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WINDOWS TO OPENA!

2nd Quarter, 2023 NEWSLETTER
Volume 4, Issue 3

**Next OPENA Meeting:
Tuesday, May 16th at 6:30 pm**

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OPENA May 2023 Meeting and Program

Join us as we take a minute to catch up with friends and meet new neighbors! This program gives us ways to better understand our community and the services to available.

Program: About Dallas Community Courts**Date: Tuesday, May 16, 2023****Time: 6:30 to 8 pm****Location: St. Augustine's Episcopal Church**

The Dallas Community Courts helps residents who have quality of life citations with the city and assists them through community service and social services. When a defendant pleads guilty or no contest, they are given hours of community service in lieu of paying a fine or court costs. They also do community service projects such as free lawn maintenance for citizens who are elderly or disabled and litter pickups. The Community Court has two specialty courts that assist defendants with specific drug rehab and treatment needs.



Guest Speaker: LaKebra Mahomes is the Social Services Coordinator at the Court. She connects defendants to resources, such as assistance obtaining identification, employment services, linkage to food resources, etc. LaKebra provides case management and referrals to adults and children experiencing homelessness, mental health, domestic violence, and other medical barriers. She is a Dallas Native who graduated from the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas, where she received both her Bachelor in Social Work and Master in Public Administration.

OPENA is OPEN to ALL!**For more info, visit us at:**

- **Website:** www.opena.org
- **Facebook at:** [Oak Park Estates Neighborhood](#)
- **Email us at:** OakParkEstates1@gmail.com

*** **VOTE!! VOTE!! VOTE!! VOTE!! VOTE!! VOTE!! VOTE!!** ***

We encourage you to VOTE in the Dallas Joint Election on Saturday, May 6th, 2023.

Election Day Voting Location for Oak Park Estates/Druid Hills:

John W Carpenter Elem School (V3046)

2121 Tosca Ln, Dallas, Texas, 75224

Vote Rm: Auditorium

Dallas District 4 City Council position (that's us!) is on the ballot with the following two candidates:

(Click each name below to be taken to their websites for more information)

- [Carolyn King Arnold](#)

- [Jamie Smith](#)

Other offices that are on the ballot, that affect Oak Park Estates/Druid Hills/St Anne's neighborhood:

- Dallas Mayor election
- Dallas Independent School District 6 Trustee

More information can be found at [Dallas County Election Site: https://www.dallascountyvotes.org/](https://www.dallascountyvotes.org/)

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!!

Next OPENA Quarterly Clean Up Drive is planned for June 3rd, 2023.

Let us know if you can volunteer to help with the neighborhood clean up -

Sign up on [FaceBook](#) Oak Park Estates

Or email us at oakparkestates1@gmail.com

Join us for a few hours & show pride in our lovely neighborhood and the green spaces in the neighborhoods adjacent to Kiest Park! The more volunteers we have enables us to clean up a wider area of our community! You can join us from 8 am to 9 am at the Rec Center to pick up your supplies and then go out to clean up the streets or areas assigned to you. Be back before noon to return your supplies and filled up trash bags. Filth and trash attracts crime and

discourages folks from wanting to live here. *Let's keep it out of our neighborhoods!*



JOIN US

WHERE?

Kiest Park Rec Center
3801 S Hampton
Dallas, TX 75224

WHEN?

June 3rd 2023
8am-12pm

OPENA Clean-Up Drive

Meet at our booth at Kiest Park
Recreation Center between 8a-9a

Email:

oakparkestates1@gmail.com



City of Dallas Volunteers opportunities:

Do you want to be involved in our neighborhood development and growth of Dallas, as our city moves forward further into

the 21st Century? Help our city move forward, caring for our people, our parks and our city's development!

City of Dallas is now accepting applications for vacancies on the Boards and Commissions Committees. [Click here](#) for more information, to see vacancies and/ or to apply for a particular committee.

The following OPENA Board members are already serving on these committees:

- **James Hauck - Citizen Homelessness Commission (CHC)**
- **Tom Forsyth - Parks and Trails on the 2024 Bond Package Commission**
- **Kelly Joe Williams - University General Hospital Site development review**
- **Kelechi Ohanaja - University General Hospital Site development review**

OPENA Board meeting, Saturday, April 22, 2023

Additionally, the OPENA Board met with lots of energy, new ideas and enthusiasm. At the end of the meeting, our councilwoman and Mayor Pro Tem, Carolyn King Arnold, spoke about the many concurrent efforts going on in our district and this area, including Kiest Park revitalization for local events, the Southern Gateway deck park, and the new Tom Thumb grocery store at Redbird. She spoke of representing her district's voters on issues that they feel are important. An example of this is the Kiest Park "Fill the Rill" campaign and a possible bridge to link the two sides of Kiest Conservation District Trails, as championed by one of our OPENA neighbors, Bert Rakowitz.

Ms. Arnold said the representation of her voters is her priority. She said she understands the government process, how to make sure that things get done.



(Picture of some of the OPENA Board members with Ms. Arnold discussing neighborhood issues at the Board meeting at the home of Tom Forsyth & Glenn Hawkins.)

To view your OPENA Board Members, look under the [Leadership](#) Tab on the [OPENA website](#).

We extend a hearty thanks for the many neighbors who put in the time and energy to be on and/or support the OPENA Board, and a [special thanks](#) to those serving City of Dallas Committees.

2023 Neighborhood Improvements have started!

Big thanks to Tom Forsyth, OPENA President, and Councilwoman Arnold, Mayor Pro Tem, for their work on this issue. See the letter below, covering a number of issues and acknowledgement of improvements already completed. Even though it was sent in March 2021, it got us on the calendar for the upcoming Bond Budget Plan. We anticipate there will be additional work soon on Five Mile Parkway and other streets in need of repair. (See letters that follow the photos.)



Letters to Councilwoman Arnold requesting services:

July 7, 2021

Councilwoman Carolyn King Arnold
 City of Dallas City Hall
 1500 Marilla St.
 Dallas, TX. 75201

Dear Councilwoman Arnold,

On your most recent Talk Tuesday event, you asked Neighborhood Leaders to provide you with a list of their Top 3 concerns. The Oak Park Estates Neighborhood Association (OPENA) serves three neighborhoods: Oak Park Estates, Druid Hills, and St. Anne's Hills. These three neighborhoods represent a combined total of about 900 homes. The boundary of our area is contiguous with Precinct 3046. Our neighborhood lies just east and south of Kiest Park. We are home to Bishop Dunne Catholic School and J.W. Carpenter Elementary School. There are two major shopping centers adjacent to our neighborhoods: the Westcliff Plaza at Ledbetter and Hampton Roads and the Kiest-Polk Shopping Center. Several large apartment complexes are situated on both the east and southwest corners of our neighborhoods. We provide this background information to aid in the understanding of some of the major issues we face as a neighborhood which include:

1. Trash, litter, and illegal dumping sites are perpetual problems that plague our neighborhoods. There are several known areas of illegal dumping especially near the apartment complexes at West Pentagon Parkway and 67, along Legendary and Navajo Streets. The violators will also dump materials in the Creekside along Nokomis just east of Cripple Creek and before Navajo. Rugged Drive and West Pentagon Parkway are major trash dumping grounds. The trash is thrown out of cars that are driving through our neighborhoods. Our neighborhood has responded to this epidemic of trash and litter by holding quarterly clean up drives with the assistance of the City of Dallas Code Compliance Dept. But it is a perpetual challenge to recruit volunteers and to obtain the supplies needed to do an effective job.
2. Gun shots are frequently heard by residents especially by those who live closest to the apartment complexes, especially the afore-mentioned apartments on West Pentagon, Legendary and Navajo. Neighbors along Cripple Creek and in Navajo frequently report these random episodes of gunfire which occur at almost any time of day. There are known cases where residents have moved from our neighborhoods due to the concern over the gun fire. Increased patrols are needed in the areas around these apartments and greater efforts need to be made to catch and arrest those who are responsible for the gunfire.
3. The third major issue is the poor condition of roads in our neighborhoods. A visit to the Street layer within the City of Dallas Map My Neighborhood tool will show there are several streets that are flagged in red with a status of poor including West Five Mile Parkway and Holliday Road. These streets are rife with cracks and potholes that reveal the re-bar support. Cars that travel on these roads are subject to considerable wear-and-tear on their suspension and tires.

It would help if the city could find some funds to help repave these roads even before the next bond issue. While not in the "Top 3", there are other issues in our neighborhoods which merit attention:

1. The need for more sidewalks especially along West Five Mile Parkway in Druid Hills where there are no neighborhood sidewalks. A sidewalk in the green space on the southern edge of Kiest Park would be a tremendous benefit for residents who frequently walk along this street but must dodge traffic and walk around parked cars.
2. There are some areas which need more lighting including: a) Near the intersection of West Five Mile Parkway and Cloudcroft. b) The vacant lot area along Holliday Rd. between Vatican and Tosca Lanes.
3. Further education regarding bulky trash including what is allowable and the dates for putting out bulky trash. In many months, it seems as if bulky trash is out in people's yards for the entire month!
4. There are several instances of parking violations including: a) Residences with more than 5 cars parked in the front yard at almost all times. b) Residents who are truckers will park their 14-wheeler trucks and truck cabs along neighborhood streets.

While we are focused on problems, it is important to recognize successes. One of the areas of improvement is the Creekside Erosion Control Project at Holliday Rd. and West Five Mile Parkway. The work on this project is almost complete and it represents a major step forward both in safety and appearance. You have our deepest thanks for having spearheaded the effort, brought together all the city resources, and acquired the funding for the project. We appreciate your interest in learning more about the issues of importance to the neighborhoods throughout District 4. We look forward to working with you during your new term to find solutions to address these issues and to enhance the quality of life in our neighborhoods. Please let us know when you are available to meet with our residents to discuss these issues and to find ways to address them!

With Warmest Regards,

Tom Forsyth, President
Oak Park Estates Neighborhood Association (OPENA)
Website: www.opena.org
Phone: 214-616-0287

Excerpt from follow up letter to Councilwoman Arnold:



July 9, 2021
Councilwoman Carolyn King Arnold
City of Dallas City Hall
1500 Marilla St.
Dallas, TX. 75201
Dear Councilwoman Arnold,

In the letter that I sent to you previously, one of the Top 3 issues in the Oak Park Estates Neighborhood Association (OPENA) is the need for the resurfacing of many roads in our neighborhoods. The reference that we used is the Street Layer in the City of Dallas Map My Neighborhood tool which you can find at this link: <https://www.policymap.com/widget?sid=8859&wkey=VLXZ2N9HSBMYOVFAS9JX2PFEI10XIV> Viewing this map, the following streets in our neighborhood are considered as poor (orange) or failed (red):

Failed (Red):

- West Five Mile Parkway (from Rugged to Hampton and from Rugged to Lost Creek)
- West Pentagon Parkway (from Rugged to Legendary)
- Driftwood (Cripple Creek to Nantuckett)
- Fountain Drive
- Lost Creek
- Treeline (part is Failed and part is Poor)
- Windchime (from Rugged to Whitedove)

Poor (orange):

- Holliday Rd. (from West Five Mile Parkway to Ebbtide)
- Ebbtide (from Holliday to Ovid)
- Hanging Cliff Drive & Circle

Southern Gateway Park

Currently, the first of two decks is in place. The first phase of the park, the build out on top of the first deck, is scheduled to start in June 2023. Southern Gateway Park is expected to open to the public in 2024.







It's *our* park - by the community, in the community, for the community. It will be a central gathering place where everyone is welcome. Spanning I-35E between Ewing and Marsalis Avenues, the future five-acre bridge park will reconnect historic Oak Cliff and ignite environmental, economic, and community revitalization. [Click HERE for more on this story.](#)

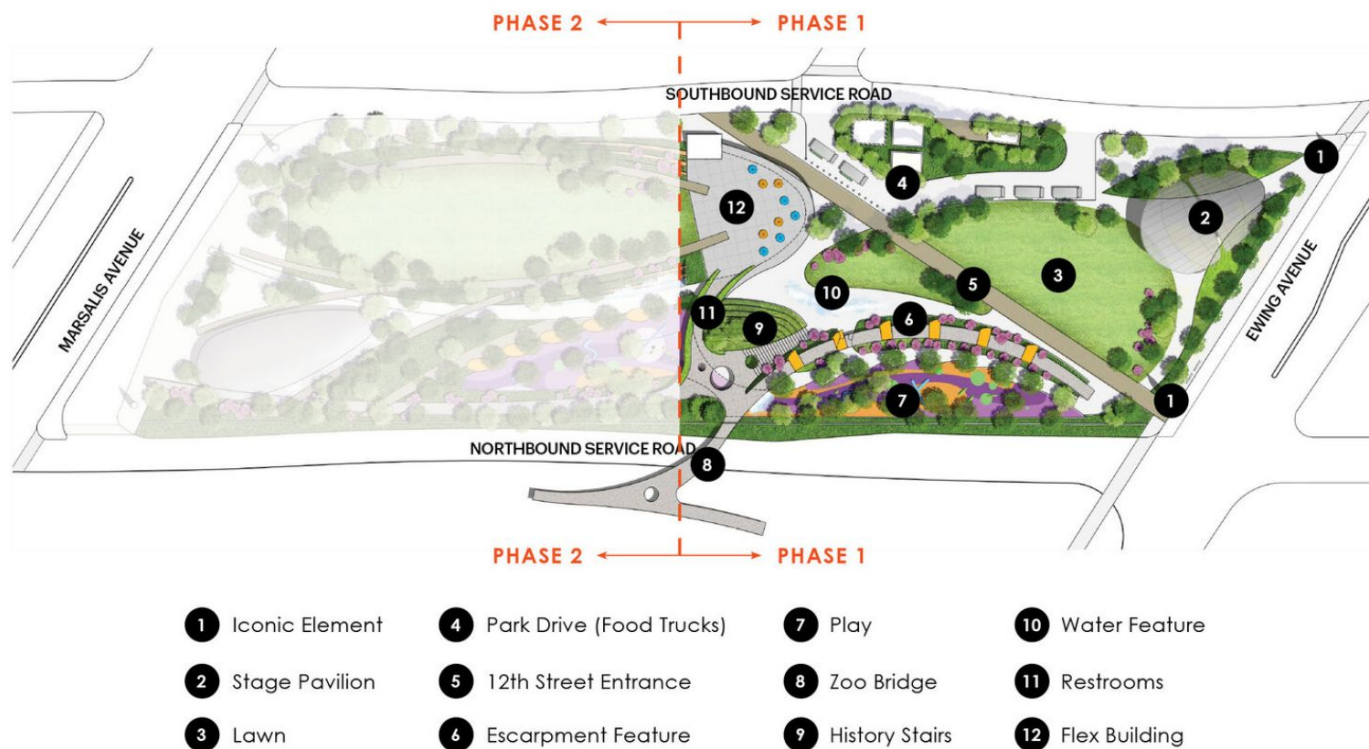


At the Southern Gateway Park Community Meeting on March 30th, 2023, the following information was presented by April Allen, President and CEO of Southern Gateway Public Green Foundation:

- This is part of [Trust for Public Land](#) project, a non-profit creating parks and protect land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come.
- 2 million visitors are expected.
- 5 acre park when completed.
- Phased approach: 1st deck is in place, done by TXDOT during the I-35 Road Project. (2.8 acres for Phase 1)
- The U.S. Focus is currently on infrastructure, especially in underfunded sections. Federal appropriations budget has money earmarked for improvements.
- Southern Gateway Park Foundation is working with schools, possibly including after school programs.
- Dallas Zoo plans to open up their parking lot along I-35 for the Southern Gateway Deck Park's park's use, and will move the Zoo parking to another location.
- Equitable housing is emphasized, in order for displacement to be minimal.
- Design was originally done by same firm as Klyde Warren Park in the Arts District, but have scrapped that and have engaged local firm with roots in Oak Cliff, so we have an distinct Oak Cliff feel to the park. Klyde Warren developers have made themselves available to assist and let Southern Gateway know any issues that they feel might arise, from their previous experience.
- Change in park elevation reflects topography typical of Oak Cliff, some of children's area is inspired by tree house.
- School fairs proposed (in meeting) & were encouraged by presenter .

- Senior ambassadors have been proposed, giving citizens new opportunities to stay active and involved. The ambassadors can share local information to visitor, allowing for a unique perspective on our part of Dallas.
- Walk of Fame, or something similar, has been proposed.

[Click HERE](#) to see a March video on the progress and plans of the new Southern Gateway Park from Channel 8 WFAA.



Oak Cliff Earth Day Fun!

OPENA had a tent booth at the Oak Cliff Earth Day at Lake Cliff Park on Saturday, April 16th, 2023. OPENA Volunteers raised money by raffling off a giant Teddy Bear, won by Victoria, and by collecting donations for Garden Seeds and Frisbees, thanks to efforts by Cylena Smith for these donated fundraiser items. A great time was had by all, both Volunteers and Participants!! The money raised will fund future projects for our OPENA neighborhood.





See more pictures at Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/OakParkEstates>

Summer is almost here... and so are Local Block Parties!

A block party cookout is being planned for Saturday, May 20th, at 6:30PM in Druid Hills. Feel free to come by and join us for dinner, or even to just say "Hi". Your neighbors would love to see you there! You can RSVP to OakParkEstates1@gmail.com for the party, so we can be sure to have enough food for everyone.

We encourage other neighborhoods to feel free to set up your local block parties, too!
(If you want others invited to your party, feel free send a notice to oakparkestates1@gmail.com and we can forward out to the OPENA neighborhood.)

Spring/Early Summer 2023

Druid Hills Neighborhood Cook-out

Saturday, May 20th at 6:30 p.m.

Cloudcroft Circle Cul-de-sac

Howdy Neighbors,

Lets plan a get-together to get to know each other and help to make our neighborhood a better place to live! We will grill hamburgers/ hotdogs and provide the fixings! Let us know if you can bring a side or have some type of music, art or games to share! See you there!

You can RSVP at oakparkestates1@gmail.com or call either Bill McKinney at 214-725-0246 or Paula Cantrell at 214-500-4400



Oak Park Estates Neighborhood Association (OPENA)

Serving Oak Park Estates, Druid Hills & St. Anne's Hills

Visit us on Facebook [@OakParkEstates](#)
Join us at: <http://www.opena.org/join-us.html>

Our mailing address is:
oakparkestates1@gmail.com

*If you have comments or concerns, please direct to OPENA Publications Chairperson:
Paula Cantrell pkcantrell@gmail.com*

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