

BALDWIN SQUARE
FALL 2013 NEWSLETTER
HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION · WWW.BALDWIN SQUARE.ORG

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Visit us on the web!!!!
www.baldwinsquare.org

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!
BSHA Annual Meeting
Wednesday 13 Nov 2013
Houston Academy for International Studies
1810 Stuart St
7:00 PM
Election will be held for two open board positions

Letter from the Board of Directors:

Greetings from the Baldwin Square Homeowners' Association (BSHA)! 2013 has been an exciting year that brought new development to the neighborhood, a number of improvements by the association to the community, and continuing work by homeowners to maintain and improve their homes. The combination of these efforts, along with the strong Houston housing market, and improvements and growth in Midtown, has made Baldwin Square a desirable area and kept our home values strong!

This annual newsletter is one tool we use to communicate what your Association has been doing.

We also maintain a website (www.baldwinsquare.org) to keep you more frequently informed of current activities. On the website, you will find helpful homeowner tips, the Deed Restrictions, Covenants and By-Laws, along with minutes of all Board meetings. Finally, you can learn about the community directly at the annual association meeting (see notice at left) or by attending one of monthly Board meetings, usually held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month.

Baldwin Square townhomes were some of the first projects built to kick off the re-birth of Midtown. It is great to be part of such a desirable and vibrant community. By doing our part to maintain our residences and to improve our community, we are contributing to the overall growth and excitement of Midtown. Consider this: The total taxable value of real property in Midtown was \$4.2 Million in 2000. In 2012, the total real property taxable value in Midtown has increased to \$12.4 million!

Sincerely,
2012-2013 Baldwin Square Board Members
Michael Oelke, President
Roger Neal, Vice President
Bill Kellar, Secretary-Treasurer

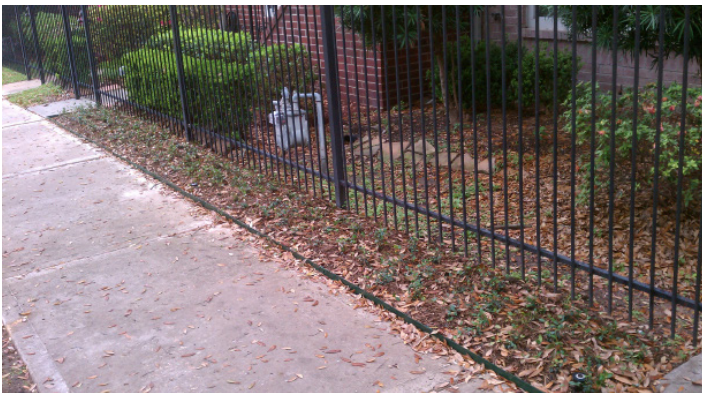
Capital Improvements 2013

In addition to our regular maintenance projects around the community, three other major capital improvements were completed this year. First, a tree service company was contracted to prune all of the trees on the property. Tree maintenance on our maturing trees was long overdue and it should help improve the long term health of all of our trees.



Tip: If you wish to have any trees pruned that are on or near your property, please contact the HOA first since we have seen how pruning by some contractors has been haphazard and detrimental to the trees. We can recommend several companies that will do an excellent job at an affordable price.

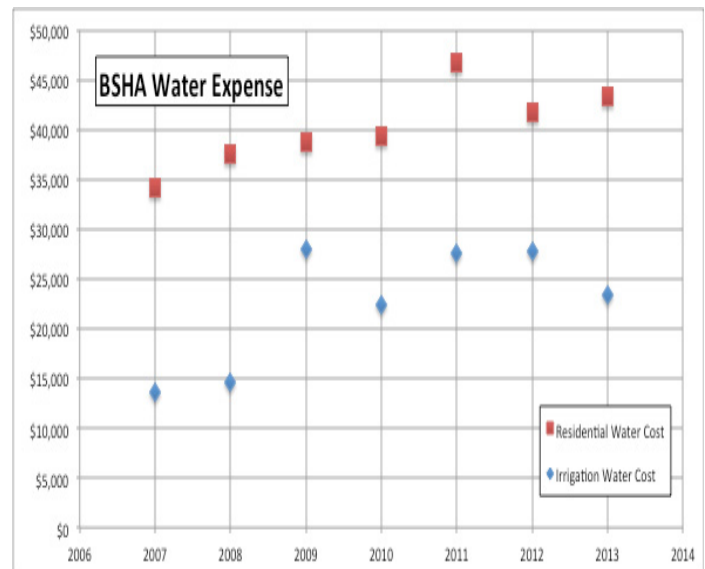
The second capital improvement was a landscaping improvement along LaBranch Street to recover some of the landscaping damaged during the LaBranch Street utility construction. Asian Jasmine was planted as a trial in the shady area. It is working well and we are considering expanding landscaping upgrades in 2014.



We have both iron fencing and cedar wood fencing on our various properties throughout the community. As some of the wooden fences are reaching the end of their service life, those sections have been replaced. In 2014, more wood sections are anticipated to need replacement.

Water! Water Everywhere!

What an expensive drop to drink! 2013 saw another hike in City of Houston water rates. Through careful management of our irrigation water and by finding (and fixing!) leaks quickly, we actually saw a net DECREASE in our irrigation water costs to date this year and only a modest increase in residential water costs. Water cost makes up 35% of our annual budget. Please report any irrigation leaks as soon as you observe them (Call Sonya at 713-489-4901).



Tip: Please check your home plumbing. A worn-out toilet valve in the tank can leak over 10,000 gallons a month alone, and cost hundreds of dollars!

Pet “Maintenance” in the Community

The number 1 reported issue in our community is dog poop, and it is a preventable community expense. This year, signs were posted in six of our properties to notify residents about the responsibility to clean up after their pets. If you witness someone not picking up after their dog, we encourage you to report the incident to property management. Did you know that:

1. It's the law. Just like littering, it is unlawful NOT to pick up after your dog, and your violation is subject to fine.
2. Dog poop is unhealthy. Abandoned dog poop can host diseases and/or parasites which can infect other dogs who come into contact with it, or be transmitted to people who accidentally step in it and track it home.
3. It's not fertilizer! In fact it impedes landscaping efforts. Leaving dog poop encourages other dogs to mark that spot, leading to dead spots in the lawn. We all pay for a landscaping budget each year. Why would you damage your investment?
4. It's just common courtesy. Do you really want to be one of 'those people'? Cleaning up after your dog, shows respect for our neighbors and our community. The grass in the common areas is not a public pet toilet.



Recycling Services



Your Board decided to investigate recycling services this year. Recycling through our contract was available, it would mean reducing household trash service from twice per week to once per week, with recycling service

taking the place of the 2nd pickup during the week. The Board decided NOT to change to recycling in our trash program due to the loss of twice a week pickup of household trash.

Tip: you can drop your recyclables at Discovery Green on Saturday mornings or at a number of other local depositories. The Westpark depository not only takes regular recyclables, but also takes paint, batteries, electronics, and even Styrofoam packaging!

A/C Grill Painting

It is the responsibility of each homeowner to maintain their townhome property. This includes the air conditioning unit fan grill assembly. Some A/C units have been replaced, but many are over 10 years old. The exhaust fan grill covers on many of our older units are rusting and those that are in view in driveways and in common area view are particular unsightly. Please check your a/c unit, take pride in being part of Baldwin Square and take steps to restore it.

Tip: If the grill on your unit is rusty, take advantage of the cooler weather and paint it. It's fairly easy to do with a can of spray paint. Be sure to disconnect the power before starting! We also know of a contractor with painting experience in the community who would likely offer a group discount if several of homeowners got together to have theirs done. Try M.O.S. Home Services, 281-908-2355, or another contractor of your choice!

Security! You can help!

Security is a common concern. Each of us can do our part to make our homes a safer place.



- Please lock your gates! Leaving them unlocked allows unwanted people not only access to your house, but all of your neighbors!
- Keep your outside lights on. A nice upgrade is to include motion sensors, light sensors, or a timer. A light timer in seldom-used rooms is also a good idea.
- Get to know your neighbors.
- Be sure to call HPD (713) 884-3131 or the Precinct 7 constable (713) 643-6118 to report ANYTHING that seems suspicious to you.

Midtown Improvement Projects

Here is a list on active Midtown community projects:

- Bagby Street and Pierce Street Improvements
- Gray Street Pedestrian Enhancements
- Baldwin Park renovation
The improvements include upgrades to lighting, the jogging trail, playground equipment, and landscaping.
- Glover Park creation
Glover Park, located at the intersection of Elgin Street and Austin Street, includes a dog run, landscaping with lawn space, seating, an exercise platform, and cultural exhibits.
- Midtown Park renovation
- Bagby Street Reconstruction
- Caroline Street Reconstruction
This is the reconstruction of Caroline Street from Pierce to Holman. This "Complete Streets" project aims to balance the needs of transportation, local businesses, pedestrians, and on-street parking. An additional component of this project is a safe and distinct bicycle route designed to the goals of the City of Houston bicycle plan.

First Class Postage

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