of the Civic Club. Please help the neighborhood out by volunteering to help the Civic Club with those issues about which you care.



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## Security Report

By Jonathan Quander, Security Chair

### Holiday Home Security Suggestions

The Security Committee reminds Willow Meadows residents that while the holiday season is a joyous time of the year -- it also is a time of the year when home and car burglaries are more prevalent. As such, the Security Committee would remind Willow Meadows residents to close and lock your doors (including car and garage doors) at night and when you away from home. Unlocked or open garage doors create an easy opportunity for a criminal to access tools, equipment, cars and other valuables that may be stored in a garage. We also discourage residents from storing gifts and other valuables in cars that are left outside at night or even during the day.

If you will be traveling during the holidays and away from home, the Security Committee reminds you to cancel newspapers and request that the Post Office hold your mail until you return. It is also beneficial to ask a neighbor to pick-up any packages or other newspapers (e.g., Southwest News) that may be delivered to your home while you are away. Finally, the use of lights (indoor and outdoor) with timers and a security system are good ways to secure your home throughout the holidays. As a reminder, **if you do spot a prowler/burglar at any time (particularly during the middle of the night), please call 911 immediately.** You can then call Willow Meadows Security (713-447-0200), and if an officer is on duty, he will respond as soon as possible.

### Willow Meadows Crime Analysis Figures

The following incidents have been reported to Willow Meadows Security and/or to the Houston Police Department between August 1 and October 31, 2005. There has been an increase in burglaries, thefts, assaults and criminal mischief incidents. The Willow Meadows Officers and HPD have targeted these concerns and will continue to do so. Please remain vigilant in reporting suspicious activity to HPD or the Willow Meadows Security Officers. Despite the criminal incidents listed below, Willow Meadows continues to have fewer incidents of criminal activity than in surrounding neighborhoods. However, as the following data indicates, this still has not left Willow Meadows without incident.

DATE	INCIDENT BEGIN TIME	OFFENSE	BLOCK	STREET
8/2/2005	1800	AUTO THEFT	9700	GREENWILLOW
8/17/2005	0029	PROWLER	10300	WILLOWGROVE
8/18/2005	2352	BURGLARY OF MOTOR VEHICLE	9600	CLIFFWOOD
8/25/2005	0009	PROWLER	10300	WILLOWGROVE
8/30/2005	0738	ASSAULT	4300	WAYNESBORO
9/7/2005	1900	ASSAULT	4700	MCDERMED
9/8/2005	1500-1700	CRIMINAL MISCHIEF	9100	CLIFFWOOD
9/9/2005	730-1830	CRIMINAL MISCHIEF	9000	CLIFFWOOD
9/22/2005	0400-1300	BURGLARY	9400	GREENWILLOW
9/28/2005	1700-1900	BURGLARY	4800	O'MEARA
10/4/2005	2100	THEFT	4800	MCDERMED
10/7/2005	1200	THEFT	4400	LEMAR
10/9/2005	2245	ASSAULT	4400	WOODVALLEY
10/13/2005	1900-2000	CRIMINAL MISCHIEF	4400	SARONG
10/26/2005	1400	THEFT	4400	LEMAR
10/28/2005	1015	BURGLARY	4300	O'MEARA

### Police Car Maintenance & Repairs

Both vehicles have operated without any major problems during recent months. Oil changes, check-ups and other minor maintenance repairs have been completed on both vehicles. The WMCC Fleet Cards continue to work well for the officers. Fuel charges have begun to subside during the last two months.

### **Crime Prevention Tips**

With the continued general concern about parked vehicle and home intrusion crimes, the following are helpful tips to decrease the chance of similar criminal activity happening to you or your home:

- Keep your house and car(s) **LOCKED** (including garage doors). It may seem obvious, but several crimes have occurred because of the opportunity presented when homes, cars and garage doors are left unlocked or open either with residents at home or away.
- **Install perimeter security lighting on the side or in your backyard that activates with motion detectors.** Reasonably priced perimeter lighting can be found at Lowe's or Home Depot.
- If possible, park your vehicle(s) in your garage, within your security gate or close to your home. **In any event, do not store valuables in your vehicle(s) because it produces an attractive target.**
- If you observe or otherwise become aware of suspicious activity in the neighborhood, please contact the Security Patrol at 713.447.0200, **or if it is an emergency situation, you should contact 911 for immediate assistance.** If an officer is not on duty at the time, please leave a detailed message indicating the date and time of your call, how to contact you and the reason for the call. An officer will follow up.

### **Intrusion / Fire / Distress Alarms**

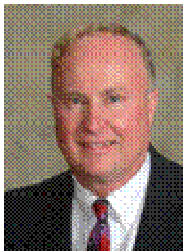
If your home and vehicle(s) are equipped with a security alarm system, we encourage you to fully utilize them. You also should change the batteries on all smoke detectors at least twice per year. Changing the batteries when daylight savings begins and ends is easy for many people to remember.

### **Security Committee**

We are always looking for residents to participate in the process to enhance our security program. The committee meets on the fourth Saturday of the month (except for those months when there is a General Meeting) at Annie's from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. A resident is not required to have a security or police background – just an interest in helping keep our neighborhood secure. Your input and ideas are needed. If interested, please contact any board member or the security chair, Jonathan Quander.

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## Willow Meadows Civic Club Meeting Schedule

December 13, 7:00 pm	General Meeting, Willow Meadows Baptist Church chapel
January 8, 5:00 pm	Board of Directors meeting, United Orthodox Synagogue library
February 12, 5:00 pm	Board of Directors meeting, United Orthodox Synagogue library
March 14, 7:00 pm	General Meeting, Willow Meadows Baptist Church chapel

## Trash Collection Schedule



Outside Loop 610 regular weekly garbage pick-up day is **Monday**.  
 Inside Loop 610 regular weekly garbage pick-up is **Tuesday**.

December 19	Green-bin recycling (outside the Loop)
December 20	Green-bin recycling (inside the Loop)
December 22	Heavy Trash (inside the Loop)
December 26	City holiday, garbage pickup this week postponed 1 day
January 2	City holiday, garbage pickup this week postponed 1 day
January 3	Green-bin recycling (outside the Loop)
January 3	Green-bin recycling (inside the Loop)
January 3	Heavy Trash (outside the Loop)
January 16	City holiday, garbage pickup this week postponed 1 day
January 17	Green-bin recycling (outside the Loop)
January 17	Green-bin recycling (inside the Loop)
January 26	Heavy Trash (inside the Loop)
January 30	Green-bin recycling (outside the Loop)
January 31	Green-bin recycling (inside the Loop)
February 13	Green-bin recycling (outside the Loop)
February 14	Green-bin recycling (inside the Loop)
February 14	Heavy Trash (outside the Loop)
February 23	Heavy Trash (inside the Loop)
February 27	Green-bin recycling (outside the Loop)
February 28	Green-bin recycling (inside the Loop)
March 13	Green-bin recycling (outside the Loop)
March 14	Green-bin recycling (inside the Loop)
March 14	Heavy Trash (outside the Loop)
March 23	Heavy Trash (inside the Loop)
March 27	Green-bin recycling (outside the Loop)
March 28	Green-bin recycling (inside the Loop)

**Trash cans and yard clippings are NOT to be placed 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.** Stickers for garbage bags put out in addition to your wheeled container are available at Sellers Brothers Grocery on Stella Link. Call ahead to check for garbage bag sticker availability at (713) 666-4417.

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