

Old Austin Neighborhood Association (OANA)  
13 April 2015

The Board of Directors (BoD) of OANA came together just before 4 pm on Monday 13 April 2015 at the Common Room of the Regency Apartments. Directors in attendance were Albert Stowell, Ted Siff, Paul Isham, Michael Portman, Charles Peveto, John Horton, Bill Schnell, Diane Zuniga, Perry Lorenz, Ray Canfield and Blake Tollett. OANA member Roger Cauvin sat in with us.

Ted brought us to order and offered the revised March 2015 minutes for adoption. On motion by Albert with Charles seconding, they were so adopted and Bill will post them on our website.

Under Current News and Action Items-

Along with representatives from the Downtown Austin Association (DAA), on behalf of OANA John and Ted attended a County Commissioners' sponsored informational meeting concerning the proposed downtown Civil Courthouse project. The County's preference that the project is built on the 1.75 acres it currently owns on the south side of Republic Square continues to harden, especially in regards to relocating the proposed project out of the downtown area. Some concerned folks are looking at ways to bring alternate solutions to the table. The funding bonds for the project go before the voters this coming November.

The downtown terminus of the Metro Rail, the Downtown Gateway, continues to be on the north side of the Convention Center, and OANA still believes an extension to the Seaholm project would be beneficial. The County, in touting their proposal for the Republic Square location of the civil courthouse expansion, does envision a rail connection although it is uncertain that Cap Metro is aware of this.

In an update to the proposed Bowie Street Underpass project to provide a north to south passage under the railroad track bed, Paul reported that the railroad is apparently preparing to do some sort of work in that area. Diane asked whether, at this time, there still exists a need for a tunnel under the tracks considering there is now access VIA Seaholm Drive. After discussion, we resolved to go visit the area before the next meeting and reevaluate our position of encouragement if warranted.

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NOTE: We first began looking at this project in June of 2010, specifically from that month's meeting:

“The Bowie Street project involves the construction of a tunnel beneath the Union Pacific railroad tracks to link the Pfluger Bicycle & Pedestrian Bridge and the Lady Bird Lake Trail with the West End Commercial District and the rest of the Central Business District (CBD) through the Lance Armstrong Trail.”

In May of 2012 we revisited the plan and discussed the City's use of a TIF:

“Ted went on to tell us that his understanding is that the northern border of the TIF implemented to redevelop the Seaholm Power Plant has been extended beyond the railroad tracks.

NOTE: The entry for Tax Increment Financing (TIF) in Wikipedia is as follows: “Tax Increment Financing, or TIF, is a public financing method that is used for subsidizing redevelopment, infrastructure, and other community-improvement projects in many countries, including the United States. Similar or related value capture strategies are also used around the world.

TIF is a method to use future gains in taxes to subsidize current improvements, which are projected to create the conditions for said gains. The completion of a public project often results in an increase in the value of surrounding real estate, which generates additional tax revenue. Sales-tax revenue may also increase, and jobs may be added, although these factors and their multipliers usually do not influence the structure of TIF.

When an increase in site value and private investment generates an increase in tax revenues, it is the "tax increment." Tax Increment Financing dedicates tax increments within a certain defined district to finance the debt that is issued to pay for the project. TIF is often designed to channel funding toward improvements in distressed, underdeveloped, or underutilized parts of a jurisdiction where development might otherwise not occur. TIF creates funding for public or private projects by borrowing against the future increase in these property-tax revenues.”

This is important for the neighborhood and the future developments centered on Bowie and W. 3rd Streets in that the City now has a means to finance the Bowie Street tunnel under the railroad tracks.”

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Ted then gave us an update on the April 21st Shoal Creek Conservancy (SCC) Awards ceremony. Happily the event is oversubscribed so the pressure is off the Board to continue recruiting attendees. Ted did ask for an accounting as soon as reasonably possible.

As for the OANA goals and website updates, this was tabled to our next meeting. Any tweaks requested between now and then will be circulated by email.

Roger Cauvin then spoke to us about an organization he and others are forming to represent neighborhoods throughout Austin. His group, Friends of Austin Neighborhoods (FAN), began as an informal leadership group of folks from the City’s Council District 9 and is in the formative stage now. After discussion, it was decided that before the OANA BoD further discussed membership in FAN that it would be beneficial to our understanding if we had a copy of their organizational bylaws to review as well as a list of their organizational members. If appropriate, we will revisit this matter next meeting.

Paul and Diane led the discussion of where the process is regarding the City’s attempt to come up with a regulatory ordinance concerning concrete pours in the Central Business District (CBD). There are of course two perspectives on this; there are costs involved when concrete

pours are not allowed 24/7, but residents of downtown would really appreciate a pause in downtown construction inactivity so as to get some uninterrupted sleep. The temporary ordinance enacted by the previous City Council was set to expire on 31 March, but because there is no stakeholder group consensus on how to regulate the pourings, the temporary ordinance has been extended until 30 June. Diane noted that the Downtown Commission had put forward a proposal based on what is being done in other cities. This recommendation, which does limit activity, looks not only at concrete pours but all construction activity; intrusive noise is intrusive noise no matter the source. The OANA BoD will decide as to whether to weigh in on this proposal when and if it makes it to City Council.

We then turned to Albert's financial report, and our balance remains at approximately \$4,617.

Under Government Relations/Social Order, having already discussed the conundrum we are facing with the proposed placement of the new civil courthouse, John had nothing else specific for us to consider.

Albert then talked to us about the goings on at the 12th Street ACC campus. Next year will be a construction year for them with all current classes being transferred up to the Highland campus. The question, at least in some of the stakeholders' minds, is what will be the programming at the 12th Street campus when it reopens. Albert and Ted will keep us informed.

Michael reports he has gotten together an email list and will put it on Google Documents for the BoD to review. This is a list of current members and prospects.

Charles reported the movie presented at Wooldridge Park on the 9th was a smashing success. They had attendance closing in on 300 folks and their resident food vendor sold out. There will be an Earth Day centered film on April 22nd with more films later in the year (go to [AustinParks.org](http://AustinParks.org) for a full listing). Thank you Charles and your fellow Friends; the transformation of the park is amazing. Charles additionally reports that the Friends of Wooldridge Park will be meeting with the Parks & Recreation Department (PARC) to work on securing the Park Land Dedication (PLD) funds from the Aspen Heights project.

Under further news from Shoal Creek, Ted reports that the collaborative agreement between the SCC and the City of Austin has been finalized [NOTE: the agreement can be found on the OANA website]. It is a unique document and Ted and Joanna are to be congratulated. Dedication and persistence were rewarded.

There were no new zoning matters to discuss, although under historic preservation Perry tells us that it is very possible that the abandoned wooden railroad trestle over Shoal Creek down by the lake may very well be preserved rather than taken down.

Our next meeting will be on 12 May and Charles will look into us being at the Austin History Center.

We then adjourned.

Blake Tollett-Secretary  
OANA