

# THE BOCA NEWSLETTER

BOULEVARD OAKS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

MARCH 2007

## Medical Clinic of Houston Plans Six-Story Building in the Neighborhood

The Medical Clinic of Houston on Sunset Boulevard invited BOCA and various neighborhood leaders in the surrounding neighborhoods to attend a meeting to hear about the proposed expansion of their facilities located at 1707 Sunset Blvd. At that meeting, we learned that the Clinic plans to construct a new 6-story, 88 ft. high building that will face Sunset Blvd. on the site of the parking lot to the east of the existing two-story clinic building. A new 65 ft. high, 7-story parking garage is planned immediately to the south of the new Clinic building and would accommodate 600 cars. The Clinic's buses, which currently transport staff and some patients to an off site parking lot, will cease to operate when this new garage opens later this year.

An artist's rendering of the face of the building and an overhead schematic (now on the Clinic's website at <http://www.mchllp.com>) were presented at this meeting. Select community representatives invited to this meeting posed many questions and concerns regarding the design and aesthetics of the 7-story garage. Unfortunately, the architect's answers regarding the design were limited, apparently because their design and exterior appearance were not final when we met. Construction of the garage is proposed to begin in June and will open in December 2007. Valet parking will be the only way to access the existing clinic until the new garage is in service. Construction of the new clinic is to begin in September 2007 and scheduled to open for business in October 2008. We just received notice that new renderings are on their website.

The existing two-story clinic building and associated parking garage will continue to be owned by the Clinic but will be 100% leased to Methodist Hospital for specialized medical services, administrative offices and storage. Methodist will also have use of the 6th floor of the new clinic, primarily, we are told, to provide services currently available only off site such as rehabilitation therapy, classrooms for nutrition and diet classes, and the like. Linbeck Construction is the building contractor. We were told that all construction workers, trucks and construction equipment will be instructed to enter and exit the work site from Fannin and Main Streets via Rice Blvd. west to Cherokee then to Sunset eastbound and back to Rice Blvd. eastbound back to Main Street in order to not increase that traffic onto the residential streets of Mandell, Cherokee, Rice and Sunset from the west.



*This beautiful live oak at the corner of Cherokee and Sunset will soon be moved 25 ft. closer to the intersection, or eliminated, to make room for a new 88 ft. tall medical office building for the Medical Clinic of Houston at 1707 Sunset.*

Since the meeting, BOCA has sent the Clinic two letters (we have included them in this newsletter) posing specific questions and concerns. The Clinic has responded and correspondence and meetings continue. BOCA is working closely with the Southampton Civic Club President and others on a comprehensive strategy to address all of these issues. The Southampton Civic Club sent a similar letter (posted at <http://www.southamptoncivicclub.org/mch1.pdf>) to the Clinic detailing their concerns and questions about this project and voted last week to oppose the construction of this clinic.

BOCA hopes to keep communication channels open and continues to investigate and seek comments and questions about this project from our residents to share with the Clinic. The Clinic disclosed that the majority of its patients live in neighborhoods immediately surrounding the clinic; thus the BOCA Board thinks your views should be made known promptly and that they should carry significant weight. We will summarize your prompt feedback and send it to the Clinic. Updated information on this project is posted at the Clinic's website at <http://www.mchllp.com> - select the "Construction Updates" tab on the left side of your screen. Please email BOCA at [boca@airmail.net](mailto:boca@airmail.net) or call 713-528-BOCA (2622) to give us your feedback about this project.

## MOST RECENT BOCA MEMBERS

In the last *BOCA Newsletter* (December 2006), we listed the names of all residents who had joined BOCA by the time that newsletter went to press. Memberships received since then are listed below. **Thank you very much for your support**—BOCA couldn't operate without it! If you haven't already joined BOCA this year, please take a moment to do so now. A membership form can be downloaded from [www.boulevardoaks.org](http://www.boulevardoaks.org).

### Patron

Marion Barthelme & J.F. Fort  
Patricia & Steven Grossman  
Diana & William Hobby  
Marley Lott  
Andrea & Gregory Mathis

### Sustaining

Stephen Elison & Richard Brown  
Maria & Jorge Jimenez-Marcos  
Joanna & Don Reid  
Camille Murphy & Freeman Self  
Martha Claire Tompkins  
Lily & Clinton Wells

### Regular

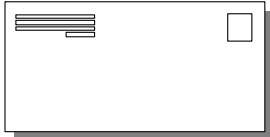
Carol Barndollar  
Claire & Mike Bell  
Beverly & Bill Brownfield  
Susan Allen-Bryan & David Bryan  
Mary Burke  
David & Lynda Daniel  
Caroline & Mark Dannenbaum  
DeAnn & Victor Decker  
Julia & Larry Elliott  
Mary Evans  
Martha L. Garipey  
Jane & Wilbur Gay  
Cassie & Joe Gresham

Sandra Haldeman, M.D.  
Sylvia & Carlos Herrera  
Amanda & Richard Johnson  
Elbert Johnson  
Marie Mann  
Leslie & Ken Miller  
Sue Nash  
Dr. Lynne Rutzky  
Mark Seriek & Gary Higgins  
Anne & Jack Shelton  
Allison & Ray Teheng  
Maria & Michael Thompson  
Yin & Surong Zhang  
Cynthia Zinner & Robert Murphy

### If We Don't Have Your Email Address – You're Missing Out!

If BOCA doesn't have your email address, you're missing out on important rail line updates, invitations, meeting notices, neighborhood news and security alerts via the  
BOCA E-NEWS.

Send your email address to [boca@airmail.net](mailto:boca@airmail.net) so you don't get left out of the loop.



### City Trash Schedule

Automated curbside collection	Tuesdays
Yard Waste (bagged)	Tuesdays
Heavy Trash	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thurs.
Recycling	every <i>other</i> Tuesday
	March 13 & 27, April 10 & 24

### Private Trash Schedule

(Edgemont, Broadacres, Cherokee)

Curbside & Alley collection	Tues. & Fri.
Recycling	Every Friday
Yard waste	Tues. & Fri.

Call to arrange Heavy Trash pick-up  
Royal Disposal & Recycling 713-526-1536



*Julie Mastroianni*  
Sales & Marketing Specialist

Office: (713) 961-1722  
Cell: (713) 829-4966  
[juliemastro@garygreene.com](mailto:juliemastro@garygreene.com)

2900 Wesleyan #150  
Houston, TX 77027



**Prudential**

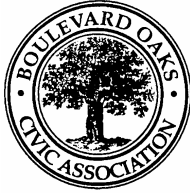
**GARY GREENE**  
REALTORS®

### *If you want it SOLD...*

*We would like the opportunity to help. Our goal is to get you the highest net proceeds at closing in addition to just getting it sold.*

*Please give me the opportunity to design a highly effective marketing plan that fits your needs and derives the highest profit for you.*

*Building Your Wealth  
In Home Ownership.*



**Letter to Medical Clinic of Houston  
January 23, 2007**

Ms. Karen Rainey  
Medical Clinic of Houston  
1707 Sunset Boulevard  
Houston, Texas 77005

Dear Ms. Rainey,

Community leaders and residents very much appreciated the meeting and presentation the Medical Clinic of Houston and Methodist Hospital held on January 11, 2007 for the benefit of discussing with the neighborhood your plans for the former First Christian parking lot site. As we mentioned at the meeting, we have additional questions and requests for information, as well as some concerns about aspects of your plans.

First, we respectfully request that a Traffic Impact Study, particularly addressing the intersection of Sunset and Rice as well as the intersection of Cherokee and Mandell, be conducted and that the results be provided to us, and that we be provided with drawings of the building and parking garage, along with detailed information about the materials that will be used for the construction and facades of both.

We also have serious concerns about the loading dock and trash pick-up site, which are very near the homes on Bolsover Street. We ask that you change your plans to relocate the loading dock and trash pick-up to another location that doesn't negatively impact the quality of life of nearby residents. It is our understanding that the loading docks, which will include the trash pick-up point, will take access from the alley. We believe the alley is too narrow to allow adequate back-up space for trucks and should be relocated to one of the streets. The loading dock is currently designed to be less than 15 feet from the side of the Dominican Fathers residence. Truck noise, traffic noise, loading and unloading noise, back-up alarms, odors, etc, are major issues for residents, especially at 5:00 or 6:00 a.m. in the morning or in the middle of the night.

Residents of Southhampton and Boulevard Oaks (which includes the homes on Bolsover), are also very concerned about the parking garage lighting and the appearance of the garage from Rice Blvd. A design that does not completely mask the internals of the parking garage would cheapen the appearance of Rice Boulevard, especially at night. And 7 floors of garage lighting, 365 nights a year, poses serious problems for the neighborhood. A lighting design must be developed that doesn't bleed light into residential areas either to the west on Rice & Bolsover or to the north on Sunset and Cherokee. We will want to discuss these issues with you further and work together to find a design solution that works.

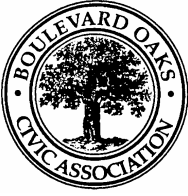
Despite the good intentions spelled out by Linbeck's Bill Scott, it is unlikely that commercial construction workers will pass up the chance to park on streets close to their jobsite. It is also unlikely that deliveries will consistently be made via the Main Street/Rice Blvd/Sunset Loop as described at your meeting. If deliveries are made via Sunset, Rice Blvd. and Cherokee, it will damage our trees and streets. Our committee would, of course, monitor the parking situation and delivery route and expect the clinic to address and remedy the situation if these promises aren't kept.

We also have a question about the ownership of the new clinic. Will it be co-owned by Medical Clinic of Houston LLC and Methodist Hospital? If not, who is the actual owner?

Again, we appreciated the meeting and presentation you held earlier this month. Please get back to us by February 7, 2007 in regard to the questions and requests we've included in this letter.

Sincerely,

Kathie Easterly, Executive Director  
Boulevard Oaks Civic Association



**Letter to Medical Clinic of Houston  
February 21, 2007**

*Via Telefax (713) 524-2256*

Ms. Karen Rainey  
Medical Clinic of Houston  
1707 Sunset  
Houston, Texas 77005

*RE: Medical Clinic of Houston expansion and building plans*

Dear Karen:

Thank you for your recent reply to our January 23, 2007 letter. BOCA has not yet taken any official "position" on the clinic's building plans and we are doing our best to investigate responsibly, report to our 1,200 constituents, and, when we feel appropriate, to respond or recommend reasonable alternatives to be considered. Our residents (many of whom are your patients) are already expressing concerns and asking many questions, some of which were specifically addressed to you in our prior letter. We have encouraged members to reserve judgment, but are hampered by the clinic's failure to answer or respond to any of our questions and comments with a meaningful response.

The clinic's failure to provide this surrounding neighborhood association's leadership with a timely, informative response is likely to engender a climate of distrust among your neighbors, which is the last result we think is in your best interest, or ours, and we express our disappointment in such a response. We desire to maintain a cooperative spirit for the good of all, but if distrust becomes widespread in the neighborhood we fear that it is a short step to organized opposition. Therefore, could you please start addressing the comments and questions posed in our January 23, 2007 letter, now, updating us promptly as answers become available, and give us a "time certain" for responding to the remainder? Please feel free to discuss answers and progress with our Executive Director, Kathie Easterly. Alternatively, Board members, including myself, stand ready to meet with you again soon.

If the clinic does not intend to timely respond or elicit further input from the neighborhood and to keep the leadership currently abreast as you evaluate your own evolving alternatives and consider our input, please tell us now. The BOCA Board and your neighbors are likely to regard an untimely response to this letter or failure to provide prompt substantive answers to our outstanding questions to mean that the clinic does not intend to continue this dialogue and is likely to take steps accordingly.

As you know two of our Board members represent the clinic. They have voluntarily and properly recused themselves from discussion of, or participation in the Board's consideration and actions regarding this subject matter. Since we are aware of such representation, however, we are sending them a courtesy copy of our letter.

The pleasure of a prompt substantive response will be greatly appreciated.

Cordially,

Boulevard Oaks Civic Association

By: *J. Palmer Hutcheson*  
J. Palmer Hutcheson, President

## UNIVERSITY CORRIDOR RAIL LINE UPDATE

At the BOCA Board's request, METRO President and CEO Frank Wilson met with BOCA Board President J. Palmer Hutcheson and Board Member Ron Kahanek, on February 8 to discuss BOCA's position on the currently proposed University Corridor rail line options/routes. Please recall that one of the 3 proposed "short list" alternatives is to run this route west from Wheeler (Richmond) station to Montrose, then south along Montrose to US59, becoming elevated along the north side of US59 (above our new bridges) to a still undecided crossover point to Westpark, then west under loop 610. This route, which we understand was proposed by Congressman Culberson, was to have no contact, or as little contact as possible, with Richmond Avenue. Congressman Culberson has also specifically requested that the line leave Richmond and cross over the freeway as far east as possible.

The instruction that the crossover point be "as far east as possible" brings the disturbing possibility of a rail line on the south side of US59 east of Kirby. Any such line would have to cross Shepherd, Greenbriar or Kirby as the line heads west, rendering Kirby even more impassable than it already is.

Though Congressman Culberson promised the Board in writing that he would oppose any route through our neighborhood (Vassar), METRO officials would not eliminate the possibility that the final route could run along BOCA's border or even possibly through the Vassar area. Mr. Wilson said there are advocates who continue to lobby for the rail line to extend along the south (BOCA) side of the freeway, either along the Vassar Spaceway or elevated on BOCA's side of the freeway.

We responded that BOCA had lobbied long and hard to make sure that when US59 was rebuilt between Montrose and Greenbriar, it would be placed far below grade level to maximize safety and to minimize noise, unsightliness, etc. As a result of persistent hard work by prior Board and neighborhood members, US59 was lowered and novel, beautiful cross bridges were constructed instead. We are confident that the overwhelming majority of Boulevard Oaks residents strongly oppose routing this rail line along US59, especially if there is any possibility it would ultimately be placed along the south side of US59 at grade level or

elevated anywhere within or next to the US59 right-of-way.

Many BOCA residents wrote letters to METRO and to their public officials, stating compelling reasons for their support for rail on Richmond and their opposition to running the rail down Vassar or above or along either side of US59 between Montrose and Cummins (or Edloe initially). These letters were helpful then, but it is absolutely crucial at this time for BOCA residents to show up in person in masse at METRO "input" meetings and other public forums, and at [RichmondRail.org](http://RichmondRail.org) rallies. A number of Boulevard Oaks residents attended Congressman Culberson's Town Hall Meeting on February 22 at Rice University, including J. Palmer Hutcheson, President of BOCA, who spoke on behalf of BOCA and reminded Culberson publicly of his promise that the rail would never go down the Vassar Easement. Congressman Culberson again promised he would do all in his power to keep the rail line from going through the BOCA neighborhood. While encouraged by his assurances, which we believe would never have occurred but for the Board's earlier work to bring Congressman Culberson aboard, the ultimate placement decision is based on a number of variables that are not under any single public official's control.

The final selection process is moving rapidly and we are continuing to monitor developments. As recently as last week the BOCA Board held a special meeting to strategize further. The threat to our neighborhood remains sufficient enough that we are continuing significant behind the scenes work, including meeting with public officials, METRO personnel, etc.

### Sign up for the Mayor's eNewsletter

Mayor Bill White invites residents to sign up for his eNewsletter, which provides periodic e-mails on important City issues of interest. Visit <http://cohapp.cityofhouston.gov/citizensnet> to sign up to receive emails.



**Boulevard Oaks Civic Association's  
17th Annual  
EASTER EGG HUNT**



***Saturday, April 7, 2007***

**10:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.  
BROADACRES PARK**

(North Boulevard at Parkway, by the tennis courts at the end of North Blvd.)

Everyone is invited to enjoy the fun and refreshments and have their photo taken with the Easter Bunny. Children through the age of eight are invited to hunt for hundreds of candy-filled (and prize-winning) plastic eggs. Children nine and older will get to take their turns at a candy-filled piñata.

The older children and adults are also invited to help hide eggs at 9:00 a.m.

Refreshments Provided  
B.Y.O. Basket  
Come join the Fun!

Volunteers are needed to help stuff eggs and the piñata, decorate, provide refreshments, and hide eggs. Sponsors are needed as are donations to help cover the expenses of this event. Please send your contributions to BOCA, P.O. Box 540331, Houston, TX 77254, or bring to the Hunt.

For more information or to volunteer, call 713-528-BOCA (2622) or send email to [BOCA@airmail.net](mailto:BOCA@airmail.net).

## In the Neighborhood



President and Senator Clinton dropped into The Raven Grill for lunch following the funeral of Sen. Lloyd Bentsen. Accompanied by a small battalion of Secret Service, the two stayed quite a while and visited with restaurant guests and the staff. President Clinton poses here with Raven owners Sara & Rob Cromie and their close friend Kendall Pron.

**Chevy Chase Civic Club  
Annual Meeting  
7:00 p.m.  
Thursday, April 19, 2007  
Poe Elementary Auditorium  
5100 Hazard St.**

In light of recent events in the area, business will include a discussion of the strategies and procedures involved in strengthening the deed restrictions; maintenance of a database/directory for the membership's communications; and collection of dues.