



friends of
Mandell Park

Fall
2013

1982

Houston Library Dept. buys Bonnie Brae/ Mandell property for new Montrose library, demolishes residential and commercial abuildings which creates a 1.2-acre vacant lot

1988

Library Department opts for Campanile space on Montrose Blvd., Mandell site remains vacant and becomes a dumping ground

1991

Castle Court Neighborhood Association cleans up residential (south) half of property

1993

First organic beds built onsite

1997

The organic gardens officially named "Meredith Gardens" after founder Meredith Burke

2004

Property transferred to Parks Dept. — City names the property Richmond Park, later changed to Mandell Park

2004

Park advocates form non-profit Friends of Mandell Park (FoMP)

2005-06

Slabs and debris removed, land graded, and grass seeded on the commercial (north) half by City Parks Dept.

2006

FoMP and the UH School of Architecture host Design Charette — Asakura/ Robinson chosen to create and manage Masterplan

2010

FoMP launches capital campaign, "Planting for the Future"

2013

Over \$1,050,600 raised; renovation scheduled to begin in October

Mandell Park Renovation

The renovations to Mandell Park may start this fall, hopefully around mid-October. The process of getting the work done has been much more complex than I anticipated and thus my optimistic timing for a spring start was off by quite a bit.

Although there doesn't seem like much is going on at the park, a lot of preparation work is underway and a tentative time line for the start of construction is discussed below.

The first thing to be accomplished was removal of the aerial utilities that bisected the park.

The electrical and telephone utilities have been removed and the remaining cable (and poles) should be removed shortly. The construction drawings were reviewed by the City of Houston Planning Department and returned to the architects for comments and clarifications. The plans should be resubmitted for final approvals by the time this newsletter is distributed.

The Inter-Local Agreement (allows the Parks Board to do the work on our behalf) between the Houston Parks Board and the City of Houston has been finalized and approved by City Council. It is anticipated that City Council will approve the appropriation by end of August. Upon receiving the appropriation and permits, it is anticipated that bid requests will be advertised in early September, with bid opening around September 20.

The Parks Board could then award the contract around September 24 allowing construction to start around mid-October.

We are continuing our fundraising efforts as I stated last issue.

Recent estimates for demolition, construction and signage have risen substantially from our earlier estimates. Our total capital campaign has raised \$1,050,760.71 through individual gifts, grants (received and pledged), and matching funds. Until we get the bids, we will not know the exact amount the construction will cost, but we believe we can complete the renovation with the monies we have available to us.

Many thanks to all who have believed in our vision and who have supported us through the years.

Our next event is the Second Annual "A Curious Garden" party being held at the home of Rebecca and Michael Jusbasche. I invite you to join us as last year's event was a fun-filled evening with good food and entertainment. This year's event is shaping up to be a wonderful evening again. Read all about this fundraising event in this newsletter.



Stanley (Skip) Almoney, PhD
President
Friends of Mandell Park



Friends of Mandell Park

Save the Date:

Thursday, October 17, 2013

Each year, Friends of Mandell Park hosts its annual cocktail party “A Curious Garden” in a private residence in one of the adjoining neighborhoods. This year’s evening will take place at the lovely home of Rebecca and Mark Jusbasche, which is located on South Boulevard. Funds raised at the event will benefit the maintenance fund ensuring the long term care needed once the park has been rebuilt.

Through the course of fundraising, local businesses and individuals have graciously helped with the effort by joining as underwriters. This year, we have named each underwriting level after flowers growing in Mandell Park. Please consider supporting “A Curious Garden” party at one of the following levels:

\$1,000 – Viola – Tickets for four, recognition on printed & digital

media, named ornamental tree planted in the garden

\$2,500 – Periwinkle – Tickets for six, recognition on printed & digital media, named shade tree planted in the garden

\$5,000 – Sunflower – Tickets for eight, recognition on printed & digital materials, named teak bench in the garden

\$10,000 – Poppy – Tickets for 10, recognition on printed and digital materials, special invitation to grand opening event, named picnic table in the garden

Thank you in advance for your generous support. It is with your assistance that we are able to continue our mission of making Mandell Park the oasis it deserves to be!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Friends of Mandell Park President Skip Almony at 713-208-2626 or Gala Coordinator Robert Shipman at 713-553-8900 or by email at FoMandellPark@aol.com.

Meet Our Meredith Gardens Compost Team

About ten years ago **Jeff Harmon**, an accountant, was looking for a place to recycle his kitchen scraps when he discovered Mandell Park. His recycling endeavor turned into a passion for composting!

“When I started there was an old dog cage that functioned as the intake bin,” said Jeff. “It was almost completely full of old well-preserved dried leaves with very few kitchen scraps mixed in, surrounded by a fence of old shipping pallets.”

Over the years volunteers have improved upon these humble beginnings, but the new compost station will be state-of-the-art. Jeff knows the needs of the gardeners and shared his insights in the design of the new facility. Upon completion, it will include four 5’ x 10’ bins, moveable covers to protect workers

from the sun, an irrigation system to keep the compost moist, plus a designated grass driveway for drop-offs.

When the park is completed, **Michele Bonilla** will be manager of the compost station. We are grateful to Michele, who was instrumental in moving the compost pile temporarily while we await construction. Michele has been gardening since she was 15, and lived a “sustainable life” near Rosharon for many years before moving to Houston. She is a consummate pro when it comes to all things organic, and explains her commitment:

“I deeply feel that one of the main sustainability factors on the earth is how we compost the waste we produce. It is the reason I wanted to help with the compost at Meredith

COMPOSTING

Composting requires four ingredients to happen. These ingredients are:

- brown (carbon)
- green (nitrogen)
- air (oxygen)
- water



Gardens. The less we put in the trash, the more soil we are recreating. We are at a time that we must return to the earth and create gardens, grow our own food (some or all of it), and be less of a burden to this earth. And it is fun to see our kitchen scraps that can become so gross turn into beautiful soil.”

The new compost facility designed by Jeff, managed by Michele and maintained by the gardening team, will accommodate the local neighbors’ kitchen and garden wastes and provide rich, organic soil for the Meredith Gardeners.

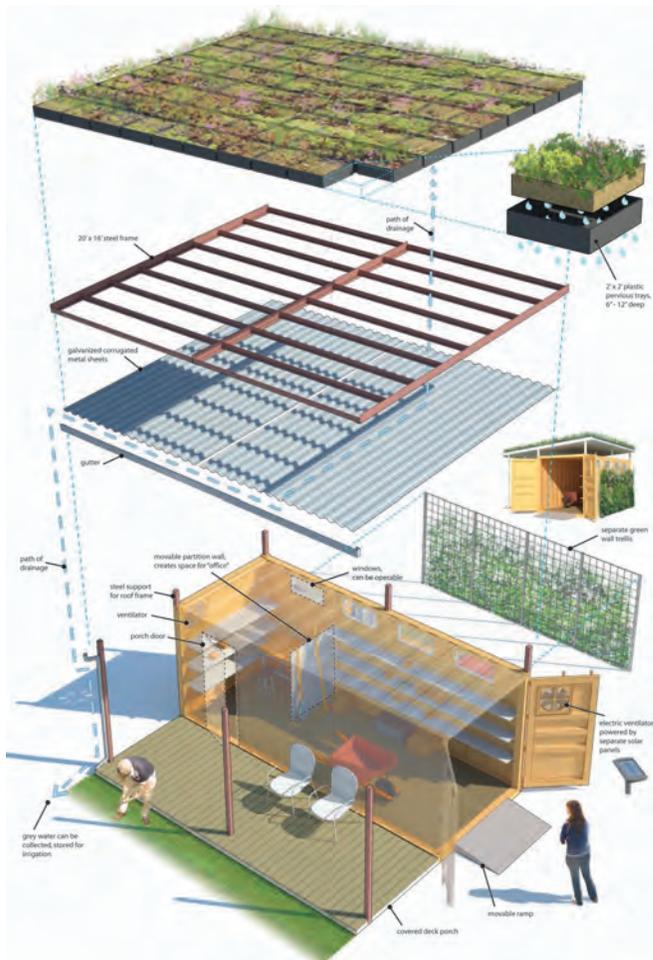
Meredith Gardens is closed until the completion of the renovation. In the meantime, if you would like to learn more about composting or learn more about future plans for Meredith Gardens, please contact Elani Hantel, Meredith Gardens Coordinator (elanihantel@gmail.com).



Jeff Harmon, compost mentor, and Michelle Bonilla, compost manager

Spotlight on Garden Center

A recycled container will be reconfigured to house the Meredith Gardens equipment. The shed will incorporate a solar panel and a green roof and will be placed on the eastside of the park. Naming rights are still available.



The Board of Directors would like to thank the following for their contributions to our efforts. Every donation helps us as we strive to achieve our vision. Corporate contributors are listed in bold. Please remember these businesses when you are looking for products or services. The following donations were received between February 16, 2013 and August 3, 2013.

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Friends of Mandell Park Newsletter

Lynn Kelly, Editor
Jen Cooper, Designer

COMMENTS

Contact us via email at
fomandellpark@aol.com.

Friends of Mandell Park
PO Box 66551
Houston, TX 77266-0551
713-524-2485

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