

# Drainage documents pointed to high-rise in '06

By **MICHAEL REED**  
mreed@hcnonline.com

An application for storm drainage use at the corner of Ashby and Bissonnet streets was received Nov. 21, 2006 by the city of Houston, pertaining to a project that would include 210 apartments, 10,000 square-feet of office space and a full-service restaurant.

Records obtained by the Examiner

through an Open Records request contained a letter from the Public Works Department — dated Dec. 9, 2006 — responding to the request by Maryland Manor Associates and addressed to the attention of developer Matthew Morgan.

The letter described the proposed structure as being comprised of:

- five townhouses;
  - 210 apartments with washer-dryer connections;
  - two lounge-terrace areas (3,500 square feet each) with 400 square feet of kitchen-bar area for residents;
  - a health spa of 5,000 square feet for 60 occupants;
  - a fitness room of 2,000 square feet for residents only;
  - a multipurpose room of 2,000 square feet for 200 occupants;
  - office space of 10,000 square feet;
  - a full-service restaurant of 4,600 square feet consisting of 3,500 square feet of indoor dining and 2,000 square feet of retail space.
- Parking lots and spaces are not included in storm drainage requests. Plans, however,

call for the first five floors of the 23-floor structure to contain 467 parking spaces.

The letter, signed by Zia Mohammadi, a supervising engineer, noted that it was written for Michael Marcotte, director of Public Works and Engineering.

Mohammadi said because the tract is located in the Brays Bayou watershed, approval of

the Harris County Flood Control District is required. He said if construction of the project is not started within two years of the letter, a renewal request must be submitted.

Records show Morgan's proposal to Public Works said he anticipated a waste water availability request would necessitate "the construction of a 10-inch sewer in Dunlavy (Street) to connect to the 78-inch sewer in North Boulevard at a manhole near Dunlavy."

That request was also received Nov. 21, 2006 and was responded to by Public Works on Dec. 5, 2006 in a letter that listed the same components as the Dec. 9 response with the following exceptions:

- the 2,000 square feet of retail space became 2,000 square feet of outdoor dining;
- a 2,600 square-foot fast food restaurant area and 2,500 square feet of retail space were also included.

Both of those documents are public records.

An e-mail dated Sept. 24, 2007 and obtained by the Examiner through the Open Records request indicated the developer's plans were affected by public opinion.

"The opposition from the community was anticipated," Jun Chang wrote to Andy Icken, both of whom are with Public Works. "The developer, therefore, built a 1,000-foot sewer extension to connect to a 78-inch sewer on North Boulevard instead of connecting to a neighborhood sewer line."

In an e-mail earlier that morning, Icken told Chang:

"Community mtg (meeting) last

wk (week) was very antagonistic. One common perception is coh (city of Houston) already helped size this to 23 floors by agreeing with developer on joint ww/w (waste water/water) oversizing project and we collected impact fee for (a) larger project and we approved (a) building plan."

Records show Morgan paid a waste water impact fee of \$168,556 June 4, 2007 for 200.2495 service units committed, receiving 47.838 service units credited.

He also paid \$47,520 as a water impact fee on that date.

The e-mails from Icken and Chang referred to a community meeting held Sept. 20 by the Southampton Civic Club and the Boulevard Oaks Civic Association.

In an e-mail Friday, the Southampton Civic Club reminded its members that a September 2005 newsletter had alerted them to the possibility of a high-rise replacing Maryland Manor apartments, but said an investigation of reported survey work at the site "yielded nothing."

It went on to say "the issue did not surface again until early March of 2007 when another survey crew was observed at the site, although it is unclear if their presence was related to the Maryland Manor site or another neighboring property."

The full text can be seen [www.southamptoncivicclub.org/newsletters](http://www.southamptoncivicclub.org/newsletters) by clicking on Late Summer 2005 and scrolling to Page 5.

The article said the Civic Club had made "preliminary contact with the city about the possibility of a high-rise at the site. "We will keep you posted," it concluded.