



*Mission: To make the Village of Spring Hill a neighborhood center by improving the pedestrian, aesthetic and commercial amenities of the area*

FALL 2009

## A Village Is Born

Welcome to your Village! Two years ago, over 600 of you participated in the creation of *The Blueprint for Spring Hill*, our master plan, and I am happy to report that many components of that plan are now a reality. Village streetscapes are popping up all over. We have wide sidewalks, decorative lighting, street trees, flowers, benches, and even a Village clock, none of which existed just six short months ago. Now that's progress!

It doesn't seem possible that the Village of Spring Hill is in its fifth year—what a busy few years it has been for our organization! In this time we have successfully raised over one million dollars for the Spring Hill community. Working closely with our elected representatives, grants totaling \$680,000 have been obtained and used to develop a master plan for Spring Hill, fund the electrical infrastructure for streetscape lighting, pay for sidewalks, and purchase benches and pavers. We have also been successful in engaging commercial property owners to spend tens of thousands of dollars implementing the Village streetscapes.

Through our efforts, the intersection of Old Shell Road and McGregor Avenue has been redesigned emphasizing pedestrian safety and creating a better first impression of our community. Our negotiations with CVS resulted in a more traditional building design, implementation of the Village streetscapes, and the creation of a "town center" with a pedestrian plaza. And we have supported the efforts of the community to raise money for the Village clock located in the plaza.

Since having the master plan and optional zoning adopted, we have been appointed by the City of Mobile to act as a

liaison for *The Blueprint for Spring Hill*, interfacing with the City on development and implementation projects. We have worked closely with potential new development projects and new businesses to help facilitate their understanding and use of the *Blueprint* and associated zoning.

As you can imagine there are many steps involved, including a lot of cooperation and hard work by many people, before you finally see the end results of all these projects. It would take this entire newsletter to address all the generosity of the people who have given their time, talents and money to get us to this point, and I want to thank them all from the bottom of my heart. I would like to say a special thank you to my Board of Directors—this has truly been a five-year labor of love for their community.

But don't think for a minute that the Village of Spring Hill is resting on its laurels. Far from it, we are only just beginning! Future plans include flowers, hanging baskets, additional sidewalks, crosswalks to Lavretta Park, and investigating the feasibility of redesigning the intersection of McGregor Avenue and Museum Drive to accommodate a roundabout, creating a beautiful entrance into our athletic and cultural centers surrounding Langan Park. We will continue working with developers and property owners to implement the Village streetscapes. If we can find a place to put a tree or flower, we intend to do just that, creating "pocket parks" throughout our community!

The reality is that in spite of the generosity and hard work of so many, we cannot continue our efforts without your help. We continue to seek out funding at the local, state and federal levels, but this is

extremely difficult and time consuming; the sidewalk grant alone took over two years. We are asking you, as residents or business owners or simply supporters of Spring Hill, to make an investment in your Village so we can continue this dramatic progress. A contribution to the Village of Spring Hill is an investment in our community. It is also an investment in our schools, churches, businesses and homes. It ultimately impacts property values and creates a special place that we will leave to our children and to their children in turn.

As always, on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Village of Spring Hill, thank you for all your continued support. Through your generosity a Village is born!

*Linda St. John, President*

*This newsletter is made possible by generous contributions from Mobile Gas Service, Inc. and Dauphin Realty*



"sold" on Springhill since 1984

# Upgrading to Dark-Sky Friendly Lighting

The Village of Spring Hill decorative street lights were chosen not only for their attractiveness and ability to create a warm Village atmosphere but for the fact that they help eliminate light pollution. Their crook-neck design directs light down on the sidewalks and backlights the street where it is needed, enhancing pedestrian safety and reducing the amount of light directed skyward.

It is said that many of the current generation of children have never seen the stars. To address the growing concern of light pollution in the night sky, many cities and communities are going to a line of Dark-Sky friendly fixtures that provide little or no up-lighting. Reduced light pollution opens up the sky to the marvels of astronomy and provides a more natural environment for area wildlife.

The new Village lighting has been purchased and installed by the property owners. Those participating to date are **Holiday Place, AT&T, CVS Corporation** and **Regions Bank**. Please join us in thanking these businesses for their dedication to the ongoing development of the Village of Spring Hill plan. We hope to see many more in the near future.



## Spring Hill's New (Old) Benches

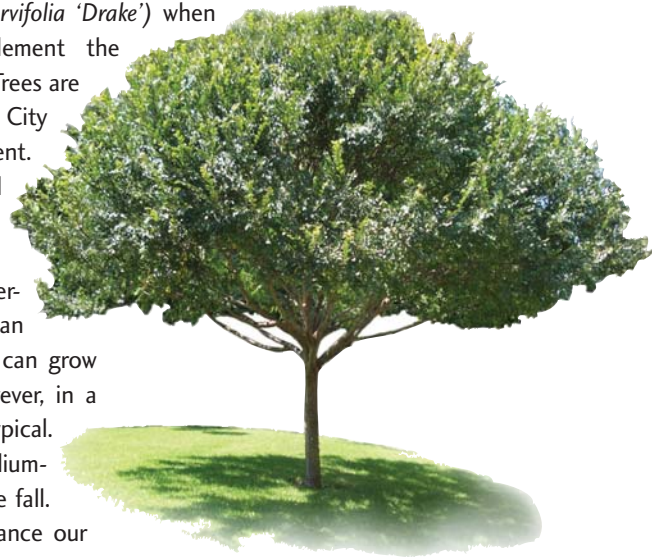
The signature bench for the Village of Spring Hill might be familiar to some Mobilians, as it has been used in the City since 1866 when 58 cast iron benches were installed in Bienville Square. A little research tracked down the one existing pattern which was shipped to Robinson Foundry in Alexander City, Alabama, for production of an initial 10 benches for Spring Hill.

The old Mobile benches were funded as part of a state grant from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) for the implementation of the Village streetscapes.

The benches were purchased for placement on City right-of-way on the new wide sidewalks in front of Holiday Place, AT&T, Regions Bank, and the Monte L. Moorer Public Library.

## A New Tree Grows on the Hill

Existing diseased and damaged Bradford Pear trees are being replaced with 'Drake' Chinese Elms (*ulmus parvifolia 'Drake'*) when individual property owners implement the Village of Spring Hill streetscapes. Trees are being provided and planted by the City of Mobile Urban Forestry Department. Widely used in urban settings around the country the Drake Elm is an excellent shade tree, drought and disease resistant, pollution tolerant, and especially suitable to urban settings. In the open, Drake Elms can grow to around 40 feet in height; however, in a sidewalk tree well, 25-30 feet is typical. This cultivar features light- to medium-green leaves that turn yellow in the fall. These new Elms will certainly enhance our community for generations to come.



## Planned Giving

For information about planned giving or making memorial donations of benches, lights, or trees, please contact the Village of Spring Hill at [giving@thevillageofspringhill.com](mailto:giving@thevillageofspringhill.com). What better way to create a lasting memorial while improving Spring Hill for future generations.





## A Home for Our Village Clock

The new plaza at the corner of Old Shell Road and McGregor Avenue was designed by the Village of Spring Hill to give our community a much needed town center. In cooperation with **CVS Corporation** and **The Mitchell Company**, this center has become a reality. Signature Village pavers, trees, and lighting are part of the design, giving this important corner Main Street appeal as well as providing a home for our new Village clock. The Village of Spring Hill will maintain the planter with seasonal flowers.

The Verdin Company clock is prominently placed in the raised planter. It

was funded through a charity run organized by the **Carpe Diem Runners** last December and recently through a sold-out luncheon sponsored by **True Restaurant**. Generous support was also received from **RegionsBank, BankTrust, BBVA Compass, Roberts Brothers Realty, RBC Centura Bank, Carpe Diem Coffee & Tea Co.**, and others. The clock is dedicated to the memory of Van Rusling, founder of Carpe Diem and president of the Spring Hill Merchants Association from 1996 until 2004. The clock is the realization of Van's vision for an identifying marker for the Spring Hill community.

A history of the site is displayed on a plaque which the **Ollie R. Threadgill, Sr. family** has dedicated to the memory of the Henderson family, long time Spring Hill property and business owners. A generous donation of three memorial benches was made by the family, completing the look of the plaza. CVS Corporation has an agreement with the family to designate the plaza as Henderson Place.

*We would like to thank Carolyn Miller Design for newsletter design and our volunteer photographers, David Synder and Sandi Nicosia, for all their time and talent!*





## At the Village Crossroads

**“You never get a second chance to make a first impression,”** Mayor Sam Jones recently reminded attendees of a local symposium. Our mayor opened the meeting by talking about how important first impressions are to economic development in Mobile. The Village of Spring Hill faces a similar challenge, and the reconfiguration of our central intersection goes a long way toward reminding visitors and residents alike of the pride we take in our community. Once simply another nondescript intersection, the Village now boasts a high quality community center serving automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic alike.

With six schools within the Village of Spring Hill boundaries, safety was our primary concern in redesigning the intersection at Old Shell and McGregor. An added bonus is the overall appearance, the “first impression” that

this intersection makes. After consulting a local engineering firm and the **City of Mobile Transportation Department**, it was determined that the best way to accomplish this goal was to increase the size of the pedestrian islands, ensure that right lanes are only used for turning, as designed, and make crosswalks larger and more visible with shorter crossing distances. The number of lanes stayed exactly the same to maintain the existing volume of traffic.

Preliminary intersection engineering was donated to the Village of Spring Hill by **McCrorry Williams Inc.** and then presented to the City of Mobile for approval and implementation. The **Mobile Area Water and Sewer System** removed the fire hydrant in the intersection at no charge, and the signature Village pavers in the crosswalks and islands were sold to the Village of Spring Hill at a reduced cost

by **Riley Stuart Supply Company**. Construction costs for the new intersection, including decorative traffic light poles and crosswalk signals, were funded by City Council Member **Gina Gregory** with additional support from Council President **Reggie Copeland**.

Intersection improvements were initiated during the summer months, while schools were out, in order to minimize the traffic delays. Everything went smoothly and the work was actually completed ahead of schedule thanks to excellent oversight by the **City of Mobile Engineering Department**. We would like to thank City Council Members Gina Gregory and Reggie Copeland for helping bring this project to fruition, creating an impressive “first impression” for the City of Mobile and the Village of Spring Hill as well as enhancing the safety of our community.

### Did You Know...

that the Village’s signature pavers are the same ones used on Spring Hill College’s campus in front of the St. Joseph’s Chapel, tying in the Village’s recent improvements with Spring Hill College’s extraordinary revitalization? These pavers provide a traditional “village” appearance and are manufactured to withstand the heavy traffic load.

### CITY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES WEIGH IN...

*“I’m very proud of what this community has achieved and to have played a role in making these wonderful improvements come to fruition. From the sidewalks, street lights, and benches to the new medians, traffic arms and Village clock, the heart of Spring Hill has been transformed. It’s a great beginning and I’m dedicated to continuing the effort. I appreciate the hard work and leadership provided by the members of the Village of Spring Hill to turn what was a dream into the reality that we see today. It takes this kind of private/public partnership between residents, businesses and government with a shared vision to work together to make their cities, districts and neighborhoods successful and sustainable.”*

– Gina Gregory, City Council, District 7

*“I am very proud of the accomplishments and improvements that have been made, and I think in the future, property owners will be very happy with the overall results. Congratulations to the Village of Spring Hill and all of its partners.”*

– Reggie Copeland, City Council, District 5



## Sidewalks—A Step in the Right Direction

The number one request of attendees at our first community meeting almost five years ago was sidewalks. Fulfilling our goal of creating a more walkable community, construction of new sidewalks down Old Shell Road is now complete. Anyone living, working, or going to school near Old Shell Road can now enjoy a safe and fun way to walk around our community on the new five-foot wide sidewalks.

Funded by an ALDOT Transportation Enhancement grant and a 20% match by the City of Mobile, this \$250,000 project was initiated by the Village of Spring Hill with the help of State Representative **Jamie Ison** over two years ago. Hopefully this will be just the first of many sidewalk projects connecting Spring Hill as a single Village. We have already begun looking into engineering and surveying costs for sidewalks down the north side of Old Shell Road, connecting these neighborhoods to the existing sidewalks going into Langan Park. Please help keep our new sidewalks clean and free of debris and litter while you are out walking, and remember that maintenance of the sidewalks and grass is the responsibility of the adjoining residents and not the City of Mobile.

### DO

- Try to keep grass mown and sidewalks free of leaves and dirt (this is the responsibility of the adjoining resident - NOT the City of Mobile)
- Watch for pedestrians crossing side streets and driveways
- Share the sidewalks with others using them
- Pick up any litter that you see while using the sidewalks

### DON'T

- Drive or park on sidewalks
- Place yard debris or other trash on sidewalks
- Block sidewalks with garbage cans



## Lavretta Park(ing)

Lavretta Park continues to be a popular destination for the Village of Spring Hill and surrounding communities, and it now features an overflow parking lot coordinated with other Village projects and funded by City Council Member, Gina Gregory. The parking area features new environmentally-friendly pervious asphalt to reduce the amount of stormwater runoff. Thirty-one spaces will help alleviate on-street parking shortages at peak times such as community events and large birthday parties held at the popular park. **Landscaping and fencing will be added** in the coming months in order to dress up the parking area and give it a distinctive Village look.



# The Blueprint for Spring Hill & Zoning Recap

Summer of 2008 witnessed a flurry of activity surrounding the Village's planning and zoning projects, and many of you were instrumental in passage of these two important regulations. In 2007, the Village of Spring Hill was awarded a \$300,000 grant by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA), with the support and assistance of then State Senator Hap Myers, to perform comprehensive planning for three commercial areas within our boundaries. This grant enabled the Village of Spring Hill to hire nationally renowned town planners Dover, Kohl & Partners. Later that year, they conducted a site visit and then held a week-long charrette—an intense community planning workshop—the output of which was *The Blueprint for Spring Hill*. This document contains conceptual plans showing how each area might evolve over the next 10, 20, or even 50 years and illustrates key principles to help make our Village economically viable in the long run.

The *Blueprint* was subsequently approved by the City of Mobile Planning Commission and City Council, thereby making it part of the city's overall Comprehensive Plan. The next step involved amending the city's zoning to actually allow the type of development considered in the plan—denser, more pedestrian friendly, traditional 'Main Street' style buildings. Again, the Village of Spring Hill hired Dover-Kohl to work with the city to draft an overlay zoning regulation. After much discussion and public debate before the Planning Commission and City Council, the ordinance passed unanimously.

It was essential that the city pass these regulations because without them, each developer who wanted to follow the Village plans would have had to apply for a variance and potentially face unnecessary opposition. Since the plan and zoning are official regulations, anyone who wants to use them now has a right to do so. As a testament to the power of

the new regulations, the Village of Spring Hill has been approached by and has assisted a number of developers who wish to follow the *Blueprint* and optional zoning. Passage of these regulations was vital to the success of your plan—and you delivered!

*Thank you again for your support!*

## Did You Know...

that the final versions of *The Blueprint for Spring Hill* and the zoning and subdivision regulation ordinances are available on the Village of Spring Hill web site at [www.thevillageofspringhill.com](http://www.thevillageofspringhill.com)



## Regions Bank Development Update

Work has now begun on the Village streetscapes in front on Regions Bank. Improvements include a wide sidewalk, decorative lighting, and street trees. This revitalization is a welcome addition to the Village master plan and kicks off redevelopment on the east side of the intersection.

## At Home in the Village

While the Village of Spring Hill's primary focus has been on improving the commercial areas within its boundaries, *The Blueprint for Spring Hill* and optional zoning also address an alternate form of residential development. The new optional zoning features houses located toward the front of each lot, small front yards, a more uniform street appearance, the potential for tighter building spacing, and streetscapes to create a Village feel.

When Johnny Roberts approached the Village of Spring Hill about his property at the corner of Old Shell Road and Bit & Spur Road (along Shepards Lane), the potential was clear. The new residential zoning was a perfect fit and allowed a much better lot layout than the standard city-wide zoning. A series of meetings with the city's Urban Development Department confirmed the viability of the application, and the project is now ready to go. The new development, for marketing purposes called "**A Village in Spring Hill,**" will feature six detached single-family homes in an upscale French-country style and accessed via a private drive. Both the Old Shell Road and Shepards Lane frontages will feature Village streetscapes, with Elm trees and street lights located in a six-foot wide grass strip and a six-foot sidewalk behind that. There is no doubt that this development will greatly enhance the visual appeal of one of the Village's key commercial areas as well as provide an excellent environment for its residents.

This is the first residential development being planned that will adopt many of the features put forth in *The Blueprint for Spring Hill*. We look forward to seeing the implementation!

# We Are Just Getting Started!



The Village of Spring Hill's work is only just beginning. Now that planning and zoning activities are complete and initial infrastructure projects are taking shape, we look forward to starting the next wave of initiatives, including:

- Hanging baskets and planters with seasonal flowers
- Crosswalks at Lavretta Park and Bit & Spur Road
- Landscaping and beautification of other small, public spaces
- Additional sidewalks on the north side of Old Shell Road and in front of Spring Hill Manor
- Feasibility study / engineering a roundabout at McGregor Avenue and Museum Drive

for private property owners to revitalize or redevelop their properties, but when they do, we want to ensure that we have incentives in place to encourage use of the Village streetscapes—lights, street trees, benches, and landscaping. Additional sidewalks will continue to improve the connectedness of our community and encourage pedestrian use. The corridor at McGregor Avenue and Museum Drive can become an impressive entrance to our cultural and athletic center. We have all seen the positive impacts these types of projects have on our community—we need to keep up the momentum.

**You are the key  
to our future success...**

as an active member or by making a direct contribution. While other funding sources such as local, state, and federal grants continue to be pursued, these external sources are especially scarce in the current economic environment. The Village of Spring Hill continues to keep expenses to a bare minimum. In fact, it still has no salaried employees; its Board of Directors and volunteers all donate their time to help improve the community—and plan to continue doing so. We only ask that you give what you can, and you have our commitment that your investment will stay within the community and be put to the best possible use.

Of course, this will take time and money. Many of Spring Hill's streetscapes remain under-developed, with narrow sidewalks and extensive curb-cuts. It will take time

We cannot continue to make improvements and encourage redevelopment without your ongoing support. You can help by joining the Village of Spring Hill

*Thank you!*



## TOGETHER, WE CAN...

*Join your friends and neighbors and be a part  
of something exciting happening in Spring Hill!*

- Friend: \$35 – 99  
Contributor: \$100 – 249  
Supporter: \$250 – 499  
Sustainer: \$500 – 999  
Patron: \$1,000 +

*The Village of Spring Hill, Inc. is a  
501(c)(3) tax exempt organization.*

### Mail form to:

The Village of Spring Hill  
4354-A Old Shell Rd. #145  
Mobile, AL 36608-2011

Attached is my check for a 2009 membership in the amount of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I would also like to make a \$ \_\_\_\_\_ contribution in the name of:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone #1: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone #2: \_\_\_\_\_



**Please take the time to update or send us your email address so we can keep you abreast of happenings in the Village! We want to keep you up-to-date on happenings without spending an inordinate amount on regular mail. There is a link on the homepage of our web site:**

[www.thevillageofspringhill.com](http://www.thevillageofspringhill.com)

**Email: [info@thevillageofspringhill.com](mailto:info@thevillageofspringhill.com)**

*Good things are  
happening in  
the Village!*



4354-A Old Shell Rd. #145  
Mobile, Alabama 36608

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