



The Newsletter of The Civic Association of The First Montrose Commons, Inc.

On Common Ground

Volume 30 Number 6

November 2024

30 Years Preserving Our History
– Protecting Our Future

CAFMC ELECTIONS November 19, 2024

CAFMC ELECTIONS ALL BOARD POSITIONS QUORUM is 11
ROOM 106 THE MONTROSE CENTER 401 BRANARD STREET

The Mayor & Ms. Gaffrick

Mayor Continues Mission to Undo & Changes Rules

Houston Avenue Tear-out & Montrose Blvd Projects were just the beginning...

MAYOR WHITMIRE IS VERY FOND OF SAYING THAT HE WAS ELECTED TO ROOT OUT FRAUD, WASTE, AND CORRUPTION, AND TO MAKE CITY GOVERNMENT "TRANSPARENT". Eleven months into his four-year term we see that his plan is to have his way regardless of long-established procedures, ordinances or regulations – or cost. He has transparently bypassed process to have his own crosswalk signal; transparently thrown out years of planning to design Montrose Blvd to comply with modern safety and flood control standards, and now proposes to transparently hire a new head of Public Works who is not a licensed engineer – despite the legal requirement that the position is filled by a licensed engineer.

The Mayor has dismissed members of Boards and City employees and replaced them with loyalists – all ostensibly to make Houston government more transparent and to root out perceived corruption.

Thus, the Board of the Montrose Redevelopment Authority (TIRZ 27) initially failed to approve appropriations to redraw the plans for upper Montrose Blvd according to the Mayor & Ms. Gaffrick's vision. But only a few weeks later, in the midst of hotly contested national and local elections an emergency meeting of that Board (which followed an 11 month Mayor's pause) was held at 8:00am on a Friday morning at a law firm in Greenway Plaza. Ms. Gaffrick sat in the rear of the room. **Public comments were limited** for the first time ever in TIRZ 27 history to one minute each. Dozens showed up, taking off work to attend; and **the overwhelming majority spoke against the proposed funding to redraw the plan—strongly preferring to move forward with the plans already prepared and construction ready.** In the end, **all 4 of the Mayor's hand-picked Board members voted to allocate \$400,000 to redraw plans** that provide for 12-ft lane widths (the width specified for limited access roads and freeways under Federal and State design standards). The Mayor's solution – **throw out Houston's Design Standards in favor of 12-ft lane widths for roadways in the City!**

CAFMC BOARD ELECTIONS TUESDAY NOVEMBER 19, 2024 Meeting Begins at 7:00pm

Elections for the 2025 Board of Directors for The Civic Association of The First Montrose Commons will occur Tuesday, November 19, 2024 at our regularly scheduled meeting in Room 106 of the Montrose Center, 401 Branard St.

Only Members in Good Standing May Vote or Stand for Office
[\$6.02, \$10/01]

Nominations for all positions are still needed. Please contact the Nominating Committee Bill Stewart & Nick Whitaker – billstewart20@yahoo.com or whitakers@gmail.com
Nominations will also be accepted from the floor from Members in Good Standing only.

There being 103 Members who paid the 2024 Annual Dues on or before 60 days prior to the November 19, 2024 Meeting (i.e. September 20, 2024), the quorum for this meeting is set at 11 Members in Good Standing.

Members will also vote whether to approve the Board's recommendation to maintain dues unchanged for 2025.

If You Are Not Happy with the way CAFMC is RUN – Then Run for OFFICE and VOTE

This is the Appropriate Mechanism to Effect Change – NOT Personal Attacks on Officers

Our Civic Association, comprising people with diverse views and ways of doing things, has always remained civil and managed to pull together to accomplish its goals.

This year, however, we have seen a disturbing and frankly unacceptable rise in overtly hostile and demeaning diatribes against The Association and its Board by residents appearing in public speaking forums.

You are reminded that ALL Officers & Directors of our Civic Association during its 31 years of service are VOLUNTEERS – giving of their time and money to represent YOU.

Personal attacks and attempts to discredit the Association are NOT helpful. Dissent is Good – Diatribe is NOT. Please be CIVIL.



2024 CAFMC Officers & Directors

President
Steve Longmire

1st Vice President
Bradley Lau

2nd Vice President
William Stewart

1st Treasurer
Bradley Lau

2nd Treasurer
William Stewart

Secretary
Richard Peoples

Historian
Joan Leslie Turner

Director of Activities
Marlene Matterson

Director of Communications
Steve Longmire

Co-Directors of Membership
Nick Whitaker & Natalie Matuszczak

Director of Neighborhood Safety
VACANT

Sidewalk Ordinance Changes Face Tough Scrutiny before Plan- ning Commission

Changes proposed under Prop A .by 3 Council Members were referred for review by the Planning Commission. At its Nov. 14 meeting speakers for and against the proposal agreed only on two things: more time is needed to revise the ordinance; the ordinance needs to be revised.

As submitted, the proposal would eliminate the "fee-in-lieu" from the present requirements. Most agreed the present fee is overly complicated and insufficient to meet its stated purpose of funding sidewalk improvements across Houston. It would also increase the number of exemptions from the requirement to build new sidewalks. This item sparked much discussion as one of the exemptions includes deed restrictions that prohibit sidewalks. It was observed that sidewalks are constructed in the City's realm, and therefore are not subject to deed restrictions on privately owned properties. *Stay tuned -*

SPARK Park Hours December

School Days 4:00pm -5:50pm
7:00am-5:50pm CDT

Park Closes at 5:50pm nightly

If you see persons playing on the soccer pitch after the SPARK

Park closes, please call
HISD POLICE DISPATCH AT
713-892-7777

Inform the dispatcher there are persons trespassing in the SPARK Part at the Arabic Immersion School and that you need a patrol unit dispatched.

Note- HISD PD response times are significantly shorter than other agencies, so please help us keep our park safe for everyone.

**NO NON HUMAN ANIMALS
AT ANY TIME IN THE PARK!**

Report
All
GRAFFITI
to
311

MEETING QUORUM FOR CAFMC

11

Yes, as few as eleven members can decide - **UNLESS YOU
SHOW UP TO THE MEETING**

Pumpkins in the Park Draws Record Crowd

60+ attend Safe Halloween Event in SPARK Park

We started Pumpkins in the Park after the lockdown of COVID-19 - realizing that traffic through First Montrose Commons in the early evenings had grown, becoming hazardous to young trick-or-treaters walking on dimly lit streets.

This year, it rained, and rained, and rained until 30 minutes before the event. But our young goblins were not to be deterred. Marlene Matterson, our Director of Activities arranged to have a balloon artist and a face painter this year - both huge hits! We also set up a miniature pumpkin decorating station which also proved very popular - and spurred a bit of artistic competition. Our earlier start time also meant a safer walk to and from the SPARK Park, and helped parents keep the midweek bedtimes of their toddlers.



Failure to attend CAFMC Meetings is a **CHOICE** to SUPPORT the decisions of those who do!

Long Awaited New Montrose Library Opens in December

So, What's the Mayor Using the \$11M He earmarked in TIRZ 27 Budget for now???

Recall Mayor Whitmire's unfortunate comments that the new library's location was unsuitable owing to its proximity to adult entertainment venues. His proposal then was to somehow have Legacy Health use the new building as a sort of drive through dispensary for HIV medications and rehabilitate the old location in the former church on Montrose at Colquitt. He rammed through an earmark in TIRZ 27's budget to set aside \$11M in funds to rehab this building – which happens to be in TIRZ 2, NOT TIRZ 27.

Now, after months of additional delays, the NEW Freed-Montrose Library is set to open December 14 – at 1001 California Street. At last, Montrose has a modern purpose-built library to meet our needs in the 21st century.



HOUSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Grand Opening

Freed-Montrose Neighborhood Library
1001 California Street, 77006

DECEMBER 14, 2024 | 10AM - 1PM

DEADLINES IN DECEMBER

Houston's Proposed Short-Term Rental Ordinance

Latest Updates Online Now

Link to Online Comments
Deadline December 13

Below are links to the latest Updates to Houston's Proposed Short-Term Rentals Ordinance, as well as a link to provide your input via their online comments form.

As has become typical, the comment period coincides with the busy holiday season, so it is especially important to visit both sites, become informed, and provide your feedback on the proposed Ordinance. District C, and Montrose in particular is home to the greatest concentrations of short-term rental properties in Houston. These changes will impact all of us – whether we own STR properties or just live here.



<https://www.houstontx.gov/ara/business-licensing.html>



Short Term Rental Ordinance
Comment Form -exp Dec 13, 2024

Sidewalk Ordinance Amendments

The Amendments to the Sidewalk Ordinance have been referred to the Council Quality of Life Committee, which meets **December 2** at City Hall in Council Chambers. From there they will go to City Council **December 11** for a vote. This leaves precious little time for you to learn about the proposed amendments and comment on them. Your best option is Lets Talk Houston:

<https://www.letstalk-houston.org/sidewalk-ordinance-amendments>



Sidewalk Ordinance
Details and Comments

DEADLINES IN DECEMBER



the Montrose Center

EMPOWERING LGBT HOUSTON
WWW.MONTROSECENTER.ORG
401 BRANARD STREET 77006
713.529.0037



Neighborhood Patrons provide substantial financial support to The Civic Association of The First Montrose Commons, greatly facilitating our work to preserve and protect our unique historic urban neighborhood.

If you own a business in or near First Montrose Commons and are interested in becoming a Neighborhood Patron, please contact us via email at president@firstmontrosecommons.org. We'd be happy to discuss this program with you!



The Center for Women's Healthcare

4100 MILAM STREET
AT WEST MAIN

TUESDAY – FRIDAY
9:30AM – 3:30PM

713-797-9200 cwhccopier@gmail.com
[HTTPS://WWW.THECENTERFORWOMENSHEALTHCARE.COM](https://www.thecenterforwomenshealthcare.com)



COMMERCIAL

VIEBIG, McCOMMON & ASSOCIATES, P.C.
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS



EXPERIENCE	JUDGMENT	TRUST
401 W. Alabama Street Houston, Texas 77006	(713) 529- 9949 (713) 529- 9702 fax	info@vmatax.com

Beauty & Beyond Skin Care Center

410 Sul Ross
Houston TX, 77006
713-528-SKIN
www.beautyandbeyondhouston.com
formybeautyusa@gmail.com

Paul Davis Photography

Ph: 832.655.8706

pdcitywide@gmail.com

<http://paulrdavisphoto.com/>

Tony's Tree Care INC.



We always Exceed The Customers Expectations.

www.tonystreecare4u.com

ANTONIO SALAZAR *Call us now!* **832.594.9052**

If you own a business and wish to become a commercial member of First Montrose Commons, please contact us via our web page:

<https://firstmontrosecommons.org>



firstmontrosecommons.org
stay connected

Are You Planning to Move Out of First Montrose Commons?

We hate to see you leave us, but we ask that you let us know

Maintaining an accurate and complete mailing list is an essential requirement to run a successful Civic Association – and to avoid wasted time and frustration sending out emails for unpaid dues.

You can help!

If you are planning to move out of First Montrose Commons, please let us know. You can either email president@firstmontrosecommons.org or you can click the **UNSUBSCRIBE** link at the bottom of any email announcement we have sent you – just list “**Moved**” as the reason for unsubscribing, we’ll take care of the rest.

Letting us know you are moving also helps us to keep an eye on the property until our new neighbors move in—avoiding costly vandalism or squatting.

We enjoyed having you as part of our vibrant community and thank you in advance for helping us out one last time before you go. Best of luck in your new location!

Have you seen Trespassers or Squatters in Vacant Houses or Buildings in FMC?

CALL HPD

713-884-3131

Several properties in FMC are currently vacant and at risk for occupation by trespassers or squatters. More than a mere nuisance, this is a real danger to all residents of our neighborhood, as there is the risk of fires, property destruction, and other criminal activities.

We must call HPD EVERY TIME Criminal Trespass is observed to preserve safety for all of us!

If you see that the property has filed a No Trespass Affidavit with HPD—indicated by the posting of multiple NO TRESPASS signs around the property and/or a copy of the affidavit in the window—let the HPD Dispatcher know. It makes the officer's job much easier.

CANDIDATES NEEDED FOR ALL 9 CAFMC BOARD POSITIONS

Elections for the nine positions on the Board of Directors of The Civic Association of The First Montrose Commons, Inc. will take place beginning at 7:00pm Tuesday, November 19, 2024 in Room 106 of the Montrose Center, 401 Branard St., Houston TX 77006.

In addition to voting on the members of the 2025 Board, Members in good standing will also be asked to approve the 2024 Board's recommendation to keep our dues unchanged for 2025.

The quorum for this meeting now stands at 11 Members in good standing who paid their 2024 dues prior to September 20.

Please mark your calendar now to attend this important meeting so we can achieve the required quorum at the start and avoid delays.

If you wish to stand for any of the nine open positions on the Board, please contact William Stewart, Vice President and Chair of Nominating Committee at billstewart20@yahoo.com

Descriptions of the responsibilities of each position can be found in our Bylaws, available on the CAFMC website. <https://wp.me/a4jeV3-1mO9>

Our Civic Association's successes are the result of residents volunteering their time and skills to make our neighborhood better for all of us. Please consider what you could bring to this rich history of public engagement and volunteer for a Board Position on the 2025 Board.

516 W Main hits the market

516 W Main has recently been listed after a long period of vacancy following the death of its prior owner.

HAHC Approves CoA for 814 Colquitt

New owners' research revealed front door had been relocated from original position & HAHC approved moving it back

Ben and Kristen wasted no time after purchasing 814 Colquitt, a contributing home in the First Montrose Commons Historic District. They contacted CAFMC and then the Houston Office of Preservation and began their deep dive into this home's history. The result—they learned that the present awkward location of the front door is not original. Instead, it was grafted onto a prior sun porch and the original entry closed in.

They found and submitted lots of historical evidence, but perhaps the most persuasive was a real estate add for their home showing the door's original location under a small lip in the roof at the east side of the house.

Real Estate posting from 1923 shows the original entry located where the applicants are proposing to reinstall the door and stoop.



A \$10,500.00 Montrose Home for \$8950—\$950 Cash
Balance Monthly Payments

This beautiful home in Montrose, located one block from Montrose School and our line, is priced at a sacrifice, and on easy terms for immediate sale by the owner. With 7 rooms, 3 bedrooms, sun parlor, beautiful lawn and shrubbery, double garage and servant quarters, this is an ideal home. Ready for immediate occupancy. Home was built by Russell Brown Co. Has southeast exposure. Open for inspection all day Sunday.

814 Colquitt Phone Hadley 1088

Houston Chronicle, February 4, 1923

The only real discussion among the Commissioners was the style of the bottom panel of the proposed new door. In the end, their CoA was issued, asking that they work with the HOP staff to determine the most appropriate style for the lower panel of the door. Also approved was moving some non-original windows from one side of the house to fill in the location of the existing door and converting it into an enclosed sitting area.

What a perfect example of how to get your project approved! Don't you wish home prices were as advertised in that Chronicle ad!

Monarch Community Renovation Plans Advance

The replats of 5 lots in the Bute Addition to create a single lot were approved, as was a variance from the off-street parking requirements at the November 14 meeting of the Planning Commission. **NOTE – this variance eliminates the need to provide off-street parking for residents – who are not permitted to have vehicles anyway. The variance is tied to the owner- the nonprofit corporation; so, should they ever move and sell the property, the new owner would have to comply with the parking ordinance at that time.**

This approval also means that Monarch does not have to purchase a non-contributing building in FMC and tear it down to provide parking.

The next step is to obtain the necessary Certificates of Appropriateness to rehabilitate and renovate the existing contributing structures to bring them up to codes and restore their exteriors in compliance with the Historic Preservation Ordinance. The Monarch Community owners have been in extended consultation with the Houston Office of Preservation to ensure plans are fully compliant with the Ordinance and that any renovations or additions are in-keeping with height and setback conditions in the First Montrose Commons Historic District.

It should also be emphasized again that the Monarch Community is NOT increasing the number of clients under their care. The present plans bring the buildings they own into code compliance and improve life safety and conditions of the facilities.

Parking on Sul Ross has been difficult – not only as a result of the ongoing construction at Monarch, but also because of on-street parking from other businesses and visitors. Conditions are expected to improve once the construction is completed.

Some opposed granting the variance citing concerns about increasing the density of growth in First Montrose Commons. Consider this—*had the variance not been granted, then Monarch would have had to purchase a non-contributing property in FMC, tear it down and build a parking lot that would remain largely unused.*

Had they been forced to move from FMC and sell their properties, the large lot most certainly would have been redeveloped as a large multifamily unit or as densely spaced condominiums – and *that* would have dramatically increased density.

Annual Holiday Party

Saturday,

December 7, 2024

5:30-7:30pm

At the Historic Milam House, 4100 Milam @ West Main Street
POT LUCK – Bring Friends & Family, Food & Drinks – But – as always – no pets please.



This year we start a little earlier in consideration of our families with kids.
Save the Date!



CALL BEFORE YOU START

832-393-6556AVOID RED TAGS & CERTIFICATES OF
REMEDATION

Action in the First Montrose Commons Historic District

All Applications for Certificates of Appropriateness **MUST** be filed ONLINE <https://cohweb.houstontx.gov/hpt/Login.aspx>

Next HAHC Meeting Thursday, December 12 2:30pm **IN PERSON** at
900 Bagby St, City Council Chamber.

Have your design plans *pre-reviewed* by a staffer at the Historic Preservation Office – **NO FEE** or **SIGN REQUIRED**

Announcement: Beginning in May, all proceedings of the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission, Houston Preservation Appeals Board will be conducted in person only.

All meetings will adhere to previously stated schedule and location, but there will no longer be a virtual Microsoft TEAMS option available for the public to join or address the Commission. Anyone wanting to provide comments may continue to do so in person or via email, phone or mail. To watch a live broadcast, please visit www.houstontx.gov/htv.

https://www.houstontx.gov/planning/HistoricPres/docs_pdfs/Worksheets/Design%20Review%20form_2020.pdf

It is ALWAYS recommended that owners and contractors working in any of the City's Historic Districts call the Historic Preservation Planner of the Day at 832-393-6556 BEFORE beginning any project on the exterior or any project which requires a building permit (electrical, plumbing, roofing, or structural interior work). Although these types of construction don't fall under the Historic Preservation Ordinance, you cannot obtain a permit without first clearing it through the Houston Office of Preservation.

Please SECURE YOUR PROPERTY WHILE RENOVATIONS ARE OCCURRING
HELP US AVOID PROPERTY CRIMES – FENCE AND LIGHT CONSTRUCTION SITES

REAL ESTATE AGENTS: Please inform prospective buyers that **NO BUILDINGS IN THE FIRST MONTROSE COMMONS HISTORIC DISTRICT CAN BE DEMOLISHED. WE HAVE NO TEAR DOWNS! NO EXTERIOR MODIFICATIONS VISIBLE FROM A STREET MAY BE MADE WITHOUT A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS. WE HELP HOP ENFORCE THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE!**

The HAHC will meet Thursday, December 12, 2024 at 2:30pm.

APPLICATION FEES – 2024	TOTAL*
CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS	
New Construction and Additions – Commercial and Residential	\$ 322.41
– Accessory Structures**	\$142.29
Restoration & Alteration (No Additions)	\$145.72
Demolition/Relocation	\$ 356.97

Required fees must be paid no later than close of business on Monday after the COA deadline. Administrative approvals that are not subject to monthly COA deadlines will not be processed until the fee is paid. If you fail to pay the application fee on time, your application may be deemed incomplete.

Please contact Historic Preservation staff at 832-393-6556 or historicpreservation@houstontx.gov if you have questions about your project type, fee amount, or payment deadlines.

It is the policy of The Civic Association of The First Montrose Commons to review all CoA's and CoR's affecting the First Montrose Commons Historic District, and to provide consultation to HOP Staff, and to attend hearings on such matters before the HAHC.

If you see work being done without permits displayed – CALL 311 immediately.

The only way to prevent irretrievable loss of historic materials is to promptly report unauthorized work

2024 Board of Directors – The Civic Association of The First Montrose Commons, Inc.

Stephen Longmire PRESIDENT		William Stewart 1 ST VICE PRESIDENT-TREASURER	
Bradley Lau 2 ND VICE PRESIDENT-TREASURER	Richard Peoples SECRETARY	Leslie Turner HISTORIAN	
Marlene Matterson DIR. OF ACTIVITIES	Stephen Longmire DIR. OF COMMUNICATIONS	Nick Whitaker & Natalie Matuszczak DIR. OF MEMBERSHIP	VACANT DIR. OF SAFETY

The Civic Association of The First Montrose Commons, Inc. is a not-for-profit 501(c)4 Corporation. Dues and Donations are NOT tax deductible under IRS Regulations. We meet at 7:00pm each third Tuesday. Residential Membership is open to anyone who lives or owns property in our incorporated area (bounded by W. Alabama, Richmond, Montrose, and Spur 527-Milam). Dues are \$20 per person per year, payable each January. Commercial Memberships are open to qualifying businesses and institutions subject to Board approval – see our website for details.

The First Montrose Commons Historic District of the City of Houston is wholly contained within First Montrose Commons. It is the policy of our Civic Association to attend each meeting of the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission to assure full compliance with the provisions of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance as it applies to our Historic District.



The Civic Association of The First Montrose Commons
will meet Tuesday, November 19 at 7:00pm at
the Montrose Center, 401 Branard, Room 106.
You will receive an email reminder.

our social network works for youSM
firstmontrosecommons.org
stay connected



HELPFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

CRIMEREPORTS™

<https://www.crimereports.com/>

LEXISNEXIS® | COMMUNITY CRIME
MAP

<https://communitycrimemap.com>

EMERGENCIES -LIFE, PROPERTY IN

IMMEDIATE DANGER ■ 911

NON-EMERGENCY POLICE

(Parking Violation, Crime Report)

713-884-3131

HPD NO DOPE HOTLINE

713-466-3673

ALL OTHER CITY SERVICES 311

BEST TO USE WEBSITE PORTAL

NEXTDOOR.COM

– South Montrose Group

NEVER LEGAL



1. Parking on any street for more than 24 hours.
2. Parking blocking ANY portion of ANY sidewalk – EVER.
3. Parking between the sidewalks and the curb.
4. Parking within 20 feet of ANY intersection.
5. Parking within 30 feet of STOP sign or crosswalk.
6. Parking facing the wrong way.



Not even for "just a minute!"

The STREET IS NOT YOUR GARAGE

CALL BEFORE YOU START

832-393-6556

AVOID RED TAGS & CERTIFICATES OF
REMEDIATION