



WEST AUSTIN NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP

P.O. Box 5722 • Austin, Texas 78763-5722 September, 2009

Organized 1973

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

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MEETING NOTICE

meeting will be at Muni, Lions Golf Course Club House,
Monday, October 3rd, 7-8:30 PM

President's Message

By August W. "Happy" Harris III

After the hottest, driest summer in history, at long last, Fall, in Austin terms anyway, is here! The kids are back in school, the University of Texas and other area colleges are in session and football season has started. I always have a sense of great change this time of year and a renewed feeling of energy in the community. We can look forward to more pleasant temperatures and the coming holidays, to good report cards and victories on the field and perhaps an improvement in the economy. It is also an interesting time for the flora and fauna of our very unique ecological zone. So we hope you enjoy and embrace the coming Fall season.

WANG has been busily preparing for the Annual Meeting and Social Saturday, October 24 from 10:00 AM to Noon at Eilers (Deep Eddy) Park. As always, we are putting together a program that will be informational. But it is also a chance for friends and neighbors to gather. We hope that you will take advantage of this as a recreational and educational opportunity. There will be more detail in our upcoming Annual Newsletter. Consider this your tease!

I was driving through Tarrytown on Sunday afternoon (pondering the neighborhood) as churches were being dismissed and folks were off to lunch and other weekend activities. As I wound past Windsor and down Schulle on the way to Enfield (I was exploring – not looking for the shortest route!), I was reminded of the intimacy of our West Austin neighborhood. It is a safe, clean and well maintained community where folks not only take pride in their own homes but in their neighborhood. That, of course, leads to its stability, desirability and value. It's not about the individual wealth of folks in the neighborhood, which varies. It is the responsibility that each of us assume to make our part of Austin the best it can be. We

don't just rely on the City of Austin to take care of things. We as a neighborhood take the initiative to better our surroundings. That is because of both pride and expectation.

As I continued on my drive, I turned on Enfield headed to Lake Austin Boulevard. The sheer lunacy of Cooper Robertson's master-plan for the Brackenridge Tract hit me square on at the stop sign. Brack's northern edge is at Enfield. I was struck by the endless, and I mean endless, flow of traffic of all kinds – on a Sunday on Lake Austin Boulevard west of Red Bud Trail! Some was lake bound traffic. Other traffic was drawn to Hula Hut, Cain and Abel's and Mozart's. Pedestrians were flowing nonstop down to the waterfront. It was absolute chaos. It was also dangerous. And it was a mere fraction of what it would be like if Cooper Robertson's or any similar plan was adopted by the Board of Regents. Cooper Robertson suggests, among other things, a far denser development at Oyster Landing. On Sunday, I saw what exists on the ground now near failure in terms of traffic. With 10's of thousands more people in and traveling around the neighborhood, it would be utter disaster. To compound the matter, traffic will flow through the neighborhood as it looks for alternate routes – even with a modified Enfield Road as proposed by Cooper Robertson. We have seen this happen on Exposition and on Hartford/Jefferson as folks have looked for alternates to gridlock on MoPac. The latter were not designed nor were they intended as arterials. Usage because of metropolitan growth has caused this to happen – much like what WILL happen if one of these master plans is adopted. Streets like Pecos, Windsor and their intersecting streets will see explosive growth in traffic volumes as will many of the streets in the Deep Eddy area. It is unavoidable – and clearly is not a concern nor was it taken into account by Cooper Robertson. This is certainly NOT what Colonel Brackenridge would have intended for West Austin.

It has been a quiet period for the Brackenridge Tract. We have asked Cooper Robertson on several occasions when their economic models were going to be delivered. They were supposed to have been submitted at the end of summer and that time has come and gone. We have mused as to how they came up with the unsustainable level of density that they did. One could speculate that they looked at a net revenue figure and then backed into the mix and density to reach that dollar amount. Certainly it was intended to make those that only care about money say oohh. Of course we hope that wisdom overcomes greed. And after all, isn't a university of the first class about wisdom?

The last City Neighborhood Planning meeting drew quite a crowd at the State School as we discussed infill options and Tarrytown Village Shopping Center. I mentioned the results of the meeting in my last President's Message so I won't rehash the evening. I must confess that I chuckled at what the West Austin News reporter described as the "angry mob." But I think it is worth noting that the description was, shall we say, sensationalistic. There definitively was and is animosity towards Jeanne Daniels, the owner of Tarrytown Village. It is an unfortunate situation for which there is no easy answer. Folks would love to see that as a vibrant asset of our neighborhood rather than the issue it is. I would remind everyone, no matter how you feel about Daniels, that businesses including the wonderful folks at Tarrytown Pharmacy among others, are our neighbors and our friends. Do not forget to patronize them! One day PETA may impress upon Daniels that it can do more with the money from a sale to advance its cause than she can by holding Tarrytown Village hostage. Regrettably, some of the discord was directed at City staff for their persistence in pushing its density agenda. On the one hand, staff tries to promote dialogue and approaches much of this from the most basic perspective. And that is appropriate for an uninformed group. But the folks in West Austin are intelligent, educated and generally well informed. There was great frustration in the audience with staff's unwillingness to adjust the process. I would add that many of us have been disappointed that staff, on direction from those higher in the City hierarchy, didn't allow the neighborhood to more fully define its desires in terms of future land use and zoning on

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the Brackenridge Tract. That is the primary reason we advanced in progression in the order of neighborhood plans. Consequently, there is the sense that this has all been nothing but an enormous waste of time for everyone and thus an overarching source of our frustration.

Whether Neighborhood Planning has been a waste of time or not, CRITICAL decisions that will affect the neighborhood loom. There are still some significant zoning issues that WILL affect future development patterns and land use. We will discuss zoning of the contentious Elm Terrace tract as well as commercial areas of the Central West Austin Combined Planning Area. So it is essential that you not only stay informed and engaged but that you participate in upcoming meetings.

Don't forget to look for the Annual Newsletter coming to your doorstep shortly and mark your calendars for the WANG Annual and Social October 24th.



September Meeting Minutes

By Michael Cannatti, Secretary

These are the minutes of the West Austin Neighborhood Group Board of Directors Meeting on Tuesday, September 1, 2009 at the Lions Municipal Clubhouse.

I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:15 pm with the following Board members in attendance: Mary Arnold, Joyce Basciano, Susan Pascoe, August Harris, George Edwards, Ann Keene, Gwen Jewiss, and Michael Cannatti.

II. Approval of Minutes: The minutes from

the August 2009 meeting were approved by a vote of 7-0-1, with Cannatti abstaining.

III. Neighbor Communications:
 A. Friends of Eilers Park Grounds Masterplan - Brenda McGahagin reviewed the Plan for improving Eilers Park to include an amphitheater, floating dock, creative play area, splash pad, and picnic area with shade cover. Fundraising efforts are getting started.
 B. Mayfield Preserve Invasive Species WANG Grant Request - Not addressed.

C. Friends of Tarrytown Park ACL Grant Request Support - Terry Kuzmich provided information about the Second Annual Friends Of Tarrytown Park Fall Fling on Sunday, September 13th, 3 - 6 p.m. at Tarrytown Park with proceeds going toward park improvements, including installation of an irrigation/sprinkler system, tree plantings, erosion control, etc. Friends of Tarrytown Park is attempting to raise \$40K for this project, and requested that WANG support their requests for grants to Austin Parks Foundation (APF) and Neighborhood Parks Group (NPG).

Board Action: The Board voted unanimously to support Friends of Tarrytown Park with their APF and NPG grant applications, and Harris will write a letter of support from WANG.

D. 2107 Woodmont - Colleen Theriot presented information concerning the possibility of obtaining historic protection of the "Hansel & Gretel" house at 2107 Woodmont. The Board provided a number of suggestions on approaching the issue and performing the required historical research to see if the property qualifies, including requesting professional assistance from the Heritage Society, the Austin History Center, or other professionals; requesting support

FAMILY FRIENDLY WANG ANNUAL AT DEEP EDDY PARK

- WHAT** Don't miss our Annual Social Saturday, October 24, from 10 a.m. – 12 noon
- WHERE** Eilers Park (Deep Eddy Park), 401 Deep Eddy Avenue, Austin 78703
- WHO** Austin Water Utility – Speaker to offer tips on “Residential Water Conservation” including Rebate Program for Washing Machines, Toilets and other household items and Free Irrigation Evaluations as well as updates on Drought Stage-Two Restrictions;
- AUSTIN ENERGY** – Speaker to cover “Residential Energy Efficiency” measures the entire family can practice. Learn about the High Performance Energy Star Program offering rebates and loans to residents and Solar Water heater systems;
- SUNFLOWER DESIGN** – Learn about “Sustainable Landscaping Resources,” the most favorable plants to use in Austin and techniques to foster water conservation in landscapes.
- FACE PAINTING AND BALLOONS FOR KIDS** – Kids can learn how to do their part to protect and preserve environment.

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from the owner for historic designation; talking to neighbors about the history of the house.

IV. Committee Reports:

A.Zoning

(1) SPC-20089-0052C – On behalf of the Girls School of Austin (GSA), Jim Bennett reviewed GSA's revised site plan, noting that most of the neighbors requests have been incorporated into the plan. However, the City rejected the closure of the McCall Driveway because this would require all traffic to enter and leave from Windsor, creating traffic problems as parents queued to drop off and pick up students. There was also a discussion of possibly limiting the number and type of students at the school under the Conditional Use Permit. GSA agreed to post a copy of the revised site plan at the school for review by the neighbors, and Gwen will so notify the neighbors. The Planning Commission is scheduled to hear the case on Sept. 22.

B.Communications

(1) WANG Annual Social – August reported that the Annual Social will occur on Saturday October 24 (10:00 to 12:00) at EILERS PARK. Topics to be addressed include Brackenridge Tract Update, Neighborhood Planning, Website, Green Building, Water and Energy Conservation

(2) Newsletter – Cannatti and Cary still need to review the contract for this matter. August noted that we are still short on advertisements for the Annual Newsletter, and reviewed the efforts to date. The extended deadline for obtaining ads is the end of this week.

C.Infrastructure

(1) Brackenridge Tract Update: August reported that there has been no response to our request for financial analysis of the Cooper Robertson proposed development at the Brack Tract, even though this information was supposed to have been provided by the end of summer. On the issue of finances, August noted that the costs of building and operating schools have not been fully addressed thus far. Mary noted that the City's Drinking Water Protection Zone protections have not been acknowledged by the Cooper Robertson proposals, nor has the issue of what City regulatory authority exists for non-UT use of the land. August will seek to meet with the new Board of Regents subcommittee to underscore WANG's concerns expressed in WANG's press release posted at <http://westaustinnng.com/2009/07/01/wang-press-release-concerning-crp-planning-suggestions-for-brackenridge-tract/>. Mary Arnold

provided an update on the golf course historical marker, stating that the State is not allowing the marker to be posted on the golf course, so the possibility of posting the marker in the City right-of-way is being explored.

(2) Neighborhood Planning: The next neighborhood planning meeting will occur on Thursday, September

10th, at the chapel in The Sanctuary, 2600 Exposition Boulevard., 6:30-9:00PM. The discussion of the Elm Terrace property located at 3215 Exposition Boulevard will NOT occur at this meeting due to conflicts with a number of interested neighborhood stakeholders. Instead, the meeting will discuss the purpose of a Neighborhood Conservation Combining District (NCCD). In addition, the meeting will discuss how height issues at the Tarrytown Shopping Center can be addressed. The meeting will also explore zoning changes for part of Westensfield Park (from its current multi-family zoning to “public” zoning) and on two slivers of City-owned property located at Lake Austin Boulevard at Veterans Drive just to the east and west of the intersection (from its current zoning for single-family and neighborhood commercial uses to “public” zoning). Finally, the meeting will discuss having design tools that would be applied throughout the residential portion of the neighborhood. D. Liaison: No report.

E. Historic District: No report.

F. Nominating: August introduced Christi Buerger as a possible addition to the Board from the Deep Eddy Heights area of the neighborhood. She is checking us out, and thinks WANG would benefit of having representation of young families from the neighborhood.

V. Treasurer's Report – August noted that Mike Falk is stepping down from the Board, and will send WANG's account information to August who is hoping that one of the Board members will assume the treasurer's responsibilities. Happy reported that the operating account had a balance of \$ 1,656.80.

VI. Old Business -- August reported that the membership renewal letter resulted in lots of membership renewals.

VII. New Business – This agenda topic was not addressed.

VIII. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm, and the next WANG Board meeting will occur on Monday, October 5, 2009 at a location that is to be determined.

Sara Madera

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
ALL ARE WELCOME
Meeting location will be at the MUNI
(Lions Golf Course) Clubhouse on Monday,
October 3rd at 7:00 - 8:30 PM
Please Check Mailing Label for Renewal Date

West Austin Neighborhood Group
P.O. Box 5722
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