



WEST AUSTIN NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP

P.O. Box 5722 • Austin, Texas 78763-5722 • December, 2012

Organized 1973

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

**Our next meeting is Monday, January 7th at 7:00PM at Howson Library.
We look forward to seeing you! Please join us. And speaking of joining us....**

DECEMBER PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Cathy Kyle

Board of Directors

Cathy Kyle
President

Michael Cannatti
Secretary

Blake Tollett
Assistant Secretary

August "Happy" Harris III
Past-President

George Edwards
Treasurer

Committee Members

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

Honorary Committee Members

Hon. Lloyd Doggett
Hon. Lee Leffingwell

I know it's a cliché, but this is my favorite time of year. I drive my family over the brink by listening only to Christmas carols, watching the same Christmas movies each year, and I take it as a personal failure that my Christmas tree, although real, is still barren of lights and ornaments. I do manage to avoid the malls and the spending frenzy, opting for homemade gifts, charitable giving, and making purchases at local merchants. Still – there was something magic about standing in front of the old Marshall Fields' window in Chicago earlier this month to watch the automated displays of toy trains, elves, and Santa himself.

Another part of the holidays that I love is to drive through our neighborhood to check out the decorations – especially the lights. While our display is modest – one string of white lights along the eaves (and I will not admit how long those lights have been attached to our gutter), I am always amazed and impressed by the beautiful decorations on your homes, demonstrating not only your creativity but a lot of hard work.

And we at WANG have been hard at work as well. Each month, we weigh in on requests for zoning changes

that go before City commissions. Many thanks to Blake Tollett for his tireless efforts on that front. We also represent the neighbors' concerns for just about every building project in the neighborhood, from the expansion of the Good Shepherd campus to the re-design of the Austin Girls' School. You may have heard that the Legislature will be re-convening in January, and with that arrival come new challenges. There have been rumblings of selling off state property, or even leasing it, to generate revenue – and some of that property is in our neighborhood.

So, there is every reason to continue your support of WANG as we work to convey your interests to City Council, the Board of Adjustment, our state representatives, and the University. This season reminds me of the many things I have to be grateful for, not the least of which are WANG's incredibly talented board members and the terrific folks in our neighborhood.

Happy Holidays, and best wishes for the New Year.

Cathy Kyle

Be sure to visit our website at <http://www.WestAustinNG.com>

Lake Austin Pawn Opens in West Austin

By August "Happy" Harris III

Since it became known that a pawn shop was going to open in the old Run Tex location at the corner of Lake Austin Blvd. and MoPac, WANG has received numerous calls and emails from concerned neighbors. To create an opportunity for conversation and to address community concerns, we invited the owners of Lake Austin Pawn to come to our December WANG meeting to tell us a little about their business. WANG also invited neighbors who contacted us, though none attended the meeting. As the pawn shop is a permitted use for that site and as it required no variances or zoning changes, there was little that WANG could do but welcome our new neighbor. However, there was such a high level of concern by neighbors that we decided that a presentation was warranted.

You might scratch your head and wonder why in the world Lake Austin Pawn would choose to open at 2201 Lake Austin Boulevard. Manager Corby Logue noted that while certainly unusual for West Austin, they view the site as a tremendous retail opportunity given that more than 150,000 cars pass on MoPac every day and that several thousand cars a day transit the intersection of Lake Austin Boulevard and MoPac. They anticipate that much of their business will be in jewelry and firearms though they certainly expect a wide variety of merchandise to be on their shelves. He added that since opening a number of weeks ago, business has been more brisk than even they expected.

Mr. Logue said that the pawn industry is widely misunderstood

by the public. They make a large number of loans secured by items brought in by folks. Folks have the option of paying off the loan and recovering their property or forfeiting the property or collateral in lieu of repayment. He added that folks don't understand that the industry is heavily regulated and policed. For the curious, please go to <http://www.occc.state.tx.us/pages/Legal/Laws/fcode/pawnrules.html>. In addressing the concern over the fencing of stolen items, he said that they are very careful not to accept such items and constantly work with law enforcement. Simply, if pawn shops receive stolen property, they run the risk of having the items confiscated by the police and the pawn shops, in turn, lose both the item and the money paid. Stolen items represented a mere 0.0017% of their total transactions in dollars for 2011. He pointed out that folks are far more likely to buy stolen goods on Craig's List than at a pawn shop according to a 2011 Consumer Digest report. Pawnshops are highly regulated, work very closely with local and federal law enforcement officials, and train their staff to be on the lookout for and identify stolen property. When asked if ownership felt the site would be a target for criminals, Logue commented that they have many locations and have almost never experienced burglaries because they have robust security systems, cameras and lighting and as a result, criminals know not to target pawn shops.

He encouraged neighbors to visit Lake Austin Pawn, learn a little about the business, view their merchandise and get to know the staff.

Join WANG Today!

Contributing Levels

<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$30.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior/Student	\$15.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Friend	\$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$100.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$250.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	\$500.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Business Friend	\$500.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Business Sustaining	\$1,000.00

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MINUTES FOR NOVEMBER 5th BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

By Michael Cannatti, Secretary

These are the minutes of the **West Austin Neighborhood Group Board of Directors Meeting** on Monday, November 5, 2012 at the Lions Clubhouse Branch Library.

I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order with the following Board members in attendance: George Edwards, Haidar Khazen, Joseph Bennett, Mary Arnold, Cathy Kyle, August Harris, Joyce Basciano, Blake Tollett, and Erik Cary, later joined by Michael Cannatti and Gwen Jewiss.

II. Approval of Minutes: The October minutes were unanimously approved after correcting the spelling of "Good Shepherd" church.

III. Neighbor Communications: None

1. Lake Austin Pawn Shop - 2201 Lake Austin Boulevard: Board members discussed citizen concerns about the new pawn shop, including questions about increased crime and proximity to schools, such as the CASA Montessori school. Many neighbors are complaining about the pawn shop, but there is no zoning leverage to change this since the current zoning allows pawn shop uses. August noted that the lease is already signed and no zoning change is required. Mary Arnold suggested that neighbors check with APD about criminal concerns. August asked if the neighborhood plan provides any guidance on the land use at this location. August suggested that the owners of the pawn shop be invited to WANG's next meeting.

2. 3213 Bonnie: Jessica Walton (the owner) discussed her plans for a new house which would extend across the width of the lot to accommodate her growing family, and which would include a variance from the garage placement requirement which limits the width of front-facing garages which are not set back from the front. Board members discussed the history of the garage placement requirement from the neighborhood plan process, and also reviewed the options available for placing a garage at the back of the property (similar to the previous configuration) and the apparent lack of any hardship (since this is a cleared lot).

3. ThinkBike Austin: Gwen Jewiss reported on the results of the Thinkbike Workshop efforts to develop sustainable solutions to bicycling infrastructure and cultural changes in the city. Workshop solutions were presented at City Hall on Oct. 26, and are posted at <http://www.austintexas.gov/article/thinkbike-update-workshop-findings-and-presentations>.

4. APD Commander's Forum: Cathy Kyle requested that WANG's website be updated to announce the next APD Commander's Forum for the Central West command area at McCallum High School on Wednesday, November 7, 2012 - 7-8:30 p.m.

5. Tarrytown Center Proposed Wine Bar: Collin O'Hanion & Suzanna Albright announced their plans to open a local neighborhood wine bar (The Winhouse 03) at the Tarrytown Shopping Center next to the Post Office with limited hours of operation (4-10 pm weekdays, 4pm-12 am on weekends) to serve wine, beer and a wine-tasting menu. A zoning change (from General Retail to Commercial Services) would be required, but there would be no problems meeting the City's parking requirement. Blake noted the desirability of obtaining limitations on uses if a zoning change is required. August noted that there might be height limitations arising from compatibility requirements, and there may be issues under the neighborhood plan requiring an amendment to the future land use map. Joyce noted that a similar wine bar in Bryker Woods may be a useful precedent. Cannatti noted that WANG's board had approved such a use at this location many years ago.

IV. Committee Reports:

A. Zoning

1. 2205 Forest Trail: RDCC Modification Request No. 2012-07187RA (Applicant/Owner: James & Jessica Scott 472-4495) - Applicant has requested a modification to allow a FAR increase from the maximum development permitted of 40% (2,800 s.f.) to 49% (3,431 s.f.) to build a 2nd story addition for 4 bedrooms and 3 baths and closet in an SF-3 zoning district. Applicant explained that the variance was needed to remodel a home that had been owned by the wife's grandmother, and was intended to maintain the height to be similar to adjacent neighbors, including the Marshal Durrett duplex project at Forest and Windsor. Applicant has provided neighbors with information about their plans, and no opposition has been noted thus far.

• **Action:** The Board voted 7-0-2 to not oppose the zoning change if there was no neighbor opposition.

2. Request for Reconsideration at 3801 Stevenson: Variance Request No. C15-2012-0124 (Applicant: Jim Bennett 512-784-4961 Owner: Jack & Ann Swingler) -- The applicant has requested a variance to decrease the minimum front street setback requirement from 25 feet to 5 feet in order to erect a carport for a single-family residence in an SF-3-NP zoning district. The applicant has requested a variance in order to erect a carport for a single-family residence in an SF-3-NP zoning district. The LDC (under the Central West Austin Neighborhood Plan) states that a parking structure with an entrance that faces the front yard may not be closer to the front lot line the building façade. The owners of this structure have previously received a variance from and a modification to the LDC from the BoA and the Residential Design Compatibility Commission (RDCC), respectively. Board members noted that the board had previously voted electronically to oppose the request in light of neighbor opposition, and that there remained four neighbors in opposition.

• **Action:** No action taken since there were no new facts to consider.

3. Ordinance Amendment C20-2010-015 - The Board briefly discussed the proposed ordinance to allow Group Residential in MF-4 Zoning, but noted that the proposed area was outside of WANG's jurisdiction, so there was no action taken.

4. City Code Amendment C-20-2012-010 - The Board noted that Council had pulled the proposed amendment to allow amphitheaters in any zoning area (including residential), so there was no action taken.

5. Demolition Permit Notices (1512 Forest Trail and 2617 Pecos) - The Board briefly noted that these projects are proceeding.

6. LDC Amendments -- No discussion noted.

7. Lake Austin Task Force -- No discussion noted.

B. Infrastructure:

1. 45th/Bull Creek, City State Interlocal Agreement - August reported on the development progress to add a retail/mixed use development, including an HEB retail grocery store, using a City-State Interlocal Agreement that is scheduled for approval in the upcoming City Council vote (Nov. 8). The item has to do with the City approving an interlocal agreement with the State (the Texas Facilities Commission) regarding the development of state-owned property under the State's Public Private Partnership (P3) agreements. Background information on this issue is posted at <http://www.statesman.com/news/business/city-wants-to-negotiate-its-role-on-state-lands/nSznP/>. Mary Arnold expressed concerns that the agreement may violate previous legislation requiring that the State negotiate with the City on any development at this site, and that there was a missed opportunity for leverage.

• **Action:** On a motion by Mary Arnold seconded by Joe Bennett, the Board voted 9-0-1 (Harris abstaining) to re-

quest that Council postpone action on the item.

2. Austin State School Update – No discussion noted.

C. Membership/Communication: Joe Bennett reported that current membership is down to 196, due to the failure to hold the Annual Social meeting this year. In addition, we currently have with 17 “Friends” level supporters. However, Joe reported that ACL ticket proceeds resulted in \$2200 in ticket sales. To address reduced membership, Joe requested that each board member work to sign up five new members by the next meeting.

D. Liaison: No report.

E. Transportation: August reported that the construction of side-walks on Westover under MoPac is underway. However, the City determined that crossing at Westover at the Spring Lane did not qualify for a new crosswalk.

MINUTES FOR DECEMBER 3rd BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

By Michael Cannatti, Secretary

These are the minutes of the **West Austin Neighborhood Group Board of Directors Meeting** on Monday, December 3, 2012 at the Howson Branch Library.

I. Call to Order (7:04 pm): The meeting was called to order with the following Board members in attendance: Mary Arnold, Joyce Basciano, George Edwards, August Harris, Joseph Bennett, Haidar Khazen, Blake Tollett, and Michael Cannatti, later joined by Cathy Kyle. Betty Trent also attended on behalf of Pemberton Heights Neighborhood Association.

II. Approval of Minutes (7:05 pm): The November minutes were unanimously approved after a correction noted by Joyce that the reference in the minutes to the wine bar in “Bryker Woods” should have instead referred to the wine bar in the “Oakmont Heights” neighborhood.

III. Neighbor Communications (7:06 pm):

1. Betty Trent: August introduced Betty Trent as the representative from Pemberton Heights Neighborhood Association to the WANG board.

- **Action: No vote was taken under Section 6.5 of WANG’s Bylaws at this time.**

2. Lake Austin Pawn Shop – 2201 Lake Austin Boulevard: Corby Logue, Director of Operations for Lake Austin Pawn, provided information about the pawn shop operations at their new store to address concerns and misperceptions about pawn shops. He explained that the location was chosen because of the exposure to traffic on MoPac and Lake Austin Boulevard, and that the business was focusing largely on jewelry sales (70-80%). He also explained that pawn shops have very few break-ins, and that there are protections used to prevent stolen property from being pawned, including requiring the seller to demonstrate familiarity or understanding of the items being sold. Mr. Logue also provided 2011 statistics on the amount of loans (\$7,356,776), purchases (\$1,417,129), police confiscations (\$15,121), and percentage of transactions involving stolen items (.0017%). He also recommended that homeowners catalog their property with serial numbers to help recover stolen property.

IV. Committee Reports:

A. Zoning

1. 2205 Forest Trail: Variance Request No. C15-2012-0143 (Applicant/Owner: Rox Covert, Agent: Jim Bennett 282-3079) – Applicant has requested a variance to increase the maximum impervious coverage requirement from 45 % to 45.12% in order to erect a deck for a single-family residence. This is a 6,558 s.f. lot with a 3,178 sq. ft. house built in 2005. The FAR is .4845. The Applicant did not attend the board meeting. Blake calculated that the proposed deck will increase the impervious coverage by just

V. Treasurer’s Report – The Checking Account Balance is \$8,215.13, and the Oak Wilt Account Balance of \$1205.89.

VI. Old Business – The Board acknowledged the service of August Harris as WANG’s president by presenting him with an engraved plaque which stated:

“With gratitude for the service and leadership of

August W. “Happy” Harris, III,

President, West Austin Neighborhood Group, 2008-2012.”

VI. New Business – None.

VI. Adjournment -- The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm. The next board meeting will occur on Monday, December 3, 2012 (7 pm) at Howson Branch Library.

under 8 sq. ft., and suspects that the violation was reported by a neighbor. Blake will check the file at the city to see if any oppositions have been filed.

- **Action: No action taken pending additional information from Applicant or the file.**

2. 2007 McCall Road: Site Plan No. SPC-2012-0027C (Owner: The Girls’ School of Austin; Lisa Schmidt 478-7827; Applicant: Big Red Dog, Matthew Stewart 669-5560) -- Applicant is proposing demolition of existing buildings, rebuilding with additional buildings and associated improvements, for a private primary and private secondary educational facility in an SF-3 zoning district. This matter will go before the Planning Commission on 11 December 2012. WANG’s board has received a number of presentations about this project from the Girls’ School over the past year. Blake will check the file at the city to see if any oppositions have been filed and to confirm that the previously negotiated notes and conditions are included in the site plan documents.

- **Action: On a motion by M. Cannatti seconded by B. Trent, the Board voted 9-0 to not oppose the site plan, including a statement to be finalized by Blake noting our appreciation of Applicant’s work with neighbors over the course of this project.**

3. Good Shepherd Church Site Plan – August asked if the Good Shepherd Episcopal Church Master Plan was proceeding with the construction of the Narthex (entry) and Nave (sanctuary), and new parish life center and underground parking garage (adding 41-44 parking spaces). George Edwards will ask for an update on the project.

- **Action: No action taken.**

4. 2617 Pecos Street: Historic Rezoning Application No. C14H-2012-0012 (Owner: Kit Carson, LTD, Applicant: City of Austin-PDR, Steve Sadowsky 974-6454) -- The Board briefly discussed the proposed historical rezoning of this property initiated by the City over the property owner’s objection. August reported that the owner considered relocating the structure to another location, but that logistical problems would likely prevent a move. Mary Arnold asked about the status of having an historical resources survey done, and August noted that funding limitations will likely prevent such a survey from being prepared.

- **Action: No action taken.**

5. 2412 McCall – Cannatti inquired into the status of the construction at this location, noting that there appear to be height limit concerns from the permit documents which list a height of 39 feet. Betty expressed concern that the property owner should not be penalized for proceeding with construction after the city reviewers approve the plans. Joseph expressed concern that the Applicant is responsible for complying with building code requirements, and Blake explained that the property owner has recourse against the

builder or architect for any building code violations and corrections. Blake will check into the status of the file.

- **Action: No action taken.**

B. **Infrastructure:**

1. Ping Pong Table for Tarrytown Park – August noted that an electronic motion had been circulated to obtain WANG's letter of support for a ping pong table improvement in Tarrytown Park. The proposed ping pong table will be commercial grade, ADA compliant table constructed on a concrete pad and paid for by Friends of Tarrytown Park, and will go through the PARD and the city for permitting and approval. The proposed letter supports the project under the conditions that it receives all requisite approvals from PARD, it is fully code compliant, it is a durable and high quality facility, and it receives stakeholder support as recommended by PARD.

- **Action: On a motion by A. Harris seconded by C. Kyle, the Board voted 8-0-2 (Arnold and Cannatti abstaining) to support the ping pong table with a letter of support.**

2. 45th/Bull Creek, City State Interlocal Agreement – August provided an update on the Interlocal Agreement that is scheduled for approval in the upcoming City Council vote (December 6) which would provide the Texas Facilities Commission (TFC) with development rights for state-owned property under the State's Public Private Partnership (P3) agreements with only limited input or control by the City. The measure is being promoted by Council Member Cole to provide the City with a "seat at the table" regarding possible development projects, but the arrangement has potential implications for other state-owned properties (like Lions Municipal Golf Course or the Austin State Supported Living Center (formerly, Austin State School). August expressed concerns that it is premature to enter into the agreement with TFC at this time, given critical reviews about the TFC from the Sunset Review Commission, and proposed that any decision be postponed until March 8 to allow various state legislative events to occur before approving the agreement.

- **Action: On a motion by M. Arnold seconded by M. Cannatti, the Board voted to prepare a letter to City Council expressing prematurity and costs concerns about the proposed Interlocal Agreement, and to circulate the letter for approval by electronic motion by December 4.**

3. Texas Facilities Commission (TFC) Capitol Area Development

Strategy (CADS) for State School – No report.

4. Imagine Austin and Other City Ordinance Updates – Joyce provided an update on various Austin city code revisions being addressed at the City Council's December 4 work session, including a City Auditor briefing regarding implementation of the Citizen's Independent Redistricting Commission (concerning the new 10-1 city council districts), resolutions regarding the proposed Interlocal Agreement with the TFC, and Land Development Code updates concerning the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan.

C. **Membership/Communication:** Joe Bennett reported that current membership is down to 193, due to the failure to hold the Annual Social meeting this year. Joe will investigate sending out a postcard with a membership reminder after the new year. Haidar reported that any President's Message and minutes must be completed 10 days after the board meeting (Dec. 13) in order to be included in the newsletter. George requested that the membership file be distributed to board members to help coordinate membership recruitment. In addition, we currently have with 17 "Friends" level supporters.

D. **Liaison:** No report.

E. **Transportation:** No report.

V. **Treasurer's Report** – The Checking Account Balance is \$11,430.13, and the Oak Wilt Account Balance of \$1205.89.

VI. **Old Business** – None.

VII. **New Business** –

- On December 4, the Austin State Supported Living Center will have a Tree of Lights ceremony with music by Sara Hickman and the Brass Trio of the Austin Chamber Music, light refreshments, activities for children, and a very special appearance by Santa!

- August reported that the PARD Aquatics Dept. promised to direct funds from the recent bond election toward the West Enfield Pool project, and that Reed Park will also be receiving mitigation funds.

- Mary Arnold reported on the recent Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) meeting to develop a citizen-based plan to reduce bacteria levels in four Austin streams, including Taylor Slough South (through Reed Park). Mary would like a working group established for the Taylor Slough South creek.

VIII. **Adjournment** -- The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm. The next board meeting will occur on Monday, January 7, 2013 (7 pm) at Howson Branch Library.

Watch for Bed Bugs

By Wizzie Brown, Extension Program Specialist at Texas AgriLife



Bed bug problems are on the rise in the United States. Some think the return of the bed bug is due to more travel, specific pesticides no longer being used, or changes in pest management practices. Regardless of the why, bed bugs are back and something to be aware of.

Bed bugs are small, dark brown to reddish colored insects with no wings. Their bodies are oval and the color and size often depends on if the insect is engorged with blood. Immatures, or nymphs, resemble the adults but are smaller and lighter in color. Usually adults are about the size of an apple seed.

Bed bugs feed on the blood of animals. The common bed bug, *Cimex lectularius*, is most often associated with humans while other species of bed bugs feed on animals such as birds or bats. Most feeding occurs at night with bed bugs piercing the skin while people sleep. The bugs inject a fluid while feeding that can cause some people (about 50%) to have an allergic response causing the skin to become irritated and itchy.

After feeding, bed bugs crawl away into hidden areas- mattress seams, headboards, nightstands, behind baseboards as well as other locations. They prefer to hide in locations that are close to where they feed, but they will crawl several feet to get to a meal. Over time, congregation areas become marked with blood, fecal material, hatched eggs and cast skins of molted bugs.

When travelling, always inspect rooms thoroughly for bed bugs before moving luggage into the room. If you are concerned about bringing bed bugs home, place clothing in the dryer (before washing) on high heat for about an hour.

For more information see the following website:
<http://citybugs.tamu.edu/factsheets/biting-stinging/bed-bugs/>

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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West Austin Neighborhood Group

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Brown marmorated stink bugs (BMSB) were confirmed in Corpus Christi late in 2011. These insects are a new pest to Texas and relatively new to the United States. They are a true bug with piercing-sucking mouthparts and they have a large list of plants that they may feed upon including numerous ornamentals, vegetables and fruits.

Brown marmorated stink bugs are shield-shaped, about 5/8 inch and mottled brown in color. The last two antennal segments have alternating light and dark bands. The edges of the abdomen, which are exposed from above, also have alternating light and dark bands.

In addition to feeding on many ornamentals and crop plants, the stink bugs can be a nuisance pest and move into homes when temperatures drop. The insects have scent glands and can leave an odor behind in the home.

Brown marmorated stink bugs usually cause small necrotic areas by feeding on plant tissue, but they may also cause stippling, seed loss or transmit diseases. Damage to fruit can be scarring, pitting, catfacing and sometimes changing the texture to be more mealy or grainy.

We suspect that BMSB is in more places across Texas, but have not been noticed as a new pest species. They are very good at hitchhiking and could be transported into the state via travelers who come from infested areas to overwinter in Texas. We need your help! Please submit any suspected stink bugs (we need actual insects submitted for confirmation) to me or your local Extension office. You can email digital images or drop off/ mail insects for confirmation.

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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