

Old Austin Neighborhood Association (OANA)
01-13-15

The OANA Board of Directors (BoD) came together at their regularly scheduled time and place, the second Tuesday of the month at the Regency Apartment's Common Room beginning at 4pm. Directors in attendance were Perry Lorenz, Albert Stowell, Ted Siff, Paul Isham, John Horton, Charles Peveto, Bill Schnell, Michael Portman and Blake Tollett. We had a guest in Kristin Fine of the Shoal Creek Conservancy (SCC).

Upon motion by Charles with John seconding last month's minutes were unanimously approved.

Our first item of discussion was the upcoming Annual Meeting on Monday 26 January at the Shoal Creek Saloon. The agenda will be:

5:30 to 5:45 social 1/4 hour

5:45 to 6:15 our annual business meeting to elect BoD members and to discuss our 2015 goals and priorities

6:15 to 7pm resume socializing

As for BoD members up for election this cycle, Perry, Paul, Bill and Blake have asked to stand for reelection. Richard has decided to step down so there will be one open seat. Bill will send out a save the date email reminder to our electronic list.

One priority this coming year is to revisit and possibly revise our organizational goals now listed on our website. Ted asked for input from the board as to revisions with this coming Friday as a preliminary deadline. He will then send out a draft restatement to the full BoD and we can discuss this at the Annual.

We then discussed where the implementation is as far as the City Council passed ordinance concerning the Downtown Austin Plan (DAP). This ordinance, amongst other things, rezones our entire neighborhood to the Downtown Mixed Use (DMU) zoning district, but this mass rezoning has not occurred. Albert then related his meeting with the new City Council Members at a reception held by the Austin Neighborhoods Council (ANC). He spoke to them about the DAP as well as our concern about the urban tree canopy loss due to work by Austin Energy (why can't they begin burying the utility lines instead of cutting back the canopy) and the completion of the sidewalk grid in the downtown area.

Kristin and Ted then spoke to us about SCC going on. They will be hosting their first annual benefit titled The Shoal Creek Awards, a "night to recognize and honor projects and programs that have improved Shoal Creek in the past year". The event will be held on Tuesday 21 April from 5 until 7:30pm at the former La Zona Rosa building now occupied PGi. All of the present BoD members agreed to be named hosts of the event. Although hosts will not necessarily be financial sponsors, each host agrees to lend his name to the event, make an appearance if at all possible, and agree to sell 10 tickets (\$35 per individual and \$50 a couple), the ticket serving as a membership in the conservancy. Ticket holders will be asked for an electronic contact so that they can be encouraged to renew their membership when appropriate.

At this point John had to leave us, but before he left we quickly discussed politics, City of Austin and Travis County, and how the election will affect our neighborhood. We are comfortable with and confident that our new District Council Member (DCM) and OANA member, the Honorable Kathie Tovo, will be an asset to the City and us. Our new Mayor, the Honorable Steve Adler, is also a member of OANA although we don't know him as well as we do DCM Tovo. City politics will be interesting this coming year if nothing else. On the County level, the entire BoD has concerns about the proposed location of the new County Courts building. The need for more courtrooms is abundantly clear, but should the courthouse be located on one of the last complete downtown blocks is open to question in our opinion. The County owns this block contiguous to the south of Republic Square, but it could easily be resold for a profit and that money used to build a courthouse away from this very dense urban area. The Federal Courthouse on the west side of the park is a good example of a dead building after hours, something that the envisioned vibrant downtown doesn't necessarily need more of. It has yet to be determined if the financing of the proposed new courtrooms will go before the voters or be through administratively approved bonds. Ted and John are tasked with trying to determine the sentiment of the County Commissioners' Court and the OANA BoD will weigh in on this matter as appropriate.

We then discussed the recent complaints of smoke and odor trespass from the Fresa's Chicken al Carbon restaurant site, specifically to the Nokonah condominium project. The Nokonah folks have talked with the restaurant's management but there is still some concern. Ted volunteered to be of assistance on behalf of OANA in trying to come to an amicable solution, and the BoD, on motion from Paul with Michael seconding, will allow him to cautiously move forward.

As for NEWS items:

Concerning the 24-hour concrete pour controversy, both sides (those putting up the structures and those living in proximity to the construction sites) have legitimate concerns. The previous City council passed a temporary ordinance of regulations with the understanding that there would be further stakeholder meetings to further define the regulations. There are meetings scheduled and Paul and Albert will attend them as representatives of OANA and report back to the full BoD.

Ted and Albert will begin working with Austin Energy to see if some of the tree trimming monies allocated for our neighborhood might better be used in burying the utility lines such as was done along Rio Grande Street.

The myriad ongoing construction projects in our neighborhood, Seven, The Bowie, The Independent, 5th&West, Green Residential & Office, Seaholm Condominiums and Retail, all appear to be progressing nicely. There should be groundbreaking on the Aspen Heights project soon also.

Under Financial, Albert reports our current assets as \$3,957.96.

Under Memberships and Marketing Michael reports he has been reaching out to the residential complexes through their management and/or home owner associations seeking new members. He

has put together a recruitment package containing a cover letter outlining who we are and inviting folks to our Annual Meeting, a revamped membership form, our neighborhood map, and “OANA Highlights of 2014”. We then discussed updates to our email list.

Turning to Parks, Trails and Open Space, we discussed the ongoing work on improvements at Duncan Park.

At this point, 5:35pm, Secretary Tollett had to leave. Beyond our Annual Meeting on the 26th, our next scheduled meeting will be on Tuesday 10 February.

Blake Tollett
OANA Secretary