

Old Austin Neighborhood Association (OANA)  
10 February 2015

The OANA Board of Directors (BoD) came together just after 4pm at our regularly scheduled day, time and place (second Tuesday of the month from 4 to 5:30pm at the Regency Apartment's Common Room). Directors in attendance were Ted Siff, Bill Schnell, Ray Canfield, John Horton, Charles Peveto, Paul Isham, Michael Portman and Blake Tollett. Albert Stowell, Perry Lorenz and Diana Zuniga had sent their regrets.

There were no guests although in the near future we anticipate a visit by District 10 City Council Member Kathie Tovo.

Our first order of business was a review of the minutes from last month's regular meeting and the Annual Meeting. With little discussion, on motion from Michael with Bill seconding, both documents were adopted and Bill will post them.

Under a point of privilege, we left the agenda and Ted told us that there would be an opportunity for BoD members to preview the residential facilities at the Seven and the 311 Bowie apartment towers. Directors in attendance expressed enthusiasm so Ted will make arrangements and get back to us.

Turning to ACTION ITEMS, we again discussed the proposed Travis County Civil Courthouse (TCCCT). John reported that he and Ted would be meeting individually with Judge Eckhardt and Commissioner Daugherty tomorrow, 11 February. There is a sense of urgency in these meetings in that the full Commissioner's Court is proposing that a \$294 million bond package go before the voters this coming November to construct a building on the city block just to the south of Republic Square. In line with our previous discussions of this proposal, for the OANA BoD the necessity of a new courthouse is not in issue but rather where the courthouse is to be located. The currently proposed site is somewhat unique in this area of downtown in that it is a full city block and is not constrained by the Capitol View Corridor ordinance. The potential private development of this city block, either as a residential use or a commercial use (or a mixture of uses), would add substantially to the City's tax base, an addition to the tax base that will be lost if a governmental project is placed there. On motion from Paul with Charles seconding, and after discussion of why OANA is becoming involved in the issue, the Board voted to allow Ted and John to continue to work with the County Commissioners, specifically to advance our alternate preferred location for this proposal, the Travis County Complex at Airport Boulevard and SH 290, or other locations in the same area such as at or near the Austin Community College (ACC) campus at Highland Mall.

We then discussed the proposal from Cap Metro to enlarge the Red Line Train terminus by the convention center into the Downtown Gateway, something of a mass transit hub. Their vision is quite elaborate structure wise, and we discussed whether the monies identified for this could possibly be better allocated to extend the train westward to the Seaholm area. Regardless, it was noted that there is going to be additional track added to the system so as to facilitate running trains simultaneously inbound and outbound. The passenger demand is there.

Charles gave us a brief update on the Austin History Center's expansion into the Faulk Library building when the new downtown library opens. There is money available to rehabilitate the current historic home but it will probably take future bond monies to accomplish the retrofitting of the Faulk building. Charles will inquire as to availability of appropriate meeting space and availability for the OANA BoD to meet there in March.

Under CURRENT NEWS, Paul gave us an update on the City's "24 hour concrete pour" ordinance. The current ordinance is a temporary fix that is slated to expire at the end of March, but as the two sides appear not particularly in synch on this, City Staff will be asking for an extension so folks can continue seeking and acceptable compromise.

As for the reported smoke and odor trespass from Fresa's Chicken al Carbon, upon further inquiry, the concern seems to be isolated and transitory. Ray volunteered to speak with the Fresa's owners and see if there might be a kitchen procedural process available to reduce the discharges.

We then briefly discussed all of the ongoing development projects in the neighborhood. It is a truly amazing transformation. Ted reports that the 5th & West project would appear to have cleared some hurdle as the developers have presented the Shoal Creek Conservancy (SCC) with a check for \$25,000, the first of three yearly contributions.

Under Other News, John had sent the Board an electronic link to the news articles concerning the proposal of our new Mayor to enlarge his staff through the use of private foundation monies. We discussed this along with the Mayor's appointment of various district council members to the different council committees.

Ted suggested that a board committee be formed to revisit and possibly revise and update the OANA website. The committee's charge would be to use input offered by several BoD members in response to Ted's request for input on OANA goals prior to the Annual Meeting. BoD members Bill, Albert, John and Blake volunteered to meet and report back to the full Board.

Under Financials, Ted reports that our account remains fairly stable with the new monies taken in from memberships being offset somewhat by the expenses incurred for our Annual Meeting. It should be noted again that the organization is indebted to Ray for generously helping facilitate the occasion at his restaurant.

Under Membership & Marketing, Bill told us that he is beginning composing the Spring eNewsletter. Suggested topics are a wrap up of the Annual Meeting, updates on the new development projects, a recap of the dedication ceremony adding the W. 6th Street Bridge over Shoal Creek to the National Register of Historic Places, and the April SCC benefit. Michael spoke to us about ongoing membership recruitment.

Under Parks & Trails, Charles reports that Wooldridge Park is going to do some mulching during Its My Park Day (IMPD). He also reports that a new food trailer operator has come to the park and the service seems to be well received. The Wooldridge "to do" list is being whittled down and they are continuing to look for folks wanting to do programs in the park.

Ted reports that the SCC awards program on 21 April has gained not only donations of food, music and beverages but also folks putting up cash. It was noted that Paul and Ted, on behalf of the SCC, continue to work with the City's Legal, Parks & Recreation, Watershed Protection and Public Works Departments to come up with a guiding document covering the entire Shoal Creek watershed.

There will be at least 7 IMPD projects along Shoal Creek as well as a mulching project at Duncan Park. We had a short discussion of the proposed Duncan Park master plan, the guiding principal being to do no harm to the park, a directional that seems obvious but is not always followed.

Having exhausted our time, we adjourned. Our next meeting will be on Tuesday the 10th of March and possibly at the Austin History Center building.

Blake Tollett, Secretary  
OANA