



# WEST AUSTIN NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP

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

Organized 1973

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

**Our next meeting is Monday, August 6 at 7:00PM at Howson Library.  
We look forward to seeing you! Please join us. And speaking of joining us....**

## Board of Directors

August "Happy" Harris III  
President

Michael Cannatti  
Secretary

Blake Tollett  
Assistant Secretary

Gwen Jewiss  
Past-President

George Edwards  
Treasurer

## Committee Members

Mary Arnold  
Joyce Basciano  
Joseph Bennett  
Erik Cary  
George Edwards  
Haidar Khazen  
Cathy Kyle  
Laura Sharp

## Honorary Committee Members

Hon. Lloyd Doggett  
Hon. Lee Leffingwell

## JULY PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By August W. "Happy" Harris III



**Tarrytown 4th of July Parade**

What a Fourth of July Parade we had this year! I hope each of you got to attend and enjoy the festivities. It truly is such a wonderful neighborhood tradition. Already the largest in town according to APD, it was made even more memorable with the participation of the Texas National Guard. The Parade was led by a Navy color guard. Participating in the parade were a number of Guardsmen, several Willy's Jeeps escorted by men in World War II gear, a World War Two era fire truck that had been restored and a Humvee. The Grand Marshal for the Parade was, most appropriately, Frank Denius. Many of you know of his distinguished service but I will recount the two most well know incidents from the Battle of Mortain and the Battle of the Bulge for which he received two of his four Silver Stars.

Sergeant Denius and his small group ..... directed artillery fire from their vulnerable post (at one point) for seventy-two hours

without rest..... despite intense.....direct fire from tanks, and artillery and small arms fire directed on their position..... by paratroopers, considerable armor, and large infantry forces .....which was a contributing factor in (the defeat of) the German effort.

In later combat, when the 30th Infantry Division was fighting in Belgium during the Battle of the Bulge, his Forward Observer party was again supporting the infantry battalion. On December 22, 1944 they found themselves in the path of a German panzer attack. Their artillery observation post was discovered by the enemy and taken under fire by German tanks. Despite the fire that began to fall all around him, Sergeant Denius refused to withdraw from the post and continued "rendering artillery support" until the attack had been repulsed.

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

## Presidents Message, *continued from page 1*

And if you ever wonder why we celebrate Independence Day, Memorial Day and Veterans Day..... Without the service of folks like Frank Denius, we wouldn't. Our neighbors at Camp Mabry really enjoyed being a part of the Parade and look forward to participating in the future! We're so glad to have them. Planning is already underway for next year's Parade – perhaps a dance team and the Austin High Band?

### State Owned Lands

And speaking of Camp Mabry, you know how I like to segue things. Our good neighbors to the north are concerned about the future of the TxDOT/State Cemetery Annex land at 45th and Bull Creek near Westminster Manor. They may be facing the same sort of challenges we have had with the Brackenridge Tract and the Austin State Assisted Living Center tract.

The State and its various agencies have underutilized real estate in most if not all municipalities and counties throughout the State. Frankly, some of it really might be better returned to the public for development or redevelopment. Both the General Land Office and the Texas Facilities Commission are actively reviewing the State's holdings looking for ways to increase revenue and decrease holding and operating costs, something that is supportable *prima facie*. The General Land Office seems more interested in selling underutilized or surplus land while the Texas Facilities Commission seems to prefer redevelopment under long term ground leases. Elm Terrace is representative of the former while the Triangle and Central Market are representative of the latter.

The activities of both the General Land Office and the Texas Facilities Commission will require monitoring as they are becoming increasingly active. We obviously have tracts of land within the WANG area that could be impacted. Our adjacent neighborhoods certainly do. Our concerns in the neighborhood typically center on land use, compatibility and traffic impact. The last thing we want is a State agency or Legislators that have no ties to our neighborhood deciding what they want without knowing or taking into account what we are willing to accept and what our neighborhood can reasonably bear. The State should be required to comply with its host communities' land development codes. Those codes have been developed around each community's values, characteristics and traditions and those should be respected. We have seen how the University of Texas and the System view their assets. The City and UT have agreed to disagree on whether the Brackenridge Tract is subject to local codes and ordinances. The University's position that it should be exempt is not acceptable. Unfortunately, it may take legislative action to guarantee appropriate redevelopment.

The State has created a Partnership Advisory Commission to review the State's public private partnerships or "P3's." It is comprised of appointed Legislators. Senate Bill 1048 was enacted to create the authority and processes governing P3's and to ensure an open process. It addresses the identification of such projects as well as the contractual requirements between the parties involved. The Partnership Advisory Commission would review the interim and comprehensive agreement proposal before the participating government agency can begin negotiations. Projects under \$5 million are not subject to this review if they have already received legislative approval. If you think projects will get mired down forever in bureaucracy, think again. The Commission has 10 days to decide whether it will review a P3 once it has been submitted and the must have a recommendation within 45 days of receipt. Failure to act within that timeframe would constitute a rejection. Lastly, the participating state entity must submit the final agreement 30 days prior to execution for review. This Commission may warrant particular scrutiny as we monitor our State owned lands.

### Trees

I was blown away when I heard that we had lost nearly 6 million trees statewide as a result of drought, disease and fire and that if that loss continued at the same pace, the State would be deforested within 10 years. That is absolutely terrifying. In past newsletters, I have certainly encouraged folks to diversify their own urban canopies. It is no longer about diversifying but about repopulating trees in our neighborhoods and throughout our communities. With that, the following comes from the City of Austin.

#### Connect to the Roots of Your Community. Become an Urban Forest Steward!

The City of Austin Urban Forestry program and TreeFolks present the Urban Forest Steward series of workshops focused on building and protecting the urban canopy of Central Texas. Drought, invasive species and habitat degradation constantly take a toll on Austin's parks and natural areas. The Texas Forest Service estimates that Texas has lost up to 10 percent of its trees. The goal of the Urban Forest Steward series is to equip a cadre of citizens to help us gain ground in rebuilding our urban forest through education and volunteer leadership.

The topics to be covered are extensive and intend to give volunteers the tools to educate, train, and lead other volunteers in planting and maintaining our urban forest. Topics include Stewardship, Arboriculture, Urban Planning & Design, Volunteer Leadership, and Sustainability. Class dates are July 21, August 4, 18, September 15, and October 6 from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm at the AWU Center for Environmental Research at Hornsby Bend. Attendees must attend at least four classes (with an optional fifth day) to graduate from the series. To register visit: <http://treefolks.org/ufs/>

#### Join a Posse and Roundup some trees!

Now more than ever we need to account for and value our urban forest and The Great Texas Tree Roundup is doing just that. It's easy to join and start mapping trees. Once your trees are validated, you will be able to see the benefits provided by each tree in monetary terms. An excellent tool for homeowners and tree lovers alike. Two free workshops are scheduled for July 7th and 28th. For more information or to register visit: [http://www.treeroundup.org/participate/workshop\\_results.php](http://www.treeroundup.org/participate/workshop_results.php)

### Next Meeting

**Our next meeting is Monday, August 6th at 7:00PM at Howson Library.** *We look forward to seeing you!* Please join us. And speaking of joining us....

### Membership

WANG has committed to more than double its membership and we need YOUR help. Please don't forget to renew your membership and encourage your friends and neighbors to join! You may renew at [www.WestAustinNG.com](http://www.WestAustinNG.com). For your convenience, we have enabled recurring billing that will automatically charge your credit card on an annual basis so that you don't have to worry about your membership status. If you do have questions about your membership, please contact [membership@westaustinng.com](mailto:membership@westaustinng.com). We are constantly working on outreach and membership development. Joe Bennett, our illustrious Membership Chair, welcomes your comments and offers.

# MINUTES FOR JULY 2 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

By Michael Cannatti, Secretary

These are the minutes of the West Austin Neighborhood Group Board of Directors Meeting on Monday, July 2, 2012 at the Howson Branch Library.

I. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:10 with the following Board members in attendance: Erik (OMG) Cary, August Harris, Blake Tollett, Joyce Basciano, Joe Bennett, and Michael Cannatti. Subsequently, quietly, almost imperceptibly, Gwen Jewiss and George Edwards crept quietly into the meeting. And we were happy to have them join us.

II. **Approval of Minutes:** Once a quorum was obtained at 7:25 pm, the June minutes were approved by a unanimous 7-0 vote of all attending board members. Apparently, the minutes from the April 2012 board meeting have not been approved.

III. **Neighbor Communications:** Sadly, there were none.

IV. **Committee Reports:**

A. **Infrastructure** (7:10) –

1. **Short Term Rentals** -- Blake Tollett provided an update on the City Council's second and third readings of the Short Term Rental ordinance, and the requested postponement for final decision until the August 2 meeting. At the last meeting, Council regrettably dismissed the Planning Commission's recommendations and stripped away most of the reasonable protections against commercial STRs (e.g., clustering limits and conditional use permit requirements) except for a 3% cap per zip code. This would allow 5-8,000 commercial STRs in the central city. Council's approach would legalize an illegal use and undermines residential zoning, and provides an easy way to circumvent the City's Bed and Breakfast requirements. Council Members Morrison and Tovo are supporting the neighborhood's opposition to commercial STRs, but the remaining council members need to hear from us. August noted that commercial STRs may still violate private deed restrictions, but these need to be enforced as private property rights in court, not by the city. Cannatti asked if a sunset provision had been considered for the STR ordinance to prevent any subsequent "grandfathering" claims, and will circulate proposed language at a later time.

B. **Zoning** (7:26) –

1. **C15-2012-0081** (2110 Griswold Lane, Applicant: Toni Anne Soster, 825-3773, Owners: Michael & Jill Jaimes) -- Applicant has requested a variance from the maximum impervious coverage requirement from 45% to 49.15% in order to maintain a single family residence, guest house, swimming pool and deck in an SF-3-NP zoning district. Applicant's representative explained that the project to enclose the screened porch to increase living room space would not add impervious cover, and that no FAR modification would be required. Mr. Jaimes explained that they bought the property in 2010, and only recently discovered that the property was over the impervious cover limit. Applicant provided site plans from 2001 (showing 40% impervious cover with no swimming pool) and from 2012 (showing 49.15% impervious cover with a swimming pool). Two neighbors spoke in opposition to the variance request, noting that there are significant flooding problems on the street in general and at the adjacent downhill property in particular. The adjacent neighbors also noted that they have been forced to undertake flooding countermeasures on their property. Board members noted that there did not appear to be

significant hardship in that there were numerous opportunities to reduce the impervious cover, such as removing a portion of the driveway or the front yard path. Mrs. Jaimes responded by noting that the driveway was already difficult to navigate.

• **Action: A motion to oppose the variance by Blake that was seconded by Cannatti was withdrawn to allow Applicant the opportunity to come back with a "concrete" site plan proposal to reduce the impervious cover, provided that the site plan proposal is submitted prior to the Board of Adjustment meeting. Otherwise, the Board will take action by electronic motion.**

2. **C15-2012-0072** (2100 Elton Lane, Applicant: Applicant: Amir A. Moazami (5120 507-9675, Owner: Moazami Endeavors, LLC) – Blake reported that the Board of Adjustment partially granted a variance to allow the parking structure to be retained in the front yard, but denied the FAR variance for the garage structure by requiring that the parking structure must be an "open on all sides" carport rather than a partially or totally enclosed garage. The neighbor turnout in opposition was very strong, and their testimony greatly influenced the Board's decision.

C. **Membership** (8:37)

1. **Membership Development** – Joseph Bennett provided a report showing membership at 212 active members (not including memberships received in today's mail). There are 36 expired memberships in the past four months. Membership renewals are being sent out with success, and currently the newsletter is emailed to 26% of our membership, and mailed to the remainder.

2. **Annual Meeting** -- August Harris confirmed that the Annual Meeting will occur on October 27, 2012 (10 am), with tentative plans to repeat the "Holiday House" social. Cannatti and Kyle are to word on planning the meeting. August also requested that each board member be responsible for placing a 1/2 page advertisement in the Annual newsletter, and will circulate the ad sheets.

D. **Liaison** (8:50)

1. **Selection of new ANC Rep** – In response to August's invitation for a board member to serve as WANG's representative to the Austin Neighborhoods Council, all board members in attendance all suddenly busied themselves looking down at their papers or off to the side, effectively avoiding any eye contact with Mr. Harris. Joyce will continue to serve as our unofficial representative.

E. **Transportation** – No report.

F. **Communications** – No report.

V. **Treasurer's Report** (8:55) – George Edwards reported a Checking Account Balance of \$7,464.53, and an Oak Wilt Account Balance of \$1205.79 (up 15 cents!).

VI. **Old Business** (8:57) – August reminded all of the upcoming Fourth of July Parade from Good Shepherd Church to Reed Park, complete with police escort, fire trucks, numerous vehicles from Camp Mabry, and a color guard! Alas, no tanks.

VII. **New Business** – None

VIII. **Adjournment** -- The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm. The next board meeting will occur on Monday, August 6, 2012 (7 pm) at Howson Branch Library.

# West Austin Neighborhood Group

P.O. Box 5722

Austin, Texas 78763-5722

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## Oak Wilt

*By Wizzie Brown, Extension Program Specialist at Texas AgriLife*

As you most likely know, oak wilt is a fungus that kills oak trees. Infections have been found in 16 oak species, but no species of oak is known to be immune. The main period of infection is in the spring.

Symptoms can be seen in red oak as early as May. Leaves turn dull green or bronze, appear water soaked and wilt. They then turn yellow or brown. Damage begins at the tips and outer edges. There is a very distinct line formed between the green and brown/bronze. Symptoms appear throughout the crown and leaves are shed from the ends of branches. Crowns of trees with oak wilt seldom have uniform brown coloring as do trees with other issues. The disease progresses rapidly with red oaks dying within 1 year of disease onset but with some dying 1-2 months after symptoms appear.

For white oak, symptoms may be the same as for red oak and the tree may die in one year, but often white oaks die slowly. In trees that are dying more slowly, symptoms may only appear in and kill 1-2 branches per year. If the fungus is allowed to persist, then the tree will slowly decline each year leading to its eventual death. Some white oaks seem to recover from the disease, but still harbor the pathogen and may spread it to nearby oaks.

There is no known way to save a tree that is infected with oak wilt. The best thing to do is prevention techniques.

- Detect symptoms early and remove infected trees.
- Breaking root grafts between diseased and healthy trees. You may use mechanical or chemical barriers.
- Do not prune trees in the spring and summer. Fresh pruning wounds can attract beetles that carry the fungus.
- If you do need to prune, paint over all tree wounds immediately.

For pictures and in depth information on oak wilt, please see <http://texasoakwilt.org/>

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at [www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com](http://www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com)

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