

Old Austin Neighborhood Association (OANA)
14 October 2014

The OANA Board of Directors (Board) came together on our regularly scheduled day, time and place (second Wednesday of the month at 4 PM at the Common Room of the Regency Apartments). Members in attendance were Ted Siff, Paul Isham, Blake Tollett, Ray Canfield, Perry Lorenz, Charles Peveto, Bill Schnell and John Horton.

The minutes from the September meeting, on motion from Charles with Ray seconding were passed on a vote of 6-0-2 with Perry and Blake abstaining.

Under Current News we began with a discussion of the Transportation Networking Companies (TNCs), a recent phenomena in our city orchestrated by the Uber and Lyft systems. That the current taxi and limousine services in Austin are apparently unable to meet demand for transportation services, especially during high demand occasions, was to the Board a given. Our discussion focused on what the City Council was discussing, surge pricing and insurance coverage along with the broader issue of process. On motion by Charles with Bill seconding, the Board voted 6 to 2 to allow Ted to relay to the City Council that OANA supported the proposed ordinance as passed on first reading. That ordinance's wording first legalizes the de facto operation of these TNC companies and basically leaves the question of surge pricing and insurance to be worked out later if at all. Blake and Paul voted against the motion due to concerns of how the process was abused, specifically that the TNC operators have been operating in the City in contravention to and in open defiance of current ordinances.

We then went to a discussion of the bonding packages Austin voters are being asked to consider. It was first noted that in September the Board voted to endorse the City's transportation package of road and rail bonds. As for the Austin Community college (ACC) bond requests, Proposition 1 is focused on the acquisition of and improvements to new campuses in the ACC taxing area. Proposition 2 allocates money to the Rio Grande campus specifically along with other projects, and Proposition 3 relates to the ability of ACC to increase their property tax levy over the next few years. It was noted that the bonds requested in Proposition 1 & 2 could actually be serviced under the current ACC property tax levy and that the area within the ACC taxing authority is quite large in coverage. On motion from Perry with John seconding, the Board voted unanimously to endorse Proposition 2 only.

We then briefly discussed whether the organization should endorse specific candidates in the upcoming City elections. The decision was made to stay away from this. We are an inclusive organization and are fully capable of working with whoever is chosen by the electorate.

Under financials, Albert through Ted reported that we have \$4,160.02 in the bank and have so far this year received \$775 in membership income.

Under Government Relations John reports a slow season. The Austin Police Department (APD) continues to have Commanders' Forums across the City. There will be a movie (Beetle Juice) shown in Wooldridge Park on the 29th of this month. Travis County will have some new faces on the Commissioners' Court come January 1st, and until then questions regarding the Central Booking Facility or the proposed new County Courthouse and related offices will probably be unasked.

Bill's continuing work on our electronic newsletter was roundly appreciated and he tells us the winter special is just around the corner so we need to start thinking of appropriate content. One suggestion is that the focus of the product be our Annual Membership Meeting in January.

[NOTE-based on the elections held this past January, it would appear that Bill, Perry, Blake, Paul and Richard are up for reelection]

Ted noted that Michael has been working with a graphic artist from the Austin American Statesman and together they have come up with a map of our neighborhood in an electronic format. Because these maps are a compilation of layers of data, they can be manipulated or mined in a variety of ways. For instance, any property within our boundaries dating back 50 (or 75) years or that currently has recognized historic designation could be highlighted. Thank you Michael for envisioning this and following through.

Under Planning & Zoning, we discussed and commented on the changes to the various bars and restaurants in the West End. It was noted that the old La Zona Rosa building is now housing a software company that has reached out to interested community organizations offering the use of an internal meeting space. It might be an interesting place for us to have our Annual Meeting.

Under Parks & Open Spaces, Charles tells us that Wooldridge Park and the park's lessee (the State of Texas owns the underlying realty), the Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) of the City of Austin, has won one of the prestigious Preservation Austin award. The award category is "Preservation of a Cultural Landscape". There will be a lunch on 21 November where PARD Director Sara Hensley will accept the award. In addition to the recognition of the Wooldridge Park rehabilitation, Preservation Austin is also recognizing the restoration work at the Sampson-Nalle House at W. 10th Street and Rio Grande Boulevard. Charles went on to talk about the West 6th Street Bridge receiving recognition for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and outlined the efforts by the bridge's friends and the Shoal Creek Conservancy (SCC) to secure a rehabilitation funding, a National Trust Fund Grant, from the Texas Historical Commission. Joanne Wolaver, Shoal Creek Conservancy (SCC) Executive Director, will be announcing a date for the National Register plaque dedication this fall. On motion from Ray with Charles seconding, Blake, with help from Charles, was tasked with writing a letter of support for this noble request.

Under Other, Ted and Perry reported that the Spring Austin Partners will be awarding to the SCC a final payment of \$43,000 to complete an initial commitment of \$129,000 connected to the construction of the Spring residential project. An October 29th ceremony marking the occasion will be at the Spring penthouse on Wednesday 29 October.

Having come to the end of the agenda we adjourned until 4 November. This off regularly scheduled meeting was a result of prior commitments of Board members.

Blake Tollett-Secretary
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