

Eleanor Tinsley seeks support in beautifying Houston area

Perhaps no one has done more to beautify Houston than Eleanor Tinsley. The Houston City Council Member, now in her fifth term, takes a strong stand against billboards, she advocates demolition of dilapidated buildings, and she drums up support for more trees and parkland.

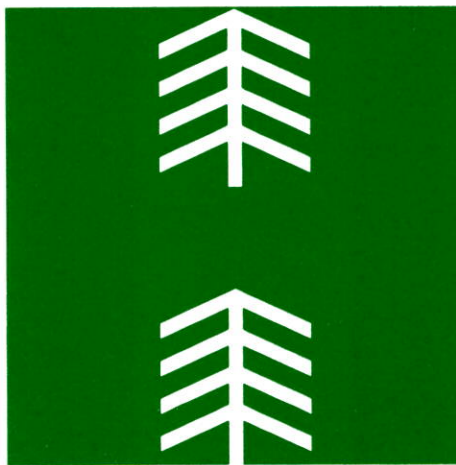
Tinsley was a featured speaker at the North Houston Association's first meeting of 1989, which also heard from Ed McMahon, Executive Director of the National Coalition for Scenic Beauty.

Together they gave NHA members a national and local perspective on what can be done to make Houston a more beautiful place.

"We really have begun to take the time to improve the quality of our lives and our surroundings," Tinsley said. "We realize visual pollution can be as damaging to our spirits as air and water pollution."

The City of Houston passed an ordinance in 1980 prohibiting new billboards, but Tinsley acknowledged legal battles over sign control have slowed progress in the battle against visual blight.

"Sometimes we seem to take one step backwards for every two steps we take forward," she said. A lobbyist for the sign industry once told her his organization thought nothing of spending \$250,000



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each year to keep the City of Houston tied up in litigation.

Tinsley applauds the North Houston Association for participating in the Gateway Houston project to beautify freeway corridors leading to and from the airport. "Persuade your neighbors to landscape their property so we can please the traveler's eye," she added.

Jack Linville, chairman of the NHA Board of Directors, introduced Tinsley and said, "Signs are doing damage to our community. The image we are sending out is bad for business and bad for businessmen."

Tinsley advised members to work with groups such as Billboards Limited, Trees for Houston, the City Parks and Recreation Department, and the Park People.

"Your commitment today has helped to keep me going," she said.



Billboards along Interstate 45 cause image problems for the City.

Following Tinsley's comments, McMahon pointed to the many cities across the nation that realize the economic and aesthetic benefits of stringent sign controls.

Houston is one of his favorite cities, he said, but it suffers from image problems. "One of the main reasons is billboards," he said.

McMahon narrated a dramatic slide show that juxtaposed landscapes, cityscapes and suburban developments with and without billboards. He urged members to ask themselves, "What are we building today that will be worth preserving 100 years from today?"

He also noted, "Most people remember the first time they see a place. That impression becomes imprinted on the mind and it's hard to change."

Trees serve a vital role in the community, and people don't realize how important greenery is until it's gone.

"Trees growing along a street visually tie a neighborhood together," he said.

"Beauty is not just in the eye of the beholder. . . It's also in the pocketbook of the beholder."

— Ed McMahon
National Coalition for Scenic Beauty

"So when people say, 'Oh, what a lovely neighborhood,' they really mean, 'What beautiful trees'."

Beautification adds up to better business, he emphasized. "Over 80 percent of shoppers prefer to shop at businesses that have substantial amounts of landscaping." He added that houses with mature trees also sell for thousands of dollars more than the same types of houses in barren subdivisions.

McMahon lauded Tinsley for her work, mentioning that the Coalition for Scenic Beauty presented her with a national award.

"Many of you may not know this, but people all over America are looking to this city, looking to people like Eleanor Tinsley, for the political courage and leadership necessary to solve these difficult issues in their own communities." ■

Developers asked to donate trees for transplanting

Save a tree and help beautify north Houston.

The State Department of Highways and Public Transportation is asking developers to participate in a new tree-transplant program to beautify Houston roadways.

As explained by District 12 Engineer Milton Dietert, the program saves young trees that might be destroyed in land devel-

opment and relocates them to new sites along area highways.

"Transplanting trees has a more immediate impact on beautifying our roadways than planting seedlings," he says.

Developers are asked to call SDHPT Landscape Architect Horace Latimer (869-4571) when they wish to donate trees in trunk diameter of 6 inches or less.

The SDHPT will cover the costs of moving and transplanting. Trees are needed to beautify Sam Houston Parkway, freeway interchanges and other roadsides.

With the economic horizon brightening, Dietert wants to alert developers now to this innovative program. Trees that might be uprooted to build new streets are the most likely candidates for transplanting. ■

Lake Houston State Park in 'limbo'

The future of Lake Houston State Park is "in limbo," says Ron Smith, NHA Environment Committee Chairman.

The state purchased the 4,712-acre parcel, situated on the northern tip of Lake Houston, in 1981, according to Jim Bell, General Parks Superintendent for Harris County Precinct 4. If developed, the park would be the largest in north Houston.

The land — heavily forested with pine and hardwoods — is graced with 10 miles of waterfront along Peach and Caney Creeks, as well as the San Jacinto River.

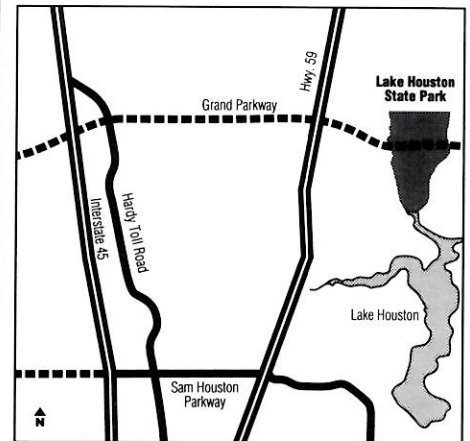
While the land was purchased eight years ago, funds have not been made available for Phase I development. When the Texas economy started declining, park development funds were deferred.

The southern portion of the land is the most beautiful, Bell says, and that is where the Grand Parkway would cross. So the Environment Committee is looking for options, such as trying to get the parkway route realigned to the north.

Another stumbling block to funding improvements is the apparent low level of interest in the park at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission. Smith fears any conflict between the Grand Parkway and the state park will discourage state authorities from developing the land.

"We need to do whatever we can do to

break this impasse," said Smith, engineering adviser with Friendswood Development Company. Without further funding from the state, Lake Houston State Park will not become a reality. ■



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Sending our agenda to Austin requires teamwork



By John W. Craddock, Jr.

The North Houston Association has joined forces with other Houston-area development groups to face issues in the 71st Legislature.

Beautification, roads and sign laws

received the most discussion at a pre-session gathering of members of our organizations.

Our consortium opposes any efforts to hinder creation of scenic districts or the City of Houston's ability to regulate signs.

In addition, Harris County should be able to charge fees to enforce sign rules in unincorporated areas.

We have given the 'thumbs-up' to maintaining funding levels for highways and roadside beautification.

We need more funds for prisons, yet we also need laws to assure no area has more or less than its share of pre-release, restitution or parole beds. The state should not be able to place facilities in or next to neighborhoods without their consent.

Other positions taken:

- Support local control of Metropolitan Transit Authorities.

- METRO's 1 percent sales tax should remain intact, but we must correct tax inequity favoring new construction over remodeling.
- School districts should not be limited in raising funds.
- The City of Houston should not be prevented from annexation if service levels are maintained.

When we communicate our solidarity in these issues, we speak with strength. The NHA and six other area associations represent more than 855,000 residents and 651,000 in the Houston area. By standing together, we can send some clear signals to Austin. ■

North Houston Association News

BOARD OF GOVERNORS CREATED

The North Houston Association announces the formation of a Board of Governors.

T. R. Wussow will chair the Board of Governors and Sue Darcy will serve as Vice Chairman.

The Board of Governors will be composed of the Association's Directors and contributors of \$5,000 or more.

An organizational meeting and reception for the Board of Governors is set for April 19 at the Northgate Country Club. The first topic of business will be the presentation of engraved free-standing membership plaques to the Association's \$5,000 contributors.

"The Board of Governors will assist with long-range planning and with our responsiveness to the needs and interests of our members," says NHA Executive Director John Craddock.

NEW NHA HEADQUARTERS

The North Houston Association has moved to new office space at 250 Sam Houston Parkway. The NHA now occupies the same building as North Harris County College and the University of Houston North Houston Institute.

NHA's new address is 250 Sam Houston Parkway East, Suite #107, Houston, Texas 77060-2009. The phone number, 591-0199, remains the same.

"This seems like a natural coming together of community groups with common interests," says Dr. Joe Airola, Chancellor of NHCC and chairman of the NHA Education Committee. "I am delighted to have the North Houston Association move here because we've had a close working relationship over the years."

Stop by the new office for a visit. ■

In brief

OVERPASS TO CROSS INTERSTATE 45

Construction work is just beginning on an overpass for the Sam Houston Parkway over Interstate 45. Traylor Brothers Construction Co. is contractor for the \$23.8 million project, according to Quincy Allen of the State Department of Highways and Public Transportation. The mainlane portion is expected to be completed by July 1, 1990.

NEW BUSINESS PARK IN SPRING

The first phase of construction of a new business park in Spring is nearing completion, according to Robert Ratelle, Development Coordinator for Lomas Realty USA. The 850-acre park has a prime location near Interstate 45, Hardy Toll Road and proposed Grand Parkway. Lomas, based in Dallas, has land development projects nationwide, including 15 in the Houston area.

SAM HOUSTON MEMORIAL MARKERS

The Texas State Senate has passed a bill (S.B. 69) authorizing memorial markers to be placed at regular intervals along the Sam Houston Parkway. State Senator Gene Green led the passage of this bill which must now go to the House of Representatives for approval.

SAM HOUSTON PARKWAY

NEW SHOPPING CENTER FOR GREENSPOINT

The Trammell Crow Company has begun building The Commons at Greenspoint, a nearly 300,000-square-foot shopping center on the northwest corner of Interstate 45 and Sam Houston Parkway. Anchor tenants in the \$22 million-plus project will include Phar-Mor Drugs, Sportstown, Children's Palace, Highland Appliance, Marshall's, Office Depot and Sound Warehouse. Craig Cheney, in charge of project development, expects the center will be virtually 100 percent leased by the time it opens this fall. ■

Seedlings planted on Arbor Day

Arbor Day, January 21, proved to be the perfect day to plant trees on the barren tract of land behind Ronnie's Truck Stop at I-45 and Rayford/Sawdust.

The event was co-sponsored by NHA and the South Montgomery County Woodlands Chamber of Commerce. Chairman of the Chamber Beautification Committee Erin

Arber (she takes a lot of ribbing about her last name) said 1,000 people attended. "It was fantastic," she said. "We started an hour early and were finished by noon."

Seventeen thousand seedlings were planted, including pines and hardwoods such as sweetgum and ash. In addition, a chili cookoff was judged in the afternoon.



Roger Galatas, President of The Woodlands Corporation, helps plant pine seedlings on Arbor Day.

New members

ANADARKO PETROLEUM

CORPORATION is one of the nation's largest independent oil and gas exploration and production companies. Work is conducted in the primary geologic basins of North America, frontier areas of the United states and in selected areas overseas.

DAN SHERWOOD & ASSOCIATES, INC.

provides general civil engineering services for municipal utility districts, cities and land developers in the metropolitan Houston area.

FIRST CITY BANK CORPORATION OF

TEXAS is a holding company with 28 banks in 62 locations across Texas. First City provides a full line of commercial banking and trust services to large and small businesses, consumers and specialized markets.

HOUSTON AIRPORT MARRIOTT

HOTEL, with 569 deluxe guest rooms, is the only hotel located within Houston Intercontinental Airport. A "people mover" links the lobby to all airport terminals. The Marriott has ample facilities to accommodate groups from 10 to 1,000.

HOUSTON NORTHWEST MEDICAL

CENTER, with 420 beds, provides care in more than 30 specialties. Located near FM 1960 and I-45, the major medical complex serves the growing populations of Harris, Montgomery, Walker, Waller and Liberty counties.

HYDROCARBON TRADING &

TRANSPORT CO. is a petroleum products trading and real estate investment firm.

ROTAN MOSLE INC. is a regional investment banking firm headquartered in Houston. The public finance group offers a large range of financial services and is active as financial advisor and underwriter, with issuers principally in Texas. ■

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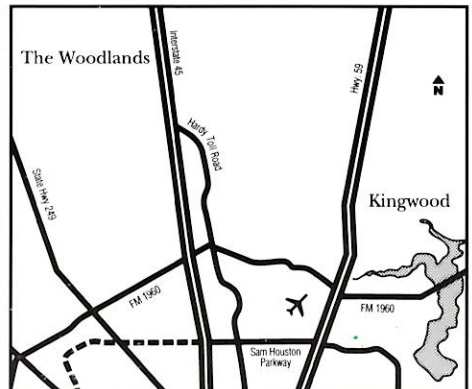
Farnsworth & Associates
Fulbright & Jaworski
Smith, Murdaugh, Little & Crawford
Vinson & Elkins

Research Consultant

CDS Research, Inc.

Education

North Harris County College
University of Houston North Houston Institute



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