



# Southgate News

April 2008

**Our next meeting will be Tuesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>** at 7:30 at **Rice Temple Baptist Church**, 6409 Greenbriar at McClendon. Please try to attend. Your input is important to the neighborhood. The Agenda will include:

- **Update on Proposed Medistar Development**
- **Dryden Triangle and Southgate Esplanade Beautification**
- **Other Issues of Interest**

## Medistar Tower Update

### Background:

The Medistar Corporation has proposed building a **forty-story hotel/apartment tower** on the land **south of Dryden** and **east of Travis**. A 1200-car parking facility is also planned. This project was discussed at the February 26 Civic Club general meeting. Mr. Mounzer Hourani, CEO of Medistar Corporation, and his associate, Mr. Douglass Williams, presented the proposed project and responded to neighborhood questions and concerns. The Medistar presentation is summarized below followed by a synopsis of the question/answer period.

### Medistar Presentation:

- Medistar sees a need for additional hotel rooms in the TMC. The proposed building would connect to the St. Luke's skyway system allowing access to TMC facilities without driving or walking outdoors.
- Medistar will ask the Houston Planning Commission for a **10-foot set back variance along Main Street to accommodate canopies and balconies**. The standard setback on Main Street is 25 feet. The Dryden and Travis sides of the structure will adhere

to the existing 10-foot set backs on those streets. (*See below for more on the variance hearing which was held in March*)

- **Balconies** will be on the Main Street side only.
- The building will house **300 hotel rooms, 100 apartments and a health club**. Parking will be for occupants of the building as well as TMC personnel. **The parking garage will be 8 stories tall.**
- **The receiving dock will face Travis.**
- All signage will be on Main Street.
- **Primary automobile access will be from Main, but a second exit is planned for Dryden.** The Dryden exit is intended for apartment residents only, but there will not be a physical barrier to prevent hotel guests and others from using this exit. **Medistar agrees that exiting from this Dryden driveway will be right turn only (towards Main and not into the neighborhood).**
- The building will be positioned so that the **narrow side faces the neighborhood**. This should minimize the shadows projected into Southgate.

- Medistar expressed an interest in assembling a **coalition to purchase the Burger King and extend Travis through to Holcombe.**
- Medistar intends to build a fountain at Travis and Dryden or Travis and Southgate.

### Q&A (paraphrased):

**Questions:** Will Medistar assist the neighbor with **traffic mitigation** efforts including street closures and additional speed bumps?

**Answer:** These are issues with the city, not Medistar. Medistar does have interest in seeing Travis extend through to Holcombe.

**Question:** What about **shadows** on the neighborhood?

**Answer:** Medistar has gone to great lengths to minimize shadows by positioning the building so that the narrow side (70 feet wide) faces the neighborhood.

**Question:** Why 1200 parking places for a building with 300 hotel rooms and 100 apartments?

**Answer:** There will be parking for St. Luke's Hospital personnel.

**Question:** What about **sounds and odors from the parking garage?**

**Answer:** The side of the garage facing the neighborhood will be solid. The other sides will be partially open to allow for the required 50% open ventilation requirement.

**Question:** When do you plan to **start construction?**

**Answer:** September 2008. This will be a two-year project.

### Results of the Variance Hearing:

The purpose of this hearing was to consider Medistar's request for a 10-foot setback on Main Street for balconies and

**canopies.** Several Southgate residents wrote letters to the Planning Commission, the Mayor's office and City Council to express concerns about this development. Additionally, a group of residents attended and spoke at the variance hearing. The Planning Commission granted the variance and approved the plat subject to the following conditions:

- The structure must setback 25 feet from Main Street. **Only balconies, canopies and architectural features may extend up to the 10-foot setback line along Main Street.**
- The exit onto Dryden must be right turn only towards the TMC.
- The applicant must provide a **minimum 6-foot wide sidewalk** on all public streets.
- The applicant must provide **6-inch caliper trees** rather than the required 1.5-inch caliper trees.
- The applicant must provide **additional landscaping** than what is otherwise required by ordinance.
- The landscape plan, as well as the proposed garage and light screening **plans are subject to the approval of the Planning Director prior to permit approval.**
- The applicant was placed on notice that they must follow Section 40-86 of the Code of Ordinances. This Section establishes broad criteria for driveways and mitigation measures. Public Works and Engineering has met with the developer to discuss traffic and other issues of concern and will continue to oversee all aspects of the plans.

### Future:

This project is now in the Public Works permitting stage. **The Southgate Civic Club will continue to monitor this situation and keep residents informed and aware of opportunities for neighborhood input.**

## Civic Club Membership

If you have not paid your Civic Club dues for 2008, please do so. There is a membership form at the end of this Newsletter. The cost is \$50 per household. Please consider joining the Civic Club. Small, single-family inner-loop

neighborhoods like Southgate are under tremendous pressure from many interests. Please become part of the effort to develop a positive vision for the future of our neighborhood.

## Ice Cream Social

The 2008 Southgate Ice Cream Social will be Sunday May 4<sup>th</sup> at Robert's Elementary. If you are interested in sponsoring the ice cream

social or volunteering to help, please contact Natalie Smith 713-419-9455 or email [nemgesmith@yahoo.com](mailto:nemgesmith@yahoo.com)

## Neighborhood Beautification

We will discuss options for beautifying the Dryden triangle (the area between Dryden and Shakespeare at Montclair) and the Southgate Boulevard esplanade at the April general meeting. The trees in the esplanade are in

grave need of maintenance. We risk losing some of these trees if we do not act. We will discuss what needs to be done and how to pay for it. Membership may be asked to vote on the appropriation of Civic Club funds.



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Neighborhood Market Statistics

## **Architectural Review Committee**

Thinking about remodeling? If you have plans to remodel your house or garage and it involves the exterior, you should have your plans reviewed by the architectural review committee. This committee will look at your plans and make sure that they conform to the deed restrictions of the neighborhood. Having your plans reviewed will avoid the possibility that you get half way through a project only to discover that there is a violation of some kind

requiring a costly change in plans. You may not know that Southgate as a whole is made up of four separate sections, each with different deed restriction language. So just because you see something in one part of Southgate, or even across the street, it doesn't necessarily mean that it conforms to the restrictions in your section. **Contact Roger M. Cooner at (713) 822-4270, to arrange for the committee to review your plans.**

## Neighborhood Notes

### Congratulations

On 1/31/2008 Juno van der Hoeven was born, the family is doing well.

### Condolences

Sincere condolences to Dr. Gene King of Southgate on the loss of his mother.

*If you are new to Southgate or know of new Southgate residents, please contact Bea King at (713) 521-3171 so that she may deliver a welcome packet. The welcome packets contain information on the Southgate Civic Club, the Rice Area Constable Service, our neighborhood and our City as well as coupons redeemable at local businesses.*

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**Feel free to contact any of your Civic Club officers** with neighborhood information or with your interests and concerns about your neighborhood and Civic Club.

President	Neil Kelly		NKelly@andrewskurth.com
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## Southgate Civic Club

A Texas Non-Profit Corporation

### Southgate Website

Previous editions of the *Southgate News* and other community information are available at [www.houstonsouthgate.org](http://www.houstonsouthgate.org).

# Southgate Civic Club

A Texas Non-Profit Corporation  
2260 West Holcombe Blvd., Box 162 Houston, Texas 77030

## Southgate Civic Club Dues for 2008 are Now Due! PLEASE JOIN

Please take a minute to complete the Resident Information Form below and mail it with your dues of \$50.00 per residence, to Southgate Civic Club, Attn. John Boom, Treasurer, 2260 Holcombe Blvd., Box 162, Houston, Texas 77030, in the attached envelope.

### How Are Your Southgate Dues Used?

**\$10** to the Neighborhood Deed Restriction Enforcement Fund

**\$40** to support activities such as:

- Membership in University Place Association
- Membership in South Main Center Alliance, Houston Homeowners Ass'n, & others
- Publishing the Southgate Newsletter and other notices
- Publishing the Southgate Residents Directory
- Annual Ice Cream Social
- Maintenance of the Dryden Triangle
- Special Projects and Neighborhood Beautification as funds allow.

### What Does the Southgate Civic Club Do for You?

- **Protects your interests as a homeowner** by monitoring and fighting deed restriction violations
- Answers your questions
- Represents you and the neighborhood at City Hall
- Represents you and the neighborhood in local civic associations
- Interfaces with Rice University and the local community
- Hosts neighborhood meetings, forums, and events
- Informs you of important happenings in the neighborhood
- Advises you of City issues affecting or impacting Southgate
- Works to maintain the common areas of the neighborhood

=====  
Clip and Return with Your Dues Payment

### SOUTHGATE RESIDENT INFORMATION

Names of Adult Residents: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Any Children: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (Number & Street): \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

May We Use Your E-Mail Address to Contact You About Critical News and Activities? \_\_\_\_\_

Check as Applicable: Own \_\_\_ Rent \_\_\_ Amount of Dues Enclosed: \$50 \_\_\_

Include my information in the upcoming Southgate Directory Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Any information to exclude from directory? \_\_\_\_\_