



# NEWSCASTER

**Spring Shadows  
Civic Association:  
HOA Newsletter**

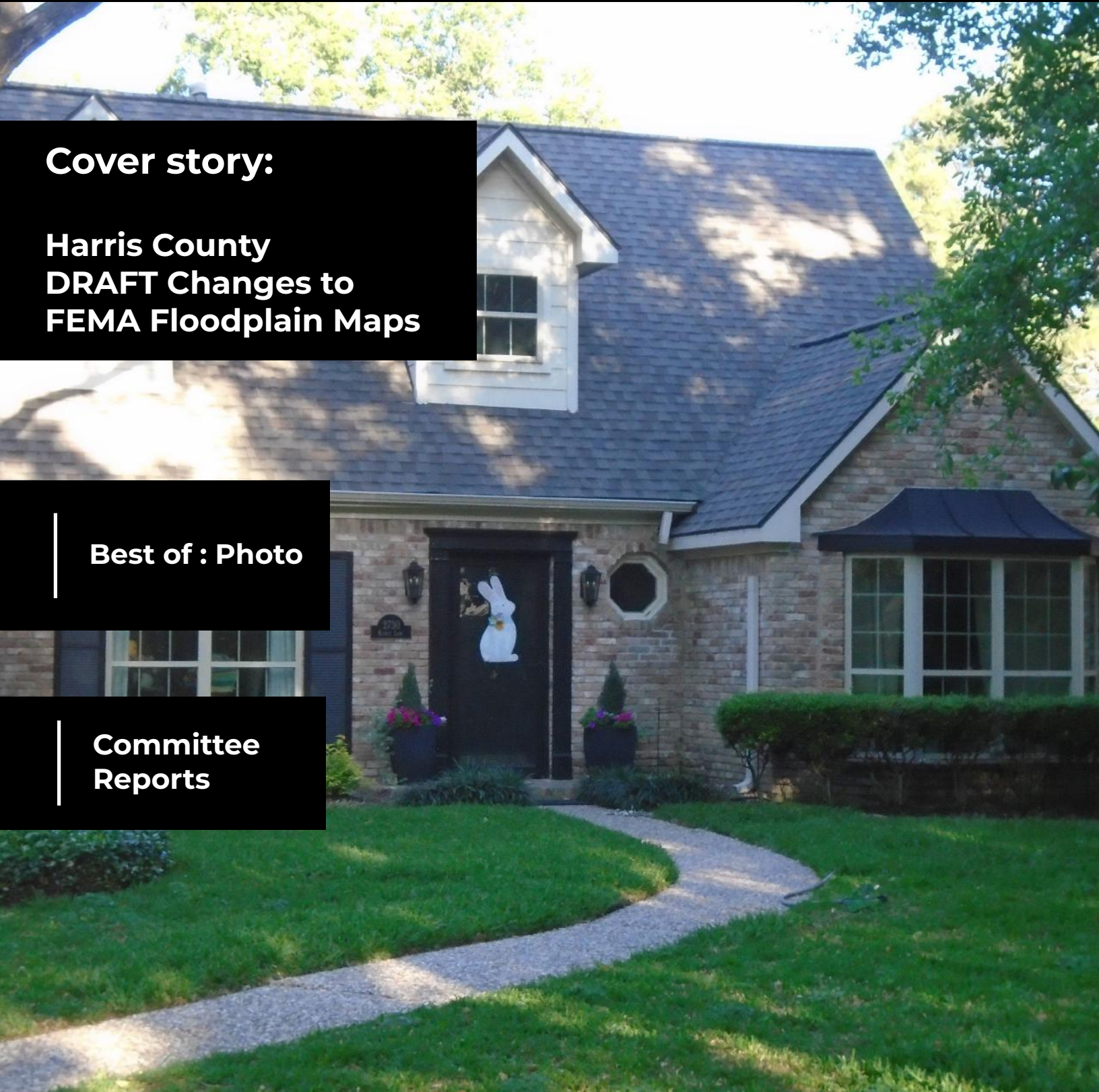
*Issue #321  
April/May 2026*

**Cover story:**

**Harris County  
DRAFT Changes to  
FEMA Floodplain Maps**

**Best of : Photo**

**Committee  
Reports**





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[www.springshadows.org](http://www.springshadows.org)  
 for current updates.

**OFFICIAL SPRING SHADOWS CIVIC ASSOCIATION**  
**FACEBOOK PAGE**

### DISCLAIMER

The Facebook page entitled "Spring Shadows Neighborhood Group" is not maintained nor sanctioned by SSCA. It is privately owned by a Spring Shadows resident.

Graphic Design/Implementation: Karen Snead  
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# PRESIDENT'S LOG

Stardate - 297244.25  
March 31, 2026

*Greg Janak*

## Hello Fellow Neighbors

Here we are, the 2nd edition of the Digital Newscaster. After launching the Digital Newscaster in February, we got a ton of positive feedback. I know there are some folks that would still prefer the paper version. As I outlined in February, there are a ton of advantages to a digital version. Again, thank you to everyone that has made this transition and its launch a huge success.

Come out and meet some of your fellow homeowners at the Spring Shadows April General Meeting on April 14th at John Knox Presbyterian Church. Meeting starts at 7 pm. Our guest speakers will be Harris County Precinct 5 Constable Terry Allbritton and Vice-Mayor Pro Tem, Amy Peck.

Sincerely,  
  
Greg Janak



### Welcome to HTX Collects!

Houston Solid Waste Management has launched HTX Collects, a mobile app that will allow residents to stay better connected with the City's waste and recycling collection programs.

Never miss a collection day again! Download the new Houston Solid Waste service reminder app, HTX Collects from the iOS App and/or Google Play store today. Sign up to receive service day reminders as mobile notifications, email or phone call. You can even add your collection days to your personal iCal, Google or Outlook calendar. Always remember your recycling day!

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# Information Hub

## Important Phone Numbers

- Pct. 5 Constable 281-463-6666
- Graffiti Removal 311 (713-837-0311)
- Emergency 911
- Houston Police (Non-Emergency) 713-884-3131
- Houston Fire (Admin) 832-394-6700
- SBISD Police 713-984-9805
- Amy Peck: Council Member District A 832-393-3010
- BARC (Roaming Dogs) 713-837-0311

Contact information correct for the publication date

## SSCA APR/MAY 2026 MEETINGS

- **Executive Committee**  
Mon. Apr. 6, Mon. May 11, 6:00 pm
- **General Meeting**  
Tues. Apr. 14, 7:00 pm -  
John Knox Presbyterian : 2525 Gessner
- **Board Meeting**  
Mon. May 18, 6:00 pm
- **Architectural Control Committee**  
Wed. Apr. 22, Wed. May 27, 6:45 pm

## SPRING SHADOWS MOMS CLUB

Spring Shadows Moms Club meets the first Thursday of each month at 7:15 pm.

Please contact our leadership team at: [ssmomsclub@gmail.com](mailto:ssmomsclub@gmail.com) for more information. \*Has no affiliation with the Association

## CALL CENTERPOINT ENERGY at

713-207-2222 for all street lights that are not working. Provide the number listed on the street light pole or the address of affected light.

**CALL HOUSTON** at 311 or 713 837 0311 for all missed garbage, recycling, trash or yard waste pickups.

## appfolio "HOMEOWNER PORTAL"

If you have not activated the homeowner portal, please call the office and provide your current email address. With the online portal, you can:

- View the SSCA Calendar
- Submit payment for maintenance fees
- Submit Architectural Control Applications
- Access SSCA documents, including deed restrictions and policies

APPFOLIO webpage link  
APPFOLIO mobile app link (iphone)  
APPFOLIO mobile app link (android)

If you do not receive an email, are unsure if you have one on file, or would like to create an account for a second owner, please contact the SSCA office at 713-460-1718 or [office@springshadows.org](mailto:office@springshadows.org)

## April 2026

- Wed. April 1: April Fool's Day
- Sun. April 5: Easter
- Wed. April 22: Earth Day
- Fri. April 24: Arbor Day

## May 2026

- Tues. May 5: Cinco de Mayo
- Sun. May 10: Mother's Day
- Mon. May 25: Memorial Day

## Trash Dates

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| April 3 - Yard waste (delayed), Trash, Recycling              | May 1 - Yard waste (delayed), Trash, Recycling              |
| April 10 - Yard waste (delayed), Trash                        | May 8 - Yard waste (delayed), Trash                         |
| April 17 - Yard waste (delayed), Trash, Recycling             | May 15 - Yard waste (delayed), Trash, Recycling             |
| April 24 - Yard waste (delayed), Trash, Heavy Trash (delayed) | May 22 - Yard waste (delayed), Trash, Heavy Trash (delayed) |

# SPRING SHADOWS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

## APRIL GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

John Knox Presbyterian Church  
Fellowship Hall,  
2525 Gessner Road, Houston, Texas 77080

April 14, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.



**PLEASE JOIN YOUR NEIGHBORS  
FOR THE ASSOCIATION'S SPRING  
GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS.**

**THE MEETING WILL FEATURE  
GUEST SPEAKERS:**

**Harris County Precinct 5 Constable  
Terry Allbritton,**  
who will address the impact of HB  
26 (89th Leg., 2nd C.S.) on the costs  
of the Contract Deputy Program

**AND**

**Vice-Mayor Pro Tem,  
Amy Peck, City of Houston District A,**  
who will discuss the status of the  
appointment-based heavy trash  
pickup system and current issues in  
the Public Safety and Quality of Life  
Committees.

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Tuesday 10 am - 6 pm  
Wednesday Noon - 8 pm  
Thursday 10 am - 6 pm  
Friday 1 pm - 5 pm  
Saturday 10 am - 5 pm

The library has a  
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- 2 Air Purification**  
 Adding air purifiers in key areas to actively reduce contaminants and improve air freshness.
- 3 Regular Maintenance**  
 Encouraging routine HVAC maintenance to ensure systems are operating efficiently and effectively.
- 4 Ventilation Improvements**  
 Suggesting enhancements to the home's ventilation, such as adding exhaust fans or using air exchangers, to allow for better air circulation issues.



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# Real Estate Market Trends & Welcome New Neighbors

by Therese Landa; Real Estate Broker: Owner of Houstonian Properties 281.236.6348

**This *Current Market Analysis* evaluates SOLD properties from the past 180 days, as market conditions from 90-180 days provide the most accurate reflection of current property values.**

- Active Listings: 32
- Number of Homes Sold: 38 (same)
- Average Days on the Market: 103 (longer)
- Sold Price Range: \$256,000 - \$755,000

- Price Per Square Foot:
- Highest Price Per Square Foot : \$329.04
- Average Price Per Square Foot: \$210.57
- Lowest Price Per Square Foot : \$136.64

## Mortgage Rates Update

Mortgage rates have dropped slightly this week.

- 30-Year Conventional Loan: 5.99%
- 15 Year Conventional Loan: 5.45%
- FHA 30-year Loan: 5.62%
- VA 30 Year Loan: 6.09%
- Jumbo 30-Year Loan: 6.20%

The average days on market suggest a slowdown, with increased inventory. Currently, Spring Shadows has approximately 2.6 months of inventory. Lower than last newsletter. A six-month inventory typically signals a buyer's market, while the current two point six month supply suggests market equilibrium.

Prices per square foot is up slightly from last month.

Remember, price per square foot average does not make value. Homes are compared kitchens to kitchens, baths to baths and flooring to flooring, with location being a top item considered too.

## WELCOME NEIGHBORS

- 2600 Anniston
- 3000 Durban
- 2400 Elmgate (2)
- 9900 Emnora
- 2600 Fontana
- 2900 Fontana (2)
- 2600 Hollow Hook
- 9700 Lawngate
- 2300 Pomeran
- 2100 Rosefield
- 2600 Southwick
- 3000 Stetson
- 2800 Triway
- 9700 Truscon



**Therese Landa, Broker/Owner,**  
GRI, CLHMS

*Spring Branch Resident, 25 Years of Experience,  
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# New FEMA DRAFT , Floodplain RISK Maps for Harris County

by Karen Snead: Director/EC at Large #1

I can't say that I've been eagerly awaiting the new Draft Floodplain Insurance Rate Maps (Draft FIRMs) for Harris County. But at least my anxiously dreading status is over since the DRAFT maps are now available for review. Many of us are in for a surprise.

The **Federal Emergency Management Agency** (FEMA) is responsible for creating these maps. All stages for this map completion can be viewed in the 4 Phase explanation on their website page for the **RISK mapping process**. It is important to stress that the maps are officially in the DRAFT stage, also known as Phase 2. According to **ReduceFlooding.Com's** reportage Harris County officials are not expecting a new finalized, legal map from FEMA for at least a year or two.

The upcoming, multiple PRELIMINARY MAPS (Phase 3) will incorporate engineering studies, comment periods by floodplain managers, and other further internal activities. Once these are completed, homeowners will have the opportunity to comment and/or protest their revised floodplain status.

The new DRAFT flood maps are based on rain data obtained after Hurricane Harvey (2017) while the old maps utilized data obtained after Tropical Storm Allison (2001). Homeowners can compare their old floodplain classification with new FEMA DRAFT classifications by visiting this **interactive map** and making sure to check the "Mapping Change Comparison" box option on the website page. You can then move the black, vertical slider bar to view the before and after floodplain categorization changes (if any) for your property.

According to the Houston Chronicle's interactive Zip Code Ranking Map, one of several maps included within a recent **article**, when using the new draft maps about 42% of properties in the 77080 boundary and 58% of properties in the 77043 boundary would move to a higher risk zone category.

One bright ray of sunshine glimpsed through these dark clouds is that for those of us who use the federal National Flood Insurance Program for our flood insurance, the formula to determine insurance costs is not contingent upon these new flood map drafts:

“Historically, well over 90% of flood insurance policyholders in the U.S. have obtained their coverage through the federal government’s National Flood Insurance Program. For decades, the NFIP used locations within flood zones on federal maps as a major factor in determining insurance premium prices.

That changed in the early 2020s under a new system called **Risk Rating 2.0**, which uses 30-plus data points to better measure each property’s vulnerability to flooding. Location in a flood map is not a factor, so premium calculations shouldn’t change under the updated maps.”

Direct quote from the Kinder Institute at Rice University article **How new FEMA flood maps will — and won't — impact insurance costs across Harris County**, Jacob Carpenter, February 23rd, 2026, Urban Edge.

Continued from page 8

Many of us may want to understand the steps for protesting/appealing flood zone classification to effectively and efficiently challenge this status during the official appeal time frame. The protest window is 90 days from the date FEMA provides legal notice for appeals to be submitted. This process occurs after the publication of its PRELIMINARY FLOOD INSURANCE MAPS.

Simply stating/documenting that your home has never flooded is not considered objective evidence when protesting.

“... an appeal should be accompanied by data and documentation indicating that the proposed new or modified flood hazard information shown on the preliminary products is scientifically or technically incorrect. The information submitted by the appellant should indicate a modification or update to the information used to prepare the preliminary FIRM (Floodplain Insurance Rate Maps) and/or FIS (Flood Insurance Study) report. Appellants are asked to demonstrate better methodologies, assumptions or data exists and provide alternative analyses or data used to develop the new or updated flood hazard information on the preliminary FIRM with their appeal package”.

Direct Quote from “[Appeals and Comments: Information for Property Owners](#)”, FEMA, pg. 2, April – 20.

Preparing in advance will make complying with the 90-day protest time frame much easier. Here are some proactive information tips/links:

- 1) Review the FEMA's [Community Members' Guide](#) to Initiating Map Revisions.
- 2) Review the [Letter of Map Change Request](#) to change your flood plain risk status for your property
- 3) Verify your property elevation if you think the current, officially reported elevation data is wrong. This requires verification by a [Texas licensed surveyor or an engineer](#).
- 4) Follow [press updates](#) from Harris County Flood Control District.

Hopefully with this information in hand during the calm before the storms we can effectively address future property, floodplain risk status.



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# Architectural Control Committee Report



by Felix Angel -  
Vice President/ACC-ACDR Chairman

Dear Neighbors,

Our heavy rains in mid-March have brought on a much-anticipated Spring. As we see blossoms in and around our community, the Architectural Control Committee (ACC) would like to share a friendly reminder about maintaining the beauty and harmony of our neighborhood.

With warmer weather, just around the corner, many of us begin outdoor projects—gardening, painting, fence repairs, or home improvements. Before starting any exterior changes, please remember:

- Submit an [ACC Request Form](#) for any modifications to your home’s exterior, landscaping, or structures.
- Review the [Deed Restrictions](#) to ensure your project aligns with our standards.
- Allow time for review—most requests are processed within 14 days. Our goal is to preserve property values, maintain a cohesive look, and ensure everyone enjoys a beautiful, welcoming environment.

If you have questions or need forms, please visit [www.springshadows.org](http://www.springshadows.org) or you may wish to reach out to the office via email at [office@springshadows.org](mailto:office@springshadows.org) directly. Thank you for your cooperation and for helping keep our community vibrant this spring!

I can help you make sure your coverage is up-to-date.  
Call me today.



Warren Sloan  
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Houston, TX 77043  
warrensloan@allstate.com



Spring Shadows Resident.

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**Good neighbors  
are like stars,  
you don't always  
see them but  
they're always  
there.**



# Beautification Committee Report

by Alex Rome: Committee Chair

There are no new changes to report for April/ May. We are still in the process of replacing the three PVB irrigation valves that were stolen along Hammerly and installing protective steel cages to prevent future theft. The cost provided by LMC is \$2,500 (not included in the original November 2025 approved budget as the theft occurred after the budget approval process) which includes replacement of the PVB valves, City of Houston inspection, and installation of the steel cages.

## BEAUTIFICATION BUDGET BREAKDOWN: 2026

The Committee budgeted \$10,500 for Plant and Sign Maintenance, allocated as follows:

- \$2,500 – New SSCA metal signs throughout the subdivision
- \$2,500 – Esplanades/Medians at Kempwood (redo end caps)
- \$5,500 – Tree maintenance along Kempwood and Hammerly

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# COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

by Janet Marton  
*Committee Chair*

## Spring Branch Super Neighborhood Council

Spring Shadows Civic Association was once a part of the Spring Branch North (Spring Shadows) Super Neighborhood Council, Inc., but is now dormant, as are the Super Neighborhoods West, and East.

Through the efforts of Catherine Barchfeld-Alexander (Central), a newly formed Spring Branch Super Neighborhood Council, comprised of Central, North (Spring Shadows), East, and West Super Neighborhood is intended as an umbrella Super Neighborhood to more effectively advocate before the City concerning issues directly affecting the Spring Branch area by having a voice before the City's Neighborhood Alliance. (See Chapter 2-621, et seq Code of Ordinances, Houston, Texas, and the Memorandum of Understanding between the Alliance and the City of Houston dated March 17, 2003.)

As this restructuring takes hold, the Committee has been attending monthly meetings to discuss City issues affecting Spring Branch, and meet the various City officials who also attend.

Eventually delegates will be named to participate with the City's Alliance. If you have an interest in this endeavor, please contact the Association Office.

## Trash Talk

As of March 5, 2026, the City of Houston has delayed the launch of its new on-demand heavy trash service continuing with the existing scheduled pickup system due to 311 service request backlogs.

The switch to a 311-based appointment system is on hold, with no new start date announced, as officials work to ensure the system is fully functional.

Residents should continue to follow the established monthly schedule and to call 311 to report problems with service.


Heavy trash is limited to a maximum of 8 cubic yards, approximately the size of a mini-van, and items must not be generated by contractors.

If service is delayed, residents can use the City's Residential Drop-Off Centers which are open Tuesday through Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and closed on Sunday and Monday.

Information about how to properly dispose of waste can be found on the Solid Waste Management Department's [website](#).

**THIS AD SPACE IS Two Business Cards**

**2.00" (w) x 6.50" (h)**



# Mosquito & Health Committee Report

By Debbie Dill - *Committee Chair*

A very warm welcome to all the new Spring Shadows residents on behalf of the Mosquito & Health Committee!

Houston is a Bayou City so we will always be battling the mosquitoes which are not just a nuisance, they may also carry serious diseases that can impact our lives and that of our pets. Years ago, Spring Shadows Civic Association formed a Mosquito and Health Committee to help control them in our area.

One way we do this is by contracting with a pest control service to fog/spray weekly from mid-March through November (the peak mosquito activity months). The chemicals used are sprayed in the suggested manner and in compliance approved by the County and the City's Board of Health. During the spraying months, service usually occurs late on Wednesday evenings. However, if for some reason the contractor is unable to spray (such as inclement weather or a holiday) the service will occur on the next date and time the contractor has available.

We ask that you do your part in the effort to control the mosquitoes by removing breeding areas of mosquitoes around

your property. Please be sure to check for low areas in your yard. Remember to empty plant saucers and rain gauges regularly and of course, always clean and maintain your swimming pools, hot tubs, water fountains and bird baths. Please check areas often, as the life cycle of the mosquito from egg to an adult is only 8-10 days.

Please check the curb in front of your home for leaves and debris which can cause street flooding as it washes towards the drains and accumulates with our neighbors' leaves, blocking the too few drains in our neighborhood. Never put anything into our street drains especially yard clippings. To do so is not only against the city ordinance, but causes street flooding and possibly neighborhood home flooding during rainstorms.

Remember to be vigilant to protect yourself and your family when outdoors by using repellent and wearing protective clothing. You also should discuss with your vet about ways to protect your pets from mosquito borne illnesses.

Thank you!



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*Owner*

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Robin Castellanos - Spring Shadows Resident



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# Patrol and Safety Committee Report

by Rob Cooms: Committee Chair

Photo used with permission: Harris County Constables  
Office Precinct 5

## Hi Neighbors and welcome to Spring and Daylight Savings Time.

Even with these longer and brighter evenings, walking and biking as the streets darken continues to be a concern. Thanks to those of you who have taken to wearing light, reflective clothing, and/or flashing lights when walking or biking in the dark. Please remember to walk in single file if you are part of a group. Also please walk facing oncoming traffic so that you can see what is coming at you since we don't have sidewalks in most of Spring Shadows.

Another pedestrian issue that we want to mention, based on HOA received complaints, is people walking with their pets unleashed. Remember, by City of Houston ordinance, pets in front yards or on the streets are required to be on leashes. Fines typically range from \$200 to \$2000 dollars. Also, please remember to pick up any "presents" pets may leave. It is the neighborly thing to do.

Homeowners continue to report some motorists on our residential streets speeding, running stop signs, and generally driving without concern for the safety of others. Please help us keep Spring Shadows safe by obeying all traffic laws, signals, and signs. We all want to drive in a manner that displays care and respect for our fellow neighbors. And for added incentive, it helps to remember that the Constables are full law-enforcement officers and they can and do issue tickets, citations, make arrests, etc. They are there for the safety of our residents and they will enforce the law for any violation.

## The BEST WAYS TO DEAL WITH EMERGENCY vs. NON-EMERGENCY LAW ENFORCEMENT CONTACT

**Non-Emergencies:** You are the eyes and ears for our Constables. Please call them at 281-463-6666 if you see anything suspicious. If you are hesitant, please don't be. Deterrence is a better solution than someone having to file a police report. If you do observe something happening, please do NOT confront the perpetrator. You might consider taking pictures and even following at a safe, but long, distance, but do NOT confront. This is for YOUR safety.

If you have provided SSCA with your email information, you are receiving SSCA emails. In February we sent out an email blast to homeowners with the following information. Specifically, we were advised that the Houston Police Department (HPD), because of lack of manpower, was turning over all NON-EMERGENCY calls in Spring Shadows to the Pct. 5 Constables for their handling.

This has caused a time delay between when HPD receives the non-emergency calls and when it contacts the Pct. 5 Dispatcher. The two departments are trying to work out how to reduce any time delays, but just know that as soon as Pct. 5 receives the call from HPD, it will dispatch a deputy to respond.

Because of these communication delays between the two departments, your best bet is to contact the



**Best of Spring Shadows**  
**Homeowner Photo Winner**  
**April/May 2026**  
**5" x 7.5" submission size**

**Rules for future entries**



**Camouflage Squirrel**  
**Photo Credit:**  
**Long Tien**



## TASTIES & MUNCHIES CORNER

BY SPRING SHADOWS RESIDENT  
EXTRAORDINAIRE -  
Roxanne Richey  
*Director/EC at Large*

This space is for any and every food interest held by Spring Shadows homeowners. If you're a good cook, love exploring Spring Shadows food history, growing edible flowers, brewing beer, and/or discovering new ethnic grocery stores, this may be the platform for you. The only caveat, we can't have restaurant reviews submitted for this content.

We do ask that you keep your submission to 700 words or less and that you follow the written guidelines outlined under [Narrative/Anecdote requirements](#) outlined on our website Newscaster page.

### Banana Bread Recipe

Roxanne Richey

#### Background

Sparky Joe, my beloved Doxle (Dachshund/Beagle Mix) rescued me 11 years ago on April 18th. One of his many escapades involved the last piece of a loaf of banana bread that I had baked. For some strange reason, I had wrapped the piece of banana bread in foil and set it on top of the toaster oven. I went to work for my usual 10 hour day... When I got home, I discovered that Sparky had been busy. He had jumped on the ottoman, jumped from the ottoman to the club chair, jumped from the club chair to the bar of the kitchen, and then he jumped onto the kitchen counter. He then took the foil-wrapped banana bread and reversed the process until he settled on the family room

floor. He managed to carefully unwrap the banana bread from the foil. Then he proceeded to eat the piece of banana bread. No crumbs were left. The only evidence was the unwrapped foil on the family room floor. Imagine my surprise when I got home that evening. I had to laugh at his determination and dexterity. I'm happy to report that no vet bills resulted from his activity. I've gotten smarter about storing banana bread.

#### Recipe

½ Cup Crisco  
1 Cup Sugar  
2 Eggs  
1 ½ Cups Mashed Banana (3 Large Bananas)  
2 Cups Flour  
1 Teaspoon Salt  
¼ Teaspoon Vanilla  
1 Teaspoon Soda  
2/3 Cups Chopped Nuts

**Instructions:** Cream the Crisco, sugar, eggs, and beat. Add mashed bananas, flour, vanilla, and nuts. Bake 1 hour at 350 degrees Fahrenheit in a greased loaf pan.

**Hints:** I don't add the salt. I go heavy on the Vanilla (1 teaspoon instead of ¼) and the nuts (1 cup instead of 2/3). I use pecans or walnuts, depending on my mood. You can substitute chocolate chips if you have friends and family members that have nut allergies.



## GREENER THUMBS:

**GARDENING, LANDSCAPING, AND PLANT TIPS**  
for the **CURIOUS, THE CHALLENGED, AND THE DESPERATE**

### **My Blooming Success: Roxanne Richey** **Director/EC at Large**

I was not born with a green thumb. I do manage to keep non-flowering plants alive. It's the prettier, showy plants that give me trouble. Oddly, I am successful with Christmas Cactus. The first one that I had lasted for many years. It bloomed like clockwork every Christmas and every Easter. My second Christmas Cactus is following the same pattern – blooming twice a year at Christmas and Easter.

Actually, there are three types of Holiday Cactus:

- Thanksgiving Cactus (*Schlumbergera truncata*) blooms from late fall to mid-winter. Its stems have a “crab” or “lobster” edge with pointed “teeth”. The stems grow upright and then arch.
- Christmas Cactus (*Schlumbergera bridgesii*) flowers from late November to early February. Its flat stem segments have smooth, scalloped edges that hang down like a pendant.
- Easter or Spring Cactus (*Rhipsalidopsis gaertneri*) blooms from late winter to mid-spring. It has flaring, trumpet-shaped flowers with pointy petals that open at sunrise and close at sunset.

Holiday Cacti are native to Brazil. Thanksgiving and Christmas Cacti grow in tropical rain forests. Easter Cacti grow in non-tropical forests. Holiday Cacti are hardy plants, sometimes living twenty years. The blooms may be white, red, magenta, pink, scarlet, purple, apricot, lilac, salmon, orange, or yellow.

They grow best when the temperature is between 60 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit, with 50 to 60 percent humidity, and bright, indirect light, facing east. They should be watered twice per month when they are not blooming and more often, with misting, when flowers appear. They are “pet friendly”.

Based on stem structure, my cactus is a Thanksgiving Cactus. It has both white and red blooms from November to March. It is facing south, is watered weekly, has never been misted, and the temperature in my home is rarely ever below 70 degrees. It's beautiful and brings me joy. Do as the professionals say, not as I do.

Refer to these articles for more information about holiday cacti.

- from [plumeriami.com](http://plumeriami.com)
- from [Good Housekeeping](http://GoodHousekeeping.com)

*more Greener Thumbs continued on page 19*





## GREENER THUMBS:

**GARDENING, LANDSCAPING, AND PLANT TIPS  
for the CURIOUS, THE CHALLENGED, AND THE DESPERATE**

### **Plants, Landscaping, Gardening, and Perplexity: An AI QUERY and a Human Fact Checking Collaboration for the Best Green Thumb Information Sites for Houston**

**By KAREN SNEAD (Director/EC at Large) and PERPLEXITY (AI)**

**KAREN'S QUERY FOR PERPLEXITY:** Best websites for gardening, landscaping, plant information focusing on plants that are appropriate for Texas climate zones, especially for Houston climate, that have scientifically valid and reliable information. These sites can be academic ones, like university sites, or they can be commercial, but they need to be accurate and provide comprehensive information for gardening, landscaping, choosing plants, and providing instructions for use/care.

#### **RECOMMENDED ACADEMIC/NONPROFIT SITES:**

##### Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Official university extension; research-based information tested in Texas with the following resources;

- Earth-Kind® Plant Selector for Texas regions
- Texas Native Shrubs photo database
- Harris County Master Gardeners - Volunteer program under Texas A&M AgriLife; Houston-specific, Research-based horticultural practices, Ask-a-Master-Gardener helpline
- Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center  
Official State Botanic Garden of Texas; NIH-funded research
- Native Plants of North America database (9,000+ species)
- Filter by region, light, soil type

#### **Highly Recommended Houston Specific Resources**

- Houston Arboretum - Ecological Gardening Program with curated native plant landscapes; sustainable landscaping focus, Vegetable Planting Guide, and plant charts for Harris County
- Year Round Food Gardening for Houston - Vegetable/fruit planting schedules specifically for Southeast Texas; addresses climate change impacts
- Urban Harvest - Specific edible plant gardening information for Houston
- Native Plant Society of Texas - Houston Chapter has great resources for our area.

#### **RECOMMENDED COMMERCIAL SITES:**

- Buchanan's Native Plants - great resource navigation tab
- Houstonia Magazine Gardening Guide - Houston Planting Guide Information and links.
- GardenGuy.com\* - Commercial landscaper in Sugar Land with an informative gardening/landscaping blog describing native plants and tips (\*this site was a homeowner recommendation)

# SSCA: 2026 EXPENSE PERCENTAGES

Patrol / Safety 64%

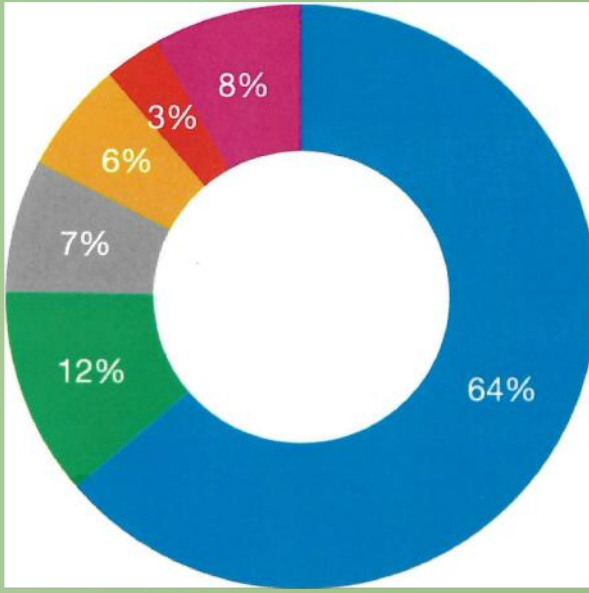
Payroll 12%

Beautification / Esplanades 7%

Office Related 6%

Legal 3%

Other 8%



## FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOT PAID

**New SSCA ,2026 Maintenance Fees [ \$375 ] were due on January 1, 2026**

*Timely payment of annual assessments is essential to maintain our community services.*

*For account details or payment plan options, please contact Sharon at the Association Office at 713-460-1718 or [office@springshadows.org](mailto:office@springshadows.org).*

**Brenda Stardig**  
 Broker Associate  
 Brenda@TaylorRealEstate.com  
 281-726-1555



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## Keep Kids Learning This Summer: SBISD's New "Minds in Motion" Summer Camp

Looking for a great way to keep your kids engaged this summer? Spring Branch ISD has launched a brand-new summer enrichment series, Minds in Motion, offering a range of fun, hands-on programs for elementary-age students.

Camps run June 8–18 at two convenient locations: Westchester Academy for International Studies (WAIS) and Shadow Oaks Elementary.

### 2026 Minds in Motion Summer Camp Offerings:

**CookLearnGrow America's Delicious Bounty:** Exploring Our Nation's Foods (Grades K–5) Young chefs will "travel" across the United States, exploring regional foods, cooking dishes, and learning about agriculture and food production. June 8–11 | WAIS | 8:30–11:30 a.m. | \$395 Note: Camp is nut-free and pork-free; additional dietary accommodations are not available.

**MoveNation Dance Academy:** This unique camp blends dance and science, introducing students to movement through physics, musicality, and artistic expression across multiple dance styles. June 8–11 | WAIS | 12:00–3:00 p.m. | \$250

**Chess Wizards:** Students of all skill levels can build strategy and critical thinking through lessons, tournaments, and interactive games. June 15–18 | WAIS | 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. | \$225

**Amazing Athletes:** A high-energy, multi-sport camp where students rotate through activities including basketball, soccer, football, and more, with skill-building and team competitions. June 15–18 | WAIS | 1:00–4:00 p.m. | \$295

**Camp Invention:** In partnership with the National Inventors Hall of Fame, this nationally recognized program offers hands-on STEM learning and creative problem-solving. June 8–11 and June 15–18 | WAIS | 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. | \$325

**American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO):** Skill-based soccer camps focused on player development, teamwork, and sportsmanship in a fun, supportive environment. June 8–11 and June 15–18 | Shadow Oaks Elementary | 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. | \$150

Minds in Motion Summer Camps is a great opportunity for students to stay active, curious, and connected all summer long, reflecting SBISD's ongoing commitment to learning beyond the classroom.

**Registration is open March 16 through May 29.** Families can complete the registration form to secure a spot. Tuition for SBISD-managed camps will be paid through MySchoolBucks, with invoices issued after registration.

**Register at:** <https://www.springbranchisd.com/studentsfamilies/summer-camp-programs>



## SBISD NEWS UPDATE FOR PRE-K : APRIL/MAY 2026

Enrollment for the 2026-2027 school year opens April 2!

### The Joy of Learning Starts with SBISD pre-K

For over 25 years, families in the Spring Branch community have trusted Spring Branch ISD pre-K programs to give their children the best possible start to their educational journey. When visitors walk into one of the pre-K centers, they see children who are genuinely excited to learn.

### Play-Based Learning That Works

What's the difference between pre-K and daycare? Within SBISD pre-K, certified teachers create purposeful learning experiences from classroom activities to outdoor exploration. When children plant seeds in their classroom garden and observe growth over time, they're learning about the natural world and the parts of a plant. When they sort colorful bears by size and color, they're mastering patterns and mathematical thinking.

### Programs Designed for Every Child

SBISD pre-K offers programs for both three- and four-year-olds, each designed to meet children

exactly where they are developmentally. The half-day pre-K 3 program provides that critical first school experience, while the full-day pre-K 4 program ensures kindergarten readiness through comprehensive, engaging learning experiences.

What makes the SBISD pre-K approach stand out? It's the personalized attention every child receives. Certified teachers work in small groups, meeting each student exactly where they are developmentally. Children move through intentionally designed learning centers: dramatic play, STEM, art, and science, experiencing both teacher-led instruction and hands-on projects. And the outdoor spaces aren't just playgrounds; they're an extension of the classrooms where children build physical skills, explore nature, and learn through active engagement.

### Supporting Every Child

SBISD pre-K offers comprehensive support services, from special education to speech and language support, ensuring

every child receives the individualized attention they need to succeed.

Spring Branch ISD pre-K students don't just thrive; they excel. Students who attend SBISD pre-K programs enter kindergarten 16 points above the Houston-area average in readiness. That's what intentional, play-based learning delivers.

### Spring Shadows Zoned Early Learning Center

Spring Shadows families are zoned to The Tiger Trail School. To learn more about your SBISD pre-K center or to schedule a tour, visit the SBISD Pre-K website (see the link below).

Enrollment for the 2026-2027 school year opens April 2!

The SBISD Pre-K website is: <https://www.springbranchisd.com/about/departments/academic-performance/connective-academics/prek>

Article submitted from SBISD on March 9, 2026 via email to SSCA



## Back the Build: Building the Future of Terrace Elementary

Terrace Elementary is beginning an exciting new chapter — a complete campus rebuild made possible by the voter-approved 2017 Spring Branch ISD bond. The new building will provide modern classrooms, updated infrastructure, and safe, functional learning spaces for generations of students.

While bond funding makes the new building possible, it does not cover many of the features that transform a school into the heart of a community — things like shaded playground spaces, gathering areas, and outdoor amenities that families can enjoy together. That's where the Back the Build campaign comes in.

### A School and a Neighborhood Park

Terrace Elementary is also home to Terrace Park, a designated SPARK Park that is open to the public outside of school hours. This means the playground and outdoor spaces are used not only by students, but by families and neighbors throughout the community. The improvements made today will benefit our children, grandchildren, and neighborhood families for decades to come.

Bond funding builds the structure.

Community support helps build the experience.

Residents who would like to learn more about the Terrace Elementary rebuild, campus design, and bond-funded construction can visit: <https://www.springbranchisd.com/about/bond-2017/campus-bond-work/terrace-elementary>

### Our Goal: \$350,000

The Back the Build campaign aims to raise \$350,000 to fund meaningful enhancements that will make the new campus more welcoming, functional, and comfortable for both students and the community.

These improvements are based on planning and cost estimates provided by Spring Branch ISD.

### Top funding priorities include:

- Shade structures for the playgrounds
- Outdoor benches and seating areas
- Drinking fountains
- Water bottle filling stations
- Outdoor tables for gathering and events

These additions may seem simple, but in Houston's climate they make a significant difference in how outdoor spaces are used and enjoyed.

### Why Fundraising Is Happening Now

Adding these enhancements during construction is significantly more cost-effective than installing them after the campus is complete. Integrating them now allows them to be designed thoughtfully into the campus rather than retrofitted later at higher cost.

This rebuild represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to shape the Terrace campus from the start.

*continued on page 23*



*continued from page 22*

**Transparent and Tax-Deductible Giving**

While the Terrace PTA supports the campaign, donations are not processed through the PTA. All contributions are made through the Spring Branch Education Foundation, a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, which ensures:

- 100% tax-deductible donations
- Transparent financial oversight
- Funds restricted specifically for Back the Build campus enhancements and maintenance

This campaign is also separate from annual PTA fundraising, which supports classroom programs, teacher grants, and school activities.

**Ways to Give**

Online Donations: For donor recognition levels and giving information, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/3dfs4szu>

Donate by Check: Checks should be made payable to Spring Branch Education Foundation.

Please include "Terrace New Build" in the memo line and mail your donation to:

Spring Branch Education Foundation  
955 Campbell Road

Houston, TX 77024

To help ensure proper tracking and recognition, please also email [terracenewbuild@gmail.com](mailto:terracenewbuild@gmail.com) to notify the campaign team of your donation.

**Corporate Matching Gifts**

Many companies offer corporate matching programs that can double or even triple the impact of your gift. If your employer offers donation matching and you would like to contribute through this program, please email [terracenewbuild@gmail.com](mailto:terracenewbuild@gmail.com) so the team can help coordinate the process.

**Every Dollar Makes a Difference**

Whether a neighbor contributes \$25 or \$2,500, every gift helps create a campus that better serves both students and the surrounding community.

As a special thank-you, the first 100 donors will receive a yard sign recognizing their support for the Back the Build campaign.

Questions can be directed to [terracenewbuild@gmail.com](mailto:terracenewbuild@gmail.com). Together, we can build more than a school — we can build a lasting legacy for the Terrace community.




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## SBISD NEWS UPDATE FOR **SPRING WOODS HIGH** : APRIL/ MAY 2026

Spring Woods High School is committed to excellence. We are excited to share that our students earned 771 college credit hours this fall. Our athletic teams are bringing home the Championships:

- Girls Basketball – Undefeated District Champions
- Swimming – District Champions and a State Competitor
- Boys Soccer – District Champions

The Band, Choir and Orchestra programs have students representing us at State. Both our Theatre Program and Debate Program have members representing us at Nationals!

Spring Woods High School is showing their Tiger P.R.I.D.E. in all they do! Come out and watch our students compete.

*Article submitted from SBISD on March 9, 2026 via email to SSCA*

### Stolen Vehicle Prevention Tips

Here are some ways to prevent vehicle theft and break-ins.

1. Make sure to lock your car doors.
2. Do not leave any valuables in plain sight.
3. Install and activate your vehicle's alarm.
4. Use GPS devices to track your vehicle in case it's stolen.
5. Install secondary aftermarket alarms in case the suspect turns off the factory alarm.
6. Park your vehicle inside your garage.
7. Ensure you have good lighting around your residence and working surveillance cameras. Please get in touch with Harris County Precinct 5 Dispatch at 281-463-6666 to report any crimes or suspicious activity.

### Seeking *Spring Shadows Volunteers* to Contribute to the Newscaster



**Layout/Graphics:**  
For those with experience in digital magazine creation using programs such as Canva, Adobe Express, Adobe Photoshop/Illustrator, Affinity, volunteering for the Newscaster production would be greatly appreciated.

**Writers:**  
Do you have special areas of expertise, either professionally or as an avocation? If so, we would love to have you join us as a writing contributor, possibly for single instance articles or recurring columns in a given hobby/avocation area. Example interest areas include gardening/landscaping, interior design, beer-making, and cooking, just to name a few.

Contact: [director4c@springshadows.org](mailto:director4c@springshadows.org)

## Advertising Policy: Spring Shadows Civic Association

The Newscaster is a digital, every other month publication of the Spring Shadows Civic Association, with editions published on the first day of February, April, June, August, October, and December of each year.

The Newscaster makes advertising space available to local businesses, local organizations, and other entities wishing to reach the residents of the 1,900 + homes in the Spring Shadows Subdivision, one of the largest subdivisions in the Houston area. Our new digital format (February 2026) should create exposure well beyond the borders of our neighborhood to Spring Branch at large.

### **COST:**

The cost for individual, single unit, advertising blocks (3.25" x 2.00" = standard business card/small ad format) is \$50.00 per issue. For businesses desiring larger size ads, simply add as many single blocks as desired.

To view the size of ads placed and the way they may appear for single, two and three column pages please view the [linked example pages](#).

### **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:**

Advertisements must be submitted to the Association in a digital format--preferably high resolution BMP, vector, or PNG. If using PNG, please use a transparent background when small fonts are used, as in many business card sized ads). For adequate web/screen viewing standards (standard of 96 Pixels Per Inch -PPI), multiply the inches width and inches length dimensions of your image each by 96; [example = (3.25"W x 96) by (2"L x 96) = 312 x 192 pixels)].

Payment in advance per issue to:

Spring Shadows Civic Association, email - [office@springshadows.org](mailto:office@springshadows.org),  
phone - 713-460-1718

### DUE DATES FOR ADS

- January 5 for the February/March Newscaster
- March 5 for the April/May Newscaster
- May 5 for the June/July Newscaster
- July 5 for the August/September Newscaster
- September 5 for the October/November Newscaster
- November 5 for the December/January Newscaster.

Exact placement of ads of the same size within the newsletter is decided by a random drawing of each advertiser corresponding to each placement space. So for ad space number 1, an advertiser is drawn at random for that space, and so forth.

The Association reserves the right to refuse advertising if, in its sole discretion, the Association determines that an advertisement is not in the best interest of the residents of Spring Shadows. Advertisers must comply with any applicable laws or regulations regarding their advertisements. The Association is not liable for the content of any advertisement and does not endorse nor assume any responsibility or liability for an advertiser's product or service or the use of same.