

Commonwealth Comments

September/October, 2001

www.commonwealth-civic.com

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Please Join
Us!



The Commonwealth Women's Club

Invites You to our
2001/2002 Kick-off

Champagne Social

Thursday, September 20
7 p.m.

for an evening of fun and friendship
at

74 Bradford Circle

For more information,
contact Susan Chaluh 281-980-3290 or
Donna Poole at 281-265-7108.



Neighborhood Watch News

Community Watch is neighbors watching out for neighbors. It is a network of people working together to keep their neighborhood as free from crime as humanly possible.

The Commonwealth neighborhoods have had a neighborhood watch program in place for about 10 years. While we are fortunate enough to live in a **low crime area**, we do not live in a **CRIME FREE** area. We have been put in the position of requesting "official" action on the part of our block captains only two or three times in the past ten years.

As a community that cares about it's neighbors, we can work together to discourage and even prevent crime from becoming a problem here.

Be sure to take the time to get to know your neighbors. Ask for a name and telephone number which you can call in case of an emergency, or just as verification that everything is okay in case you see anything out of the ordinary. Know what cars they drive and which vehicles belong on your street.

*Consider becoming the block captain for your block.
You can call Nancy at 281-265-2769 for more information.*

For up-do-date Civic Association information:

www.commonwealth-civic.com

the write

idea !

Commonwealth Comments,
3909 St. Michaels Ct.
Sugar Land, Texas 77479
Tel: 281-265-4556
email:
newsletter@commonwealth-civic.com

Community Awareness Corner

Fire Station --

Upcoming Meetings

The Sugar Land Fire Department plans to open Fire Station #5 on August 29th, 2001. The new station, located at Commonwealth Boulevard and Elkins Road, is the first to be added since 1994 and the first fire station ever to be built in the City's ETJ (extra territorial jurisdiction).

Landscape Committee Meeting

A crew of four firefighters will staff Station #5 every day. The station will be equipped with a Rescue "Pumper" capable of performing EMS (emergency medical services), rescue from motor vehicle collisions, and firefighting. In the first year of operation Station #5 is expected to make about three hundred calls.

Meets once a month. Call Steve O'Hara at 281-265-4485 for the next meeting date and time.

Modifications Committee Meeting

Anytime a fire station opens up in a neighborhood, there is a natural concern about the potential noise. The objective for every response is safety. As the pumper leaves the station, the driver usually turns on the lights and sirens to warn traffic on the streets. Generally speaking, as it gets later and the traffic decreases, the driver turns on the lights and may not utilize the sirens until he/she reaches an intersection or encounters traffic. The Transportation Code, Subchapter A, Section 546.003, Audible or Visual Signals Required states: "...the operator of an authorized emergency vehicle ...shall use, at the discretion of the operator in accordance with policies of the department or the local government that employs the operator, audible or visual signals..."

In other words, the Fire Department tries to be a good neighbor, unless being silent compromises safety.

Third Tuesday of each month - 7 p.m. at the Clubhouse



The **Grand Opening** for Station #5 will be **September 8, 2001** from **10AM until 2PM**. The ribbon cutting ceremony will occur shortly after 10AM and will be followed by a station Open House. The Open House will include station tours, child safety seat inspections, fingerprinting, fire and life safety presentations, popcorn, refreshments, and door prizes.

Board Meeting

Fourth Thursday of each month - 6 p.m. at the Clubhouse

You are also welcome to stop for a visit anytime during the day. For school groups or scouts that wish to visit the fire station for an organized tour, please call the Public Education Office at 281-275-2859, at least two weeks in advance of your planned outing.



Fore for Education

The Second Annual Fort Bend ISD Education Foundation Back-to-School Scramble will be held on Monday, September 10th. Pre-registration is necessary for this tournament and you will not want to miss out! Game day check-in begins at 11:00 a.m. There are putting, chipping and driving contests. For your \$175 entry fee you will receive a boxed lunch, a round of golf, beverages, a dinner reception and auction, *a Nike Dri-Fit golf shirt and a Nike Lite-Weight golf club bag!* The proceeds from this tournament benefit the foundation and the students of FBISD. Since 1992, the Fort Bend Education Foundation has been awarding grants to schools and teachers for innovative teaching ideas. The foundation has given away more than \$600,000 to date. Since Commonwealth Elementary opened four years ago, our teachers have received seven grants totaling more than \$8,600. Please consider playing in this fun-filled day of golf which benefits the students of Fort Bend ISD. **NOTE that our premier auction item this year is a 2001 Masters Tournament flag autographed by Tiger Woods.** For a registration form or additional information please contact Tammy Noe at 281-265-7299 or Brenna Smelley at 281-634-1113.

City Update

submitted by David Wallace,
City Councilmember, District 4

I would like to take this moment to thank you, once again, for your support and vote in the recent May election. Being elected to represent your interest on City Council is a position that I will not take lightly. I strongly believe in community service and look forward to doing my part to help make Sugar Land, and particularly District 4, a better place to live, work and raise a family. Thank you for your vote of confidence!

Since the May 5th election, the city has had a number of important issues with which to contend. I would like to take this moment to briefly update you on these issues as I feel that informed communication to all citizens of Sugar Land is essential. Should you wish to discuss these or any other issue of importance, I would encourage you to contact me. My contact information is as follows:

David G. Wallace

dwallace@council.ci.sugar-land.tx.us

281-491-5240 (office) 281-242-7822 (home)
281-240-5360 (fax)

As mentioned above, I look forward to continuing this community service for many years to come. Nevertheless, some of the important issues that have arisen during the past 90 days are as follows:

Fire Station Number 5


Fire Station #5, located at Elkins and Commonwealth, is scheduled to be staffed and operational by the end of August. The City of Sugar Land is planning an open house for the community on September 8. The station will be staffed by four firefighters, 24/7. (See related article on page 2)

University Boulevard

University Boulevard is 90% designed and is scheduled by TxDOT to be let in February 2002. It typically takes approximately 60 days +/- for construction to begin after bids are opened. Construction is anticipated to take approximately one year, weather permitting.

This project is being paid for as follows: Design is 100% by City and County; and Construction is 80% federal, 10% City and 10% County.

article continued on page four



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The project entails the following:

Commonwealth Blvd. will be extended to the west over the levee and Ditch "H" to intersect with University Boulevard. This will extend the four-lane boulevard cross section of Commonwealth and there will be two independent bridges over Ditch "H". Each bridge will accommodate two lanes and a large pedestrian lane.

University Boulevard will connect the **Commonwealth Boulevard extension to U.S. Highway 59** at the U.S. 59/University Boulevard interchange. This segment will also be a four-lane boulevard but has been designed to accommodate six to eight lanes. The road will ultimately widen to 8 lanes as it approaches U.S. Highway 59 at a future date.

Council has approved the concept of ornamental street lights on University and an ornamental traffic signal on University Boulevard at the proposed entrance to University of Houston at Sugar Land. This signal location is the future intersection of the Lexington Boulevard extension.

Further, a 14-foot hike and bike facility will run along the western side of the roadway in front of the University of Houston campus and City park land.

Proposed Budget Depicts Strong Local Economy

Sugar Land is developing for tomorrow today through sound fiscal planning and policies such that the city will ensure a strong financial position for future generations. The city council and staff are currently reviewing the budget that was submitted by the Interim City Manager. The proposed budget lowers the tax rate by \$0.015 to \$0.3333 while providing for base services, enhancements and expanded existing services, while also funding an aggressive capital improvement program. The budget goes into effect October 1, 2001. Of course, this budget is still subject to a great deal of review, analysis and debate prior to being adopted in September.

Neeley Announces Resignation as Sugar Land City Manager

Sugar Land City Manager David E. Neeley announced his resignation, effective Sept. 30. In leaving, he signed a two-year consulting agreement with the City for ongoing management services.

During Neeley's tenure, the City grew from 16,400 residents in 1985 to the current 63,328 population. During that time, the residential and business tax base grew from \$1.2 billion to \$4.8 billion in 2000 and the City's budget increased from \$11.5 million to \$90.4 million. The City also succeeded in lowering the property tax rate from 50 cents per \$100 valuation to 34.83 cents.

Sugar Land City Council at its regularly scheduled July 3 meeting, named Allen Bogard, 47, as interim city manager, effective July 21 and city manager, effective Oct. 1.

The action was taken following the resignation two weeks earlier of City Manager David Neeley. While Neeley's resignation is effective Sept. 30, his last day on the job will be July 20 because of accumulated leave. Bogard, who has been Sugar Land's Deputy City Manager for the past seven years, will work closely with Neeley during the transition.

Traffic Flow Cameras Installed in Sugar Land

To help keep Sugar Land motorists moving and enable the City to respond quickly to traffic-related incidents, traffic-management cameras have been installed on Williams Trace Boulevard at the Oyster Creek bridge. The fixed-mount cameras are only able to monitor the public roadway, and the transmissions are not recorded. The images captured by the cameras are transmitted to the City's traffic operations center, where technicians are able to continuously monitor and remotely alter traffic signal timing. This affords the City the ability to respond quickly to traffic incidents. The program was federally funded with a 20 percent local match.

The system is planned to be expanded to U.S. Hwy. 90A, Sweetwater Boulevard near First Colony Mall and State Hwy. 6 near U.S. Hwy 59. Part of the computerized traffic management system, the traffic cameras will eventually enable City staff to have a more proactive role in the management of Sugar Land's traffic signal system. The City is currently working with TxDOT to take over the operation and maintenance of the 40 traffic signals located along state roads and highways that TxDOT currently manages. The take over will be complete next year and is expected to provide a more efficient traffic signal system for residents by the incorporation of new technology into the existing system.

Sugar Land Acquires Emergency Response Vehicle

The Sugar Land Fire Department recently placed a new emergency response vehicle in service that is designed to respond to non-fire-related calls. The emergency response vehicle is intended to reduce the number of runs made by the much larger and costlier full-size fire engines. Because of the strategic locations of the four Sugar Land fire stations, the Fire Department is the first responder to all emergency calls. Reducing the number of non fire-related runs is expected to extend fire engine lifetime and improve public safety by increasing engine availability for response to fire-related incidents.

The new vehicle, known as a Squad, will respond to the following calls from Sugar Land Fire Station 4 located on Austin Parkway near First Colony Mall: emergency medical calls; motor vehicle accidents; non-emergency service calls; and hazardous materials spills. The Squad is expected to handle more than 600 emergencies in its first full year of operations.

Don Smithers Appointed Sugar Land Mayor Pro-Tem

Sugar Land Councilman Don Smithers, District 1, has been appointed to serve as mayor pro tem, a position he previously held from June 1999 to June 2000.

Each year following Council elections, the Council appoints one of its members as mayor pro tem. The mayor pro tem acts as mayor during the mayor's absence and has the power to perform every act the mayor could perform if present. Smithers was re-elected in May to his third two-year term as a City Council member.

The Official Commonwealth web-site

www.commonwealth-civic.com

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Don't Forget

Fort Settlement
MS Dedication
September 16

Rosh Hashanah
begins sundown
September 17

Yom Kippur
begins sundown
September 26

Columbus Day
October 8

Halloween
October 31

Special Interest Groups

Assistant Police Chief Graduates from FBI National Academy



Sugar Land Assistant Police Chief Michael Van Court was one of 264 law enforcement officers who graduated on June 8 from the FBI National Academy Program held at Quantico, Virginia.

Internationally known for its academic excellence, the National Academy Program, held at the FBI Academy, offers 10 weeks of advanced legal, investigative, management and fitness training for selected officers having proven records as professionals within their agencies. On average, these officers have 19 years of law enforcement experience and usually return to their agencies to serve in executive level positions.

The 205th session of the National Academy consisted of men and women from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, 24 international countries, three military organizations and four federal civilian organizations.

Van Court is one of three Sugar Land Police executives who have graduated from the prestigious FBI National Academy Program. Chief Earnest Taylor and Lieutenant Justin Joyce also are graduates.

Be sure to note that Sugar Land City Council, for reasons of safety, has recently made it illegal to distribute any material or collect money from motorists on the major streets (more than two lanes or a speed limit of over 30 miles per hour) of Sugar Land. Anyone violating this ordinance may receive a fine of \$50.00.

Moms In Common

Open to all Commonwealth residents, this babysitting cooperative is a great way to meet other moms in our area. We offer social and educational activities as well as exchange babysitting time among the members. Call Donna (281-265-2663)

The Commonwealth Babysitting Co-op

The Commonwealth Babysitting Co-op is open to all Commonwealth residents. We meet monthly, swap babysitting time, organize social activities throughout the year, and are currently organizing a Saturday night sitting swap. We are recruiting new members, so please call Brenda at 281-980-3150 or Cornelia at 281-491-4595 if you are interested.

The Commonwealth Women's Club

The Commonwealth Women's Club is open to all women residing in The Commonwealth. The club's purpose is to stimulate civic, philanthropic, educational, and cultural interest in the community, as well as foster a cordial welcome to new residents. Volunteer outreach is available to those who are interested. If you are interested in this group, or would like more information, please contact Susan at 281-980-3290 or Donna at 281-265-7108.

Hispanic Club

If you speak Spanish and are interested in joining this informal group, contact Lucy at 281-265-2610, for information, date and location.

Moms in Touch

Moms in Touch is a group of mothers who meet for one hour each week to pray for their children and the school they attend. If you are interested in joining us, please contact JoLynn Gill (Lake Olympia Middle School) at 281-565-3823; Louisa Chiasson (Commonwealth Elementary School) at 281-565-6849, Cathy Graves (Clements High School) at 281-265-7940 or Mary Marwil (Elkins High School) at 281-265-0877.



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Pretty much everyone is aware of the fact that the University of Houston is currently constructing a Sugar Land campus within a stone's throw of The Commonwealth. Good news for all of us with children approaching college age. We won't feel the need to buy the kiddos a vehicle for college --they can ride their bikes! (With the cost of education these days that's not necessarily a joke!) After all, the city of Sugar Land is planning a park and bicycle trails adjacent to the campus. In reality, the University has had a Sugar Land campus since 1996.

The new campus, currently ahead of its construction schedule, will open in the fall of 2002. Administrators anticipate an enrollment of 2000 students. Following what appears to be a future trend, the campus will offer strictly junior and senior level classes and a graduate degree program. Any student who has completed the majority of core requirements during their Freshman and Sophomore years, or has earned a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution, is eligible to apply for admission to one of the four UH System Universities. (UH-main campus, UH-Clear Lake, UH-Downtown and UH-Victoria. Students enroll in the university that offers the degree program he/she wishes to pursue and take their classes right here in Sugar Land. The University of Houston Sugar Land (UHSSL) partners with Houston Community College and Wharton county Junior College to provide seamless transfer opportunities. A student can complete the lower level work at these campuses and take junior, senior and graduate level classes at the UHSSL campus. Counselors at each of the campuses are able to assist students with the transfer.

The Sugar Land location currently offers classes for 20 undergraduate and 15 graduate degree programs (Masters degree only). Some of the degrees supported are: Computer Information Technology, Computer Systems, Accounting and MBA, Criminal Justice, Hotel and Restaurant Management and Education and Masters of Educational Administration. Degrees are issued by the campus to which the student originally applied.

The new facility will be 57,000 square feet, located on 250 acres at Highway 59 and University Blvd. Additional construction (expansion) will take place as demand dictates.

If you are interested in obtaining more information about the new University of Houston facility, you may contact Sharon Baca, Director at 281-275-3315 or Janis Parsley, Regional Development Director at 281-275-3362. Admission information is available at 281-275-3300.

www.uhsa.uh.edu/fb



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| Commonwealth Estates | \$77.85 | .97 |
| Commonwealth Park | \$67.33 | .97 |
| Oxford | \$69.34 | .97 |
| Sutton Forest | \$84.43 | .97 |
| Sutton Park | \$82.63 | .97 |

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Clubhouse Rental

The Commonwealth Clubhouse was completely renovated last year. It is a beautiful facility and can be rented at reasonable rates for parties and special events by residents in good standing with the Association. It won't be too long before the holiday party season is upon us. If you are interested in renting our Clubhouse, give Laura at Crest Management a call for rates and/or information at 713-579-0761. (Photos are located on the association web-site/click on amenities.)

Storm Doors

As fall approaches, many residents may be giving consideration to either protecting their front doors from the harsh summer light, or encouraging the winter sunshine to enter their homes. One method of doing so is installation of a storm door. Approval by the Modifications Committee is required, please note the following Association regulation:

7.0 Storm Windows and Storm Doors

7.1 The frames of storm windows and storm doors must be of a color compatible with the exterior house colors and/or general use and appearance of the house. All storm doors must be a full glass door. No front screen doors are allowed.

Property Modifications

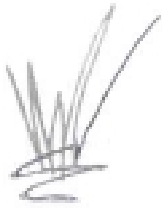
It is the responsibility of the homeowner who intends to make an exterior modification to first submit a modification application and have it approved before the work begins. This protects the homeowner from potential expensive rework to meet the civic association guidelines. In addition, the homeowner is required to apply for, and meet, all city building requirements. Modification Application forms are available from Crest Management or from our web page, www.commonwealth-civic.com.

Considering having a pool installed?

If you are considering having a pool installed, please CUT AND SAVE the following information. The MDR committee has put together this information to assist anyone submitting an application for a pool. This is provided in an effort to reduce the number of applications that are returned for lack of information. **Please note changes and additions.**

1. Obtain application from Crest Management (or www.commonwealth-civic.com)
2. Fill out application **completely** and return to Crest Management.
3. Attach a copy of your plan with the pool and deck location and dimensions indicated.
4. Indicate on plat: site access and all drain lines as well as location of all pool equipment.
5. Backwash and drain lines must drain to the street.
6. Blueprint of pool must indicate schedule 40 PVC used for all drain lines.
7. Pool and deck must be at least 5 feet from side and rear lot lines and should not encroach on any easements.
8. Pool and deck must be within building setback lines.
9. See 9.0 in your Architectural Control Guidelines for more details.

A deposit, if needed, must be received by Crest Management before authorization for building can be given.



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Jim McGregor
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Director

Steve O'Hara
281-265-4485
Director

Association Information

Clubhouse & Pool Rentals
Crest Management 281-579-0761

Neighborhood Watch
Nancy Castellvi 281-265-2769

Welcome Committee
Maura Ritchie 281-980-6347
Roseann Pisano

Landscape Committee
Steve O'Hara 281-265-4485

Modifications & Deed Restrictions
Faye Becker 281-980-3551

Tennis Committee
Cindy Facker

L.I.D. Representative
Mike Homeyer 281-980-3794

Important Phone Numbers

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Crest Management | 281-579-0761 |
| Police (Non-Emergency) | 281-275-2500 |
| Animal Control | 281-275-2596 |
| Fire Department | 281-491-0852 |
| Water & Street | 281-275-2750 |
| Trash Collection | 281-275-2772 |
| Recycling Coordinator | 281-275-2770 |
| Street Lights (HL& P) | 281-342-5441 |
| Newsletter | 281-265-4556 |
| Police & Fire Emergency | 9-1-1 |

*Deadline for next
Commonwealth Com-
ments ~
October 1, 2001*