

VITAL NEIGHBORHOODS

New Feature Section

As part of the City's commitment to its new Strategy for Vital Neighborhoods program, the Garland City Press will now feature a regular section called "Vital Neighborhoods." This section will provide updates on the program's current Pilot Area Projects and future projects, along with announcements about upcoming events geared toward boosting the strength and health of Garland neighborhoods. For updates on the Strategy for Vital Neighborhoods, we invite you to visit www.GarlandVitalNeighborhoods.org.

NEIGHBORHOOD PRIORITY ISSUES

This fall, residents of the Carriagehouse, Forest Ridge-Walnut, Oakridge, and Terrace Bellaire neighborhoods started down a path to create positive neighborhood change as part of the Strategy for Vital Neighborhoods. City of Garland staff held two meetings in each neighborhood during November and December to give local residents in each program area an opportunity to discuss important issues and prioritize concerns. Additionally, the meetings gave neighbors an opportunity to meet with each other and continue to grow support for neighborhood coordination and cooperation.

Carriagehouse Program Area

The Carriagehouse residents met at Sellers Middle School and identified a number of priority issues, ranging from public safety issues, like observance of speed limits, traffic signals, and stop signs, to neighborhood organizational concerns, such as creating or strengthening neighborhood associations and crime watch groups. Private property and public infrastructure maintenance issues were also cited as significant concerns within the neighborhood.

Program Leader – Daniel Krzyzanowski, 972-205-2460 or dkrzyzan@ci.garland.tx.us

Forest Ridge Walnut Program Area

Forest Ridge Walnut residents met at Bradfield Elementary. Safety was cited as a major concern according to most of the residents in attendance, followed by the need to update and maintain the businesses and homes in order to retain current residents and attract additional homeowners and businesses, especially a major grocery store. Other issues included parking problems and consistent enforcement and application of nuisance and housing codes.

Residents agreed that deliberate steps to meet neighbors would assist in increasing the sense of safety and sense of community that has decreased over the years. The Forest Ridge-Walnut Program Area has only one identified organized association, but the attendance for each meeting was the highest of the four areas.

Program Leader – Jean Redfearn, 972-205-2438 or jredfear@ci.garland.tx.us

Oakridge Neighborhood Program Area

The Oakridge Country Club hosted both neighborhood meetings. Consensus began to emerge to organize the effort around the Oakridge neighborhoods having similar amenities to the Firewheel area—attractively landscaped communities surrounding a golf course with a growing number of restaurants and retail establishments and restaurants located at a short distance. This will be accomplished by building upon the existing

strengths of the neighborhoods, such as the range of home styles in the neighborhood, the strong neighborhood organizations, and the convenient location within the Metroplex. Attention should be given to attracting and maintaining quality retail and restaurants, replacing the street lights in the area with ones similar to the original, reducing the number of cars parked on neighborhood streets, and updating the landscaping around the screening walls and entrances.

Program Leader – Laura Staley, 972-205-2132 or lstaley@ci.garland.tx.us

Terrace Bellaire Program Area

Residents were invited to the Gale Fields Recreation Center to discuss their neighborhood story and vision for a healthier community. The positive activities happening in the neighborhood include: low crime rates, few rental units, strong neighborhood associations, and redevelopment plans.

Some of the problems identified during the meetings were the need for street and sidewalk replacement, alley paving, drainage improvements, maintenance of vacant property, and funds for home improvements.

Some of the issues identified as high priorities were attracting businesses such as a full-service grocery store, a competitive gas station, and quality restaurants. Residents also want to improve aesthetics by reducing vandalism and encouraging property maintenance and improve the perception of the neighborhood by eliminating drug activity.

Program leader – Denish Wilson-Owens, 972-205-3337 or dwilson@ci.garland.tx.us

In early 2007, City staff will work with program area neighbors to better define the priority issues and draw up a roadmap that will address concerns and assist in meeting neighborhood stability goals. For more information, contact the Program Area Leaders or log onto the website at www.GarlandVitalNeighborhoods.org.

neighborhood announcements

The *Garland City Press* invites neighborhoods to share their news and events with the rest of the city. Space is limited, but priority will be given to events intended to help neighborhoods form new organizations and foster better neighborhood communications. Please submit your announcements to Felisa Conner, Neighborhood Vitality Manager, at fconner@ci.garland.tx.us or call 972-205-3864.

Keeping Your Personal Information Private

Identity theft has become a growing problem in the electronic age. To address this issue, The Woods Neighborhood Watch will host a meeting at 7 p.m., Tuesday, February 13, at the South Garland Branch Library, Oates and Broadway. Admission is free and the meeting is open to the public. Guest speakers will be Christina Garcia and Moco Brown from Washington Mutual Bank and Neighborhood Police Officer Richard Maldonado. For more information, log onto www.thewoods Garland.org.

Quarterly HOA Meetings

The City Manager's Quarterly Meetings for Homeowner and Neighborhood Associations will be held on Thursday, April 12, Thursday, July 12, and Thursday, October 11.

Meetings begin at 7 p.m. in the Austin State Room at City Hall, 200 North Fifth Street. If your association is not registered with the Neighborhood Vitality Office, please call 972-205-2108 or log onto www.GarlandVitalNeighborhoods.org to obtain a registration form.

GNMA Classes

The Garland Neighborhood Management Academy (formerly the Garland Neighborhood University or GNU) increases awareness of city services and programs, provides leadership training, strengthens communications, and increases knowledge of the basic tools that enhance the vitality of our community.

Classes begin in February and will be held in the Austin State Room of City Hall, 200 North Fifth Street. Space is limited, so register early. Class dates and times are as follows: City Government 101, February 10, 9-11:30 a.m.; Becoming a 21st Century Leader, March 10, 9-11:30 a.m.; Conflict Resolution, April 19, 7-9 p.m.; and Newsletters, May 17, 7-9 p.m.

Registration deadlines are one week prior to the start of the class. To register or for more information, contact the Office of Neighborhood Vitality at 972-205-3864.

