

Old Austin Neighborhood Association (OANA)
4 April 2017

The OANA Board of Directors (BoD) came together at the Shoal Creek Saloon for our monthly meeting beginning at 4 PM. Directors in attendance were Ted Siff, Diana Zuniga, Charles Peveto, Blake Tollett, Bill Schnell, Michael Portman, Perry Lorenz, and our gracious host, Ray Canfield. Austin Stowell and Perry Horton had sent their regrets. OANA Multi-Family Advisory Council members in attendance were Kathy Marcus (Spring) and Roger Cauvin (Plaza Lofts).

The first order of business was the review and discussion of the previous month's minutes as presented to the BoD. On motion from a member of the BoD, the minutes were amended, and as amended, they were unanimously approved. Bill will post them.

Under **Old Business**, we then discussed the status of the property at 405 W. 14th Street. Ted reported that the current owners' have withdrawn their request for demolition of the property, and in line with the letter sent by OANA (see attached), it appears they will now seek to sell the property with the current entitlements (potentially the property under the Downtown Austin Plan would be rezoned to DMU-60) rather than as a cleared lot. From a neighborhood preservation standpoint, this was a good outcome. It should be noted that although the Historic Landmark Commission (HLC) withdrew their historic zoning case upon the withdrawal of the demolition permit, the property owners were advised that a re-filing of the demolition permit would again cause the initiation of a City of Austin historic landmark designation for the property. A tangential but related discussion was had concerning Texas House Bill 3418 as it relates to the historic designation of property.

Under **New Business**, Michael reported no change in the W. 12th Street tree-planting project. Due to the changing of the seasons, this may have to wait until the fall, a more appropriate time to put trees in the ground. As for the OANA Tour proposal, Advisory Council member Catherine Van Hersch has been out of town a lot lately on business, but she was able to speak with her friend at the Nokonah about them possibly chairing the committee. The friend declined but did outline some of the steps necessary in order to accomplish the task appropriately. Basically, and this was confirmed by Charles who worked several years with the Downtown Austin Neighborhood Association (DANA) on their annual tours, anything more ambitious than a walking tour grows exponentially more difficult to pull off logistic wise, and a walking tour isn't that easy to do. We discussed various thematic possibilities such as historic tours, tours of residential properties, tours of neighborhood event spaces, and even the idea of holding a progressive dinner. The idea of engaging a professional organization through sponsorships was discussed as a possible source of expertise and personnel. Obviously this needs some more discussion and we will return to the idea.

Another "it came to me while showering" idea from Ted was to redefine ex-members of the BoD as Alumni with the idea that they should remain an active part of our organization. On motion from Diana with Blake seconding, the idea was adopted. Welcome Alumni!

We went off agenda at this point and turned to **Marketing** with Bill telling us he plans a spring edition of the e-newsletter. Kathy volunteered to help with graphics and other production needs.

As for future meeting places for the OANA BoD's monthly meeting, the W and the Westgate are still potentials, although Charles told us the Westgate is currently swamped with the Legislature in session.

Michael related that our **Finances and Membership** both continue to rise slowly but steadily.

Under **Planning, Zoning and Historic Preservation**, we began with a report from Kathy, our Advisory Council representative from the Spring residential tower, concerning the Austin Energy District Cooling Plant #3 (SP-2017-0038C) (NOTE-these water cooling plants provide central air conditioning to the buildings that tie into them). This cooling plant and cooling towers are located next to the residential tower and the noise is going to be a constant in the residents' lives, at least for those on the side facing the plant. Kathy and others from the Spring have advocated for if not a moving of the facility then a way to mitigate the noise trespass. Apparently Austin Energy has listened and the plant as now proposed is state of the art in tamping down the noise from the facility. She was encouraged by the BoD to file for Interested Party status and to not hesitate if the BoD can help advocate for their concerns. This discussion reminded us of the inquiry from another tenant at the Spring at our meeting there last November about ways to lessen the noise from the Union Pacific trains that run along the south side of the tower. Michael will look into whether there is a system that will accomplish this.

We then discussed the latest information on the Gilfillan House renovation and repurposing. Ted reported that the new owners and their attorney have circulated a draft restrictive covenant, and Ted, Austin and Alumni (!) BoD member Richard Hardin are comparing this document to the owners' proposed restrictive covenant from some time back. OANA's original position was that the venue should not have amplified outdoors music; in addition to noise trespass OANA is concerned about the site's perimeter sidewalks and offsite parking. The neighborhood association is very much in favor for the mansion being rehabilitated, but if the facility is repurposed from an office use to an multi-purpose event/work space as envisioned, then the neighbors' inherent right of enjoyment of their properties need to be take into consideration. As in most property rights discussions, there is a balancing act involved. Regardless of the wording of the restrictive covenant, it needs to be both a private and public contract for enforcement.

The conversion of the site of the former Aziz Building (SP-2016-0435D; 710 W. 7th Street) into a surface parking lot remains a work in progress.

Under Parks, Ted reports that progress on the Duncan Park master plan continues. Online at the PARD website are preliminary plan goals, a preliminary plan with graphics, and a concept survey. The initial reaction from stakeholders is positive.

Charles reports that the Friends of Wooldridge Square are using private funding to engage Bartlett Tree Service to conduct a Level 3 evaluation of the on-site trees. The Downtown Austin Alliance (DAA) contract with Ted Eubanks to form the "Our Austin Story" narrative is expanding to include not only the three historic squares but also Congress Avenue and the development along Shoal Creek below W. 38th Street.

Ted reported that the Shoal Creek Conservancy (SCC) and other like-minded parks and natural space advocates have been working with the City Council initiated Visitors Impact Taskforce.

The taskforce's mission statement:

- Study the impact of tourism on City infrastructure, services, and facilities, and investigate opportunities to offset those impacts by using Hotel Occupancy Tax revenues;
- Review of current uses of Hotel Occupancy Taxes and the impact of those activities and expenditures on tourism in the City;
- Review of current tourist activity in the City of Austin and what events, venues, or facilities those tourists attend while visiting;
- Review of State and National best practices for tourism programs;
- Review of Texas Tax Code Chapter 351 and allowable uses of Hotel Occupancy Taxes under the Tax Code including parks, historic preservation, cultural heritage, music, arts, special events, fee waivers, convention, visitors bureau, transportation, downtown districts, venues and other facilities and debt defeasance for city-owned hotels and convention facilities;
- Review the Austin Convention Center expansion, all possible design options and potential funding mechanisms; and
- Make recommendations to the City Council about how to best utilize all hotel occupancy revenue to impact tourism by April 1, 2017.

It is projected that there could be 7 to 10 million dollars each year from the fund that can be directed towards Chapter 351 allowable uses. That is real money.

Our time together having to end, we adjourned. Due to scheduling conflicts, our next meeting will be on Tuesday 2 May from 4 to 5:30 at the Shoal Creek Saloon.

Blake Tollett, Secretary
OANA

OANA letter concerning 405 W. 14th Street:

13 February 2017

City of Austin
Historic Landmark Commission
Austin, TX
RE: HDP-2016-0928 - 405 West 14th Street

Dear Landmark Commission Members:

The property at 405 West 14th Street is a historic structure, originally constructed around 1910 as a residence for a member of the Tobin family. It reflects the style, scale, and character of Austin's original residential neighborhood. The historic structure is currently used as an income producing property, and rehabilitation/restoration may make it eligible for both State Historic Tax Credits and the Federal Historic Tax Credits.

Saving and re-zoning this property from General Office (GO) to Downtown Mixed Use (DMU) could provide development opportunities toward the back of the lot.

If the property owner is willing to withdraw the pending demolition permit application and apply for a zoning change to DMU, the Old Austin Neighborhood (OANA)* will support that request as well as work with the property owner to find a solution that provides a competitive market value while preserving the historic character of the property. While we prefer saving the whole house, OANA is open to discussing all possible ways to preserve the historic character of the property including façade easements and other approaches.

Given OANA's offer of support, we are sharing this letter with the property owner in the hope that he will withdraw his demolition permit on or before your meeting on February 27, 2017.

Thank you for your consideration. Let us know if you have any questions.
Sincerely,



Ted Siff, President

* Old Austin Neighborhood Association (OANA) is a historic neighborhood in downtown Austin bounded by Lady Bird Lake, West 15th Street, Lamar Boulevard, and Lavaca Street. Since 1974, OANA *has worked with property owners* to preserve and enhance the historic and residential character of this part of downtown, while embracing the need for new compatible development. Forty plus years of responsible advocacy has contributed to creating and sustaining one of the most vibrant neighborhoods in Austin.

Board of Directors

Ted Siff, President Canfield	Michael Portman, Treasurer	Blake Tollett, Secretary	Ray
Austin Stowell	Perry Lorenz	Perry Horton	Bill Schnell
Diana Zuniga	Charles Peveto	Katie Jackson	