



Guest Commentary

By Mandy Nathan

Meet the challenge

On behalf of Patrons for Bellaire Parks, I would like to thank everyone who has already helped our effort to meet our \$250,000 Wortham Challenge Grant for Bellaire Town Square.

The rest of you? Please take a moment to read on.

We have only until the end of June to raise the remaining \$250,000 of our \$500,000 challenge so that the Wortham Foundation will give an additional \$250,000 for Bellaire's new park.

It's all or nothing. If Bellaire supporters can't scrape together the money before June, Bellaire's parks get nothing – nada – from this challenge grant.

That's \$250,000 down the drain.

In case you haven't heard about Patrons, we are a volunteer-based, nonprofit group that was started several years ago to raise money to improve Bellaire's parks.

Like many of you, we were concerned about aging parks and facilities. We wanted Bellaire's parks to continue serving as treasured gathering spots for families. We wanted Bellaire to be able to buy land for future parks and playing fields.

We were inspired especially by the vision of city leaders who took decades to painstakingly buy up the residential lots that eventually became Loftin Park.

Now Loftin Park and adjacent Bellaire Park will merge into one large urban oasis called Bellaire Town Square, filled with unique recreational spaces in which residents can gather and take a break from hectic city life.

The good news is that people are already stepping up and taking action to bring about that vision. As of mid-February, individuals and businesses had donated or pledged a total of more than \$750,000 for Bellaire Town Square through Patrons.

These donations included amounts of \$100,000 or more from corporations including CenterPoint, Chevron and First Street Surgical, as well as \$50-50,000 from community groups, businesses and individuals just like yourself.

This is a tremendous amount of money to have raised in such a short time. Because we are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, your donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

But we need your help now more than ever to bring in the \$250,000 donation from the Wortham Foundation.

Please do your part to Meet the Challenge.

Mandy Nathan is president of the Patrons for Bellaire Parks