

Old Austin Neighborhood Association (OANA)
10 May 2016

The OANA Board of Directors (BoD) came together on the second Tuesday of the month at our normal time and place-4 PM at the Regency Apartments Common Room. Members in attendance were Perry Horton, Ted Siff, Diana Zuniga, Charles Peveto, Ray Canfield, Perry Lorenz, Michael Portman, Austin Stowell and Blake Tollett. Paul Isham and Bill Schnell had sent their regrets.

Catherine Van Hersh, a representative of the Nokonah Home Owners' Association, joined as our first Advisory Council member. Welcome Catherine!

We first reviewed the revised April 2016 minutes, and on motion from Ray with Perry seconding, they were adopted unanimously and Blake will send them to Bill for posting.

Under Action Items the following were then discussed:

C14-2016-0034; 701 Rio Grande Street & 602 W. 7th Street

An investment group Diana Zuniga heads has owned these two properties for approximately 10 years and they are now seeking a rezoning from the General Office (GO) to the Downtown Mixed Use (DMU) zoning district. As proposed the project will be 5 stories (6 stories on the down grade side) with underground parking, a live/work ground floor, and residential rental units above. In conformance with the Downtown Austin Plan/Northwest District (DAP/NMD) they have voluntarily agreed on a 60-foot development height entitlement (DMU-60) condition and are amenable to further restrictions prohibiting bail bond services, cocktail lounge, pawnshop, liquor store, outdoor entertainment and amplified music uses. The project should also conform to the Great Streets guidelines. In consideration of these conditions, and specifically incorporating support for a developmental entitlement of a FAR or 5 to 1 due to the predominate residential nature of the proposal, on motion from Blake with Perry seconding, the OANA BoD voted to support the rezoning request. Blake will draft a letter for Ted to send to City Staff, and a representative of the neighborhood association will attend the 24 May 2016 scheduled Planning Commission hearing on this request as well as the subsequent City Council hearing scheduled for 16 June 2016.

Ted then talked with us about a possible bond election this year the City is contemplating. There is a citizens advocacy group for bonds under the name GetAustinMoving.com that has brought this discussion forward. They support the concept of a transportation bond covering all forms of mobility but their emphasis is towards pedestrian/bicycle and trail options. After discussion that centered on the idea that what projects are specifically being called for is right now unknown, the OANA BoD voted to advocate for (lend our name at a minimum) and provisionally support putting a transportation bond proposal before the citizens this coming November. The ultimate composition of a bond package, if there is one, will be determined by the City Council. The GetAustinMoving.com coalition wants to show the City Council that there is support for sidewalks, bike facilities and trails in the community and that those mobility options need to be considered.

Blake gave an update on the Texas Association of Counties (TAC) request to rezone the property at 1204 San Antonio Street (NOTE: the rezoning of their property at 1205 Nueces Street to DMU-60-CO was approved on all three readings on the Council Consent Agenda). For 1204, on first reading the Council went against the Planning Commission recommendation of DMU-90-CO and went for City Staff's recommendation of DMU-60-CO. The second and hopefully third reading of the ordinance will be this coming Thursday the 12th.

Ted reported that a new venue at 506 West Avenue, Irene's, has applied for an outdoor music venue permit. There had been a bar at this location with outdoor entertainment and it was noted that the venue is next to Austin City Lofts. If neighbor objections to the permit's issuance arise and are transmitted to us we will revisit the application electronically.

Under Current News:

Ray tells us the Flood Mitigation Task Force (FMTF) is wrapping up their work and a final report with recommendations will be issuing soon. Bottom line, to address all of the issues that are highlighted in the report including inadequate infrastructure and the removal of structures at risk in the flood plains, we are looking at billions of dollars. There is always low hanging fruit type projects that can be realistically funded and hopefully improvements to the lower Shoal Creek area fall in that category. Participation by Ray in the task force has been a big ask of Ray and we thank him for his service.

As for the Travis County Civil Courthouse project there appears to be no new developments.

Purple Pipe and Duncan Park-Charles had previously told us about the purple pipe system (reclaimed water that is not quite potable) that the City is bringing into the downtown area. Right now there is a terminus of the system at Wooldridge Square and there is a project underway to bring the pipes to Duncan Park along W. 9th Street. Duncan Park is being used by the Water Department as a staging area for the project and they will allocate money to the Parks & Recreation Department (PARC) to compensate for the temporary loss of this park area. Ted is going to explore whether this compensation money might be directed back to Duncan Park and along Shoal Creek.

Michael reported that our membership rolls and bank account remain stable.

The new owners of the historic Gilfillan House apparently are confused as to how commercial uses are defined and regulated within the City of Austin. The current zoning for the property is General Office-Historic (GO-H), but the current use of the building is office combined with an event center usage and a residential use. The later two uses are not allowed in the GO zoning district. They had an application to rezone the property to DMU-H, a zoning district that would allow the current uses either on a Permissible or Conditional basis, but that application was indefinitely postponed. Blake reported that to his knowledge the Gilfillan House has lost their historic tax abatements for this year. There does not appear to be an amicable resolution of this matter and it will probably require Code Enforcement intervention.

Charles reported that there has been an unfortunate resurgence of security concerns at Wooldridge Square, in particular very aggressive street folks. Mayor Pro Tem Tovo's office has been involved in refocusing APD's attention to this area of downtown. On more positive notes, the Friends group has reached out to the developers of the soon to be completed Aspen project concerning future programming opportunities at the Square, and our friend Ted Eubanks has drafted a formal vision for the Square and has shared it with the design team.

Our Ted reminded us that the Shoal Creek Conservancy Awards fete will be on Tuesday the 17th of May at Seaholm with a rain location of the Cirrus Logic building.

Having exhausted our time, we adjourned. Due to scheduling conflicts, our next meeting will be on Tuesday June 7th.

Blake Tollett, Secretary
OANA