



# WEST AUSTIN NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP

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

Organized 1973

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

## Board of Directors

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Secretary

Blake Tollett  
Assistant Secretary

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Joyce Basciano  
Joseph Bennett  
Erik Cary  
George Edwards  
Gwen Jewiss  
Haidar Khazen

## Honorary Committee Members

Hon. Lloyd Doggett  
Hon. Lee Leffingwell

Our next meeting will be Monday June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 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

### It's Good to Be King

I was disappointed to read in this morning's paper that the Texas House has voted down an amendment that would have required public-private development projects on state land to be subject to local zoning. Sen. Kirk Watson has sponsored a similar bill in the Texas Senate, and it's still breathing – for now. But Gov. Perry opposes the notion that commercial development on state land should comply with local land use ordinances and urged that the legislation be removed from the bills under consideration. Terry Keel actively lobbied against the amendment, too. As State Rep. Harold Dutton explained, "The

state ought to have the absolute, unfettered right to move forward with a project that the state deems appropriate and necessary to conduct state business." Ah yes, it's good to be King -- especially when the "state business" is lining the pockets of private commerce. After all, a "public-private development" turns a profit for private companies and their stockholders. These developments may or may not ultimately relieve the taxpayers' burden.

Why, you may ask, is this a neighborhood issue? While it's true that legislation bringing public-private development in line with local ordinances

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*Presidents Message, continued from page 1*

would have a state-wide effect, perhaps its greatest impact is here at home. Think about all of the state land within Austin's city limits, and especially within our neighborhood – the Austin State Supported Living Center (formerly the Austin State School), Lions Municipal Golf Course and the Brackenridge tract come immediately to mind. As a neighborhood, we spent long hours and several years developing a Future Land Use Map (FLUM) identifying development corridors and densification in our neighborhood. Without having to comply with local ordinances and ignoring the FLUM, development of state-owned lands could significantly undermine our neighborhood's efforts. As hard as we work to maintain the integrity and livability of our neighborhood, unregulated public-private developments may negate our work. In addition, these unfettered developments operate at a distinct advantage over private developments which still have to follow the rules.

This last tactic seems like yet another legislative swipe at the City of Austin. I always breathe a sigh of relief when the Legislature leaves town. *Sine die* for this session can't come too soon.

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**WEST AUSTIN NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP  
MINUTES FOR MAY 6, 2013 BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS MEETING  
By Michael Cannatti, Secretary**

These are the minutes of the **West Austin Neighborhood Group Board of Directors Meeting** on Monday, May 6, 2013 at the Lions Clubhouse.

- I. **Call to Order**: The meeting was called to order at 6:10 pm with the following Board members in attendance: Cathy Kyle, August Harris, Eric Cary, Blake Tollett, Mary Arnold, Joyce Basciano, and Michael Cannatti.
- II. **Approval of Minutes**: The minutes from the April 1 board meeting were unanimously approved, with Eric and August abstaining.
- III. **Neighbor Communications**:

- A. **Austin Girls' School construction**: Cathy Kyle reported on the update meeting from the Austin Girls' School where the construction plans for the new campus was reviewed with the neighbors. The construction is scheduled to begin this summer after school closes, and proceed with work on six days each week (7 am to 5 pm) so that construction is completed to allow classes to resume by Spring, 2014. As previously reported, all campus buildings (except for the administrative house) will be removed and replaced with new structures, and number of students at the school will not increase. To limit traffic and parking problems in the neighborhood, the construction workers will have limited parking on site, and use shuttles to deliver workers to the site, and construction deliveries will be routed into the site using Elton Lane. Neighbors have understandably expressed concerns about having noise in the early hours and weekends, but the aggressive construction schedule is intended to expedite the overall duration of the project, kind of like ripping off a bandaid.
- B. **Sound Ordinance Inquiry**: Cathy Kyle and Mike Cannatti reported on the City's Noise Ordinance and its potential application to limiting construction noise in the residential neighborhood. According to one sound ordinance provision (Section 9-2-3(3)), "A person may not . . . operate a machine that separates, gathers, grades, loads, or unloads sand, rock, or gravel within 600 feet of a residence, church, hospital, hotel, or motel between 7:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.," unless permitted by the city for the installation of concrete. Apparently, the City interprets this provision to allow residential area construction to begin at 6 am. However, the "general restrictions" of the sound ordinance (Section 9-2-3) prohibit making noise that is audible to a residence between 10:30 pm and 7 am. In addition, Section 9-2-5 from the sound ordinance states the [Restrictions on Use of Sound Equipment in a Residential Area](#), prohibiting use of "sound equipment" in a residential area between 10 pm and 10 am, where "sound equipment" is defined as "means a loud speaker, public address system, amplification system, or other sound producing device." The same provision states that "sound equipment" cannot be used that produces sound in excess of 75 decibels beyond the property line of a residence. In years past, WANG has requested the City to explain if the "sound equipment" protections for residential areas can be applied to leaf blowers as "sound equipment," but did not receive a formal response.

**Action: Mike Cannatti will follow-up**

**with City staff on the applicability of the restrictions on use of sound equipment in residential areas.**

- C. Party Barge Trash at Walsh Landing: Blake noted the ongoing problems with trash being dumped at Walsh Boat Landing by party barge businesses. These businesses claim to operate out of the Westlake area, and therefore do not comply with Austin's parking requirements. Erik Cary suggested that citation for illegal dumping could apply to their conduct. In addition, the Lake Austin Taskforce is considering possible solutions to these problems, including charging for access to the park or lake through Walsh Boat Landing. In addition, the City's residential parking permit program may be used here. Mary Arnold noted that an annual boat tag fee could be charged for access and use of the lake.

**Action: Blake Tollett will follow-up on the progress of the Lake Austin Taskforce, and will invite Ken Pfluger from the Lake Austin Taskforce to attend WANG's June board meeting.**

- D. Parkland Parking Ordinance: Cathy Kyle will draft a letter to City Council, the Planning Commission, the Parks Board, and staff expressing WANG's opposition to the proposed parkland parking ordinance which allows city parks to be used to meet parking requirements for any business located within 1000 feet of the park. In our neighborhood, the ordinance would have negative parking effects on at least Eiler's Park, Deep Eddy Pool, Mayfield Park, and Walsh Boat Landing, due to the nearby businesses that could use these parks to meet their parking requirements. In addition, August will write an article on the ordinance for inclusion in the newsletter.
- E. Neighborhood Plan Contact Team Meeting: Mike Cannatti reported on the results of the Annual Meeting for the Neighborhood Plan Contact Team. In addition to holding a replacement election (to fill the designated Pemberton Heights Neighborhood Association board member positions) and officer election, the Plan Contact Team is pursuing grant support for parks-related projects for our neighborhood plan area. Cannatti will provide a summary for the newsletter. Mary Arnold asked if the City had followed through with implementing the part of the adopted Neighborhood Plan that says the City will continue to have "regular" meetings with

"stakeholders" about the Brackenridge Tract, but no such meetings have been held.

IV. **Committee Reports:**

A. Zoning/Board of Adjustment:

- 1) C15-2013-0036 (1512 W 29th Street; Applicant: Darby A. Noonan; Owner: Luis Senta and Adela Ben-Yakar). The applicant has requested a variance to decrease the minimum separation requirement from 15 feet to 4 inches in order to erect an addition to an existing two-family residential use in an SF-3-NP zoning district.

**Action: No action taken in deference to Bryker Woods Neighborhood Association.**

B. Membership: No report.

- C. Newsletter: The deadline for receiving content for the next newsletter is 10 days from the board meeting (May 16).

D. ANC Liaison Report: Joyce Basciano reported as follows:

1. APD Commander's Forum – The Region 1 Central West District Representatives will host a Commander's Forum from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 7, 2013 at McCallum High School to share information and talk about community concerns with residents and business owners. Topics will include APD 2014 Budget Forecast, crime statistics, a guest speaker from WanderID, bicycle safety initiative, sector initiatives as well as a question and answer session with the District Representatives and Command Staff. In addition, questions about enforcement efforts under the Short Term Rental Ordinance will be addressed
2. ANC's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – A City Council proclamation in honor of ANC's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary will be provided at the May 9, 2013 celebration at South Austin Brewing Company (5 pm).

E. Pemberton Heights Neighborhood Association Liaison Report: No report.

V. **Treasurer's Report** – The Checking Account Balance is \$9,603.85, and the Oak Wilt Account Balance of \$1205.95. August Harris noted that WANG needs to appoint a coordinator for handling advertisements in our newsletters.

VII. **Old Business** – Mary Arnold asked if the Camp Mabry access request had been finalized. August Harris

noted that there is no long term plan to re-open the main gate, and that the idea of re-aligning the Camp Mabry entrance with the Pecos/35<sup>th</sup> Street intersection is no longer being pursued by Camp Mabry. Mike Cannatti noted that WANG had voted to support the request for additional access to Camp Mabry, and will finalize the letter for WANG to submit.

VIII. **New Business** – Blake Tollett reported that Mayfield Park is requesting an Austin Parks Foundation Grant for repair of the archway terrace and installation of a new water fountain, and would be requesting a letter of support from WANG. Cannatti reported on the rumor that abandoned gas station at the Tarrytown Shopping Center will be converted into an Austin Pets Alive animal shelter business. August Harris reported on the progress in replacing the pool and other park amenities at West Enfield park, including a pool party fundraising event being tentatively planned for the Labor Day weekend.

IX. **Adjournment** -- The meeting was adjourned. The next board meeting will occur on Monday, June 3, 2013 at 7 pm at the Howson Library.

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## **Parking in the Parks**

On May 28, 2013 the Parks and Recreation Board will take up for consideration a proposed ordinance that would allow businesses located within 1,000 feet of city parks to use the city's parking lots for commercial parking. The City Council will consider the ordinance on June 6. At least 93 parks across the city could be open for parking overflow for commercial businesses; thousands of businesses are located within 1,000 feet of parkland. Last December, the City Council passed a resolution to create a new citywide parkland parking ordinance to allow businesses within 1,000 feet of City parks to use park parking lots to meet minimum parking requirements in return for a fee or park enhancement. Council members Morrison and Tovo voted against the resolution.

The impetus for the ordinance is to help one business which has inadequate space for parking. Its customers routinely use an adjacent parking lot for city softball fields for overflow parking. It runs counter to good urban planning to allow a single situation to dictate policy for the entire City. The Austin Neighborhoods Council (ANC) voted unanimously against the ordinance and many neighborhoods throughout Austin have

expressed opposition to it, including WANG.

Existing park parking lots are needed to support current and new park users. As one of the fastest growing cities in the U.S., over 125,000 new residents will move to Austin within the next two years. It is possible that the new ordinance will encourage more businesses to locate near parks and compete with park users for park parking spaces. Significantly, the proposed ordinance doesn't exclude incompatible businesses such as clubs, bars, and liquor stores.

With the public hearings fast approaching, please take a few minutes to contact City Council members as well as members of the Parks and Recreation Board, and City Council to tell them to vote against the parkland parking ordinance. Their contact information can be found at [westaustinng.com](http://westaustinng.com), [austintexas.gov/department/austin-city-council-members](http://austintexas.gov/department/austin-city-council-members), and [ci.austin.tx.us/boards/results.cfm?bid=42](http://ci.austin.tx.us/boards/results.cfm?bid=42).

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## **Girls' School of Austin to Break Ground**

A new campus for the Girls' School of Austin has been in the planning stages for over a year. The current campus is in need of extensive renovations, and even so, it lacks a cafeteria, gym, and auditorium. Come June 3, 2013, crews will begin the demolition of the school, formerly Dill Elementary, located at the corner of Windsor and McCall. The board of directors, led by Bronson Dorsey, chose American Constructors as the general contractor for the project due to the company's experience in building schools. Dorsey also serves as the Project Manager for the construction. It is expected that demolition will take approximately one month, so new construction will begin in early July.

The goal of the project is for the new buildings to fit the scale of the neighborhood – “low and tucked in.” The new plan includes four small buildings — including an all-purpose building for a lunchroom and recreation -- on 1.4 acres. One two-story structure is sited next to Windsor. The structures include standing seam metal roofs and masonry veneer. A roof garden, water-retention system and riparian streams are part of the plan. The design aims for four stars under Austin Energy's Green Building program. When complete, only the “Windsor House” will remain from the original campus, providing space for administrative office. For a more detailed

look at the plan, go to [www.thegirlsschool.org/news-events/new-campus-master-plan](http://www.thegirlsschool.org/news-events/new-campus-master-plan).

Great care has gone into minimizing the effect on the neighborhood during the demolition and construction phase of the project. American Constructors will build a construction fence along the perimeter of the site. The two-story garage on the site will serve as the construction office. To minimize the number of vehicles on the site, subcontractors will only be allowed to park one vehicle on the property; subcontractors' employees will park off-site and will be shuttled to the property. Materials will be delivered along a one-way route, running south on Elton Lane, east on Griswold, and north to the job site along McCall, exiting on to Windsor. The working hours will be 7 am – 5:30 pm six days/week, but it is expected that some equipment will be turned on as early as 6:30 am, and concrete pours will begin at 6 am.

The construction is on a tight schedule, aiming for a completion date of January 1, 2014. Until then, the students will “travel abroad” to the Unitarian Church in north Austin. After construction, the size of the school will remain the same. It is capped at 150 students, grades K-8. Before demolition, neighbors are invited to rescue flowers from the landscaped beds at the school, and it may be possible to set aside a few bricks if anyone would like to keep one for sentimental reasons.

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**TEXAS A&M**  
**AGRI LIFE**  
**EXTENSION**  
**Chiggers**

Chiggers are the larvae, or immature stage, of a certain type of mite. These larval mites climb onto people when they walk through infested areas. The chiggers wander around the body seeking a good site to feed. They prefer to feed in areas where skin is thinnest or where clothing fits tightly, such as the ankles, waist, behind the knees and groin.

Chiggers do not burrow into the skin as many people believe, so “smothering” them by painting the bite area with nail polish will not do anything to relieve discomfort. Instead, chiggers inject a digestive enzyme which breaks down skin cells. The chiggers eat the broken down skins cells. Itching and redness is caused by our body's reaction to the enzymes chiggers inject into us. Itching typically begins 3-6 hours after being bitten, peaks at 24 hours and can last up to two weeks.

Try to avoid chigger infested areas, but since this is not always possible, here are some other things to try:

- Wear protective clothing- tightly woven items that fit loosely; including long sleeves & pants; shoes or boots
- Tuck pant legs into boots
- Avoid sitting on the ground
- Remove & launder clothing ASAP after being in infested areas
- Shower/ bathe after being in an infested area; scrub vigorously with a washcloth
- Use an insect repellent with DEET or picaridin

To treat chigger infestations around the home try the following:

- Keeping lawn trimmed
- Maintain vegetation; do not allow weeds to grow up & keep brush cleared
- Residual pesticide sprays, usually pyrethroids

For chigger bites:

- Do not scratch pustules; opening pustule might lead to infection
- Oral antihistamines or topical anti-itch creams to relieve itching sensation

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](http://www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com)

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