



WEST AUSTIN NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP

P.O. Box 5722 • Austin, Texas 78763-5722 • July, 2013

Organized 1973

*"To preserve our neighborhood and
protect it from deterioration."*

Our next meeting will be Monday August 5th, 2013, 7:00PM at the
Howson Library. We look forward to seeing you! Please join us.
And speaking of joining us....

President's Message

By Cathy Kyle

Board of Directors

Cathy Kyle
President

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Secretary

Blake Tollett
Assistant Secretary

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Past-President

George Edwards
Treasurer

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Joyce Basciano
Joseph Bennett
Erik Cary
George Edwards
Haidar Khazen

Honorary Committee Members

Hon. Lloyd Doggett
Hon. Lee Leffingwell

At our meeting last month, WANG unanimously passed a resolution asking the City to increase funding for the Parks and Recreation Department. The supplemental appropriation will help close the parks funding gap that has steadily increased over recent decades and will give us the "Great Austin Parks" that our community deserves. The PARD budget has been cut repeatedly for decades during economic downturns. Such cuts never seem to get restored when the economy recovers yet the need grows. We asked that part of this funding increase include \$1 million for the Aquatics Division to keep our pools open all summer. Presently,

pools open in the second week of June and close in late August (except for the handful of pools that remain open year-round: Barton Springs, Deep Eddy, Big Stacy). Even in summer, many of the pools do not open until late afternoon during the week and are closed at least one day each week.



Early bathers at Deep Eddy Pool

Google fiber

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My son is holding down his first job this summer – as a lifeguard for the City’s Aquatics Department. His involvement with the program has given me a new level of respect for the City’s pools and the lifeguards who serve there. Before taking the stand as a lifeguard, each applicant must complete a rigorous certification course, pass a City Skills test, and complete an in-service program. Lifeguards working at Barton Springs must complete an even more rigorous program. Altogether, the City’s training program instills in the lifeguarding staff a healthy respect for the importance of the work they do. In addition to having first aid and CPR training, lifeguards also watch for horseplay, stop kids from running at the pool’s edge, and pick up trash. There’s even an art to blowing the whistle every hour to give kids (and parents) a much-needed breather. At most pools, the lifeguards take the stand for 20 minutes at a time, so that they are able to remain alert.

We are lucky to have several great pools in our neighborhood. The grand dame, of course, is Deep Eddy Pool. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Deep Eddy is the oldest swimming pool in Texas, and is still spring-fed from a 65 ft. hand-dug well – meaning no chlorine. Even before the pool was built in 1914, locals swam in an eddy formed by a large boulder in the Colorado

River where cold springs surfaced. In the early days, the pool was the feature of a resort on the banks on the Colorado, and featured attractions such as a diving horse. Really.

Deep Eddy Pool has been a City park since 1935. Following a flood that year, the WPA re-built the bathhouse and



re-opened the pool the following year. It has remained open ever since. The Friends of Deep Eddy Pool and the City completed a massive restoration of the bathhouse in 2007. The pool remains a great gathering place for the community – especially in the summer, when it hosts Deep Eddy Movie Nights, which will continue this year through August 3. Learn more about Deep Eddy at austintexas.gov/departments/deep-eddy-pool and at deepeddy.org.

While Deep Eddy may be the oldest, it certainly is not the only great pool in our neighborhood. Earlier this year, I wrote a few lines about the pool at Westenfield Park (March 2013 newsletter). Plans for the new pool and park are being finalized following a public hearing last April. With neighborhood input, the plan envisions a main entry off of the existing park walkway, a bathhouse, a shaded toddler pool and a lap pool. You can find a schematic of the proposed improvements at austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Parks/CIP/westenfieldpoolimprovements.pdf. In the meantime, you can enjoy the shaded pool for the rest of the summer.

The pool at Reed Park is tucked in the back of this small neighborhood park. The separate kiddie pool makes it a great option for families with babies and toddlers. Its easy accessibility also makes it a great option for an evening picnic and swim at the end of a hot Texas summer day. The wading pool at West Austin Park in Clarksville offers similar amenities -- plenty of shade trees, a playscape, easy parking and even an off-leash area for your dog. Where ever you are and whatever your schedule, there are plenty of opportunities for a quick dip close to home. I hope you are enjoying your summer and that you take advantage of our neighborhood pools. If you’re so inclined, let the City Council know that you support additional funding for our parks (and pools).

West Austin Neighborhood Group (WANG)

Monday 1 July 2013

The Board of Directors (BoD) of WANG come together at the regularly schedule day, place and time (first Monday of the month at Howson Library beginning at 7 PM). Directors in attendance were August Harris, Haidar Khazan, George Edwards, Joe Bennett, Joyce Basciano (Bryker Wood NA), Mary Arnold, and Blake Tollett. Also in attendance as liaisons for Pemberton Heights NA were Betty Trent and Monnie Anderson. In the absence of our President Catherine Kyle, August led the discussion.

First up was the approval of last month's minutes. With no voiced corrections, the minutes from our 3 June 2013 meeting as printed in the current newsletter were unanimously approved.

We then turned to Neighbor Communications:

1) Blake reported that the controversy over the physical composition of the historical marker at the top of Mount Bonnell remains in flux. The long time and much appreciated Friends group associated with this National Register and local historic landmark, the West Point Society of Central Texas (WPSCT), would like to replace the currently deteriorated limestone marker on site with an identical marker made of granite. The City's Parks and Recreation Department (PARC), as custodian of this historic landmark, has sought and received a Certificate of Appropriateness from the City's Historic Landmark commission to rehabilitate the limestone marker rather than replace it. WANG had supported the efforts of the WPSCT to fund and go forward with a rehabilitation of the top of Mount Bonnell, but this controversy has made us reconsider our support of their vision. There is always hope that a compromise can be reached between WPSCT and the City, but regardless, the neighborhood association will continue its support of PARC. It is possible this matter will go before the City Council.

2) We then discussed the new Pets Alive facility under construction at the Tarrytown Shopping Center. There have been concerns voiced that the facility would be operated as a kennel, a use not appropriate under the shopping center's current zoning district. From the Land Development Code (LDC):

PET SERVICES use is the use of a site for the retail sale of small animals customarily used as household pets, or the provision of veterinary, grooming, or boarding services, totally within a building. This use includes pet stores, small animal clinics, and pet grooming shops, but excludes uses for livestock or large animals.

It appears that Pets Alive's operation will fit under this definition and was noted that the mission of the operator is highly laudable.

3) We then discussed the proposed change in the neighborhood's Future Land Use Map (FLUM) [as codified by City ordinance under the Central West Austin Neighborhood Plan (CWANP)] for the property at 2208 Lake Austin Boulevard (LAB), the corner of Upson and LAB. Blake reported that the new owners of the one story office building would like to convert the current structure into a two-story building with a commercial use on the ground floor and a residential use above. To do this they would need to change their current zoning district of LO-NP, Local Office-Neighborhood Plan, to LO-MU-NP, Local Office-Mixed Use-Neighborhood Plan. The FLUM along that portion of LAB speaks to it being a neighborhood commercial district (no residential), so to achieve the new owner's plans there would have to be not only a rezoning but also a change to the FLUM. The CWANP Contact Team has been formally approached on the matter and they will take it up when they next meet, the last Monday in July. At that meeting a decision will be made whether to allow the FLUM amendment process to go forward with a positive recommendation so it will be important to hear from our Deep Eddy

neighbors. A change of zoning on this property would set a precedent for all of the currently zoned commercial properties along this section of the boulevard. The WANG BoD committed to get the word out through flyers and the listserve. One concern being voiced is that the residential component, by its location, would be ideal for the establishment of a commercial vacation rental operation.

4) We then discussed the phenomena of vacation rentals in the neighborhood in general.

5) The Girls School of Austin (GSA) construction project continues to move quickly forward. The demolition is done and they still anticipate returning to completed classrooms by the end of February 2014. There have been some complaints of truck traffic in the adjacent neighborhood, but generally everything is going smoothly. The general contractor has a representative always on site, so that helps. Haidar will put a link to the projects website on our web page.

6) We mulled over the idea of setting up a neighborhood wide listserve but took no further action.

7) August reported about a movement initiated by the Great Austin Parks (GAP) organization to lobby City Council to increase the Austin park's maintenance budget by 4.75 million dollars in next year's budget. [Richard Craig (PHNA & Friends of Pease Park) and Ted Siff (Old Austin Neighborhood Association & Shoal Creek Conservancy) formed GAP] Other neighborhood associations throughout the City are endorsing these efforts and the WANG BoD unanimously voted to follow suit, with the proviso that the maintenance funds increase specifically call out for an increase in the staffing of the Urban Forestry maintenance crew (those who actually work in the trees). August and Blake will write a letter for Cathy's signature.

We then moved on to Land Matters:

Before we began August talked about the demolition

permits being issued in the neighborhood over the last several years. The 78703 zip code averages 40 to 50 demolitions per year and so far this year we are actually running somewhat ahead of that average.

C15-2013-0052

2200 Westover Road

Owner/Applicant: Andrew and Ann Erben

The applicant has requested a variance to decrease the minimum front street setback requirement of the LDC from 25 feet to 15 feet in order to rebuild a carport for a single-family residence.

The applicant has requested a variance from the garage placement requirement of the Land Development Code (LDC) in order to rebuild a carport for a single-family residence. The LDC states that a parking structure with an entrance that faces the front yard: (1) may not be closer to the front lot line than the building façade; and (2) if the parking structure is less than 20 feet behind the building façade, the width of the parking structure may not exceed 50 percent of the width of the principal structure measured parallel to the front lot line.

Blake reported that an aerial photographic map from the mid 1980s showed the carport that was taken down and replaced at this address, and that if the property owner had followed the LDC requirements and pulled a permit to replace the carport before taking it down, the carport's placement on the lot would have been grandfathered in. It was noted that the new carport is more massive in appearance than the one it is replacing, and is in fact several feet wider but also extends several feet less into the required front yard setback. Blake reported close by neighbor support and opposition to the variance requests. After further discussion the BoD voted to not oppose the requests.

We then heard from David Cancialosi, a professional property owner's representative, about a proposed garage placement variance for 3218 Stevenson Avenue.

Wang Minutes , continued from page 4

Because this matter will go before the August Board of Adjustment, it was not officially before the WANG BoD. The relevant LDC provision is:

25-2-1604 GARAGE PLACEMENTS.

(A) This section applies to a single-family residential use, a duplex residential use, or a two-family residential use.

(B) In this section:

(1) BUILDING FACADE means the front building facade of the principal structure on a lot, and the term excludes the building facade of the portion of the principal structure designed or used as a parking structure.

(2) PARKING STRUCTURE means a garage or carport, either attached or detached from the principal structure.

(C) A parking structure with an entrance that faces the front yard:

(1) may not be closer to the front lot line than the building facade; and

(2) if the parking structure is less than 20 feet behind the building facade, the width of the parking structure may not exceed 50 percent of the width of the principal structure, measured parallel to the front lot line.

Source: Ord. 030925-64; Ord. 031211-11.

After discussion amongst the interested parties, the unofficial recommendation from the BoD was that absent a defined hardship we would oppose the variance requested. [NOTE: Subsequent to the WANG meeting the BoD was informed that the variance request application was being withdrawn].

C15-2013-0064

3107 Pleasant Run Place

Applicant: Timothy P. Cross 512-934-7930

Owner: Jack and Patsy Woods-Martin

The applicant has requested a variance to decrease the minimum front street setback requirement of the LDC

from 20 feet to 17 feet in order to rebuild/enlarge an existing front porch for a single-family residence.

The applicant has requested a variance to decrease the minimum rear yard setback requirement of the LDC from 10 feet to 5 feet in order to expand a covered porch for a single-family residence.

The applicant has requested a variance to increase the maximum impervious coverage requirement of the LDC from 45% (56.7% existing) to 55.25% in order to rebuild/enlarge an existing front porch and expand a covered rear porch for a single-family residence.

The applicant and one of the owners came and talked with us. During the discussion with the BoD, they told us they would not now need the rear yard setback variance to complete the remodel project. Blake noted that to his knowledge there is no close by neighbor opposition and that the “common drive” that connects this property with four other close by properties appears to be the cause for the existing impervious coverage (IC) overage. Noting that after the project is complete the existing IC will be slightly decreased the WANG BoD voted to not oppose the requested variances.

We then briefly touched on the matters going before the Historic Landmark Commission:

HDP-2012-0373 (Demolition Permit)
2804 Greenlee

NRD-2013-0046 (Building Permit)
3214 Beverly Road

NRD-2013-0049 (Building Permit)
1410 Gaston

August reminds the BoD that we need to start thinking about the Annual Neighbor and whether or not we will have an Annual Meeting outside of our regularly scheduled meetings.

Joe informs us that the active membership is 214. He will be sending out to our expired membership list a postcard touting our offer to treat any membership received between now and the end of October as being current through November 2014.

Haidar thanked everyone for getting the newsletter content to him in a timely manner. We all were pleased with the newsletter's conforming type font.

The PHNA folks invited everyone to their 4th of July celebration beginning around noon and featuring a reading of the Declaration of Independence. PHNA will have their Annual Picnic and Social on 20 October this year beginning around 5 PM.

From the Austin Neighborhoods Council (ANC), Joyce brought us an update on the stealth dorm controversy. She also told us about the City Staff's push to have the neighborhood planning process changed so that in addition to neighborhood plan amendments having to be initiated through neighborhood plan contact teams or originate through the City's Director of Planning and Review, the Planning Commission would now have limited authority to bring amendments forward. This proposed modification to the neighborhood plan amendment ordinance will go before the Planning commission this month and is scheduled to be heard by the City Council on 8 August.

George reports our main account has \$7,886.40 and our Oak Wilt account has \$1,205.98.

We had a brief discussion of the origin of the Oak Wilt account-they are excess funds gathered over the years by neighbors now available for use as a matching component if other neighbors are seeking grant help in controlling oak wilt infestations.

Time having run out on us, we adjourned.

Blake Tollett
Assistant Secretary

MEMBERSHIP REMINDERS

All West Austin Neighborhood Group Memberships are running concurrently from November 1st to October 31st of each year. Join or Re-new now (June/July) and your Membership is good through October 31, 2014. Those who renewed prior to June will need to renew on or before November 1 to be active for 2014. If you have questions about your membership, please contact

membership@westaustinng.com.

We are constantly working on outreach and membership development.

Talk to your neighbors and ask them if they are members!

Membership is open to all West Austin residents and businesses. All members are invited to participate in public forums, engage in social activities and serve on committees. The Stronger the Membership, the Greater the effort for the Neighborhood.

We would like give a big THANK YOU ! to all our Members for their support of the Neighborhood and especially our Patron and Friend Level Members:

Patron Level - Julie & Ben Crenshaw,
Colleen & Brad Theriot, Carter Shanklin,
Marcia & George Edwards, Alex & Julie Gregg,
Libby & Bruce Malone, Judith Kenney,
and Joseph & Amber Bennett

Friend Level - Glenn & Cyndi Corser,
Andrew & Connie Mawer, Mary Ellen Oliver,
Jay & Mary Alice Lucas, Linda & Kelly Dickens,
Neil & Susan Pasco, John & Caroline Trube,
Noelle Paulette, Vicky Y Spradling,
Jim & Lee Ann Anderson, Catherine Kyle,
Jerry & Mary Bell, Lidia Agraz & Allen Peck,
Jim & Joanna Essler, Flo Ann Randle, Judy Coker,
The Girl's School of Austin, Ann Moody,
Dealey & David Herndon, Amy & Brent Corbett,
and George Henderson

Benefactor Level \$ 250

Patron Level \$ 100

Friend Level \$ 50

Family Level \$ 30

Senior Level \$ 15

Student Level \$ 15

Sustaining Level \$ 500

Dead spots in the lawn? Look for chinch bugs....

Chinch bugs often appear in Texas lawns during hot, dry conditions. Usually damage starts in sunny locations or near driveways and sidewalk areas. Damage appears as irregular dead patches in the lawn surrounded by yellowing or dying grass. Chinch bug damage can be mistaken for other lawn problems like white grubs or fungal diseases, so confirmation of chinch bug activity is needed before progressing to proper treatment.

So how do you tell if you have chinch bugs? Look for the insects. One way is to cut both ends out of a can, push it into the ground using a twisting motion and then fill the can with water for about 10 minutes and wait for any bugs to float to the top. Another way would be to get down on your hands and knees and part the grass to look for the insects. For both methods, samples should be taken in the damaged (yellowed grass), not dead, grass areas.

Chinch bugs are small (about 1/5 of an inch). Adults are black with white wings that have triangular black marks on them. Nymphs, or immatures, are yellowish or pinkish with a

light colored band across their body. Nymphs do not have fully developed wings.

Treatment is usually a liquid or granular formulation. Liquid formulations are often bottles that you can attach to the end of the garden hose or concentrates that you mix into a tank sprayer. Granular formulations are put out with push spreaders and need to be watered in after treatment.

Treatment should be applied in the area where damage is occurring and several feet out from the damaged area; the entire yard does not have to be treated. All label instructions should be read and followed before and during the treatment.



For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Also check out www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com

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