

CLENA Special Board Meeting
7:00 p.m., June 10, 2010
For the Love of the Lake office

Present: Earl Johnson, Cindy Bourne, Patricia Baillif, Barbara van Pelt, Kay Van de Rostyne, Glen Christy, Jim Hughes
Absent: Michael Janicek, Sarah Morgan, Erin Bender, Debbie Finger
Guests: see attachment A

President Earl Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. He asked people standing by the door to move towards the back of the room and for anyone with a vacant chair next to them to indicate it.

VP External Affairs Patricia Baillif explained the purpose of the meeting, to discuss the proposed home at 1438 Tranquilla.

- She gave a brief history of the neighborhood's involvement, which started Memorial Day when she received a call from a concerned neighbor as demolition of the existing house was underway.
- The plans submitted to the City indicate this is an 8-bedroom, 11-bath single family home with 30' setbacks from Tranquilla and Hermosa and 9'8" from the back alley.
- While the street setbacks meet City Code, they do not comply with the neighborhood deed restrictions for Section 2 and the alley setback does not meet City Code of 12'.
- The plans were filed as a single-family dwelling, but neighbors were told that it was an assisted living facility.
- It was marked on the permit request that there were no deed restrictions.
- Calls were placed to Councilman Sheffie Kadane, the plans were reviewed and a Stop Work order was placed on the property until the owners resubmitted corrected paperwork indicating it would be a handicapped group home, fixing the alley setback, and indicating that there are deed restrictions in place.
- Patricia displayed the interior and exterior plans as filed with the City of Dallas.
- The plans indicated there were two additional activity rooms with bathrooms the same size and configuration as the other eight bedrooms.
- The revised permit is for a handicapped group home.
- Patricia and David Baillif are scheduled to meet with Councilman Kadane, Teresa O'Donnell and the City Attorney on Friday, June 11.

Councilman Kadane and second city attorney Chris Bowers met with residents on Sunday, June 6 to hear concerns, share the City's experience with these types of facilities, and discuss options (Attachment B).

A story about the neighborhood opposition to the project appeared in The Dallas Morning News on Wednesday, June 9 (Attachment C)

Patricia made a motion that the CLENA Board oppose the construction of the proposed for-profit assisted living facility at Tranquilla and Hermosa. Kay Van de Rostyne seconded the motion.

Earl opened the floor for discussion among Board members.

- Barbara van Pelt, Glen Christy and Cindy Bourne said they had mixed feelings about the project.
 - Their concern was with the physical size of the facility – that it will be far larger than any home on Tranquilla or Hermosa
 - that it was in violation of the deed restrictions
 - that it was a for-profit business which might open the door for other attempts to build in Casa Linda Estates
 - the impact on traffic and parking would encroach on neighbors' front lawns and be disruptive to neighbors
- Glen shared that his mother-in-law is in a similar facility in Lake Highlands and that the number of visitors on weekends far exceeded the number of parking spaces and people had to park on the street.
- Cindy thanked everyone for coming and said she might feel differently if it was a smaller home.
 - She expressed her concern about what would happen to the building if the owners decided to close the group home at some point in the future; that it would be impossible to sell as a single family home and the door would be open to its acquisition by some other type of group home – recovering substance abusers, etc.
- Kay drove by the Manchester Homes facility on Spring Valley and said that although it was very attractive and well-landscaped, that she could easily identify it from neighboring homes.
- Patricia said she also appreciated the concept, but that Casa Linda participants in the Garland Road Initiative planning had clearly indicated their opposition to businesses located within the neighborhoods.
- Jim Hughes had talked with Mary Poss who, based on their experience in another neighborhood, suggested installing No Parking signs along Tranquilla as soon as possible.

The motion passed unanimously which ended the business portion of the meeting. Earl opened the floor for comments and questions.

There were a number of negative comments, mostly centered on the issues of:

- size of structure
- parking concerns
- traffic concerns
- safety for both neighbors and facility residents
- lack of regulation
- disregard for deed restrictions
- impact on home values
- disruption from emergency vehicles coming to the facility as well as delivery trucks and shift changes

One of the developers, Dean Krasovitsky, was in attendance, introduced and invited to make comments and answer questions.

Some of the specific points he made were:

- They originally filed for a construction permit as a Handicapped Group Dwelling. After a one-week search by the City to determine if there was another group home within 1000', they were told to file as a Single Family Dwelling and they could correct it later.
- They are allowed to have 16 residents based on the square footage of the bedrooms, but will limit it to eight residents and two caregivers.
- They will address the code requirement of 12' setback from the alley.
- As a Handicapped Group Dwelling, they pay residential property tax, not business property tax.
- They have closed the loan for purchase of the property and construction.
- Parking: There will be a driveway with six spaces for visitors on Tranquilla, four on Hermosa for staff, contract help and deliveries.
- Deliveries are made by car, not truck (Dean picks up food from Sam's and other items from the store and makes weekly deliveries).
- The manager will be a registered nurse.
- Status of residents is not monitored by DAD (Department of Aging and Disability), the oversight federal agency.
 - Rules state that residents must be able to evacuate the building in 13 minutes and make their needs known.
 - State law says you can't remove an aging person even if they no longer meet these guidelines (Aging in Place).
- This type of facility is not licensed.
- Property will be owned by the holding company owned by Dean Krasovitsky and David Goldstein.
- Manchester Place Homes (with two other similar properties on Spring Valley Road and St. Michael's Dr.) has been in business one year – this will be their third property.
- They have no experience in the healthcare industry prior to this; they were both in development and construction, mostly commercial with some residential.
- They met with the City on Thursday about the 15' setbacks and will eliminate two bathrooms.

When asked, given the amount of opposition to the project, if they would consider significant changes or selling the property, Dean indicated he would consult with David Goldstein.

- He does not want to fight with neighbors, but has a significant investment and other investors to satisfy.
- Downsizing in order to meet the 50' setbacks dictated by the deed restrictions would make it very difficult to make enough in profit to meet investor expectation.
- When asked if he would sell the property, he noted the investment already made in demolition, architectural plans, lining up investors, etc. He will talk with his partner to determine if they would be willing to sell and what the price would be.
- He agreed to hold construction for 10 working days to explore options with both investors and the neighborhood.

The Board thanked Dean for appearing and for addressing and answering questions from an obviously hostile crowd.

Earl adjourned the meeting at 10:00 p.m.

Guests in Attendance

Attachment A

1. Mary McKeever MaryMckeeve2@live.com
2. David and Susan Firra swfirra@sbcglobal.net
4. Margaret O'Brien Button
5. Michelle O'Brien Michele.obrien@amormeus.org
6. David Jones CDLJones@att.net
7. Mike Cooper scoop.cooper@gmail.com
8. Sharon Laminack glaminack@sbcglobal.net
9. Mike and Pat Moore mpmoore1967@sbcglobal.net
11. Teresa Venable Teresa.venable@gmail.com
12. Cecilia Thurman ceciliajt@sbcglobal.net
13. Richard and Vicki Cartwright richardcartwright@prodigy.net
15. Myers Campbell moc0200@att.net
16. Jim Van Zant vanzant1@swbell.net
17. Joann Medlin JoannMedlin@gmail.com
18. Jenny Jenkins s.k.j.j@swbell.net
19. Dave Peacock stonesober@aol.com
20. Patti Janick PPRJ@att.net
21. Erin Simpson erinapatton@yahoo.com
22. Chris Simpson Nik_1979@yahoo.com
23. Ted Knight woodvessels@TedKnight.net
24. M.I.Duke dos Santos maria_dosSantos@tamu-commerce.edu
25. Greg and Pam Egnew egg_nest00@yahoo.com
27. Phl Phelps modernartstudios@sbcglobal.net
28. Sally Schopmeyer sschopmeyer@maintenanceinc.net
29. Richard Reed rlreed@swbell.net
30. Darin Breedlove d.breedlove@bellavistacompany.com
31. Clyde and Deegee Bailey clydedeegee@sbcglobal.net
32. Jay and Martie Miller nortextesting@yahoo.com
34. Don and Patsy Edinburgh patsy.edin@yahoo.com
35. Philip Schunck schunckp@yahoo.com
36. Tony Casagrande tcasagrande@composengineering.com
37. Richard Mesker
38. Bada K. Bell
39. Linda Fuller linful@airmail.net
40. Bobby Smotherman thesmothermans@sbcglobal.net
41. Carol Johns caroljohns@sbcglobal.net
42. Melanie Landay mel100145@aol.com
43. Brenda Crane stefancravel@sbcglobal.net
44. Marc and Gilda Evans me2ge2@sbcglobal.net
46. Renae Borgerding joerenae@sbcglobal.net
47. Marina Sanderson rmsanderson@sbcglobal.net
48. Dawn Cleaves zwardswan@gmail.com

49. Mary McCarthy marymccarthy1@hotmail.com
50. Gerry Ambrose ambrosiewicz@sbcglobal.net ??
51. John and Janet Cassidy jcassidy@DCCCD.edu
53. Leif Linde leiflinde@tx.rr.com
54. Dan Murray danmurray@sbcglobal.net
55. John Bryant
56. Brad Rogers
57. Justin Easterling justin@davenperrymiller.com
58. Williams Edwards wke2@tx.rr.com ??
59. Jeff Sanders jsanders100@gmail.com
60. Kristin Keating keating.kris@gmail.com
61. Bill Corporon corporongw@aol.com
62. John A. Hill mugwump7@swbell.net
63. Michael Rochester unclemikey1@yahoo.com
64. Madelyn Rybczyk maddy.elaine@sbcglobal.net
65. Mark Rybczk mark.rybczk@mac.com
66. Delores Cullivan dcullivan@sbcglobal.net
67. Chris Long clong100@gmail.com
68. Rick Magnis rmagnis@yahoo.com
69. Ellen and Michael Petersen m.petersen@mindspring.com
71. Jerry and Judy Gattis gattisjd@comcast.net
73. Lena Murray lanmurray@dallasisd.org
74. Matt Mallett mallet.matthew@hotmail.com
75. Douglas Schopmeyer dschopmeyer6268@sbcglobal.net
76. Desiree and Russell Scott desiree.scott@dallasmavs.com
78. Michael Curry mtc302@yahoo.com
79. Paul Macaluso pd-mac@hotmail.com
80. Marion Lineberry marion.lineberry@yahoo.com
81. Ron and Marina Sanderson rmsanderson@sbcglobal.net
83. Barbara McElwee barbaramcelwee@tx.rr.com ??
84. Mary and Perry Barber marybdal@aol.com ??
86. Bob and Donna Sanders dsanders@axiomsfd.com
88. Mike and Maria Hensley BOLCONDAL@hotmail.com ??
90. Ed Ward
91. David Baillif baillifaia@sbcglobal.net
92. Frederick Linton Medlin lin@linmedlin.com
93. Larry W. Love LWL6787@att.net
94. Lisa Druebert lisa_druebert@yahoo.com
95. Kelly Clayton kellyclayton@allstate.com
96. Kim Davis cinegal@aol.com
97. Barbara Davis muthervideo@aol.com
98. Jenny Capritta
99. Denice and Scott Buchanon denicebuchanon@aol.com
101. Kathy Rohrer kathy.rohrer@twcable.com
102. Paula Selzer
103. Vera Guillen

Notes from 6/6/10 Neighborhood Meeting to discuss
1438 Tranquilla
7:00, Casa Linda Park

The house at 1438 Tranquilla (corner of Tranquilla and Hermosa) was sold to developer David Goldstein's company, DW Gold Construction. On May 26, a construction permit was filed with the City of Dallas to build a 6,934 square-foot single-family dwelling with 8 bedrooms and 11 bathrooms.

The permit was granted and demolition quickly ensued. Neighbors on Tranquilla became alarmed after discussions with personnel onsite indicated an assisted living facility was being constructed there. External Affairs VP Patricia Baillif was contacted and she obtained a copy of the permit. A number of residents became involved at that point for several reasons:

Concerns with a busy for profit business operating in a residential home:

- Original construction plans indicated only two parking places which would necessitate a large number of vehicles parking on either Tranquilla or Hermosa, both of which are very busy streets
- Noncompliance with the deed restrictions in Casa Linda, Section Two, which require a 50' setback on both Hermosa and Tranquilla, 12' from back and side of property; no curb or sidewalk. The home is supposed to fit in with the neighborhood – will it?
- Increased pressure on the water pipes in the area (11 bathrooms, kitchen, beauty salon)
- Frequent presence of emergency vehicles

Mistakes in the original application/permit and a number of calls to Councilman Sheffie Kadane resulted in the City pulling the construction permit for the project, issuing a stop work order, and requesting that new paperwork be submitted along with new floor plans. That has been done and the request has changed to indicate that handicapped or disabled residents will be living there.

Plans now include a circular driveway and six parking spaces.

At a neighborhood meeting in Casa Linda Park Sunday night, Councilman Kadane and First City Attorney Chris Bowers addressed homeowners and answered questions. The following points were made:

By changing the use to that of handicapped/disabled residents, the owner has made it very difficult to fight this in court, as the Fair Housing Amendments Act calls for all reasonable accommodation. The City has tried several times, without success, to fight developments like this in neighborhoods. Cities have lost more than 90% of these cases in federal court. It becomes a matter of discrimination if cities or neighborhoods try to ban this type of business. The City of Dallas discriminates in favor of the disabled now. The definition of handicapped/disabled is very vague, but appears to include the elderly.

Restrictions that can be enforced are:

- Maximum of 8 unrelated residents at any one time
- Must request and receive a waiver from the City to establish a group home within 1000' of another group home

- The federal oversight agency for this type of business is the Department of Aging and Disability (DAD). They grant operating licenses, set standards for resident care and staff training/performance.

Mr. Bowers suggested the following steps:

- Determine if there are any group homes operating within 1000' of 1438 Tranquilla. Even if not licensed by DAD, it might be enough to deny the permit. The owner could sue.
- If the owners, any of his companies or business partners have pending tax liens or criminal convictions, they can be denied a license from DAD. We can research this although they are likely operating under a group license. Manchester Care Homes operates two assisted living homes in Dallas, one at 7109 Spring Valley and one at 10754 St. Michaels Dr.
- Talk to homeowners around the Manchester Place facility on St. Michaels Dr. to ask if they fought the permit, and how things have been going since.
- Let David Goldstein know of our concerns: not that we are necessarily opposed to a group home in the neighborhood, but are concerned about it fitting into the neighborhood and following the deed restrictions; potential for traffic problems due to heavy vehicle traffic on Hermosa and Tranquilla as main detours around busy Garland/Buckner intersection; frequent presence of emergency vehicles; increased demand on already overtaxed water lines and mains in the neighborhood.

He advised caution in placing signs in the neighborhood or picketing as it could be seen as discrimination.

The idea of placing No Parking signs along Hermosa and Tranquilla was raised. Those signs are requested through City of Dallas Public Works and Transportation. Cannot discriminate against the handicapped and no one would be allowed to park on the street, including long-time residents.

Notes by Barbara van Pelt

Attachment C

Recent Stories, Editorials, Letters to the Editor and Editorial blog
published in The Dallas Morning News or dallasnews.com

Assisted-living center not the neighbor Casa Linda residents hoped for

12:21 AM CDT on Wednesday, June 9, 2010

By MICHAEL E. YOUNG / The Dallas Morning News
myoung@dallasnews.com

When the old house at Hermosa and Tranquilla came down, folks in Casa Linda Estates naturally wondered what would take its place.

After all, this is a neighborly neighborhood just east of White Rock Lake, where a casual conversation on the front lawn can draw a small crowd, and a mention that you're going out of town for the weekend will have people down the block asking about the trip.

Many residents grew up here. They're invested in the place. And now they are angry about what could be coming: a group home for the well-heeled elderly.

When developers David Goldstein and Dean Krasovitsky bought the property, people stopped to ask their plans.

"I saw Mr. Goldstein ... and he said he was going to tear down the house and build another one for a client of his," said [Paul Lambert](#), bishop suffragan of the Episcopal Diocese of Dallas, who lives across the street.

When the demolition took place and construction materials arrived, another neighbor asked about the project.

"The guy said it was going to be 7,000 square feet, with something like 10 bedrooms, 11 baths," Lambert said. "So one thing led to another, a couple of people called the developers' office, and we heard it was going to be everything from a halfway house to hospice care."

Turns out the new place will be an upscale assisted-living facility called Manchester Place, with space for eight residents who will pay \$5,500 to \$6,000 a month for room, board and round-the-clock care. More of these types of accommodations are popping up in residential areas, and Manchester Place already has two locations in Dallas.

The Casa Linda neighbors are furious, and they're fighting back.

"This happens over my dead body," said Patricia Baillif. "I was talking with someone the other night – they just moved in last year – and they said if that's built, they're moving."

Earl Johnson, president of the Casa Linda Estates Neighborhood Association, said he has heard "from a number of residents, and I'm not hearing anything positive. Quite the contrary."

Resident Dottie Bidal added: "This will destroy the neighborhood."

But Goldstein said he's confident the project will win over people.

"We understand the scare factor," he said. "But if you go to our other projects, the neighbors will say, 'It's beautiful, it's landscaped beautifully, it's a great addition to the neighborhood.'"

Zoning laws

Maybe the most shocking news about the project came from the city of Dallas. Officials said the assisted living facility was perfectly legal in Casa Linda and any other residential neighborhood in the city, even though zoning laws prohibit group homes, retirement homes and nursing homes in residential areas.

Federal law defines an assisted living facility as a "handicapped group dwelling," said Dallas building official Betty Antebi-Taylor – a use that is not only permitted in residential zones but encouraged.

"They can go there," she said, "and there's nothing the city can do to stop them."

The city did issue a stop-work order on the project this week, but only because Goldstein's building permit application listed the structure as a single-family home.

"We've given him the stop-work order so he can amend his application and his plan to reflect what he really wants to do, which is a handicapped group dwelling," said assistant building official Phil Sikes.

The only restrictions on such facilities in residential areas are capacity – no more than eight people can live there – and proximity to similar enterprises. They must be at least 1,000 feet apart, officials said.

But none of that means that neighbors will drop their opposition.

Even in this area of very large lots and spacious homes, neighbors worry that Manchester Place will be overwhelming. Aside from the size of the facility, the project will include up to 10 parking places and a circular driveway.

"That's essentially like paving your front yard," Baillif said. "You'll have a minimum of two people working, delivery trucks coming and going, ambulances, people visiting. You'll have people parking up and down the street."

In a neighborhood without curbs or sidewalks, that's an issue, she said.

But what's most bothersome, Baillif said, is the way the project has been presented.

"Mr. Goldstein is trying to be disingenuous," she said. "He says, 'I'm building a house.' No he's not. He's building a for-profit nursing home."

Johnson said Goldstein has agreed to attend the neighborhood association's meeting on Monday, "something he should have done quite some time back," Johnson said.

When Goldstein began hearing objections and concerns from residents of Casa Linda Estates, he sent them the Internet link to the Manchester Place website and invited Johnson and other board members of the neighborhood association to visit one of the two [North Dallas](#) facilities that opened last year "so they could be at ease with who's in there."

"These are senior citizens – no loud parties," Goldstein said. "We worry more about our neighbors disturbing us than us disturbing the neighbors."

Neighbors' reports

The first Manchester Place opened in May 2009 on Spring Valley Road near Hillcrest Road. The second Manchester Place is near Royal Lane east of Hillcrest.

Rebel Webster, president of the Northwood Hills Homeowners Association, said the first location has been a good neighbor.

"It's aesthetically very pleasing, and it's much better than a dirt lot, which is what we had before," she said. "I drive by, and I kind of smile when I see a little kid get out of a car and go in to see grandma."

But at first, neighborhood opposition was much the same as in Casa Linda Estates.

"There was a hue and cry, and it brought the neighborhood to a stop for about six weeks," Webster said. "People were worried about the construction, the potential impact on property values and the operational sustainability."

"But the end result has been very nice."

One of the most interesting parts of the process, Webster said, was watching people think about their objections.

"And having done that soul-searching, people decided it was OK," she said.

The neighbors in Casa Linda Estates haven't reached that point. They're still hoping to block the project.

Two lawyers in the neighborhood are researching legal options. They'd hoped the city's zoning laws would have kept out Manchester Place. With that unlikely, they've turned to a restrictive

deed covenant for all properties in the neighborhood that limits construction to single-family homes.

"I knew we were going to have to fight this," said Bidal, one of the attorneys. "I was hoping we'd have some opportunity to talk about it with the city."

Bidal said it's her understanding that neither Texas law nor the federal Fair Housing Act affects restrictive covenants, if those covenants have remained in place over the years.

Dean Malone, another lawyer from the neighborhood, said he thinks the deed restrictions "may be the remedy."

Bishop Lambert hopes so.

"I have the biggest dog in this fight – I bought a brand new house right across the street last year," he said. "We haven't been incorporated into any discussions on this. So my concerns are those of others in the neighborhood – traffic, parking, that sort of thing.

"And what will it do to property values?"

Like his neighbors, he waits to see what will happen, whether the deed restrictions can prevail against federal law.

"We may not win this," Lambert said. "But it's going to be some kind of fight."

6/12 Editorial Page, Hits and Misses – listed as a Miss
The Dallas Morning News

There goes the neighborhood? Not quite

In many neighborhoods, the addition of a few senior citizens and a new, upscale building would be a pretty safe proposition. After all, they're unlikely to become noisy neighbors, throwing wild parties or coming and going at all hours. The staff will keep the lawn mowed. What more could you want from a neighbor? But clearly, Casa Linda Estates isn't most neighborhoods. Residents are riled up about the construction of a high-end assisted-living facility that will house a grand total of eight residents. It's certainly legitimate to ask questions about parking and traffic when such a facility is constructed, but neighbors' declarations that this will destroy the neighborhood seem hyperbolic and just plain silly. Ruin the neighborhood? Eight elderly residents? No doubt that plenty of Dallas neighborhoods would trade "problems" with Casa Linda Estates.

Sunday, June 13 Letters to the Editor

Posted at 3:44 PM on Saturday, Jun. 12, 2010

Letter to the Editor

[On Casa Linda senior housing fight ...](#)

Neighborhood plans backfired

Re: "Home for seniors not the neighbor they had in mind -- Furious residents are fighting plans for assisted living center," Wednesday news story.

As an architect, I empathize with the Casa Linda neighbors' concerns. What started as a well-intentioned effort to protect some groups from housing discrimination has been manipulated into the opportunity for commercial development in residential districts in Dallas and nationwide. Laws written to allow marginalized individuals the experience of living in stable residential neighborhoods now allow the disruption of those neighborhoods by demolition of existing homes and the construction of commercial buildings -- buildings not self-regulated by consideration of future resale and therefore, by the aesthetic and quality standards of the residential marketplace. I would caution the residents of Casa Linda against putting too much faith in the law. The second Manchester Place home in Dallas was constructed in violation Dallas zoning ordinances, but will likely receive permission to continue operating because it has already been built. You see, a 7,000-square-foot, 10-bedroom building with no garage, no back yard and a front-yard parking lot is not a house and, once constructed, can never return to being a residence in a stable residential neighborhood.

Roger Harris, AIA, Dallas

Why fight these neighbors?

I was flabbergasted to read that several neighbors were opposed to the proposed assisted living residence in Casa Linda Estates. Obviously the design and scale of the residence was in keeping with the fabric of the neighborhood.

My guess would be that there would never be any loud late-night parties coming from this residence, nor would these residents likely bring a criminal element to the neighborhood, and one would assume that most of these seniors no longer drive, so in short, no noise, no crime and no traffic. Who could ask for a better neighbor?

Roger Gault, Dallas

These projects are unstoppable

I am a neighbor of Manchester Place on Spring Valley Road. I was upset when I learned that a nursing home was being built next door but quickly learned the futility of resistance. Now, my property is devalued to the point that I will never be able to sell, a fact the city will not address in my tax evaluation.

I choked when I read that our neighborhood homeowners association president, Rebel Webster, finds the property "aesthetically pleasing," and that she "smiles" when passing. If she lived next door, she would see enough parking lot to land a small airplane.

In spite of this, the street is filled day and night with parked cars and service vehicles. Trash day must really make Ms. Webster laugh, with five trash cans spilling their contents into the street. I hope the people of Casa Linda can stop this building with their covenants, but I doubt it. They may have to get used to the idea of a parking lot the size of Guam and a giant sprawl of building which bears about as much resemblance to a neighborhood home as a Walmart.

Budd Mahan, Dallas

Isn't this a good thing?

I live near Campbell and Hillcrest Roads in a residential neighborhood. Down the street, a house has been converted into an assisted living home.

There aren't ambulances and delivery trucks in the driveway all the time. In fact, I haven't seen one yet.

Sometimes I see two cars, sometimes six. My thought is that someone has a visitor. Isn't that a good thing? I feel bad that I haven't gone down to the house to visit. I visit larger assisted homes once a week to visit with the residents. Many are lonely and have no visitors.

I hope that if one of my family members ever needed a place to go I would be able to find one like David Goldstein is building in my neighborhood. This is a blessing and these residents in Casa Linda should understand that they, too, may need something like this in the future.

Audrey Pincu, Dallas

Lend a hand instead

When I read the article about a small group home for seniors who need some help, all I could think was shame, shame, shame on the residents opposed. Would they feel the same way if a family with six or eight children moved into a lovely home in their area?

If it were my neighborhood, I would be asking what I could do to help these senior citizens, such as organizing carpools for doctor appointments, maybe a day out shopping. Do something positive to help.

Shirley Wall, Farmers Branch



Photo shows the problem

The photograph accompanying this story highlights what's really wrong with this picture. There stands the Rev. Canon Paul Lambert, an Episcopal bishop suffragan, with his jaw set, chest puffed out and hands on hips, vowing to "put in some kind of fight" against the building of this assisted living home.

According to him, "the biggest dog in this fight" is his brand-new home across the street. I guess he's OK with the old folks in his congregation -- as long as they don't live near him. But then again, maybe he's cranky because the fist-sized cross around his neck is weighing him down.

Joanne Dimeff, Dallas

[A firestorm over assisted living center in Casa Linda](#)



11:09 AM Thu, Jun 10, 2010 | [Permalink](#)

Nicole Stockdale/ Editor [Bio](#) | [E-mail](#) | [Suggest a blog topic](#)

Every week, we poll the members of the editorial board on a timely and divisive topic. This week, the question is:

As the furor increases in Casa Linda over the assisted living center being built in the neighborhood, do you think residents are making a mountain out of a molehill?

Here are their responses:

- [Keven Ann Willey](#), **Editor of the editorial page:**

Yes. I understand and sympathize that there inevitably will be a larger than usual parking lot necessary and likely the occasional ambulance disruption to the neighborhood, but, really, is that so terrible?

We're talking a maximum of eight elderly, well-heeled residents in an assisted living facility. They don't drive (so the only cars will be those of the caregivers), they won't be playing loud music, causing a traffic jam or creating an eyesore.

Most neighborhoods would be thrilled to have such peaceful residents. Not to mention thankful for the opportunity to provide a warm embrace for those in the twilight years of their lives.

- [Sharon Grigsby](#), **Deputy editorial page editor:**

I shared my thoughts in [a blog post yesterday](#):

We're working, as is our newsroom, on the Cliff Manor controversy. The issue is whether 100 chronically homeless residents should be relocated into Cliff Manor on Fort Worth Avenue. The neighbors think this is a very bad idea, particularly because of nearby schools. A sobering thought, for sure, to learn this is literally about to happen -- with no advance warning to the neighborhood --

in an area that is struggling hard to turn itself around. It's not an easy call, because we've got to find permanent housing for the homeless, but it seems like southern Dallas gets more than its fair share of these "challenges."

But contrast that tough decision with this fuss, which verges on silly IMHO: We learn, on page one today, folks in Casa Linda Estates are up in arms about the construction of an upscale assisted-living facility with space for eight residents who pay \$5,500 to \$6,000 a month. True, it sounds like the developers weren't upfront on what they were actually building on this property. But listen to resident Dottie Bidal: "This will destroy the neighborhood."

Excuse me. The folks on Fort Worth Avenue would kill to have this kind of project in their neighborhood. Wonder how those Casa Linda residents would feel about the city relocating some of The Bridge's clients over to their neighborhood? The disparity in these two protests goes to the heart of our city's "gap."

- [Mike Hashimoto](#), **Assistant editorial page editor**:

I want to give the complaining residents the benefit of the doubt -- as in, how would I feel if this were my neighborhood -- but I have to admit that I can find little basis in logic for their "over my dead body" and "destroy the neighborhood" titty-baby hysterics. A lot of things can "ruin" a neighborhood, but an assisted-living center for eight people who can afford \$5,500 a month rent doesn't sound like one of them.

Ultimately, the owner of the property where the center is being built has complied (or will comply) with existing city ordinances. At that point, he should be able to do with his property as he sees fit. I was especially persuaded that other Manchester Place developments proved, despite similar over-the-top predictions of doom, to be fine neighbors.

- [Michael Landauer](#), **Assistant editorial page editor**:

I really do. I think the reason that a group home for people like this is allowed -- as long as it meets the current zoning and setback restrictions, remember -- is that this kind of residence is not likely to create major harm to a neighborhood. It's not like a halfway house or even a home for people struggling with mental illness. Dealing with older folks is going to become more and more of a challenge in more ways than just housing, so trying to block seniors from family-friendly neighborhoods just seems immoral to me.

- [Nicole Stockdale](#), **Assistant editorial page editor**:

It's easy to depict the angry residents as heartless, but they have a point: The developers seemed intent on obfuscation and have helped fuel this firestorm. It's natural for neighbors to respond defensively; they're not sure what else these developers are trying to hide. And there is a natural fear that the nature of the neighborhood will change, that their property values will go down.

I think we should ask the same for these residents that we ask for those in other neighborhoods: Let the process be transparent, and let developers work to get neighbors on board first. Explain the process and allay their fears.

- [Rodger Jones](#), **Editorial writer:**

I have no problem with the idea of a group home. One quietly opened in my neighborhood for mentally challenged adults, and it had no problem fitting in. It was a smallish house, and a limited number of adults lived there.

The Casa Linda situation sounds different. It was a surprise knockdown-replacement scenario. The replacement building will house more people than a home typically does in a single-family neighborhood. The home will have employees and, presumably, visitors, and that will generate more traffic than a single-family home.

It sounds like long-time residents worry that the nature of their neighborhood will be changed, they didn't know about it and they had no say in the matter. I sympathize.

- [Colleen McCain Nelson](#), **Editorial writer:**

In a word, yes. I certainly understand residents' desire to know as much as they can about something being built in their neighborhood. And the fact that it's not a single-family home raises legitimate questions about parking, staff, etc. But zoning rules allow this assisted living facility to locate in Casa Linda, and to suggest that a small group of senior citizens is going to "ruin" the neighborhood seems hyperbolic and just plain silly.

When you live in the middle of a big city, you inevitably will have a mix of neighbors and development nearby. It's a diverse neighborhood - not an impenetrable bubble. And as far as neighbors go, a handful of senior citizens seems like a pretty safe option to me. Presumably, they won't be throwing wild parties or coming and going at all hours, and staff should keep the lawn mowed. In my book, that makes them a pretty good neighbor.