

Original Austin Neighborhood Association (OANA)  
10-02-12

The Board of Directors (BoD) of OANA came together at our regularly scheduled time and place, the first Tuesday of the month at 4 PM at the Common Room of the Regency Apartment, Members in attendance were Ted Siff, Richard Hardin, Bill Schnell, John Horton, Ray Canfield and Blake Tollett. There were no guests.

On motion from John with Ray's second the minutes of the 09-06-12 meeting were adopted and Bill will post them.

We immediately moved to review and discuss the proposed charter amendments with John and Paul's evaluation before us. The following is from their report with discussion following:

1. Propositions 1 and 2 deal with moving the municipal election from May to November. Prop 1 just moves the election while Prop 2 moves the election to even-numbered years, calls for 4-year staggered terms and limits Mayor and council members to two terms. The move of the election is prefaced on the belief that more voters will turn out in November than May.

Discuss: The Board favors Proposition 2, aligning the City election date of November with the even numbered year federal and state elections. We felt the downside of the potential of partisanship being injected into our City government races was outweighed by the potential for increased participation in the election itself.

2. Propositions 3 and 4 deal with creating single-member districts. Prop 3 is for 10 districts with Mayor at large and Prop 4 is for 8 districts, Mayor and two members at large.

Discuss: This was a very interesting discussion. In the end, and keeping in mind what would be best for an organization representing property owners and residents within our defined boundaries, the Board voted 5 to 1 to recommend that both propositions be defeated and the current system be allowed to continue. Richard dissented.

3. Proposition 5 allows council members to hire and manage their own staffs.

Discuss: We had another interesting discussion concerning this proposition, this time focusing on the different forms of city government and the separation of duties between the city manager and elected council members. We couldn't reach a consensus so voted to remain neutral.

4. Proposition 6 provides that the Council will appoint the city attorney.

Discuss: We again could not reach consensus so we had no recommendation.

5. Proposition 7 reduces the number of signatures needed for citizen initiated ordinances or referendums to the 5% of registered voters required for charter amendments.

Discuss: The Board agreed that this proposition simply changed the City Charter to conform with existing State law. We unanimously recommend this proposition.

6. Proposition 8 allows council members to raise political funds for 30 days after the election date when they were elected.

Discuss: We unanimously recommended this proposition.

7. Proposition 9 permits council to lease parkland to an independent school district if 2/3s vote in favor and the purpose is a park purpose.

Discuss: The Board members in attendance were very leery of this proposition. There has been no real explanation coming from the Council or the City administration as to the necessity for this change to the Charter, and absent that, we recommend a vote of no.

8. Proposition 10 would provide a civil service system for those employees not already covered by such a system (the fire and police departments are covered).

Discuss: Our recommendation is to vote against this proposition.

9. Proposition 11 would specifically provide a civil service system for emergency medical service personnel.

Discuss: Our recommendation is to vote against this proposition.

We then turned to **Membership/Marketing/Camaraderie** and discussed the Board using our master email list to send out special bulletins. If we don't make this a regular occurrence thus diluting their importance to the recipients, this may be a good way to keep our organization in front of neighbors in a positive fashion. We decided that we would reissue the call for volunteers for the Shoal Creek cleanup project scheduled for 20 October, and before the November elections we would send out our recommendation on the Charter amendments (see the above discussion).

We then turned to **Planning/Zoning**:

First up was the **Texas PTA** request to change the zoning of property at **408-416 West 11th Street** from the zoning districts of DMU and CS, respectively, to CBD. The OANA BoD was unanimous in opposing the CBD request as being spot zoning as there was no contiguous CBD zoning and being contra to the Downtown Austin Plan (DAP). In addition, these properties are within the Capitol View Corridor (CVC) and are thus restricted on height. We do understand the applicant's and prospective purchaser's stated developmental goals but feel they can be accomplished under a DMU-CURE-CO designation [with the CURE allowing a greater floor to area ratio (FAR)]. This matter goes to the Planning Commission on 9 October and Ted will file a letter expressing our concerns and recommendation. It is believed that City Staff is also recommending DMU-CURE-CO.

We then discussed the proposal before the City Council by the owners of the condominiums at the **Westgate Tower** to have their building rezoned to Historic. Although this property is without our organization's boundaries, the sufficiency of the documentation supporting the request was discussed as well as the effect of a rezoning will have on the historic designation program as a whole. It was noted that most of the current civic discussion has been about residential properties outside downtown being rezoned historic but that if this rezoning is approved that discussion could turn towards properties downtown, residential as well as commercial.

Ted tells us that the ACC planned rezoning of properties around their Rio Grande campus has been put on hold until 13 November so that close by neighbor opposition can be understood and hopefully allayed.

We then turned to the current **Cirrus Logic** developments. Last month we were told that Cirrus Logic wanted to expand their office use north to include 702 & 704 West Avenue and that the neighboring condominium project was amenable to this provided the promised setbacks were done. We now have learned that these plans are fluid and that they have optioned the south west corner of Rio Grande Street and West 7th Street (701-711 W. 7th Street). OANA worked with the current owners of the property when they sought CBD zoning and there is a conditional overlay (CO) on the property with a traffic restriction of less than 2,000 trips per day as well as a commitment that the project be at least 50% residential. Cirrus's current plan is to build an office tower there and use the 702/704 West Avenue properties for a parking garage. This proposed use of the 701-711 W. 7th Street property would need a removal of the CO, the basis for OANA's support of the rezoning to CBD. There are also some very large heritage live oaks on the property and their relocation will be very problematic with little chance of success if previous like efforts are any indication. On a positive note, Ted reports that City Staff has brought forward the recommendation to allow limited electronic testing under the DMU zoning district, which if approved by Council will trigger the rollback of the commercial CS zoning on the property Cirrus Logic owns at 707 West Avenue (AKA the Aziz property).

Our next meeting was confirmed for Tuesday 6 November and we adjourned.

Blake Tollett-Secretary  
OANA