

Old Austin Neighborhood Association (OANA)
11 October 2016

The OANA Board of Directors (BoD) came together for our regularly scheduled monthly meeting on the second Tuesday of the month. Per our ongoing outreach to residents within our association boundaries, the meeting was held at the Club Room of the Seaholm Residences beginning at 5:30, with a promoted social hour beginning at 6:30. BoD members in attendance were Ted Siff, Paul Isham, Perry Lorenz, Austin Stowell, Diana Zuniga, Perry Horton, Michael Portman, Charles Peveto and Blake Tollett. Advisory Council Member Catherine Van Hersch was also in attendance.

We had quite a few guests, and unfortunately I did not get all of their names. Downtown residents David Keenan, Carolyn Mezger, Coby Kresch and Matt Cruz were among our visitors.

Our first order of business was the review of the September Minutes, and on motion from Perry H with Paul seconding, they were unanimously approved as submitted.

We then reviewed our meeting schedule going into the next three months:

In November, in deference to the elections on Tuesday the 8th, we will be meeting on Monday the 7th, and in a continuation of our outreach goal, the meeting will be at The Spring tower. This will be another 5:30 to 6:30 meeting followed by a social hour. Charles and Diana have graciously volunteered to specifically work on the setup and take down surrounding the social hour.

In December, we will meet on our regular day of the second Tuesday of the month (the 13th), and our normal meeting time of 4 to 5:30, but we will convene at The Shoal Creek Saloon. This meeting will be promoted as our holiday event in our fall e-newsletter and will be followed by another social hour featuring a free first drink for those joining our association. Again, our objective here is to raise awareness of the organization and to recruit new members.

In January, we will have two meetings. Our regular meeting on the 10th from 4 to 5:30 at the Common Room of the Regency Apartments and an Annual Meeting on Tuesday the 24th. The Annual Meeting will be at The Shoal Creek Saloon beginning at 5:30.

Under Current News, topics of interest/involvement:

Blake had forwarded to the BoD an email announcement he received from the Austin Neighborhoods Council (ANC) concerning a demonstration of a soundwave mitigation technology at the Austin City Hall Plaza. From the announcement:

“The purpose of the demonstration is to test technological solutions for sound issues arising from music venues in close proximity to residential uses. This effort is coordinated by the Music & Entertainment Division of the Economic Development Department and the Austin Police Department Sound Enforcement Unit.

Using plane wave speaker technology, the Swedish-designed JBN Sound Ceiling system is mounted above the listening audience and faces straight down, off axis to neighboring uses. The system is reported to provide an enhanced high quality listening experience, while yielding unprecedented containment of audio frequencies, including bass.”

Containment of sound on a property, or rather the trespass of sound from one property to another, is something OANA continues to take seriously. We are an association of neighbors, and we should endeavor to live if not in harmony, then at the least we should contain our impact on the neighborhood. The initial friction over sound trespass from outdoors amplified music between the Allan House and the neighborhood was substantially mitigated by the installation of a sound absorbing band shell on the property. Perhaps this technology being demonstrated will allow amplified music and sounds within structures to remain contained within the structures. Perry H and Austin will attend the demonstrations and report back to the BoD.

[UPDATE: Perry Horton emailed the BoD the following report:

“I had the opportunity to check out the sound technology display presented by Jbn earlier this week. The manufacturer of the product is Jbn Sound Solutions. The company develops and uses plane wave technology that controls and directs the sound within a certain area. The main product is the Jbn Sound Ceiling where the technology / speakers are mounted above the target area and shoot the sound waves in a controlled area downwards versus traditional speakers that distribute sound far and away in many directions. For example, while I was there the decibel level under the sound ceiling was 112 dBs. When I walked out from underneath the speakers at a distance of about 40 feet away the dB level was 78 dBs. That's a substantial depression. At the same distance, ordinary speakers would have been recorded at 106 dBs. Something I noticed significantly was the level of bass that I couldn't hear while standing away from the system. The system did an incredible job at controlling the spread of heavy bass.

Austin, TX is the first stop for the company in America. The company and advocates will have to convince music venues and bars to purchase this technology. Keep in mind, the technology is required to be mounted above the target area or dance floor. For rooftop decks, this would require a bar operator to assemble a mounting system to hold the equipment and an impermeable screen to protect from the rain and elements.

I took a video to try and capture the sound difference, but you can't really tell a huge difference on my phone like you could in person. I'll try sending the video out later.

For more information, check out their website: jbnsoundceilings.com.”]

The initiative to use mitigation monies from the Cecelia residential project at 906-908 Nueces to plant trees on privately owned property has surprisingly yielded no takers. Ted continues to work with Michael Embesi of City Forestry to find a good home for the proposed trees within our neighborhood boundaries. Charles volunteered to explore the idea of OANA adopting some of the medians along W. 12th Street as homes for the trees.

The Wooldridge Square concept plan stakeholder group will have a third meeting on Tuesday the 25th at PARD's Aquatics Office at 2818 San Gabriel Street. OANA has recorded concerns with the civic space planning as it has progressed and hopefully those concerns will be addressed at this meeting. Of note is that our friend Ted Eubanks has been hired by the Downtown Austin Alliance (DAA) to formulate an historical interpretive plan encompassing all three of the remaining public squares in downtown, Wooldridge, Republic and Brush.

PARD has tapped the Daniel Woodroffe Group (dwg-landscape architects) to begin the master plan for Duncan Park. dwg is also the urban landscape architects for Wooldridge Square.

Under Shoal Creek Conservancy (SCC) updates:

- The engineer hired by SCC to study general maintenance of the lower portion of the creek will release a report this Thursday the 13th at Cirrus Logic.
- The Gap Project between W. 5th Street and West Avenue will be completed in early 2017.
- The preliminary engineering report on trail improvements between W. 5th Street and W. 15th Street will come out in early 2017 also.
- Efforts are beginning to address the trail between W. 2nd Street and West Avenue. Monies for this effort come equally from the developers of The Independent and PARD.

Under Committee Reports and Action Items:

Under Financial Report & Membership, Michael reported no change in membership or funds on hand.

Under Planning, Zoning & Historic Preservation:

- Ted and Austin have a meeting tomorrow, the 12th, with the current owners and their legal counsel concerning what is going on at the Gilfillan House. OANA is on record in support of the adaptive reuse of the historical properties within our neighborhood, but again, we have concerns over amplified outdoor entertainments, sound trespass.
- What is to become of the government surplus declared old Federal Courthouse was discussed. Per federal guidelines, surplus government property is given to organizations according to an established hierarchy, housing the homeless getting first priority. Here, the Front Steps organization has submitted a proposal to transform this historic structure into a dormitory like setting, a process that would more than likely require the gutting of the ornate courtrooms at a minimum. Charles volunteered to monitor the situation as this plays out over time.
- Travis County has sent out a Request For Proposals (RFP) concerning the County owned block between W. 3rd and W. 4th Streets and Guadalupe and Nueces Streets. Although the voters rejected the idea of placing a new County Courthouse building on the block, apparently there still is being touted a plan to develop the property as a joint public/private project. The County would retain the option to sell the property at an estimated price of twice what the County originally paid for the property. Ted and Perry H. will set a meeting with Belinda Powell, the Travis County Staff Planner.

Under Marketing, Ted will communicate with Bill in anticipation of a fall e-newsletter.

It being 5:15, and in deference to the Secretary's need to leave the meeting early, the formal agenda concluded and the audience was invited to make comments or ask questions of the BoD.

Blake Tollett, Secretary
OANA

NOTE: The Social Hour is being sponsored by our friends at Deep Eddy Vodka.

As the meeting continued after the Secretary had left BoD member Diana Zuniga added the following to the official Minutes:

Blake, I just had a chance to review the minutes I took after you left the meeting. Following are my additions:

Under attendees, Kathy Marcus, our new advisory board member from Spring was also in attendance.

After you left, one of our guests, Kobi Kresh (kobix@yahoo.com, 512-215-8205) who is a Spring resident, expressed concern over the noise caused by the train. He has done extensive research on a product called LoramTracShield that can reduce the squealing noise caused by a train passing on a curved track. He handed out information on the system and said that the system costs \$40,000 and that he would pay \$10,000 of the cost if OANA or someone else could get Union Pacific to install it on the tracks.

Dale Laine who is treasurer of the Seaholm Condos HOA later introduced himself. He mentioned that Jim Susman is the President of the HOA and that they would like to work on the Loram project.

Charles Peveto mentioned that Mitchell McGovern has started a Market District Neighborhood Watch.

We then adjourned and had our social hour. Thanks, Diana