

Old Austin Neighborhood Association
2014 Highlights
From OANA Board Meeting Minutes

January 2014

605 West 4th Street: Administrative approval of a site development permit for an electronic testing use has been administratively approved. The applicant is Cirrus Logic. The applicant had originally wanted to place this testing facility in the Aziz building at 707 West Avenue. It was noted that even after 707 West Avenue's zoning was changed from DMU to CS, a very controversial process, even after the uses allowed under the DMU zoning district were expanded to allow electronic testing, and that the zoning on the property is now being rolled back to DMU-60 under the conditions of a Restrictive Covenant between Cirrus Logic and OANA, in the end the City was unable to supply sufficient electric power to 707 West Avenue to allow for the proposed use.

February 2014

Under **Parks, Open Spaces and Trails**, we continued our discussion of the parkland dedication fund, a fund created by the developmental fee imposed on any new residential project in the City, and how the fund is accounted for and returned to the citizens of the City. Ted has been working with the Parks & Recreation Department (PARC) to identify funds generated by residential projects within our neighborhood association boundaries and how those funds have been used. Apparently the proposed master plan for Duncan Park will be paid for with those funds. We then discussed the relationship between Duncan Park and the Shoal Creek Conservancy (SCC).

In discussing the SCC, Paul informs us that their letter of approval from the IRS concerning their Section 501(c)(3) status has been received. This should help them in their fund raising efforts.

March 2014

Under **Government Relations/Social Order** we discussed the recent election of Travis County Commissioner Bridget Shea and Travis County Judge Sarah Eckhardt and how this affects OANA. While Shea is somewhat less known, Eckhardt is a proven friend of Wooldridge Park, and their election should generally be viewed positively for the neighborhood. While he had no official report, John related a midafternoon outing he took with the Downtown Austin Alliance (DAA) using the new rapid transit bus outbound to the Crestview Station and the Black Star Co-Op brewpub and the light rail train inbound back downtown. The Capital Metro sanctioned adventure began at Halcyon Coffee and John reports the buses are spacious and comfortable and WIFI equipped and things went rapidly as advertised, but unfortunately only as far north as MLK. At that point the rapid transit bus left the Lavaca Street designated bus lane and entered normal traffic. It took approximately 45 minutes to arrive at the Crestview Station where Airport Boulevard intersects North Lamar. After a pause for refreshments, the southbound light rail was utilized to return downtown, a trip of approximately 15 minutes. John noted that the train is being heavily utilized during SXSW as a downtown connector.

805 Nueces-This is the Aspen Heights project; five levels of parking with a first floor lobby and work/live area topped by sixteen residential apartment floors. We discussed in general the history of the property and the limitations on the site. It was noted the property is zoned DMU with a height limit of 90 feet, but under the Downtown Austin Plan (DAP), additional entitlements sufficient to build the proposed project are available under the density bonus program (NOTE: this program in theory replaces the CURE vehicle for increased entitlements-See a discussion of CURE in our OANA minutes of 8 November 2011). As far as can be determined this is the first project seeking increases in entitlements under the administratively overseen density bonus program. One of the necessary criteria under the program is a giving back to the community in exchange for increased entitlements and OANA has conferred with the developer of the project about identifying Wooldridge Park as the beneficiary of necessarily increased Parkland Ordinance fees flowing from an increase in residential units. OANA and the developer will be working with the City and the Parks & Recreation Department (PARC) on this.

April 2014

Parks and Open Space: Paul Isham mentioned that SCC was contracting with the Texas Conservation Corps for American Youthworks for bamboo removal, eradication and barrier installation in the Shoal Creek Greenbelt in the area of 28th Street; Charles Peveto inquired as to whether anyone knew about plans to renovate 9th Street. He mentioned that 8th Street was in the process of being reconstructed and that the City had plans for 10th and 11th Streets, but he hadn't heard anything about 9th Street.

May 2014

Also showing up on the ballot will be Austin Community College (ACC) bonds. If these bonds are approved, some of the monies will go towards the Rio Grande campus for renovation of the main building and some infrastructure needs. This is not how it was envisioned by OANA for the campus, a negotiated plan put forward by the citizens advisory council to ACC, but it is a beginning. Ted and Albert will continue their work on this. The majority of the money in this proposal will go to the transformation of Highland Mall and to campuses in the Austin exurbs.

June 2014

We then discussed the recent (to Austin) phenomena of Transportation Networking Companies (TNCs), or ride sharing programs, such as Uber and Lyft. These companies use social media to facilitate the connecting of folks needing automobile transportation with private individuals who have agreed to make available and drive their automobiles to meet this need. The TNCs are the paid intermediaries in these transactions and assume a basic level of screening of the for hire drivers and automobiles, usually relying on social media to evaluate the performance of the individual parties. This would appear to be very close to a traditional taxi business model without the governmental licensing and oversight. This has caused some concern amongst interested parties and the City Council is asking for discussions to try and find a way to level the playing field between the two business models. Members of the OANA BoD discussed Austin's current level of taxi service, a service that may be inadequate especially during the many special events hosted by the City, and their experience with using TNCs in other cities. In Austin it was

generally agreed that the taxi service, a City regulated monopoly, had substantial room for improvement and that some judiciously allowed competition might initiate an elevated level of consumer satisfaction.

July 2014

Under Parks, Open Space & Trails, Charles tells us that he and Mitchell McGovern are going to be leading up the Friends of Wooldridge Park this next year and they will be initiating a mini-master plan for the park focused on programming. Charles also spoke briefly about the Austin History Center's transition from its traditional home to the soon to be vacated library to its south and we discussed whether the Great Streets program just finishing up on West 8th Street is going to be replicated on West 9th Street, a natural corridor between Guadalupe Street and Lamar Boulevard with Duncan Park and Shoal Creek in between.

August 2014

Membership: A brief discussion occurred with regard to increasing the memberships in OANA. Paul Isham raised the issue of whether OANA should consider extending its borders in an easterly direction towards Congress Avenue. President Siff reviewed current projects under construction as well as projects soon to be started and noted that more than 1,000 living units should be added to the existing OANA boundaries within the next 4-5 years. In light of this fact, there was no further discussion with regard to the issue of expanding borders. Michael Portman and Ted Siff said that they would meet and discuss methods or programs designed to increase membership, and specifically concentrating on the new developments, and report back to the Board with suggestions or recommendations.

September 2014

Planning and Zoning: President Siff and Paul Isham reported on their meeting with Greg Guernsey, the City's Planning and Development Review Director, and his willingness to work with the neighborhood groups to establish additional conditions on permits for concrete pours during off peak hours. Those conditions would include notification to adjoining property owners, a 24/7 hotline number of the contractor for residents to call if they had complaints, reduction of lighting at night, a "Q-ing" schedule for concrete trucks during the pour, and revocation process for violations of the permit conditions. Mr. Guernsey also mentioned that he was going to reduce the area that was originally included in his recommendation. It was mentioned that this matter would probably be considered by the Council before the end of the month.

October 2014

Under Parks & Open Spaces, Charles tells us that Wooldridge Park and the park's lessee (the State of Texas owns the underlying realty), the Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) of the City of Austin, has won one of the prestigious Preservation Austin award. The award category is "Preservation of a Cultural Landscape". There will be a lunch on 21 November where PARC Director Sara Hensley will accept the award. In addition to the recognition of the Wooldridge

Park rehabilitation, Preservation Austin is also recognizing the restoration work at the Sampson-Nalle House at W. 10th Street and Rio Grande Boulevard. Charles went on to talk about the West 6th Street Bridge receiving recognition for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and outlined the efforts by the bridge's friends and the Shoal Creek Conservancy (SCC) to secure a rehabilitation funding, a National Trust Fund Grant, from the Texas Historical Commission. Joanne Wolaver, Shoal Creek Conservancy (SCC) Executive Director, will be announcing a date for the National Register plaque dedication this fall. On motion from Ray with Charles seconding, Blake, with help from Charles, was tasked with writing a letter of support for this noble request.

November 2014

908 Nueces-This is going to be a new residential use with ground floor parking, partially below street level, and three floors of residences above. There will be 32 units, all on the smallish size. NOTE-Under current development standards new residential structures in the CBD or DMU zoning districts do not necessarily have to have onsite parking.

December 2014

Our discussion then turned to the City Council elections. Our newly elected District 9 Council Member, the Honorable Kathie Tovo, owns property in our neighborhood and is a member of OANA. Steve Adler, in the Mayoral runoff election, has a campaign office at West 9th Street and Nueces and is also a member of OANA. The OANA BoD needs to get with all the council members to help them understand that downtown is an economically powerful engine. A lot of folks work, office and live in downtown and there are very substantial real and personal property taxes generated from our area. There are well vetted and proven reasons that previous City Councils have focused on downtown, and this focus does not necessarily short change other sections of the City.