

# THE BOCA NEWSLETTER

A PUBLICATION OF THE BOULEVARD OAKS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

SPRING 2020

## Message from the Board

What interesting times we're living in! Despite the end-of-the-world news reports, Boulevard Oaks is an oasis of calm and tranquility. Thanks to the complete absence of traffic, our streets are being frequented by more joggers, bikers and hikers than ever before. It's delightful to see so many families out enjoying springtime.

We were disappointed to have to cancel the annual Egg Hunt but were happy that to be able to pivot and turn it into a socially distanced version. We invite everyone to be part of the "Bear Hunt" to help keep our neighborhood children entertained. Visit our website for instructions and to download the Bear Hunt sign.

To those who are at-risk and need help with errands, we remain ready to pair you with a volunteer who is happy to help with errands.

We send our thanks to those neighbors in essential occupations who are keeping our city going. We appreciate you!

We hope all of you will keep an eye out for each other. We are hearing that crime is increasing, primarily in more commercial areas, as the situation drags on. Please be alert for suspicious activity and do not hesitate to contact the Patrol at 713-825-5555 if anything seems "off" to you.

We are continuing to carry out the business of the civic association, albeit in new ways. The board is meeting virtually. The annual meeting of members is tentatively scheduled for June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at Poe Elementary. We certainly hope that the Stay-Home order will have been lifted and that it will be safe to gather in person, but we are also exploring virtual/online options should they be necessary.

For the time being, our newsletter and other communications will be online only. If you know of neighbors who are not part of our listserv, please invite them to join by sending a message to [info@BoulevardOaks.org](mailto:info@BoulevardOaks.org).

Thank you all for being such great neighbors. Kindness is spreading everywhere, and we are indeed a great neighborhood – and that's no accident!

## Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Please keep an eye out for each other and check on each other. If you are heading to the store, you might check with your neighbor to see if you can pick up a few items for them also.

We also have a list of neighbors who have offered to make grocery store and pharmacy runs for older residents and those who cannot get out. Please contact us if you would like to participate as a volunteer or recipient of this service.

## Enjoy Social Distancing Hour

Our neighborhood knows how to have a good time, and to that end, several blocks are enjoying a regular "Social "Distancing Hour" outside in front yards to stay connected and break the monotony of the news cycle and the Stay-Home order. This is a great way to enjoy this time of year. Just remember to stay 6 or more feet apart and follow CDC Guidelines.



## Homeless Population Along Southwest Freeway & Shepherd

Since the Covid Crisis began, the number of homeless persons camping along the Southwest Freeway (US59/I-69) and under the overpass at Shepherd has grown. Tents and makeshift beds have been setup as far west as Magic Island along the rights-of-way. Trash and debris are mounting along the freeway as the homeless population spreads west presumably in an effort to distance themselves safely from others. This location is attractive in that it is sheltered and close to 24-hour food options.

Those who are under the freeway overpass appear to be following the city ordinances which prohibit citizens from blocking sidewalks and erecting tents. Ordinances also require that belongings be contained in an area not to exceed three square feet, and most are complying.

The City, in conjunction with the Coalition for the Homeless ([homelesshouston.org](http://homelesshouston.org)), has recently secured two hotels to house the homeless during the Covid Crisis, but relocation is challenging, and many prefer to take their chances on the streets. This is a tough time to be homeless in Houston. Patience is needed.

## Membership Drive Reminder

Your support is needed to fund BOCA's activities to maintain property values and enhance the quality of life for all residents appreciated! BOCA's Fiscal Year begins in July. And we are wrapping up our fundraising effort for 2019-20.

Another round of reminders was mailed recently, but response has been slow given the distractions and budgetary constraints everyone is facing. However, if you received the recent request and are able to help, your participation would be greatly appreciated.

Visit [www.BoulevardOaks.org](http://www.BoulevardOaks.org) and click the blue "Join" button at the top of the homepage to pay dues via PayPal or by credit card.

## Meeting with Our New District C Council Member Abbie Kamin



In February, incoming District C Council Member Abbie Kamin held a meeting for the leadership of all District C Super Neighborhoods. BOCA was represented at the meeting and our top priorities for the city were submitted in conjunction with those for the

entire University Place Super N'hood. The list included:

- the need for remediation of the confusing Rice/Sunset intersection
- the need for City regulation of Airbnbs and similar short-term rentals
- the proliferation of high-density student housing/dormitories in residential neighborhoods and enforcement of related ordinances
- the ongoing request that the City develop a rehab, overlay and reconstruction program for streets and public alleyways.

BOCA is pleased that Council Member Kamin and her experienced staff are reaching out to District C neighborhoods and Super Neighborhoods to gain a comprehensive understanding of our individual and collective needs.

## Brighten the Corner Where you Are!

Our thanks to the neighbors of all ages who are using their artistic abilities to brighten sidewalks with colorful chalk art and keeping windows filled with new tableaux of stuffed animals, rainbows and other signs of hope. See the next column for a way to make neighbors smile.

Join the fun! If you'd like to participate, simply place a stuffed bear in a window of your home so when families go for car rides or walks during this quarantine, they can hunt for bears! Communities around the nation are participating in bear hunts for the little ones to enjoy! Have some fun with your family while you practice social distancing!

How many bears can you find?

## Noise and Lawn Care During the Stay-Home Order

As a courtesy, please limit noisy activity such as lawn care during early morning hours and on weekends. Most neighbors are now at home and with few going to work during the Stay-Home order, many have altered schedules and are sleeping later.



Even in normal times, many sections of the neighborhood have governing documents that regulate lawncare activities and prohibit them before 8 a.m. or 9 a.m. weekdays. A few sections even go as far as to prohibit this activity on weekends and holidays.

Just as we are noticing how noisy the birds have suddenly become without the constant hum of traffic and commerce, lawn equipment noise is more noticeable than ever. Let's be considerate of others and their evolving schedules.

## Trash & Recycling Delays: Call 311

Many of you are experiencing delayed trash and recycling collection. City staff reports that Solid Waste collection crews are overwhelmed by the amount of waste generated due to the Stay-Home order. If your trash is missed, make a report to 311. Crews are catching up with missed collections on Wednesdays and Saturdays at homes where reports are made.

# Get Outside and Ride! by Radu Tutos

Tired of being stuck home and desperate to have your kids go outside and play? Take your family for a bicycle ride! It's a fun, safe, and healthy way to spend time outside while observing Houston's Stay-Home order. Check out the handy *Boulevard Oaks Bike Map* below and explore your neighborhood and adjacent areas by bike! Visit [BoulevardOaks.org](http://BoulevardOaks.org) for an enlarged version.

Luckily, our neighborhood streets are pretty much all bike-friendly and pleasant to ride on. If you wish to get a little further out, Hermann Park is an easy bike ride away.

For even longer rides, Buffalo Bayou Park has excellent bike trails. You can reach either destination using the suggested routes in the adjacent map. Just remember, parks are currently closed, so a ride on our mostly empty local street is a great alternative.

Don't forget to keep social distancing precautions while you ride. Avoid riding in large groups. If using bikes that do not belong to you or family, wash your hands before and after, and use disinfecting wipes. For more safe riding tips and suggestions for popular bike circuits in Houston visit [www.BikeHouston.org](http://www.BikeHouston.org).

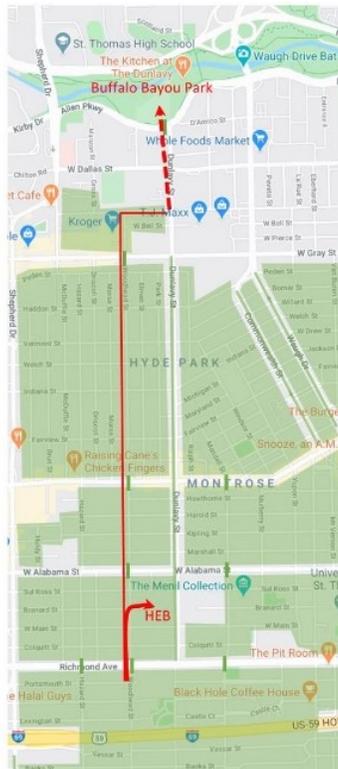
## Boulevard Oaks Bike Map

Brought to you by BIKEHOUSTON

- Bike-friendly street grid (1)
- Street crossing with stop light or 4-way stop
- Street segment that may be crossed with precaution
- Suggested route to popular destinations
- Suggested route to popular destinations Walk bike on sidewalk segment

(1) Low-traffic streets with a single traffic lane in each direction and traffic-calming elements (frequent intersections, parked cars, speed bumps, pedestrians crossing)

**Warning:** Riding a bicycle can lead to serious accidents, as does driving a motor vehicle or walking. All suggested routes in this map are potentially dangerous, so ride carefully.



## Pettiquette: Canine Safety and Courtesy Reminders

We want BOCA to remain a safe and enjoyable neighborhood for everyone and that means keeping pets and pedestrians safe by obeying laws. The two most frequent pet complaints we hear about are dogs roaming or being walked off-leash and owners failing to pick up after their pets.

### **The Leash Law**

Dogs “running at large” or wandering through the neighborhood have been a perennial problem on several blocks. Pet owners may not realize that this practice is disturbing to others and can be dangerous. The city’s leash law (Section 6-101) protects both the dog and the dog owner from unexpected accidents. The law requires that when a pet is not indoors or contained within a fenced yard, it must be on a leash and “under direct physical control of a live human being at all times.”

In addition to the legal requirement, here are several more reasons to always keep pets on a leash:

- Leashes prevent your dog from chasing animals, people, or bikes, thus preventing accidents, animal fights and traffic hazards.
- It’s courteous to your neighbors, especially if they do not know your dog’s level of obedience.
- A dog leash could save your dog’s life. You can pull your dog back to protect them, should there be something dangerous in the environment.
- When used properly, most canines don’t mind being on a leash, in fact, most like them.
- Fines for violating the leash and waste laws can be up to \$500 per incident per day (Section 1-6).

### **Gate & Fence Safety**

For the safety of pets and children, keep your pet safe by keeping gates/fences in good working order. Inspect them regularly and perform routine maintenance to ensure self-closing mechanisms are in working order.

During the Stay-Home orders, more puppy adoptions are occurring than ever before. Yards that may have previously been safe without a pet, may need additional fortification. If you have adopted a dog that will grow large, you may need to add additional latches and locks to your gates.

### **Safety Around Dogs**

Please educate yourself and your children about pets, even if you don’t own one. Below are a few of the many helpful tips from <http://resources.bestfriends.org/article/dog-safety-staying-safe-around-dogs>.

- Teach children to be safe around dogs and do not let them threaten, tease, chase or harass a dog.
- Always ask permission before petting or touching someone else’s dog.
- Don’t corner a dog. All dogs have a sense of personal space, so watch their body language as you get closer (or the dog gets closer to you).

- Do not approach dogs in cars or on chains or ropes. Dogs can be protective about their territory and may feel a bit more vulnerable or defensive than usual. When dogs are tied up, they know they can’t run away so their only defense will be to fight.
- Never get between dogs who are fighting and keep your hands away from their heads.
- Don’t reach over or through fences or barriers to pet or touch a dog.
- Don’t enter a property containing a dog if you’re not accompanied by the dog’s owner. Dogs can be protective of their family and territory and think it’s their job to protect them.
- Children should always be accompanied around dogs, even the family dog.
- Supervising children around dogs not only protects the children from accidents but also protects the dog from harm by children who don’t always know that touching animals in a certain way can hurt them.

## Room to Roam

Consider these nearby options where your pup can run freely.

- The Ervan Chew Dog Park on Dunlavy across the freeway bridge is in walking distance and often has a supply of waste bags.
- Levy Park at the intersection of Eastside near Richmond. The is shaded and very well-maintained.
- The Danny Jackson Dog Park on Westpark Dr. just inside Loop 610 is a park with water features. When visiting dog parks, use common sense and take proper Covid protection precautions.



The City of Houston’s Parks Department has a full list of dog parks: [www.houstontx.gov/parks/dogparks](http://www.houstontx.gov/parks/dogparks)

### **Pet Waste**

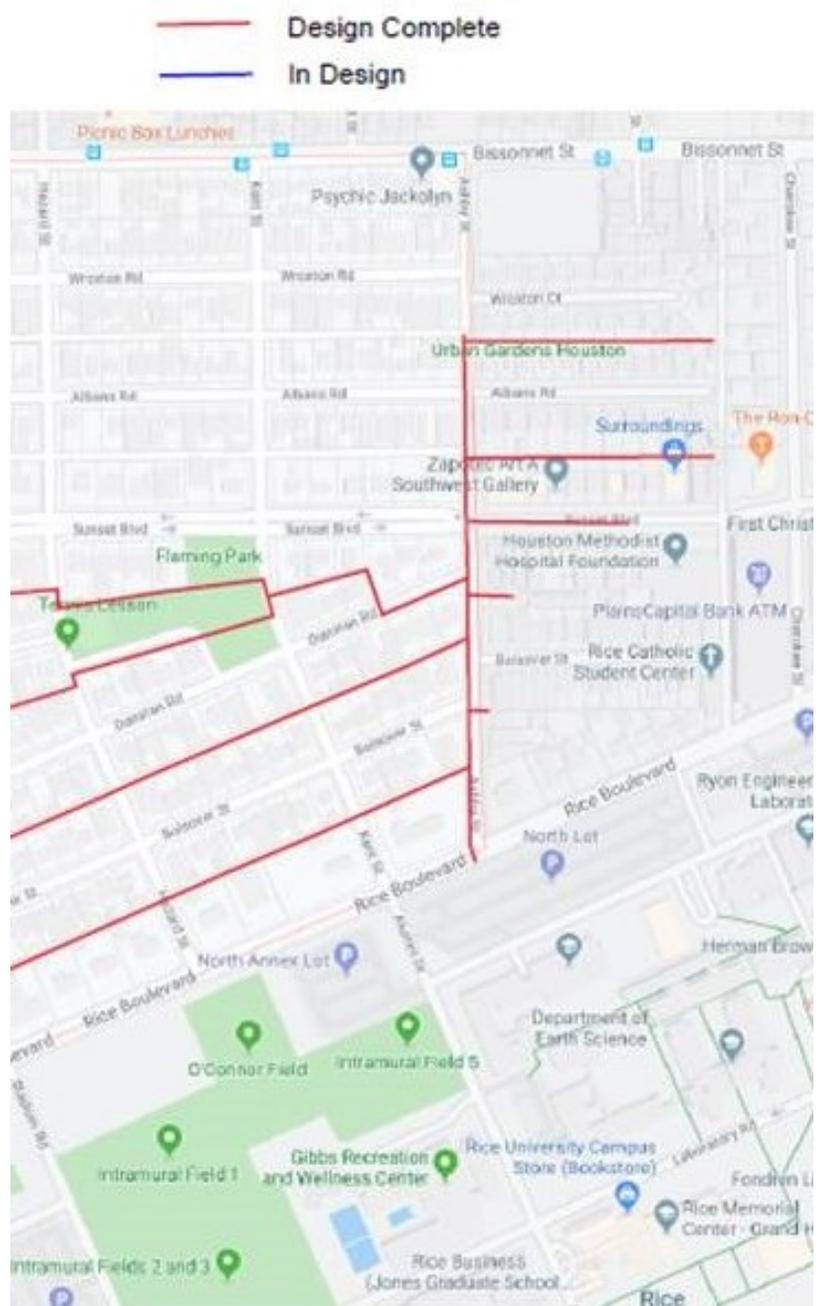
Please pick up after your pets! City law Section 6-24 requires that citizens walking pets must carry a bag, or other means of waste disposal. Not only must the waste be collected, you must take it away with you. The number of pets being walked in the neighborhoods has increased with several of the new apartment complexes nearby and we are hearing reports about bagged waste being left in the esplanades and curbs. If you see this activity taking place, feel free to politely remind pet owners that they are breaking the law. If there is a chronic problem with a particular pet owner, you may wish to contact the Patrol.

## Gas Line Replacement Project for Southeast Section of Boulevard Oaks

CenterPoint Energy's natural gas operations is planning a system modernization that will replace natural gas mains and service connections for some parts of the southern extension of the neighborhood this fall. The map below shows the lines (in red) that will be replaced. The replacements are determined by factors such as age of the existing line, materials in the existing line that need upgrading, and the need for a larger line due to increased growth/usage. Lines are east of Ashby Street, and in much of the Southhampton subdivision. CenterPoint has assured the neighborhoods that they will strive to minimize customer impact during the project. Construction of the line replacements are expected to start this fall.

A few weeks prior to construction, door hangers notifying residents of the project, will be placed on affected homeowners' front doors. Construction methods will be used to minimize disturbance to property, and CenterPoint will restore their work areas to original condition and in compliance with the City's specifications for such repairs. During construction, construction vehicles and vehicular traffic will be able to use the alley, but sections will be blocked off where the boring is taking place. There will also be some gas main work in the rights of ways (ROWS) on Greenbriar (from Rice Blvd. to Bissonnet on the east side of ROW), and on Ashby (on the west side of the road from the alley north of Albans to Rice Blvd.) They also have a short segment of gas main proposed on the south side of the Sunset Boulevard ROW, from Ashby to about 400 feet east of Ashby in the southern extension of Boulevard Oaks. CenterPoint crews will use extreme care not to impact street trees. New lines will be installed by boring a hole at one end and pulling the new line through it. Then, connections will be made between the new line and individual meters.

During the process of switching over to the new facilities (pipelines), homeowners will experience a brief interruption of service for a matter of minutes. After service is interrupted, service technicians will perform safety checks on all homes' natural gas appliances and equipment and relight pilots as needed. CenterPoint and their contractor service technicians will have marked vehicles and be able to provide a picture ID. Connections will be coordinated with homeowners to minimize the time that their service is interrupted. The current plan is to work on one block at a time, with each block taking approximately two to three weeks to complete. The plan could change to working on several blocks simultaneously. The project will be halted from just before Thanksgiving until after Christmas to avoid disruptions during the holidays. We will keep you updated as information becomes available.



Map provided by CenterPoint Energy.

Map data ©2020 Google 200 ft

## Record Attendance at December 2019 Caroling Party



The 2019 Caroling party held on December 15<sup>th</sup> was magical and had the best attendance ever. This event is possible thanks to the efforts of volunteers lead by chairman Stephanie Pedigo and her sister Shannon Allen and their industrious families and friends. Santa made an appearance; hayrides were extended to ensure everyone had a ride. The earlier timeframe seemed to work better for families with little ones too.

Thanks to the Pedigo and Allen families and all of the helpers including Sam & Cher Levy and photographer Elain Mut. And special thanks to neighborhood realtor **Andrew McCain** and to **Sue Lawson** for co-sponsoring the event!

## City Trash & Recycling

Questions? Call 311

**Automated** curbside collection: Tuesday

**Yard Waste** (bagged): Tuesday

**Recycling** (Tues. B): every other Tuesday

April 14 & 28 May 12 & 26

June 9 & 23 July 7 & 21



Bins and yard waste bags should be placed at the curb after 6:00 pm the evening before collection and removed from the curb by 10 pm on collection day.

### City Heavy Trash

Place items on the curb after 6 p.m. the Sunday before scheduled collection. **Tree debris** is collected every month. **Junk waste** is collected in **even** months.

Blocks East of Greenbriar: ..... 1<sup>st</sup> Friday

Blocks West of Greenbriar:.....3<sup>rd</sup> Monday

## Private Trash Schedule

### Edgemont & Broadacres Trash Info

#### WCA Waste: 713-526-1536

Trash & Yard Waste: Tues. & Friday

Recycling..... Friday

Heavy Trash ..... By request



### Cherokee Trash Info

For residents of the 5300 blocks of Cherokee and Mandell trash and recycling collection is provided by TX Pride Disposal. For more information contact customer service at 713-705-3534.

## BOCA Officers 2019 – 2020

(July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020)

<i>President</i>	Richard Holt
<i>President-elect</i>	James Cogan
<i>Vice president</i>	Sue Lawson
<i>Treasurer</i>	Bob Wright
<i>Secretary</i>	Helen Toombs
<i>Past President</i>	Sue Payne

<u><i>Directors</i></u> 2017 – 2020	Jennifer DeLange Cece Fowler
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	Jean Jenner Geoffrey Walker
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2018 – 2021	Trey Christensen Julie Mastroianni Harry Tindall Radu Tutos
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2019 – 2020	Joe Cialone Steve Grossman Stefan Murry Melissa Rabalais
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### Committees

<i>Deed Restrictions</i>	Geoffrey Walker
<i>Public Works</i>	John Cutler
<i>Trees</i>	Hank Segelke Wallace Hooker

<i>Website</i>	Dave Shine
<i>Photographer</i>	Elaine Mut
<i>Night Out</i>	James Cogan
<i>Caroling Party</i>	Stephanie Pedigo Shannon Allen

<i>Mixer</i>	Vacant
<i>Easter Egg Hunt</i>	Bonnie Coffman
<i>4<sup>th</sup> of July Party</i>	Donna Yanowski Sue Payne

<u><i>Executive Director</i></u>	Evalyn Krudy
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## Poe Elementary Campus and Spark Park Are Closed - Please Take Away Your Trash



With many working from home and with schools closed Poe and the Spark Park are receiving many more daily visits from families and dog walkers. The Poe PTO asks that you carry your personal waste and any pet waste home with you after visiting the campus. Poe and the Spark Park are not serviced by the City Parks Dept. And Poe's custodial staff are off-duty during the closure and the cans are not being emptied. Your cooperation will prevent cans from overflowing and will prevent a small, public health crisis from occurring on campus. Thanks for your cooperation.

*Thank you to our Neighbor and Newsletter Sponsor, Andrew McCain!*

# Andrew McCain

andrew.mccain@elliman.com | 713.526.4847  
*A Great Opportunity and Time to Invest in Real Estate*

## My Boulevard Oaks Listings



1815 North Boulevard



1802 North Boulevard



1920 Banks Street



1641 Milford Street For Lease



# I'm with Elliman