

Sherwood Forest Citizens Association

05-18-08

SFCA News Updates

It seems these news updates are very popular and have been read by most of our SFCA members that have provided email addresses. Right now, **we have 1237 members** of the 3000 or so homes in our area. There are about **750 members that have provided their email address** for compelling updates to be sent to them. Of those there are **about 75 that are returned undeliverable** for one reason or the other (address no longer good, host server down-undeliverable, undetermined connection errors) which says **about 675 of our 1237 are being reached** by email. I have received a majority of positive comments with some identifying new issues the association needs to address. That...is what a network is. We all work together to solve our issues. That is a powerful tool to keep our neighborhoods safer and property values healthy by holding residents accountable to our city laws and building restrictions. There are times we need to help out our neighbors by staying observant of strangers to our area that may be looking to cause harm or take property that is not theirs. Remember we have to take care of each other for the common good. **We are revitalizing the Neighborhood Watch program** and it is important to do your small part to keep it strong. More information will be given as it develops. Let me know if you are interested in helping in some small way...or in a larger way. An active membership makes good neighborhoods and good neighborhoods make good cities.

Also, **I need your opinion** on a new committee for our members being considered ... "Golden Aged Assistance" (or something like that). We have the reality of aging and not being able to maintain our homes like we use to be able to do. We could pop out there and mow the grass, pick up fallen limbs, mend the fence and fix the doorbell. There were a lot of things that may be just too much to keep up any more for some of our neighbors. Pride..."I do not mentally feel any different but physically it is kind of tough, but I do not want to be a burden on anyone". There is a fine line on this matter and it is a sensitive subject to some, especially if we are the one that needs help...care must be taken to not take the pride away. An offer of help is hard to accept sometimes and it takes a lot of understanding to approach someone needing help. The converse is that there is a community responsibility to keep your part of the world (your home) in good repair and as not to devalue our neighborhood. If it takes accepting a helping hand, then maybe it should be considered. There are those that are willing to help with no strings attached and at no cost to you, simply because it is the right thing to do. Nothing would be etched in stone, but just an organized group of neighbors wanting to help if needed by someone that is challenged by age or health. The committee (as I envision) would accept requests and evaluate the valid need, then organize some assistance. Sometimes the city government can help but it is up to us to be good neighbors and help out if we can wherever we are able. This assistance would be kept strictly confidential as to not embarrass anyone unnecessarily (from now on).

- ❖ **Beware of perfume vendors:** Incident at a business recently...Perfume sellers are having one member approach you (distraction) as the others scan for items to steal. If you are approached by perfume sales, ask the name of the company, say you are not interested, close and lock the door, then call the police to log the incident and please notify us after you finish so we can tell our patrols to be on the look out for the group. To be safe, do not let strangers into your home to sell you some product (that may not be their agenda at all). They may want to “case” your home security, find items they can come back for later or simply begin a home invasion. I do not mean to scare anyone, rather to warn everyone to be cautious. When personal items are stolen, it is terrible...but more than that there is a sever security breach most of us are not use to dealing with. Loss of credit cards, social security information, checks, driver’s license (to mention a few key items) all could be in the hands of unscrupulous people. All of these (possibly more), could be in your purse or wallet. Guard your personal items closely and be prepared to deal with emergencies. Keep a good list of emergency phone numbers, contact and account information for all credit cards, social security, bank checks and driver’s license data. I make a copy of all my cards and keep the contact information all in a safe place at home in case I would ever need it.
- ❖ **Consider installing a Security System:** I can not really recommend a specific vendor...BUT, I can say that there are several good vendors out there. I suggest that since it is such an important function these days that you do a little research and interviews possibly. They will all say that they are the best so if you type “security systems in Baton Rouge” in your favorite search engine (internet), there will be a grand list of vendors ready to offer you some deal. I have had one in my home for about 14 years (since we moved in) and in my opinion, it is very calming to know that something is protecting your home when you are there, when you are out about town and when you are out of town. Whether you get a monitored system or not, I believe it is a good idea to have an alarm system of some sort. Know the terms, know the vendor and have some idea of what you are interested in before you call and talk to a salesman. That way you can control the conversation and not be talked into something you do not readily understand (even if it may be a good feature). Be informed above all, and that is done with a little research. [A GRAND LIST](#) Quote: You do not have to run faster than the bear, just faster than the other guy...
- ❖ **SSOs...what is that?** Sanitary Sewage Overflow The time line on repair of the city-wide issue with sewage is about to be accelerated. Some of the things I have heard is that the EPA is involved with our city in getting some of these issues resolved and the issue is high profile and ongoing. Funding, staffing and politics are all a part of this issue. Kip Holden, Mr. Futrell, all the councilmen and various DPW offices are involved with this problem and are dedicated to bring it to true resolution. The city is large and so are the problems with our sewage, drainage and general condition of systems that have been in place for a long time. It will take a long time to truly fix this problem due to the sheer size and complexity of the combined issues. Capacity of our main sewage plants around Baton Rouge is our main issue along with underlying issues of failing underground piping. Mike Futrell and Kip Holden are committed to this long standing issue and they are saying we will begin seeing results in the near future. I suppose we

will see about that...in the meantime we have to report each time there is a SSO.

The Baton Rouge City/Parish is undertaking a sewer infrastructure rehabilitation program to eliminate, or lessen the frequency of Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSOs). In addition, this program includes wastewater treatment plant modifications/upgrades in order to meet wastewater discharge regulatory requirements. We are making a major capital investment in our sewer infrastructure and wastewater treatment plants now, so that we can create a sustainable system that serves the health and safety needs of City/Parish residents and businesses, and that protects water quality in our lakes, bayous, creeks and rivers.

What should I do if I see a sewer overflow?

Immediately call Department of Public Works at (225) 389-3090. DPW staff will be deployed to investigate, clean, take samples, and work with the state's Department of Environmental Quality to report and monitor the spill.

You should also take these precautions:

- Keep people away from the area of the overflow (typically a manhole). This is especially important for children and pets that may play near the overflow area (e.g., street, Public Park, or local streams, creeks, and rivers).
- Do not go near or touch the overflow. However, if you do happen to come in contact with the sewage overflow, wash your hands thoroughly in warm, soapy water before handling food or touching other persons or surfaces.

http://brprojects.com/sewer/pages/Sewer_FAQ.htm and the SSO offices is the best source of information. **Report the issue EVERY TIME it occurs.**

Mike Walker's office is assisting a recent report of a local sewer that was overflowing (and causing issues inside the home) to temporarily resolve the issue (with a program the city has to assist) with a "work around" Liberty Pump installed at no cost to the homeowner. It is not near as good as fixing the problem by replacing drainage intrusion, cave-ins and poor capacity issues. BUT, it is better than having to deal with contaminated water in your yard or home. If you have a problem like that, let me know and I will get you in contact with the right person.

❖ **To search the Municipal Code of Ordinances or Unified Development Code simply click to go there and use the "Search" to type in your keyword**

❖ **PODs are covered by an ordinance:** I have looked this up (and found) in the Unified Development Code (UDC) of Baton Rouge (city laws/ordinances) on PODs: In 2003 the Zoning Advisory Committee met to consider proposed amendments to the

Unified Development Code. In March, the Metropolitan Council approved the Portable on Demand Storage Unit Ordinance (PODS).

Entire UDC <http://www.brgov.com/dept/planning/udcodeonline.asp>

Chapter 9 of the UDC <http://www.brgov.com/dept/planning/udc/pdf/chapter9.pdf>

Section 9.4 “Portable Storage Containers” are permitted accessory uses in residential districts, subject to the following restrictions :

Section 9.401

Portable storage containers may only be placed in the front yard in a residential district up to three (3) times per year for a period not to exceed fifteen (15) days, provided that at least seven (7) days have lapsed since the last fifteen (15) day period during which a PSC was located on the property.

Section 9.402

Portable storage containers may be placed in a residential district for up to thirty (30) days, provided that all building setback requirements are met.

Section 9.403

The building official may permit the placement of a portable storage container in a residential district for more than thirty (30) days, subject to building setback requirements, provided that the property owner has a valid building permit or had demonstrated that extenuating circumstances exist or building setbacks to justify the extension. Extenuation circumstances, shall include, but are not limited to, disaster such as hurricane, fire or flood.

Dial 311 (talk to a person) or online you could fill out (in greater detail) the **Citizens Request for Service** <https://brgov.com/apps/crs/>

❖ Municipal Code of Ordinances, City of Baton Rouge (in regards to roosters and chickens)

Sec. 14:224. Chickens, other fowls, and birds.

(a) The keeping of more than three (3) chickens within a recognized residential subdivision on a lot of less than one (1) acre is prohibited.

(b) The keeping of roosters, geese, guinea fowl, ducks, turkeys, or peacocks is similarly prohibited in recognized residential subdivisions on lots of two (2) acres or less.

(c) (1) Any chicken or other fowl or avian kept in a residential subdivision shall be maintained as follows.

- a. All chickens, or other fowl, or avians shall be confined to the owner's property at all times.
- b. Pens, coops, flight cages, or other enclosures shall be located a minimum of ten (10) feet from the nearest property line and minimum of fifty (50) feet from any residence other than that of the owner.
- c. All enclosures shall be cleaned regularly to prevent an accumulation of food, fecal matter, or nesting material from creating a nuisance or unsanitary condition due to odor, vermin, debris, or decay.
- d. Appropriate food, water, shelter and housing shall be provided to meet the requirements of the particular fowl or avian in question.

(2) No fowl or bird shall cause a nuisance. Owners of fowl or birds will be held responsible and liable for any damages they cause in the parish.

(d) The provisions of this section shall apply upon receipt of written and signed complaint by the director of animal control. When a violation is determined to exist, the owner or keeper shall be ordered to correct the violation within seventy-two (72) hours of receiving such notice. Failure to correct the violation may result in the owner or keeper being issued a summons to appear in court for the violation(s). Each day a violation of this section is continued shall be deemed a separate violation.

(e) Registered Four-H and Future Farmers of America (F.F.A.) club members may be allowed to keep fowl otherwise prohibited in this section provided that they:

- (1) Meet all provisions of subsection (c)(1)c and d; and
- (2) Obtain prior written approval and permission from all adjoining property owners or residents and file such approvals with Four-H or F.F.A. club supervisors or agents.

(f) Properly licensed raptor owners shall be exempted from this section provided that they meet all provisions of subsection (c)(1)c and d.

(Ord. No. 9634 § 1, 5-26-93; Ord. No. 9766, § 10, 11-24-93)

Sec. 14:225. **Penalties**

(a) Any person who violates any provisions of the sections of this chapter or who shall hinder or molest or interfere with any officer or agent of the animal control center in the performance of any duty provided for by this chapter shall, upon conviction by a court of competent jurisdiction, be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and may be fined any amount up to five hundred dollars (\$500.00) or imprisoned for not more than one hundred-eighty (180) days, or both fined and imprisoned, in the discretion of the court.

(b) The animal control center, or its agents, may enforce any provision of this chapter by instituting a suit for injunctive relief and use of summary process, including all temporary restraining orders permitted by law.

(Ord. No. 9634 § 1, 5-26-93)

- ❖ **Does anyone have information** on the vacant - house at 980 Hedgewood Drive at the corner of Effringham? There are neighbors interested in buying it
- ❖ **We are working** the wrecker at 395 Kay Drive (pending investigation)
- ❖ **We are working** the school bus on Nassau (pending investigation)
- ❖ **We have a rooster** on Brookshire (is there some kind of ordinance against roosters?)
Fortunately the neighbor that shared this information is an early riser
- ❖ **We are checking** on a white Ford Taurus backed into the carport (~2000 model) on Kay Drive near Archery
- ❖ **We are investigating** reports of an area on Mollylea that has large parties on the weekends (getting very loud with obscene language and loud arguments) creating an intolerable environment for long-time homeowners in this area, that has cars parking on both sides of the street, congesting the street to the point emergency vehicles (EMS or Fire Trucks) could not pass. They block driveways and some appear to not be registered to be on the road. Some of the cars have been ticketed but continue to park there.
- ❖ **We are going to be contacting** a homeowner with a swimming pool and back yard that is in need of help. The son of the homeowner lives out of state but would be glad to get any assistance for his parent's property. This is another good prospect for our new committee assisting those needing assistance. They just can not deal with big project any longer. The neighbor that reported this need is willing to assist in helping on this project.
- ❖ **What are the regulations** on child care centers in Sherwood Forest?
- ❖ **We need to be on the watch** for anyone suspiciously wandering around the neighborhoods starting fires. It appears three boys have been seen going into yards around Donovan and Arlington, up on the porches of some of the homes showing unusual gall. This has been reported but any information on such activity or carrying containers that may have diesel or other fire accelerant, would be appreciated.
- ❖ **We are investigating** a house on one of our streets that has two cars that haven't moved in several weeks and has grass that has not been mowed in a while.
- ❖ **We are working on** a green van parked in the street at 10831 May Belle Court as well as a white van is parked in driveway (towards the front of the house for all to see) with a torn tarp over it... and has been there since last summer - it has obviously not moved and is used for storage. The back yard is full of STUFF and some of that has white canopies covering it...The concern is that varmints would be drawn to such an environment. The front shutters are falling down and they are just left where the fall...yard maintenance is neglected and the front is not kept in a neighborly manner.

- ❖ **We are working on** an Entergy truck that often is parked in the street
- ❖ **Childcare center regulations?** (found in the UDC Appendix H) [Unified Development Code - Online](#), Baton Rouge, LA
A1 Single Family Residential District (See Section 8.201) Conditional Uses (See Section 4.101 – Site Plan Review and Section 8.106 Conditional Uses)

Childcare centers, Preschools including Head Start and other Pre-Kindergarten programs – Enrollment is limited to ten children. Hours of operation are between 6:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. A six (6) foot solid wooden fence is required between adjacent residences and outdoor play areas. No signage is allowed. Must be owner occupied. All parking areas must be completely screened (see parking screening in Appendix D) from the street and adjacent residences. Shall not be located within a recognized residential subdivision.

There are many that have made comments on how they have enjoyed getting this news update report on some of the activity in the SFCA (Sherwood Forrest Citizens Association) service area. It has been said we should protect the identity of our members that are in need of help for their safety, and I agree. However those that want to live as they please and not follow the **Municipal Code of Ordinances** or **Unified Development Code** **should be identified**. They place our surrounding neighbors at risk or devalue the properties we have invested in with no regard for others. That is selfish and inconsiderate of the very neighborhood they moved into. When you move into Sherwood Forest you choose to live in a special area of Baton Rouge (aging as it may be) we will not tolerate noncompliance of the city codes or our deed restrictions. This type of living is obviously not for everyone, but if you make that choice to live among the ones that do follow the rules and mind our deed restrictions, you will be scrutinized by us all and held accountable for your actions. If assistance is requested or help needed we will be there to help you through the best we can. We are Baton Rouge and even more, we are Sherwood Forest.

This is the third News Update that has been sent via email, to the membership by your SFCA Webmaster: Dallas Ballmer in the attempt to keep you informed on issues in our neighborhoods