

SOUTHWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

11063-D South Memorial Drive, Box 325, Tulsa, OK 74133

www.SNABixby.org

Russ Fischer - Secretary

Fall 2021 Newsletter

Email: Fischerruss@hotmail.com

As a number of you heard from me earlier this month, *the Judge ruled in our favor on the lawsuit between SNA and Ms. Bazay!!* Such incredible news to receive rather out of the blue. The trial was during the first week of August, and the final Summary Statements from the Attorneys were required to be submitted by the end of September. Our Attorney said that the Judge then could take however much time she felt was needed to research and determine the verdict. I'm told by our Attorney that the 2 months the Judge took was a relatively quick time. I'd been advised to be patient in that it very well could take until early next year to get the verdict from the Judge. I believe there's a saying as to how the wheels of justice turn slowly. I'm glad it wasn't longer!

At this time, Ms. Bazay has until the end of the month to file an Appeal. Whether she does or doesn't will determine when we have to go back to Court. If she files, then we have to soldier on and there'll be time in Court to deal with the Appeal. Even if she chooses not to appeal the decision, we then head back to court for settlement proceedings. The verdict issued in our favor was great for us, but we're not at the end of the road yet. Please hang in there with us, supporting our efforts to see this on through to hopefully a successful resolution.

City of Bixby News & Projects:

I hope that you all have been able to get to downtown, or to the pedestrian bridge and Washington Irving Park to enjoy all the new construction. What a vast improvement! It's been quite a transformation and will spur more redevelopment of downtown.

When we gathered at City Hall years ago to start the process of coming up with ideas of how to improve not only downtown, but also how to connect downtown with Washington Irving Park and the Arkansas River, this all seemed like a rather monumental task. There was just so much that needed to be done to get to a better place, but here we are with nearly all of the initial work in place!

It was wonderful to have the Christmas Parade in the new Downtown; so much excitement! Even just walking around under the lights is very enjoyable. Charlie Young Park, since being redeveloped a couple of years ago, is a great space; plus there's the ice skating rink for this month too.

Another great new space is the Harmony Bridge! Have you tried your hand at the musical instruments on the bridge? They're very creative and fun to play on. While the activities will be a bit limited during

the winter months, this'll be a great space when the weather is warmer in the Spring.

Turning toward Bixby street projects, I'm sure that those of you in Southwood Extended on the eastern side of the neighborhood have seen all the detour and construction signs related to the work underway at Mingo and 121st. This is the last of the 3 intersection improvements that were approved in a city bond issue approved nearly a decade ago. We were fortunate in that 111th & Mingo was the first of the three to be built several years ago now.

Speaking of Bond Issues, you may recall that there was a \$28.5 Million bond issue approved in April. It was 4 proposals funding a new Fire Station, Street Improvements, Parks & Trails, and Stormwater. Within the street projects were improvements on Mingo. Typically, intersections are improved, then the roadway in between follows. The City has long planned to improve Mingo so that it can handle more traffic and take some pressure off of Memorial. Remember that the projects for the bond package were helped shaped by our input per surveys filled out earlier. We need to always work to have our voices heard. It's really great when projects get done that'll improve areas near us!

SNA Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting was held on November 16th in person since there is plenty of space for us at the Church. We had delayed the meeting hoping to know more about a verdict on the lawsuit, but at that time we had not yet heard on the verdict.

Regular business was conducted including the election of Officers. After a number of years on the SNA Board, Tom Daniels was not re-upping for the office of Vice-President. Tom was at the meeting to start SNA! Russell Smith was willing to step in as VP and help us out. Russell & Kelly have lived in the neighborhood for about 35 years. Thanks so much for helping us fill this position!

The other regular business was discussing our finances and how to get more people involved with SNA and helping us with donations and “dues.” I work with residential developers and know that neighborhoods often bill residents around \$500 per year for their HOA dues, and there are some that are more than double that. We don’t have elaborate entrances or pocket parks that require maintenance, so we don’t need much. But our legal costs to defend our Covenants have been over \$50K to date, and we’re not finished yet. We need all members and friends of SNA to please talk with your neighbors and see if they will support SNA and our efforts to protect our wonderful neighborhood!

Southwood Trial

While I still cannot discuss many of the specifics of the case, I shared some elements at the Annual Meeting, and will mention one here. Once things are resolved, we’ll have a meeting to discuss what all played out at trial. It was quite an experience!

The trial showed we can be attacked even though we are working to improve our neighborhood. The accusations from opposing counsel, Phil Frazier (the former and current Bixby City Attorney), were outrageous to me, an ordinary person not involved with the current legal system. It felt like obvious things that an ordinary person would understand, were turned upside down in court.

For instance; I’ve underlined a part of last year’s newsletter that was read into evidence AGAINST SNA! “...please review the covenants that are posted on the website. Yes it costs more to put masonry and shingles on an outbuilding, but one should be looking to add value to their property. We all work to make our houses look nice and an outbuilding next to your house should reflect positively on your property, which in turn reflects positively on the entire neighborhood as well. Please be a Good Neighbor!”

Membership Dues & Donations:

The SNA dues were set at \$50 at the Annual Meeting. With the cost of the litigation, we’re hoping that you will find it in your heart to even donate a little more! There were a significant number of folks who gave us \$100 last year, a couple did more even. If you’re able to donate a little more, it is really appreciated, but we are very grateful for whatever you give to SNA.

You can mail the form below with your dues in the envelop provided or drop it in my mailbox at 8734 E. 113th Street. My mailbox is across the street from my house and items cannot be taken out of it by the postal service. PLEASE make sure your contact info is current too. Thank-you very much!!

Russ Fischer, Secretary of SNA

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| Name: | | Date: | |
| Street Address: | | 2021/22 - Dues \$50.00 | |
| Contact Preference (circle one): | Phone Postal E-mail | Willing to help as a: Volunteer?? YES No | |
| Ph. # | E-mail Address: | | |