

WEST AUSTIN NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP

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

Organized 1973

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

**The next WANG Board meeting will occur on
April 2, 2012, 7:00 Howson Library**

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FEBRUARY PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By August W. "Happy" Harris III

WANG has traditionally stayed out of the fray of politics and has focused on issues that affect our wonderful neighborhood. Occasionally we will foray into areas of citywide concerns where they impact us. We are always involved in a wide array of issues that affect each of you. We always keep you informed via the monthly newsletter. Another way we communicate is by holding monthly meetings. Our meetings are typically held the first Monday of the month at the Howson Library at 7:00PM. Many of you have never attended a meeting. That is a great disappointment to me and I suspect to other board members. To a great extent, these are held for the neighborhood's benefit. And more often than not, the only folks attending are those there for a variance request or those with a program presentation or an issue.

Like so many other meetings, some of ours can be dull as heck. But there is always something on the agenda of value. After dispensing with the business of the board, we have a section called Neighbor Communications. Typically, this is when presentations are made by various organizations. For instance, this month, we had a presentation by the staff at Camp Mabry regarding an update on their forward-thinking masterplan currently underway and their upcoming American Heroes Celebration on April 21st and 22nd. Last month, we had a presentation by the folks at Good Shepherd regarding the completion of their negotiated site plan and a discussion with the City about the traffic calming project at Tarrytown Park. After presentations are complete, we encourage members and neighbors to bring up issues of concern. This is your chance to let us know what is on your mind so that we can more effectively address any issues.

After Neighbor Communications, we move into Zoning to address any land use cases that might be on the agenda. Blake Tollett has served as our Zoning Chair for years and is an

irreplaceable asset for our neighborhood.

Most commonly, these cases are variance requests. Variances most frequently are required when planned construction exceeds the City's Land Development Code. No case is ever identical though from time to time there are similarities, and many are quite interesting. Each case is thoughtfully reviewed and deliberated. We consider whether a hardship exists, whether the matter is precedent setting and whether there is any neighbor objection. The City's Board of Adjustment does not consider financial hardship and thus neither do we. We often do make recommendations to the applicant, owner or builder about options to consider that would bring the project into compliance. Some have been open to our recommendations while, as you might imagine, others have not been. We then vote to oppose, not oppose, or not oppose with negotiated conditions.

It is rare when we have a zoning case. With the Neighborhood Plan in place, the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) defines zoning categories within the planning area. This provides owners with guidance on land use decisions and hopefully keeps the number of potential cases at a minimum. Most of our planning area is categorized as single family on the FLUM and most of the zoning within the FLUM category is Single Family 3 or SF-3 which allows for single family residences and duplexes. We have very little commercial property and, for the most part, existing zoning provides for most anticipated neighborhood uses so there really isn't much of a need for up-zoning. The only cases that occasionally come forward are those that would increase the dwelling units allowed on certain tracts to facilitate denser multifamily projects. We are always careful about allowing the encroachment of either commercial or multifamily uses into existing single family areas.

Lastly we move into Committee Reports. This

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

August President's Message, *continued from page 1*

is where you have a chance to learn about infrastructure and park projects, Brackenridge Tract or State School updates, MoPac and other items and issues that affect West Austin. I would like to think these reports are informative.

We all have busy lives. I certainly am not chastising you for not attending our meetings. But we would love to see you at our next meeting and share with you and have you reciprocate with us. We also would invite you to be more active and engaged members of the West Austin Neighborhood Group!

City Bond Package

The City of Austin is currently considering not if but how large a bond package it will place on the November ballot. We urge you to be engaged and knowledgeable about the bond package. Please go to the City's site <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/bond-development> for detailed information. For the preliminary capital requests, it is well worth reading http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Capital_Planning/Needs_Assessment_Projects_and_Programs_Report.pdf. The numbers are staggering but it is important to recognize that this includes all asks under a needs assessment and likely will be pared down to around \$400 million. There are those that suggest that the bonds ultimately submitted for voter approval in November will not be more than the current City property tax rate can service. I have said this before but we in 78703 pay about 10% of all ad valorem taxes collected by the City and there is very little of this bond money that impacts our neighborhood. However, much of it does impact the quality of life we enjoy in Austin so it is critical that you have a firm understanding of what will be at stake in November.

From February through April the Bond Election Advisory Task Force, comprised of community members, is considering the capital needs assessment project lists and taking input from the public, stakeholders, other City Boards and Commissions. There are four committees established to consider the project and program lists provided by City staff. The committees are Affordable Housing, City Facilities, Parks and Open Space and Transportation/Mobility. If there are bond issues you feel strongly about, do make sure you engage with the appropriate committee. In May, the Task Force will make final recommendations to the Austin City Council. You will then once again have the opportunity to influence the final bond package. If there are any particular bonds that affect West Austin, WANG will review them further and report to you.

City of Austin Comprehensive Plan

Candidly, I don't often report on this issue. "Imagine Austin" as it is branded has been going on for several years. Currently before the Planning Commission, it is being pushed through to conclusion and City Council would like to have it approved before the Council elections in May. The Plan does have far reaching implications for the region and will direct future capital improvement spending and help shape growth in the years to come. For better or worse, there is little that impacts West Austin other than higher taxes to pay for growth rather than forcing growth to pay for itself. One of the significant points of conflict between neighborhoods like ours and City staff is whether our individual neighborhood plans like ours completed in 2010 would be recognized and respected. We and the Bryker Woods Neighborhood Association have fought vigorously to maintain the compromises reached on Lake Austin Boulevard and on West 35th in our neighborhood plan. Particular thanks are due to Michael Cannatti and Michael Curry, collectively the "Mikes."

The City would have you believe that this has been a process full of public input and participation. There certainly have been and continue to be ample opportunities for each of you to weigh in – and you SHOULD! But the fact of the matter is that City planning staff are driving this and have little regard for public input. To compound the

matter, staff insisted that the community focus on the "possibilities" without looking at or being provided with critical details on which to make an informed decision. It is easy to move dots around on a map. But you have to know the facts on the ground. Anyone experienced in due diligence or studied in history knows how critical such information is to avoid a flawed if not disastrous outcome. Our own Mary Arnold, with all of her experience and knowledge, has absolutely overwhelmed City staff pointing out in her eloquent way the many flaws in their draft work product.

I believe in a plan, that it should be based on facts and data, that it should encompass an understanding of the areas that it will impact, that it should be well thought out, that it should be embraced by the community and that it should be implemented. Austin Tomorrow, its predecessor was such a document –driven by the community and not staff – but few of its recommendations addressing preferred growth corridors were ever implemented despite their value thus resulting in many of the problems we face today. I understand and appreciate the need for a comprehensive plan. For a city of Austin's size, every step we make must be strategic and thoughtful and a comprehensive plan, if well done, is a critical tool for success. What is being presented for consideration falls far short.

The upcoming schedule for hearings on the comp plan is:

- March 27 Public hearing
- April 2 Comp Plan Committee meeting
- April 9 Comp Plan Committee meeting
- April 10 Public hearing and possible vote

Next Meeting

Our next meeting is Monday, April 2 at 7:00PM at Howson Library. We look forward to seeing you!

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. 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,

CRIME REPORTING

Here's how to send your anonymous tip via text message.

1. Text "APD" and your message to 847411 (Tip411).
2. Austin PD may reply to your message asking for additional information.
3. Text "STOP" to end the dialogue.

MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 6 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

By Michael Cannatti, Secretary

The Board of Directors (BoD) of WANG came together at their regularly scheduled monthly meeting on the first Monday of the month at Howson Library beginning just after 7 pm.

Board members in attendance included Mary Arnold, Susan Pascoe, Joyce Basciano, August Harris, Cathy Kyle, Haidar Khazen, George Edwards and Blake Tollett. We welcomed a newcomer to the Board, Laura Sharp, as a liaison from Pemberton Heights Neighborhood Association (PHNA). Susan is the current PHNA liaison but will be leaving the board later this year. President Harris led our discussions.

Guest this evening were Steven Radke with VRI Development and neighbors David Madden and Ross Plummer.

Our first order of business was the adoption of the minutes from 6 February 2012. On motion from Cathy with a second from Susan, they were passed as written.

Next up was Neighbor Communications:

David Madden from Camp Mabry came to give us a heads up about their April 21st-22nd Annual Muster-American Heroes Celebration, from 8 am to 4 pm each day. The theme of the event encompasses not only a celebration of first responders such as fire departments and EMS but will also have the always entertaining reenactment program, this year featuring the reenactment of the battle of Montelimar, August, 1944, when the 36th Infantry Division almost cut off the escape of the German 19th Army following the invasion of Southern France (Operation Dragoon). There will be armored vehicles on display and moving around, with helicopters each day at 1 pm followed by pyrotechnics at 2 pm. On Sunday the 22nd there will be a 5-kilometer run within the campus. Last year some 17,000 folks visited the Camp during the Muster and they expect at least as many this year. Mr. Madden went on to discuss Camp Mabry in general, specifically that the Camp is now very open to civilians; all you need is a form of identification. The Camp houses the Texas Military Forces Museum, has designated recreational and picnicking areas, and even has a couple of fishing holes (\$5 fee; catch and release). We then generally discussed the relationship between the Camp and the neighborhood vis-à-vis security concerns and wild fire prevention efforts. At the end, August inquired whether the Guard would agree to participate in the Annual Tarrytown 4th of July Parade, and they enthusiastically agreed. That should be exciting.

We then turned to zoning matters:

Case Number: 2012-017858R

1809 Schulle Avenue

Owner/Applicant: Ryan Vinson 743-6913

The applicant has requested a modification to allow an increase in Floor to Area Ratio (FAR) from the maximum development allowed of 40% (2730 s.f.) to 46.8% (3188 s.f.) for new construction of a two story single family residence in a SF-3-NP zoning district.

Steven Radke visited with us on behalf of his business partner Ryan Vinson and explained their basis for requesting a modification to the Land Development Code (LDC) for their property at 1809 Schulle. This was an informational presentation with no vote taken due to the need for Blake to seek further clarification from the City. He was tasked with getting back to the Board and an electronic vote either to oppose or not oppose the request will be taken prior to the hearing on 13 March.

The Central West Austin Neighborhood Plan Contact Team (CWANPCT) will meet on April 23rd to amongst other duties elect officers for the coming year. August, a member of the team, discussed this fall's bond election and what the neighborhood might see in our area project wise.

The general consensus is that the bonds will focus on transportation and infrastructure, public parks items being of special concern to us.

We then went on to discuss the comprehensive plan currently being formulated for the City, Imagine Austin. There is a new text version of the plan and Susan relates that the Austin Neighborhoods Council (ANC) to which she is PHNA's representative is reviewing this iteration with the idea of getting neighborhood association feedback. The plan so far has been before the Planning Commission (PC) where the focus has been on interaction between the proposal and established neighborhood plans, so the Zoning and Platting (ZAP) commission will also hold hearings where officially nonplanned areas can weigh in. This proposed comprehensive plan does not in all respects fit in smoothly with the established by ordinance neighborhood plans so there is some friction. For neighborhoods without established neighborhood plans the comprehensive plan will form the template for any future plan they may work towards. Mary asked that we request the City to place a hard copy of the plan in all of the libraries.

We then segued into the February 5th Muny 5K Run held at Lions Municipal Golf Course. Mary reports there were approximately 300 entrants, that the Save Muny group raised \$2,600, and a wonderful time was had by all, especially those enjoying a warm beverage on the brisk morning while observing the competitors.

August then discussed the Brackenridge Tract. As the official end date of the golf course lease, 2019, comes closer, any leverage the City and neighborhood has to shape the land's destiny fades. The need to reestablish communication with UT's Dean Rankin and the Field Laboratory folks was discussed. We discussed the logistics of a new neighborhood survey to gauge where we need to go on this.

Susan reported from ANC that they are going to hold a candidates' forum on 28 March. We were encouraged to look at the ANC website for various resolutions posted there. She also gave us an update on the electric lawn mower program. This year the City is not only offering a reduced price electric lawnmower if you turn in your gas mower, but if three neighbors turn theirs in, you get an electric one free to share.

We then had a general discussion of Red Bud Isle and mulled over the proposal for metered parking there. The idea is that metered parking with maximum times coupled with enforcement would result in a more rapid turnover of spaces so more folks could use the facility.

Our discussion next turned to MoPac. August reports that over 200 folks attended the last open house at O'Henry. Basically there will be one managed toll lane in each direction (located on the inside next to the railroad tracks) with the entrances/exits being located north of FM 2222 and at West 5th Street. This increase in capacity qualifies the road for sound walls that will start being installed very soon. It was noted that Union Pacific RR appears serious about relocating their freight service to new tracks east of the city where the land is flatter and there are no kinks in the track. The plan is to have a commuter rail line from Georgetown to San Antonio.

George reports monies as \$8,173 in checking and \$1,205 in the Oak Wilt suppression fund.

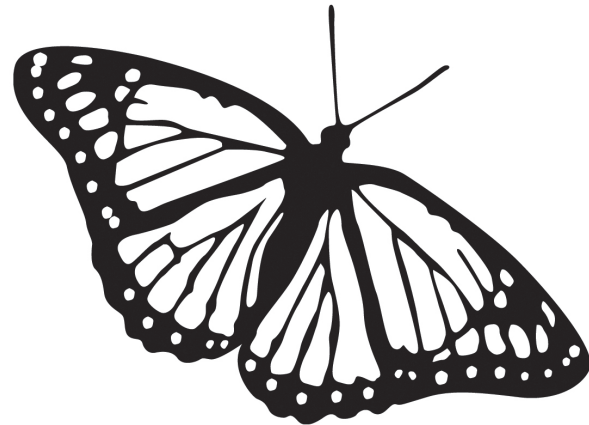
Having run out of time we adjourned.

Blake Tollett

Butterfly Gardening

Butterfly gardening can be a wonderful way to invite nature into your backyard. With a little knowledge on local butterflies and the correct plants, you can create a garden that allows you to watch butterflies in various life stages. Adult butterflies feed on nectar, gathering it from flowers. Larvae, or caterpillars, feed on plant foliage, so if you do not like to have your plants eaten by insects, butterfly gardening may not be for you. Some larvae feed only on particular plants. The following is a list to help you with your plant selection:

Butterfly	Plant
Monarch butterfly	milkweed, butterfly weed
Queen butterfly	milkweed
Viceroy	cottonwood, poplar, willow
Black swallowtail	parsley, dill, fennel
Spicebush swallowtail	spicebush, sweet bay, sassafras
Pipevine swallowtail	Dutchman's pipevine
Giant swallowtail	citrus, Hercules club
Brazilian skipper	canna
Brush-footed butterflies	nettles, thistles
Hairstreak butterflies	pecans, walnuts
Gulf fritillary	passionflower vines
Giant purple hairstreak	mistletoe
Gray hairstreak	legumes
Question mark	hackberry, elm
Texas crescent	shrimp plant, dicliptera, ruellia
Painted lady	hollyhock, thistles
Buckeye	plantain, snapdragon



Adult butterflies need a source of nectar in the garden. The following is a list of plants they might like:

Plant name	Flower color
Asters	lavender, pink, purple, white
Blazing star	lavender
Butterfly bush	lavender, purple, white
Butterfly weed	orange, yellow
Cone flower	fuchsia
Flame bush	red-orange
Goldenrod	yellow
Ironweed	pink, purple
Lantana	combinations, lavender, orange, pink, white, yellow
Loosestrife	lavender
Mexican heather	lavender
Mexican milkweed	red-orange, yellow
Mexican mint marigold	yellow-orange
Mist flower	blue, white
Phlox	pink, purple, red, white
Salvia	blue, lavender, pink, red
Verbena	blue, lavender, pink, purple, red, white
Zinnia	orange, pink, red, white, yellow

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

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April 16
 TRIP PLANNING:
 ENSURING YOU ARE THE DRIVER

April 23
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 CHARTING YOUR COURSE

May 7
 A FINANCIAL TUNE UP
 ENSURES A SMOOTH RIDE

10:00 am – 12:30 pm

Tarrytown United Methodist Church
 2601 Exposition Blvd | Austin, Tx 78703

RSVP by April 12 to Melissa Perez at
 (512) 473-4399 or melissa.perez@frostbank.com
 Free valet parking





WEST AUSTIN NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP

The West Austin Neighborhood Group is a non-profit organization of neighborhood residents with the shared goal of preserving the character of West Austin and protecting it from deterioration. WANG is concerned with community development, ecology, safety, and many other matters that indirectly and directly affect the quality and character of our neighborhood and the City of Austin.

WANG publishes a monthly newsletter and one annual newsletter described more fully below.

Guidelines:

- Payment and ad copy **MUST** be received upon submission for the Annual Newsletter and by the 10th of the month for monthly newsletters. No exceptions.
- Proofs must be signed and returned in a timely manner to avoid errors.
- Monthly newsletters are mailed no later than the 25th of the month.
- The Annual newsletter is typically hand delivered 4 weeks prior to the Annual Meeting. [The 2011 delivery date is scheduled for mid October.]

Ad Specifications:

All ads must be submitted in camera ready format. Size specifications are found below.

AD	SIZE
Full Page	7.5 x 9.75
1/2 Page	7.5 x 5 or 3.75 x 9.75
1/4 Page	3.75 x 5 or 7.5 x 2.5
1/8 Page	3.75 x 2

Camera-Ready ads are ads that can be placed directly into the newsletter publication for printing without modification. Our preferred file format for receiving camera-ready ads are PDF files. Using PDF files avoids common font problems that can occur with other file formats. If your software does not support creating PDF files, we also accept EPS files with embedded fonts or fonts that have been created to outlines.

We accept ads from any vector-based program in PDF or EPS format. The following lists several popular vector-based programs:

- Adobe Illustrator
- Adobe PageMaker
- Adobe InDesign
- Corel Draw
- Macromedia Freehand
- Microsoft Publisher
- QuarkXPress

We do not accept ads from raster-based or "paint" programs such as Adobe Photoshop, Macromedia Fireworks and Microsoft Paint, even if provided in PDF or EPS formats. Raster-based design programs create ads that reproduce poorly in print.

Advertising Rates:

	Circulation	Insert	Full	Half	Quarter	Eighth
Newsletter						
Monthly	400	\$285.00	\$185.00	\$140.00	\$95.00	\$75.00
Annual	4,000	\$600.00	\$600.00	\$400.00	\$250.00	\$150.00

Base Discounts:

The base discount applies to contracts with multiple months. Ads of the same size can be changed monthly.

3 ads -10% • 6 ads -15% • 12 ads -20%

Package Discounts:

Multimedia A	Web/Monthly Newsletter	10%
Multimedia B	Web/Annual Newsletter	15%
Multimedia C	Web/Monthly & Annual Newsletter	20%
Comprehensive	Web/Monthly & Annual Newsletter/Booth*	25%

* Booth – Advertiser may have a booth/table at the WANG Annual Meeting and be listed as a sponsor.

West Austin Neighborhood Group

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