In their first month in office, three newly elected Bellaire City Council members have made it known they will be asking more questions and riding against the status quo on some of the city’s biggest projects and processes.

A 4-3 vote, for example, during a Bellaire City Council meeting on Jan. 27 put an end to a request to consider altering contracts, pursuing legal action and evaluating vendor performance for the ongoing Spruce and Fifth Street Reconstruction Project. The action item for the estimated $2.5 million construction project, designed to improve streets, drainage and aesthetics, was requested by new Council Member Nathan Wesely and was piggybacked on a requested update for the project by fellow new Council Member Catherine Lewis.

In response to shooting, HISD struggles with way forward

By Matt Dulin

At Bellaire High School, a sense of normalcy has not returned in the weeks since senior Cesar Cortez was killed by an apparent accidental shooting on campus Jan. 14.

“Students are still wearing black ribbons. There are more adults and police officers around, and hall sweeps are more frequent,” said Ioana Nechiti, a senior at the school. “There’s more vigilance.”

School district trustees and officials have been grappling with how to respond. On Feb. 13, trustees voted down a measure that would have allowed the district to expedite installing metal detectors at some schools, but Houston ISD school board President Sue Deigaard said the item is almost certainly going to return for further consideration.

“From what I heard, trustees want a comprehensive safety strategy for our kids that metal detectors may or may not be a part of,” Deigaard said. “It doesn’t necessarily just have to be equipment; there’s practices and procedures to think about.”

Continued on 20

The new Bellaire City Council will decide on a slew of important issues later this year.

Budget: Revenue, expenditures, initiatives in each of the city’s operating funds, staffing levels and employee compensation

Capital Improvement Plan: A five-year plan for major capital expenditures, including bond-funded projects

Comprehensive Plan: A framework for guiding future development, redevelopment, and community enhancement over 20 years

New Bellaire council dynamic taking shape

By Hunter Marrow

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The action item for the estimated $2.5 million construction project, designed to improve streets, drainage and aesthetics, was requested by new Council Member Nathan Wesely and was piggybacked on a requested update for the project by fellow new Council Member Catherine Lewis.

The week prior, the council chose to put on hold plans to embark on a three-year review of Bellaire’s Comprehensive Plan, the guiding document that serves as a policy guide for the council, city boards and commissions, and city staff, according to the city’s website. Wesely and Lewis were joined in their
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kelsey-seybold.com/cares
FROM AMY: Calling all parents! Summer is going to be here before we know it. Looking to keep your kiddos busy and avoid the dreaded boredom blues? Check out our Camp Guide. We have full list of local area camps to choose from for a fun and exciting summer.

Amy Godfrey, GENERAL MANAGER

FROM MATT: All eyes are on the Nob Hill property to see what comes next. We’ll provide updates online and in print whenever we get answers. Stay tuned.

Matt Dulin, SENIOR EDITOR

THIS ISSUE BY THE NUMBERS

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IMPACTS
Businesses that have recently opened or are coming soon, relocating or expanding

NOW OPEN

1 MOD Pizza opened Jan. 28 at 5103 Bellaire Blvd., Ste. 130, Bellaire, serving made-to-order, artisan-style pizzas. The pizza chain, founded in 2008 in Seattle, opened a location in the Texas Medical Center, at 6622 Fannin St., Houston, in late July 2019. The chain focuses on individually sized pizzas and salads, with over 30 toppings to choose from at one set price, according to the company. 346-340-6024. www.modpizza.com

2 Kim Son Cafe is bringing its traditional Vietnamese and Chinese cuisine to Rice Village, at 2512 Rice Blvd., Houston. The cafe opened its doors in late January, replacing Nam Noodles and More. Both are under the umbrella of the Kim Son restaurant chain, which includes six restaurants throughout the Greater Houston area. 713-533-1188. www.kimsoncafe.com

3 The food truck El Topo has been serving up sophisticated tacos on hand-pressed tortillas, pastries baked from scratch and updated cowboy-inspired recipes, at its new brick-and-mortar location, 6119 Edloe St., West University Place, since early January. It serves all day, including brunch, lunch and dinner with wine. The menu reflects Texas-style cooking, according to the restaurant’s website. Each item is made from scratch, keeping in mind culinary tradition and consciously sourced meat, produce and grains. The restaurant offers an extension of its cuisine in an El Topo food truck that can be found at Urban Harvest Downtown, at 901 Bagby St., Houston, on Wednesdays and Urban Harvest Eastside, at 3000 Richmond Ave., Houston, on Saturdays. 832-795-7251. www.topohtx.com

COMING SOON

4 Meyerland Modern Dentistry was expected to open in early March at 4950 Beechnut St., Houston. The office accepts new patients in the Braeswood, Beechnut, Willowbend, Willow Meadow and Bellaire areas, according to the office’s website. Dentists Namrata Singh and Ashley Elizondo will work on crowns, dental hygiene, fillings, teeth whitening and veneers and perform emergency work if needed. The practice accepts several dental insurance plans. 281-503-4804. www.meyerlandmoderndentistry.com

5 Core Primary Care, an internal medicine and primary care practice and walk-in clinic, expects to open its new location at 2244 W. Holcombe Blvd., Houston, in late March. The practice, which also includes holistic health coaching on nutrition, exercise, stress and other issues, has been seeing patients at an office at the Texas Women’s Hospital. 713-636-2621. www.coreprimarycare.com

6 The commercial leasing agency Edge Realty has announced several new tenants opening in Rice Village this year that are bringing new concepts to Houston.

7 MYX Blend Bar, a Dallas-based custom lipstick and lip gloss shop, will open in early spring at 2524 Amherst St., Houston. MYX helps customers create unique lip products with shimmers, glitters, custom fragrances, SPF, vitamins, anti-aging treatments and other ingredients. www.myxblendbar.com

8 Boasting “facials for the people,” the Los Angeles-based Face Haus will open its first Houston location at 2400 University Blvd., Ste. A-125, this spring. www.thefacehaus.com

9 The beauty brand turned salon Madison Reed Color Bar is coming to 2515 Amherst St. Colorists will help customers select from among 50 hair shades and either have the treatment done in the studio or with a take-home kit. www.madison-reed.com/colorbar

10 Nashville-based Paddywax Candle Bar will open this summer at 2400 University Blvd. The shop helps individuals or groups try their hand at candlemaking while sipping on alcoholic or nonalcoholic beverages. www.thecandlebar.co

RELOCATIONS

7 The locally owned Premier Fine
Shearns
713-295-5236. www.houstonisd.org/

we can leave our children,” HBA President
knowledge is the most important legacy
Benny Agosto Jr. “A love of reading and
matching gifts from Nichole Agosto and
for the effort, including $15,000 in
infusion of new books, furniture and oth-
er resources. The HBA raised $30,000
on a remodeled school library on Feb. 14.
Stella Link Road, Houston, cut the ribbon
in the zoo’s blog post announcing the
Zoo President and CEO Lee Ehmke said
the Greater Houston economy,” Houston
while contributing to the overall health of
animals to inspire action to save wildlife,
according to the study Feb. 2, attributing the impact
to a recent study by economist John J.
to the Houston area in 2018, according
$242 million in economic impact
The Houston Zoo generated more
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doing business as available,” said
Stephanie Madrid, division vice president
of Houston-area operations for Kindred
Healthcare, in a statement. The TMC
location has 105 beds for treating chronic and
critical illnesses requiring extended hospital stays. 713-790-0500.

CLOSINGS

A&O Lamp Co., a family-run lamp, chandelier, fan, and furniture company with a decadeslong presence at 3936
Bellaire Blvd., closed its doors in January after holding inventory viewings Jan. 9-10 with an auction Jan. 11, according
to a flyer distributed online by auctioneer Webster’s Auction Palace. The closure came as the owner looked to retire,
according to the flyer. Over 3,000 items worth over $600,000—the store’s entire remaining inventory—were sold during the auction, according to a representative from Webster’s Auction Palace.

10. Kindred Hospital’s Texas Medical Center location at 6441 Main St.,
Houston, will remain open. In January, the network announced it would close six Texas locations by March 17, includ-
ing four in the Greater Houston area, resulting in hundreds of potential layoffs. “Employees will be offered positions
within the company as available,” said

IN THE NEWS

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12. The Express fashion store in Rice
Village, at 2414 University Blvd.,
Houston, had its last day Jan. 26. The locations
at 112 Meyerland Plaza, Houston, and
The Galleria at 5015 Westheimer Road,
Houston, will remain open. The closure comes as the chain looks to reduce costs by $80 million and close 100 stores by 2022. www.express.com

EXPANSION

The Texas A&M University System
announced plans in February to invest
$546 million into its campus, on the
1000 block of Holcombe Blvd., over the
next three years, with a construction
start date this summer for a renovat-
ed building that will serve students in the school’s EnMed program, and June
2022 and 2023, respectively, for two
new buildings for student housing and a medical plaza. www.tamus.edu

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TO-DO LIST
March and April events

MARCH

01 THROUGH MAY 25
EXPLOR THE GLORY OF SPAIN
AT THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston hosts a traveling exhibition spanning more than 4,000 years of Hispanic art and culture through paintings, drawings, sculptures, and more. Free (members, children 12 and younger), $23 (adults 19 years old and older), $18 (ages 13-18 and 65 and older), 1001 Bissonnet St., Houston. 713-639-7300. www.mfah.org

07 LEARN MORE ABOUT DJ SCREW
The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston hosts a workshop based around the exhibition, “Slowed and Throwed,” in which participants can learn more about DJ Screw through making collages, buttons and stickers. The museum’s Teen Council leads the workshop. 2-4 p.m. Free. 5216 Montrose Blvd., Houston. 713-284-8250. www.camh.org

07 CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF RICE’S MEDIA CENTER
Rice University commemorates the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Rice Media Center and film and photography program through screenings of James Blue and David MacDougall films. 7 p.m. Free. 2030 University Blvd., Houston. 713-348-4882. www.events.rice.edu

14 TOUCH A TRUCK IN BELLAIRE
Texas Children’s Hospital and the Bellaire Police Department present Touch a Truck at Evelyn’s Park, bringing monster trucks, heavy equipment, high-water vehicles and more for the entire family. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Free. 4400 Bellaire Blvd., Bellaire. 281-946-9372. www.evilynpark.org

14 THROUGH APRIL 4
CHECK OUT ‘PINOCCHIO’
The Company OnStage provides an on-stage adaptation of the tale of the wooden puppet Pinocchio in Italian comedic fashion. 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.; 2 p.m. (March 22). Free to $10, depending on ticket option. 4930 W. Belfort Blvd. 713-726-1219. www.companyonstage.org

15 FOLLOW THE STORY OF THE PICTURES
EXHIBITION FROM ‘POSIES’ MUSICIAN
St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, through its Coffee House Live outreach program, hosts Posies founding member Ken Stringfellow as he plays songs and stories from his work as a solo artist, as well as with the Posies, Big Star, REM, Neil Young, Mercury Rev, Ringo Starr, Robyn Hitchcock, and more. 7 p.m.-9:30 p.m. 5308 Buffalo Speedway, Houston. 713-667-1703. www.sahouston.com/coffee/

17 TAKE IN SOME CHAMBER MUSIC
Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music hosts Pavel Haas Quartet as the group performs a contemporary midsummer quartet written specifically for them, a Beethoven quartet, and a Tchaikovsky tribute to a friend. 7:30-9:30 p.m. $20-$45, 6100 Main St., Houston. 713-348-4854. www.music.rice.edu

20 ENJOY HANDS PERCUSSION AT MILLER OUTDOOR THEATRE
Miller Outdoor Theatre hosts its first performance of the 2020 season with contemporary and traditional percussive music from the ‘Hands Percussion music group, out of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Traditional costumes and high energy accompany the group as it seeks to preserve its cultural heritage. Free and open to the public. 8 p.m. 6000 Hermann Park Drive, Houston. 832-487-7102. www.milleroutdoortheatre.com

21 SEE AN IRISH DANCE PERFORMANCE
The Bellaire City Library celebrates St. Patrick’s Day with an exciting performance by Clann Kelly School of Irish Dance. The public is invited to come and participate and even learn a step or two. Free to the public. 2 p.m. 5111 Jessamine St., Bellaire. 713-662-8160. www.bellairetx.gov/Library

APRIL

04 PARTICIPATE IN BELLAIRE TROLLEY RUN
The city of Bellaire, Patrons for Bellaire Parks and the AL Lawrence Running Club host the 25th annual Trolley Run, allowing participants the opportunity to walk or run either a 5K or 1 mile. 7:30 a.m. $30-$32 (5K, depending on chip time), $20-$30 (1 mile, depending on age group). 7008 S. Rice Ave., Bellaire. 713-662-8280. www.bellairetx.gov

The Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center of Houston hosts the 16th annual Houston Jewish Film Festival. Tickets and showtimes vary. Venues include the ERJCC; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and Holocaust Museum, Houston. 5601 S. Braeswood Blvd., Houston; 1001 Bissonnet St., Houston; 5401 Caroline St., Houston. 713-729-3200. www.erjchouston.org

The Willow Water Hole hosts its eighth annual Music Fest over the weekend, with 14 professional bands and music performances as well as bird art by area schools and students. Food trucks will be on-site. Noon-8 p.m. (Sat.), noon-6 p.m. (Sun.). Free. 5300 Dryad Drive, Houston. www.willowwaterhole.org

SPPRING CLEANING? CONSIDER DONATING
Consider donating gently used clothes and items during this year’s spring cleaning to some local thrift stores or donation centers.

Society of St. Vincent de Paul Bellaire Resale Shop
Society of St. Vincent de Paul Bellaire Resale Shop seeks to end poverty throughout the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. The organization accepts in-kind, monetary and vehicle donations in its efforts to target poverty. 5236 Cedar St., Bellaire. 713-669-9410. www.svdpbellaire.com

Goodwill
Goodwill Industries continues its mission of educating, training and hiring individuals with barriers to employment. The organization’s donation centers accept gently used clothing among a slew of other items. Local donation centers include:

Meyerland Store: 9606 Hilcroft St., Houston
Mcnair Donation Center: 4930 Beechnut St., Houston
West U Donation Center: 5213 Kirby Drive, Ste. A, Houston
Stella Link: 8721 Stella Link Road, Houston
Medical Center: 2428 W. Holcombe Blvd., Houston
713-661-1819. www.goodwillhouston.org

Arms of Hope Donation Center
Arms of Hope is a nonprofit organization that assists children and single-mother families in need through comprehensive residential care programs for children, along with outreach ministry and college and career programs, among others. 9750 Fondren Road, Ste. B, Houston. 830-522-2200. www.armsofhope.org

Find more or submit Bellaire, Meyerland and West University events at communityimpact.com/event-calendar. Event organizers can submit local events online to be considered for the print edition. Submitting details for consideration does not guarantee publication.
TRANSPORTATION UPDATES

After clearing regulatory hurdle, autonomous vehicles hit the road

After receiving the first federal exemption of its kind, the autonomous vehicle company Nuro expects to soon begin testing its latest design on Houston streets.

“In the coming weeks, R2 will begin public road testing to prepare for its first deliveries to customers’ homes with our partners in Houston, Texas,” Nuro CEO Dave Ferguson wrote in a blog post about the news.

The US Department of Transportation and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration approved an exemption on Feb. 6 allowing the autonomous vehicle to operate without side mirrors or a windshield, according to a news release. The vehicle uses sensors and cameras to monitor its surroundings.

The R2 will be limited to 25 miles per hour and has an updated design from its predecessor, R1, which was tested in Scottsdale, Arizona, in 2018.

Nuro’s R2 autonomous vehicle will soon begin testing. (Courtesy Nuro)

Kroger, Walmart and Domino’s Pizza have partnered with Nuro to offer autonomous delivery. Kroger has had Nuro-powered Toyota Prius vehicles with human drivers providing deliveries to the Bellaire, Meyerland and West University area since last spring.

A start date for the new round of testing has not been announced.

ONLINE PROJECTS

West University Place traffic study

Under a contract approved by West University Place City Council on Feb. 10, Traffic Engineers Inc. will spend about a year collecting data across all city streets, creating a detailed safety study, making recommendations and developing tools for improving street safety. Speed data, crash data, traffic severity and other factors will be analyzed during the study, according to testimony during the Feb. 10 meeting.

No official action has been made regarding speed limits in West University Place, though according to a staff report to the council, the study could reveal that safety conditions in the city require a speed limit reduction from the current standard of 30 mph. The contract has a not-to-exceed amount of $70,000, and additional funds have been budgeted to implement the study’s recommendations.

Timeline: February 2020-January 2021
Cost: $150,000
Funding source: West University Place

Bellaire Spruce and Fifth Streets reconstruction

A-Status Construction LLC, the contractor for this Bonds for Better Bellaire project has requested a contract extension of 157 additional days, according to a report shared with Bellaire City Council on Jan. 27. City staff said they were reviewing the request and had not made a determination as to how many days should be added. The original contract was for 300 days and began in April 2019. According to the council report, the contractor said the extension is needed for make-up days attributed to rain days, mud days—time to allow for ground to dry after rain—and unforeseen problems.

Timeline: April 2019-TBD
Cost: $2.5 million
Funding source: city of Bellaire bond funds

ALL INFORMATION ON THIS PAGE WAS UPDATED AS OF 2/24/19. NEWS OR QUESTIONS ABOUT THESE OR OTHER LOCAL TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS? EMAIL US AT BMWNEWS@COMMUNITYIMPACT.COM.
Why are we tending a community farm?

Lyndon B. Johnson Hospital serves an area of Harris County known as a food desert. A grocery store may be two bus trips away for many residents and too expensive once they get there.

That means our patients and neighbors are unable to fill their families’ basic needs for fresh, wholesome produce. That’s a community health issue we decided to do something about.

Partnering with organic agricultural experts, we built a farm in our own backyard. We use it to teach people to grow their own fruits and vegetables. And to offer fresh, free produce—and better health—to our entire community.

This is the future of healthcare.

Bellaire seeks help in drafting potential new zoning district

The Bellaire Planning & Zoning Commission approved a scope of work on Feb. 13 that would guide a consultant to help the city create a possible new zoning district.

The former Chevron campus, at 4800 and 4900 Fournace Place, is zoned as a Technical Research Park but is being considered for a new zone dubbed the North Bellaire Special Development District.

The commission approved 30 hours for the scope of work, which includes coordinating with city staff, providing initial review and comment on the amendment draft, preparing for an evening workshop with the commission, follow-up, and on-call support to address unanticipated issues.

“The challenge we face here is that if we give them no guidance on what they’re going to submit,” commission Chairman Ross Gordon said.

The commission also amended the motion to add a public hearing to the drafting process.

With the approval, city staff will work on the contract process with an anticipated completion date of April 9, according to a city agenda report.

A cost has yet to be determined, as the commission and city staff will need to wait for proposals from the two firms. The commission will then make its recommendation on its firm of choice to the Bellaire City Council, which will then vote on whether to secure the contract.

Nob Hill apartments go up for sale

Nob Hill, a community of over 1,300 apartment units on a 39-acre site in the Meyerland area, has solicited offers for a potential sale.

A listing on the real estate advisory firm Newmark Knight Frank’s website listed a bid deadline of Feb. 18. Irvine, California-based Steadfast Cos. owns the apartments, which sustained some flood damage in Hurricane Harvey.

The Harris County Flood Control District did not put in an offer for the site, Executive Director Matt Zeve told Community Impact Newspaper. In late 2019, the district purchased Meyergrove Apartments for over $14 million and will turn the site into detention later this year.

The Nob Hill property, located at 5410 N. Braeswood Blvd., Houston, was built out between 1968-71 and had a taxable value of over $60 million in 2019, according to Harris County Appraisal District data.

The community rents one- to three-bedroom apartments ranging from around $600-$1,100 a month.

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The commission approved 30 hours for the scope of work, which includes coordinating with city staff, providing initial review and comment on the amendment draft, preparing for an evening workshop with the commission, follow-up, and on-call support to address unanticipated issues.

“The challenge we face here is that if we give them no guidance on what they’re going to submit,” commission Chairman Ross Gordon said.

The commission also amended the motion to add a public hearing to the drafting process.

With the approval, city staff will work on the contract process with an anticipated completion date of April 9, according to a city agenda report.

A cost has yet to be determined, as the commission and city staff will need to wait for proposals from the two firms. The commission will then make its recommendation on its firm of choice to the Bellaire City Council, which will then vote on whether to secure the contract.
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\section*{NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES}

Find recent community news, events and updates

\section*{HOUSTON CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN MEETINGS}

The city of Houston will hold several public meetings to gather input for its $3.2 billion Capital Improvement Program, which determines which road, drainage and infrastructure projects will be pursued over the next five years. The meetings are organized by council districts.

\textbf{District C:} 6:30 p.m. March 11, Metropolitan Multi-Service Center, 1475 W. Gray St., Houston

\textbf{District K:} 6:30 p.m. March 26, Fountain Life Center, 14065 South Main St.

\section*{NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS}

Houston’s super neighborhood program allows for an area’s neighborhood leaders to meet and share updates, discuss concerns and provide feedback on city services.

\textbf{Meyerland Super Neighborhood} meets at the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center of Houston, 5601 S. Braeswood Blvd., Houston, on the fourth Monday of the month at 7 p.m.

\textbf{Brays Oaks Super Neighborhood} meets at the Braeswood Assembly of God Church, 10611 Fondren, Houston, on the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m.

\textbf{Westbury Super Neighborhood} meets at the Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church, 4930 W. Bellfort Blvd., Houston, on the second Wednesday of the month at 9 a.m.

\section*{1 BRAYS OAKS MANAGEMENT DISTRICT}

Economic development plan, a ‘bible for investment,’ nears completion

Officials with the Brays Oaks Management District are finalizing a package of studies, plans and recommendations that could guide economic development and infrastructure across the area for years to come.

The plan, part of a broader strategic plan and a Livable Centers Study scheduled for 2021, will help the management district educate and persuade investors to see the area’s potential, said Sheri Cortez, a member of the management district board of directors.

“This will be a bible for investment, for us to use to present to investors and get them on board,” Cortez said.

Some aspects of the plan are already underway, with the district looking to enlist an agency to help boost its image and branding. Another step is to pursue a streetscape master plan to define the look and feel of the roadways and intersections, said Ben Brewer, the executive director for the district.

“For some of these items, we don’t have the funding by ourselves as a district, but with the planning in hand, we can seek out partners and have guidelines and a vision to follow,” Brewer said.

Beyond capturing more business investment, the plan also recognizes the assets already in place that can be enhanced to raise the appeal of the area.

\section*{2 WEST UNIVERSITY PLACE}

Updated alarm monitoring service goes live

West University Place rolled out updates to its new alarm monitoring service to the public Jan. 28.

The new updates for Direct Link, originally launched in 1993, had already undergone a test phase for its users, police chief Ken Walker told West University Place City Council.

“We started looking at it a year ago,” Walker said. “It’s based on feedback from what we found from our competitors and what they were providing.”

One of the biggest changes is the addition of a mobile app that allows remote monitoring, said Jessica Ly, the police department’s support services sergeant.

Residents can opt for the app by choosing one of two packages ranging from $8.95 to $14.95 per month, separate from the $35 monthly fee for Direct Link, Ly said.

Direct Link is unique in that alarm signals do not go through a third-party provider but rather get sent directly to the West University Police Department, which then dispatches emergency personnel immediately.

Direct Link is available only to West University residents, according to the city’s website.

The city has a total of 3,075 registered alarm permits, with 1,400 accounts using third-party monitoring companies and 1,675 using Direct Link.

\section*{3 SOUTHSIDE PLACE}

City waiting for word on $5 million drainage project

Southside Place officials expect to hear from the Texas General Land Office in the next month or so on whether they will be able to move forward on a proposed drainage project.

The city applied for federal Community Development Block Grant hazard mitigation funds in 2019. If the grant is approved by state officials, Southside Place will provide a 20% funding match.

The proposal calls for expanding drainage capacity along Edloe, Auden and Harper streets.

Construction would not be able to begin until mid- to late 2021 or 2022, City Manager David Moss said.

\textbf{City Council has three seats on the ballot}

All three incumbents for City Council positions 2, 4 and 5 have filed to keep their seats.

With no challengers filing by the Feb. 14 deadline, that means another two-year term for Council Members Melissa Byers for Position 2, Douglas Corbett for Position 4 and Melissa Knopp for Position 5.

Southside Place council members do not have term limits.
**Guide**

Camps in the Bellaire, Meyerland and West University area

**ACADEMIC**

**Codeverse**

Dates: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday-Friday throughout June, July and August  
Cost: $499 weekly  
5085 Westheimer Road, Ste. 3570, Houston  
832-862-8878  
www.codeverse.com

Classes immerse children in a fully interactive coding studio that teaches kids how to code using KidScript, a proprietary programming language, to build mobile games, projects and apps, as well as program dozens of objects.

**Crossing Borders Rice Village**

Dates: June 1-Aug. 14 for English (ESL), Spanish, Mandarin, and French camps for ages 4-6; June 22-July 31 for Spanish camp for ages 7-10; June 22-July 31 for English (ESL) camp for ages 7-12.  
Cost: Call for pricing.  
2553 Rice Blvd., Houston  
281-465-0899  
www.crossingborderspreschool.com

Camps catered to children with all levels of fluency in English (ESL), Spanish, Mandarin, and French will make language immersion fun and interesting, as well as age-appropriate and specific.

**IDEA Lab Kids**

Dates: June 1-Aug. 28  
Cost: $175 to $275 (full day); $175 to $195 (half day)  
5410 Bellaire Blvd., Bellaire  
832-993-1213  
www.idealabkids.com

Classes will be held all summer in subjects including science, engineering, arts, 3D printing and drones, cooking, robotics, coding and programming, and mathematics.

**Houston Museum of Natural Science**

Dates: June 1-Aug. 14. Camps meet from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Cost: $200-$620 (members); $240-$760 (nonmembers)  
6001 Fannin St., Houston  
713-639-4652  
www.hmns.org/education/summer-camp

Camps allow children the chance to experience education and adventure amidst a backdrop of dinosaur fossils and chemistry in action with hands-on learning and distinguished teachers. Registration begins March 23 for the general public.

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**2020 Camp Guide**

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Cost: $499 weekly  
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CONTINUED FROM 15

Language Kids
Dates: 9 a.m.-3 p.m. daily, June 1 to Aug. 17. Early immersion is available at some locations at 7 a.m. and extended immersion until 6 p.m.
Cost: $239 weekly (regular hours), $34 (early immersion) and $44 (extended hours).
Houston Museum of Natural Science (Spanish) 5555 Hermann Park Drive, Houston
Saint Thomas’ Episcopal School (Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, French and English) 4900 Jackwood St., Houston
Bellaire Rec Center (Spanish & Mandarin Chinese) 7008 Fifth St., Bellaire
St. Thomas More Parish School (Spanish, French & Mandarin Chinese) 5927 Wigtone Drive, Houston
281-565-1388 www.languagekids.com
Classes provide young students a language immersion experience at several area locations.

University of Houston-Downtown
Dates: June 1-July 10
Cost: $269-$695 per week, with extended hours available in some locations for $75.
St. Thomas More Parish School: 5927 Wigtone Drive, Houston
MD Anderson Cancer Center: 1515 Holcombe Blvd., Houston
(Summer Academy only)
713-221-8032. www.compucamp2020.com
UH-Downtown partners with local institutions to offer camps in computer programming, engineering, creative writing and foreign languages. A two-week Summer Academy is also offered, including ACT/SAT test prep, financial literacy, and career discovery opportunities. Classes may vary by location. Ages 6-16.

ARTS & THEATER

Glasell School of Art Junior School
Dates: June 1-Aug. 7
Cost: $165-$300
5101 Montrose Blvd., Houston 713-639-7700. www.mfah.org/visit/glassell-junior-school
One- and two-week sessions offer campers the opportunity to choose from various art forms including drawing, painting, ceramics, sculpture, fashion drawing, architecture, digital art and animation.

Main Street Theater
Dates: June 1-Aug. 17
Cost: $70 (Turbo Camp)-$490 (two-week, full day camp)
MDT Rice Village
2540 Times Blvd., Houston
Midtown Arts & Theater Center Houston
3400 Main St., Houston
Museum District
1101 Milford St., Houston
Bellaire Parks & Recreation Center
7008 Fifth St., Bellaire
713-524-7998 www.mainstreettheater.com
Main Street Theater hosts six camps this summer, offering one day “Turbo Camps,” as well as full- and half-day, one week and two-week sessions at differing skill and age levels, with many camps culminating in a stage performance. Camps may vary by location.

Monart School of Art
Dates: June 1-Aug. 21. 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. for morning classes; 1 p.m.-4 p.m. for afternoon classes; 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. for full-day classes; aftercare offered from 4 p.m.-5:30 p.m.
Cost: $210 to $420 per week, depending on camp. Individual day prices vary. $100 per week for aftercare.

Monart School of Art
4007 Bellaire Blvd., Ste. F, Houston 713-218-0000 www.houstonmonart.com
Camps will focus on a variety of mediums, all using the Monart Method to teach individuals to draw using the five basic Elements of Shape. Students are guided as to how they might combine them through different mediums so their art represents what they see.

DAY CAMPS

Camp J
Dates: June 1 to Aug. 17, camps meet 9 a.m. -3:30 p.m. with extended care
available before and after. Costs: $360-$780 per camp; $35-$90 for extended hours options.
5601 S. Braeswood Blvd., Houston
713/729-3200
www.erjcchouston.org
The Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center holds day camps for ages 3 to 15 with a wide variety of age-appropriate activities and topics, including arts, sports, writing, technology, science and academics. Most camps are weeklong, but some are 2-4 weeks in length.

Camp Paseo (Bellaire)
Dates: June 1-Aug. 7; camps meet 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. daily, with before and after hour dropoff available.
Cost: $150 (residents) or $165 (nonresidents) per week
7008 Fifth St., Bellaire
713-662-8280
https://camppaseo.weebly.com

Bellaire’s Parks and Recreation Department hosts weekly day camps with a variety of indoor and outdoor sports and other activities for children age 5 to 12. Some activities will take place in the Bellaire Family Aquatic Center, city parks and the city library.

Elite University
Dates: June 1-Aug. 21; 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily
Cost: $250-$300 per week, with meal plans extra
6221 Main St., Houston
713-454-7989
www.elitesummercamps.com
Elite University organizes multiple medicine, science, technology and arts camps out of Palmer Memorial Episcopal in the Texas Medical Center. Archery, gymnastics and horseback riding camps and other topics are also available.

Pine Cove
Dates: Aug. 3-7; 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Cost: $290 for the week.
Crosspoint Church - Bellaire
4601 Bellaire Blvd
832-203-4300
www.pinecove.com/city/crosspoint

Mobile extension of the Christian camp will bring bungee trampolines, water slides, counselors, skits, Bible studies, and more for First through sixth graders.

MUSIC & DANCE
Vivaldi Music Academy
Dates: June 8-19; 9-11:30 a.m.
Cost: $500.
5305 Bellaire Blvd., Bellaire
832-404-2299
www.vivaldimusicacademy.com

The music school will host a two-week musical theater camp called “Shine!” at its Bellaire location, culminating with a final showcase at the University of St. Thomas. The camp is open to children age 8 and older; no musical experience is required.

SPORTS
Houston Gymnastics Academy
Dates: June 1-Aug. 15; 9 a.m.-1 p.m. (half day); 9 a.m.-3 p.m. (full day); 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. (all day). Early drop-off available.
Cost: $200-$375 per week based on length and membership status.
5804 S. Rice Ave., Houston
713-668-6001
www.houstongymnastics.com

The Summer Blast Camp offers half day, full day and all-day sessions for children age 3-12. Campers stay active throughout the day with stretching, learning new skills and having fun with trampolines and obstacle courses.

Salle Mauro
Dates: June 1-Aug. 28; camps meet 9 a.m.-noon. Cost: $250 per week.
4007 Bellaire Blvd., Ste. EE, Houston
832-778-8745
www.sallemauro.com

The fencing school holds weeklong summer sessions to provide children age 6 and older an introduction to the fundamentals of the sport.

The Hitting Academy
Dates: July 13-Aug. 20; camps are held 9 a.m.-noon Monday through Thursday.
Cost: $265 weekly ($295 for nonmembers).
8429 Stella Link Road, Houston
713-425-8144
www.thehittingacademyhouston.com

This baseball camp is designed for all skill levels, with skill-building exercises on hitting, throwing and fielding from coaches.

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NOW ENROLLING!
Mr. C Watch & Clock Repair

Timepiece repair shop focuses on continued good service

Mr. C Watch & Clock Repair has been a family-involved business since its inception. That has been consistent from its start on Bellaire’s east side to its current location, said Kira Carroll, whose mother and father, Adelaida and Homero Capetillo, have co-run the repair shop since 1995.

“It’s a passion that we all have,” Carroll said.

The idea for the shop did not come until after 1986, when Homero graduated from Houston Technical College with a diploma in horology, the study of time and making timepieces. He also earned a certification in 1985 from the Omega SA watch company and would later become a member of the American Watchmakers Institute.

Homero heard about the opportunity from a member of the family’s church. The future horologist had just been laid off by Brown & Root Industrial Services, where he welded on offshore oil rigs.

The horologist worked at a local watch shop for several years before deciding on going solo.

The shop has since focused on providing consistent quality, though there have been product additions, such as jewelry.

The owners had also considered moving away from clock repair because of the time and effort but decided against it because of customer demand.

“We get people to come here through word of mouth because we provide good service,” Carroll said.

The shop has adapted in other areas, such as with remodels in 2001 from Tropical Storm Allison flooding and a break-in a few years ago.

Homero’s son, Homer Capetillo II, is slated to take over in the future. He is also a horologist who graduated with a certification from Watchmakers of Switzerland Training and Education Program in 2014. He was the first in the family to attain that professional distinction. The aim is to keep the shop family-run because of its importance to the Capetillos.

“You don’t just wake up one day and decide, ‘Oh I want to be a horologist,’” Carroll said.
D'Amico's Italian Market Cafe

Longtime restaurateurs keep tradition alive in Rice Village

By Hunter Marrow

None of Nash D'Amico's family had the experience of opening a restaurant before he and his cousins opened up Damian's Fine Italian Food in Huntsville.

“Let’s give it a try,” Nash recalls saying, as he and his cousins had to borrow money to pay off the $300 per month required for the building rent.

Nash and his family brought a wider variety of Italian food and the family’s Sicilian heritage to the masses with the restaurant’s opening in 1975.

Since then, Nash has owned 11 restaurants, including pasta and clam bars across Houston and Galveston. He has since scaled back to one restaurant in Rice Village, D'Amico's Italian Market Cafe, first opened in 1996.

The family-owned restaurant serves southern Italian dishes—handmade sandwiches, fire-roasted pizzas, house-made pasta and a slew of seafood options. It also provides a fully stocked Italian deli and market.

“That’s what is unique about this location,” said Brina D'Amico, Nash’s daughter and the restaurant’s co-owner.

The market offers imported oil, wine, snacks and other items from Italy and offers specialty items during holidays. A favorite item for customers is a special olive oil that is also used at the restaurant, which comes in a glass bottle also made in Italy.

The restaurant added full beverage service in 2017 and expanded the dining area in 2019 with more seating, but it is also open to private events.

The long career and evolving business have been rewarding for Nash.

“It is a lot of work but is rewarding,” Nash said. “How could you not have fun with entertaining people?”

Dishes to Try

Chicken Bracioletti ($17.99) Rolled chicken breast, stuffed with sausage, cheese and spinach, with fresh basil in a brown lemon butter sauce, served with linguini.

Cannoli ($6.50) is filled with sweetened ricotta and citrus, and dusted with powdered sugar and toasted almond slices.

D’Amico’s Italian Market Cafe
5510 Morningside Drive, Ste. 140, Houston
713-526-3400
www.damico-cafe.com

Hours: Mon.-Thu. 11 a.m.-10 p.m., Fri.-Sat. 11 a.m.-11 p.m., Sun. noon-9 p.m.
The event marked the first shooting death inside a school in the United States in 2020, according to data tracked by the Center for Homeland Defense and Security. According to its database, 514 shootings have occurred on school grounds in the U.S. since 2010.

The event put additional attention on district leadership, which was recently cited in a state audit for inefficiencies in its security management practices and not holding state-required safety meetings.

Complex challenge

The incident at Bellaire High typifies how difficult it is for a school to deal with threats to safety, said Alan Bragg, the executive director of the Texas School Safety and Security Council, an outreach arm of the architecture firm PBK.

“Were all searching for solutions, and that is one thing that has improved—we’re all willing to send resources, share ideas and solve whatever needs to be fixed,” said Bragg, who at one time served as a night shift lieutenant for the HISD Police Department.

Metal detectors are one way to keep weapons from getting past school doors, but there are many other considerations, Bragg said.

A report by the Texas Association of School Boards noted a single metal detector may cost around $4,000 to $5,000, but the cost to operate them “requires a significant commitment of school resources and staff time.”

According to district reports, HISD has spent $29.3 million from the 2012 bond on security improvements and has an annual budget of $24 million for safety and security, which includes a police force of around 200 officers.

In recent discussions with community members, interim Superintendent Grenita Lathan told trustees police staffing emerged as a top concern.

“What I’ve heard is, ‘We want more police officers,’” she said. “That is another group of employees that we need to look at their pay disparities because we have a high number of police officer vacancies right now.”

The district is also going to look at how to hire more social workers either by adding positions or partnering with local agencies, Lathan told the board.

PBK’s 32 best practices for school safety include metal detectors as a viable layer of security. Other recommendations include adopting a clear backpack policy, improved video surveillance and social media monitoring.

“There are a number of practices
“I had been doing some advocacy before this, but I never thought it would become a real issue in my community,” Nechiti said. “It’s terrifying and shocking and horrible.”

Culture and communication

The discussion of school safety also comes as the district has been handed a comprehensive audit of its operations, including security management.

The Legislative Budget Board report, released in November, found the district’s safety management practices suffered from “inefficiency, poor communication and planning, and the omission of key safety and security responsibilities.”

The report found the district had failed to hold meetings of the state-mandated safety and security committee since 2016, and the police chief was not participating in regular cabinet-level meetings with the superintendent.

The district declined to comment on whether it had addressed these findings. However, Deigaard said that since becoming board president in January, she has not been invited to a security committee, which is required to meet three times a year under a state law adopted in 2009.

Bragg and Caldwell both said improving communication and data collection are fundamental.

“The hard part is they have to work off the data they have,” Caldwell said. “But what’s key is, the district must have a process to unify the information coming in and deal with it promptly. ... No one wants to report and then think no one did anything about it.”

More reporting can create a perception of more problems, but it also points to a better culture and raised awareness, Caldwell said.

“More reporting of incidents does not mean a school is less safe. In fact it could mean the exact opposite,” he said.

Weapons incidents at HISD have averaged 54 reports a year since 2010, according to district discipline data. Reports include firearms, knives and other weapons.

The district’s “See Something, Say Something” campaign encourages students to submit reports online and via mobile app. At Bellaire, officials said students could have reported that a gun was brought to campus earlier in the day, but they did not take that step.

“A child died on school grounds. Schools should be safe places. Kids should be free of that fear of it happening on campus,” Deigaard said.

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COVENTRY HOMES | HIGHLAND HOMES | PERRY HOMES | PLANTATION HOMES | TOLL BROTHERS
Bellaire City Council has three new voices to bear on city policy. They join four incumbents, all of whom bring different perspectives to the table.

CONTINUED FROM 1

vote to approve the motion by another new council member, Jim Hotze.

In separate interviews with Community Impact Newspaper, the new members were aligned around a desire to increase public input and advocate for more accountability over city operations.

**Being heard**

Hotze and Wesely both defeated incumbents after a runoff in December, while Lewis won the general election contest outright.

“That tells me there are citizens that share our concerns, that needed to have a way to communicate that,” Hotze said. “It was giving voice to something. That’s what the three of us turned out to be.”

Bellaire Mayor Andrew Friedberg acknowledged the potential for a new direction.

“The recent election represents the voters signaling a shift,” he said. “I’m sensitive to that.”

Wesely touched on the need for the council and city staff to find better ways to receive input from residents. He cited the exhaustive input-gathering process on the city’s comprehensive plan proposed during the Jan. 21 meeting.

“Part of the problem I have is that it wears down anybody who wants to be involved,” Wesely said. “We can do a lot better on community input than we’re doing.”

Lewis recommended improving public hearing notices by including an executive summary of the action in question.

**Accountability**

In addition to appointing the city manager, the council is able to inquire into the conduct of any city office, department or agency and make investigations into municipal affairs.

Most of the previous council shied away from that role, the new members said.

“I didn’t feel the council was holding the city manager accountable,” Wesely said. That was a big priority when he ran for office last year.

The new council members also expressed concern that the city’s debt has ballooned since City Manager Paul Hoffman took the reins in February 2014.

Hoffman pointed out that approval for completed capital projects and those in the works came from residents.

“This community made those decisions over the last 30 years to reconstruct its streets and drainage systems,” Hoffman said. “Recently, we had bond programs in 2013, which predated me, and in 2016, which certainly added to that debt load.”

When it was considered, the city put out a comprehensive information campaign for the 2016 Bonds for Better Bellaire program, a $54 million voter-approved program targeting municipal buildings, water and wastewater improvements, and streets and drainage projects, Hoffman said.

“I think the community went into that with eyes wide open,” he said.

Payments on bond principal and interest have jumped 29%, as a result, from $7.55 million in fiscal year 2016-17 to $9.73 million in FY 2019-20, according to city budget briefing. Total debt was projected to increase from $116.26 million to $123.18 million in the same period, though true figures are lower, Hoffman said, and that debt is headed downward.

“It is absolutely something we need to pay attention to,” Hoffman said. “It is important. I respect that.”

The Spruce and Fifth Street Reconstruction and flood mitigation drainage projects are also examples of inefficient spending, the new council members said.

“The drainage projects are largely ineffective, but cost millions of dollars,” Lewis said.

**Looking forward**

No time frame has been confirmed for reviewing the Comprehensive Plan, Friedberg said, as council members still need time to digest the 122-page document, which was written in 2009, updated in 2015 and amended in 2017. The new council members will also get a chance to speak their minds later this year when the city goes through its budgeting process for FY 2020-21.

Until then, the mayor said he plans to use his 10 years of experience on the council, six as a member and four as mayor, to help the new members acclimate to their roles.

“I see it as part of my role to help facilitate for them to be as effective as they can be,” he said.

And that includes being supportive when those new members raise concerns, such as when Hotze, Wesely, and Lewis raised concerns about the scope of the Comprehensive Plan review.

“It’s entirely appropriate the new council is questioning the depth, extent and expense of the plan,” Friedberg said.

The mayor also hopes to educate the public on council roles as well as the process the city uses to make decisions.

Friedberg already spent significant time discussing those topics during his State of the City address on Feb. 3.

“The process is in place if the council wants to change direction,” he said. “It’s through that process that we will achieve that change.”

For more information, visit communityimpact.com.
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REAL ESTATE

Featured neighborhood

BRAESMONT, 77096

This midcentury neighborhood of 190 properties is zoned to top area schools. With easy access to highways as well as parks and other venues, the Braesmont neighborhood is a ridge of land running north to south along the west side of Chimney Rock Road.

Median home value
$377,825

Homes on the market*
7

Homes under contract
2

Median annual property taxes
$9,560

Median price per square foot
$191.56

Average days on the market*
48

* AS OF 2/15/2020

MARKET DATA PROVIDED BY
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NEW LISTINGS PER ZIP CODE

All but one ZIP code in the area saw more new listings on the market in January 2020 compared to the prior year, with 77401 seeing 26 more listings, a 43% increase over 2019's activity.

MAPLE ST.  BEECH NUT ST.  CHIMNEY ROCK RD.

9401 Bob White Drive, Houston
4 bed / 2 bath  2,174 sq. ft.
Sold for $285,001-$325,000 on Jan. 13.

4318 Jonathan St., Bellaire
4 bed / 2.5 bath  3,173 sq. ft.
Sold for $717,001-$827,000 on Jan. 10

3061 Robinhood St., Houston
5 bed / 5.5 bath  5,917 sq. ft.
Sold for $2,879,001-$3,317,000 on Jan. 28

4106 Mischire Drive, Houston
3 bed / 2 bath  2,262 sq. ft.
Sold for $370,001-$420,000 on Feb. 3

Recently sold homes

MARKET DATA PROVIDED BY
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