



# the Southeastern

4th quarter 2020

a quarterly publication of the southeast seminole heights civic association

## SESHCA Board Members and Contact Info

### President

Ellie Baggett

### Vice-President

Courtney Bumgarner

### Treasurer

Lesley Curran

### Secretary

Rebecca Rosenthal

### Trustees

Rob Blakley

Liz Hudson

Sylvia Lopez Vanacore

Jason Marlow

Beverly Morrow

### Website

[www.seseminoleheights.org](http://www.seseminoleheights.org)

### Email

[SESHCApresident@gmail.com](mailto:SESHCApresident@gmail.com)

### Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/SESEminoleHeights>

### Instagram

@seshcagram

## Letter from the President

Dear Southeast Seminole Heights Neighbor,

Welcome to the inaugural edition of The Southeastern; we're so happy to have you! If you're anything like me, you love our neighborhood and likely chose to live here for similar reasons – walkability, quirky homes, lovely parks, unique restaurants - and of course a vibrant community of wonderful neighbors.

I know 2020 has been a trying year for many of us. Trying to see the silver lining, I have enjoyed having the extra time in my day spent walking down our tree-shaded streets with my dog, Charlie, and waving to those of you outside enjoying this amazing cooler weather. I hope you'll wave back if you see us! During times like these, daily life can be filled with uncertainty and we are all faced with difficult changes and choices. In the coming weeks, we all must do our part as members of our communities to make the right choices in supporting our families, friends, and neighbors as we weather this storm together.



This year the Southeast Seminole Heights Civic Association (SESHCA) has been working to keep the association moving forward during these complicated times. Unfortunately, we've had to cancel some of our favorite events such as Giddens & Ghouls, and Taste of the Heights, but I know next year will be much more fun and exciting for all of us. We appreciate your understanding of the situation and your feedback during these complex times. Should you have any comments, questions, or concerns, please feel free to email me directly at [SESHCApresident@gmail.com](mailto:SESHCApresident@gmail.com).

Thank you for being a part of the SESH family! I am so grateful and honored to be on this journey with you.

Ellie Baggett

President, Southeast Seminole Heights Civic Association



# Local City and County Contact Information:

**Mayor, City of Tampa**  
Jane Castor

## City Council Representatives Serving SESH:

Orlando Gudes (District 5)  
Joe Citro (District 1 - at large)  
Charlie Miranda (District 2 - at large)  
John Dingfelder (District 3 - at large)  
tampacitycouncil@tampagov.net

## TPD Non-Emergency:

(813) 231-6130

## Code Enforcement

(813) 274-6600

## TECO 24 hrs

(877) 588-1010

## Wastewater Emergency Repair/ Sewer Backup

813-247-3451

## Water Department Emergency Services

(24 hours) : 813-274-8811, Option 1

## Emergency Drainage/Flooding

(24 hours) : 813-274-3101

## Tree Hotline/Emergency Illegal Tree Removal (24 hours)

813-258-8733

## Fallen Tree

business hours 8am to 5pm  
813-274-5744  
after hours 5pm to Midnight  
813-931-2168  
-after hours Midnight to 8am  
813-274-3101

Advertising in the  
**SESHCA** *Southeastern*  
is easy and affordable!

It's not only good for business,  
it also helps the community  
where you live!  
for advertising rates and info,  
please contact  
[courtbumgarner@gmail.com](mailto:courtbumgarner@gmail.com)



## Holiday Hostings During Covid-19

Covid-19 has changed how we do just about everything, including Holidays. If you're planning on hosting a Holiday Gathering at your house, be sure to adhere the following CDC Guidelines:

- Host outdoor activities rather than indoor activities as much as possible. If hosting an outdoor event is not possible, and you choose to host an indoor event, avoid crowded, poorly ventilated, or fully enclosed indoor spaces.
- Increase ventilation by opening windows and doors to the extent that is safe and feasible based on the weather.
- Host activities with only people from your local area as much as possible.
- Limit numbers of attendees as much as possible.
- Arrange tables and chairs to allow for social distancing. People from the same household can be in groups together and don't need to be 6 feet apart – just 6 feet away from other families.
- Use single-use hand towels or paper towels for drying hands so guests do not share a towel.
- Limit people going in and out of the areas where food is being prepared or handled, such as in the kitchen or around the grill, if possible.
- If serving any food, consider identifying one person to serve all food so that multiple people are not handling the serving utensils.
- Use single-use options or identify one person to serve sharable items, like salad dressings, food containers, and condiments, so that multiple people are not handling the items.
- Provide updated information to your guests about any COVID-19 safety guidelines and steps in place to prevent the spread of the virus.
- Provide or encourage attendees to bring supplies to help you and others stay healthy. For example, extra masks (do not share or swap with others), hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, and tissues.
- If you are planning in-person holiday gatherings with people outside of your household, consider asking all guests to strictly avoid contact with people outside of their households for 14 days before the gathering.



Welcome to the first installment of our “Get to Know a Board Member” series. Each quarter The Southeastern will spotlight a SESHCA Board Member. For our inaugural issue we introduce our readers to long-time trustee, Sylvia Lopez Vanacore.



If you’ve been to a neighborhood meeting or event, chances are good that you’ve met Sylvia. Always a helpful and friendly volunteer, she may have welcomed you to a Porch Party, served you at the Chili Cook-Off, or checked you in for Taste of the Heights.

In selecting our first subject, The Southeastern wanted to provide an uncommon perspective. In a neighborhood filled with out-of-state transplants and first-time home buyers, Sylvia’s long tenure is unique, and hearing her story is like time traveling through old Tampa.

Born in Riverside Heights, Sylvia moved to Southeast Seminole Heights at just 2 years old when her father built a house near North Bay and 12th St., nearly 73 years ago. Sylvia is a not only a rare Tampa native, but a third generation Tampanian. Tampa runs deep in her family history.

When Sylvia moved to Southeast Seminole Heights, the original streetcar lines were still being removed from service, and it would be 18 years before I-275 carved up the Heights. Attending neighborhood schools, she graduated from Hillsborough High School, and would go on to become an educator, teaching at Sulphur Springs Elementary for 18 years.

Sylvia met her husband, Joe, after being set up on a blind date, but she was skeptical. “Why can’t he get his own dates?” she asked

her brother-in-law turned matchmaker. Needless to say, she thought Joe was cute and they hit it off. When he said he wanted to marry Sylvia within the next six months she told him he was crazy. They were engaged a year later.

As newlyweds, Sylvia and Joe purchased their current home 46 years ago. It’s a beautiful mediterranean style home which was featured as a stop on Taste of the Heights in 2017. They chose Southeast Seminole Heights because Joe had taken over the family business, an ice manufacturing and delivery company in Ybor City, and the neighborhood was on his delivery route.

Back in those days, Sylvia recalls the neighborhood as being comprised mostly of families and older generations. “There were more long-term residents,” says Sylvia. When I-275 was constructed smack dab in the middle of the Heights, she marks that as “the downfall”. As the older generations passed on, their kids no longer wanted to stay around. The neighborhood fell into decline as a more transient population moved in.

Sylvia says she stayed during those downtimes in part due to Joe’s business being in the neighborhood. She also knew how great the neighborhood had been and could be again, and joined the association over 15 years ago to get involved and help where she

could. Then, at one meeting during an election year, a neighbor nominated her to the board. Although she had never considered joining the board until that night, Sylvia has now served as a trustee for over a decade. She loves knowing what’s going on and seeing all the developments in the neighborhood.

During her tenure with the association and on the board, Sylvia’s been a part of many great accomplishments. “I’m probably most proud of the redevelopment and rehabilitation of Giddens Park.” Although, she doesn’t feel the work there is done. When asked if she could make one improvement to the neighborhood, it would be the addition of a Community Center at Giddens Park.

As the neighborhood changes and progresses, we asked Sylvia what she thinks is Southeast Seminole Heights’ best attribute. “There’s a real sense of community that you don’t see everywhere.” Sylvia knows everyone on her block, and they keep an eye on each other.

As for the future of the neighborhood, she thinks it’s in good hands. “The volunteerism in this neighborhood is really amazing, and it’s the young people doing it.” Luckily, the association has had friendly and hard working people like Sylvia as living examples of commitment to neighborhood volunteerism.





Post Office Box 8961 • Tampa, FL 33674-8961

PRSR STD  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
TAMPA FL  
PERMIT NO. 919



Are you concerned about reckless driving, excessive speed and other traffic issues our neighborhood faces?

## Take Action!

The SESHCA Board is forming a Traffic Committee to address these issues. However, we can't create change without the help of our fellow concerned citizens.

Please email [SESHCApresident@gmail.com](mailto:SESHCApresident@gmail.com) to volunteer.

We look forward to working with you to create a safer SESH!