

Original Austin Neighborhood Association (OANA)
6 November 2012

The Board of Directors (BoD) of OANA came together on our regularly scheduled meeting date, time and location (first Tuesday of the month beginning at 4 PM at the Common Room of the Regency Apartments). Directors in attendance included Perry Lorenz, Ted Siff, John Horton, Albert Stowell, Bill Schnell, Paul Isham, Richard Hardin and Blake Tollett.

There were no guests.

The minutes from our last meeting on 2 October, as amended, have been posted.

Under **Government Relations**, John reported no formal presentation. We did discuss the Nueces Street project, specifically the bike lanes between W. 6th and W. 8th Streets. Our understanding was the Bike Boulevard is Rio Grande Street and that is where dedicated bicycle lanes were to be placed. John will investigate.

Paul reports the Fun Fun Fun Fest was an extremely noisy neighbor last weekend. We suspect this overwhelming noise trespass is due to the placement of the sound system-the music from the SXSW lakeshore concerts and ACL concerts are nowhere near as intrusive. It was suggested that Don Pitts from the City be contacted and Paul will do so and keep the Board informed. Rick suggested that the Old West Austin and Old Enfield Neighborhood Associations be contacted as the music was easily heard in both of those neighborhoods also.

Albert reports he has been asked to Co-Chair the Austin Community College Rio Grande Campus Citizens Advisory Committee (ACC/RGCAC). They are hoping to provide constructive insight on projected enrollment estimates and overall mission goals specific to this campus.

Under **Membership/Marketing/Camaraderie**, Bill and Ted are to be congratulated on generating our first OANA electronic newsletter. It was initially sent to around 300 edresses and recipients are encouraged to forward the product along to. We are especially interested in getting the newsletter forwarded to residents through management/association contacts in multifamily projects. There are also embedded links in the newsletter for electronic subscription enrollment to future products. We discussed the idea of asking the Downtown Austin NA (DANA) to place a link to our website in their ongoing e-newsletter and we would in turn provide a link from our website/e-newsletter to theirs. Our next edition will be a winter special, so copy from board members needs to be in by Thanksgiving.

We then went to **Planning & Zoning**:

The Texas PTA rezoning request at 408-416 West 11th Street was considered by City Council on 1 November. The applicant was seeking a Central Business District (CBD) zoning district, but after negotiation, the Planning Commission and the Council approved a zoning district of Downtown Mixed Use-CURE (DMU-CURE) with the Central Urban Development standards being relaxed to allow more floor-to-area (FAR) development on the site. [NOTE: the Capitol View Corridor, CVC, ordinance will restrict the height of the proposed structures to around 90

feet] The envisioned Travis County structure at this site would have 2 stories of underground parking and 6 stories of above ground office space. OANA had supported this alternate zoning district because CBD was going to be spot zoning that would set a precedent contra to the Downtown Austin Plan (DAP). An interesting side note is that Dan Ross, the across the street neighbor to this property, has formed the Historic Austin Neighborhood Association. Mr. Ross spoke before the Planning Commission about potential economic interference resulting from the proposed project's construction but did not address the City Council.

As for the rezoning request by ACC for its Rio Grande campus, the matter is scheduled to be heard by the Planning Commission on 11-13-12. OANA has a letter on file in the case supporting the rezoning request with conditions and a member of the Board will be at the hearing.

Q-As a matter of continuing transparency, can the OANA webpage have a section where all of the letters written under the Board's direction are posted? This will require some changes format wise, but it is doable. Bill will check into it.

Q-Although it is not within our official association boundaries, does OANA want to officially weigh in on the Westgate Tower's bid for historic zoning? This rezoning request is perhaps premature as the structure is only 47 years old and the normal minimal requisite is 50 years. In addition, because this is a condominiumized residential structure and the City's historic designation criteria is not tailored for this type of ownership regime, the City may need to pause and reassess. This matter also goes before the Planning Commission on 11-13-12.

It was noted that the historic designation of the Westgate Tower would not only remove a substantial amount of property from the fully assessed tax roll, but the construction of the building itself led directly to the enactment of the Capitol View Corridor ordinance. While the CVC is seen as beneficial aesthetically, it could be stated that the ordinance, by limiting developmental height for certain properties within the corridor, effectively blocks potential expansion of the tax rolls when those properties are developed subject to the CVC.

Cirrus Logic's expansion plans appear to be on hold for now, or at least OANA is not party to the discussion at this stage. OANA has a conditional support letter on file concerning the plan to further develop the property on the west side of West Avenue above W. 7th Street.

The W. 8th Street reconstruction project continues. It was reported to the neighborhood association that the utilities, street and sidewalk reconstruction contract as let by the City had been modified without public notice to eliminate the sidewalk on the south side of W. 8th Street between West Avenue and Rio Grande Street. After discussions with the City by members of the OANA Board, this modification was abandoned and the contract as let will be completed. Blake had questioned prior to the meeting whether extraordinary pressure had been exerted by the OANA Board in getting the modification rescinded, a modification initiated by two of the neighbors in that block. In a letter to the City dated 21 April 2011 endorsing the W. 8th Street Reconstruction Project the following language appears:

“In addition, the neighborhood association is taking a neutral position on whether there should be an extension/reconstruction of the sidewalk on the south side of West 8th Street between Rio Grande Avenue and West Avenue. We are aware that there are neighbors in that area that are opposed to this portion of the project as well as the fact that ultimately this is a public right-of-way. A lack of consensus amongst the Board members leads us to not taking a position for or against this aspect of the project.”

After discussion, The Board unanimously voted to recommend to the City that the contract for reconstruction be completed as let. It was recognized by all that public discussion of the merits of various portions of the project were concluded prior to the contract being let and that the concerns of affected neighbors were thoroughly voiced and considered in that process.

Perry then gave us a quick update on the 311 Bowie Street project, basically in that all demolition is complete and the tree is ready to be moved.

We then turned to **Parks & Open Space**.

John reports that he is periodically peeking through the fence around Wooldridge Park, and from what he can see, splendid work has been done. Everything now needs time to set.

Bill reports that Cirrus Logic’s tree project to revitalize the trees along Shoal Creek between W. 6h and W. 10th Streets progresses. He also reports that around 50 folks came out for the Cirrus Logic volunteer cleanup/improvement day along the creek. They did graffiti abatement, general clean up and some horticultural plantings. Thank you neighbors.

Ted reports that there has been a second luncheon of the major stakeholders/property owners that front onto Shoal Creek to continue considering the feasibility of a Shoal Creek Conservancy. If a true effort is envisioned, the support necessary is financial at this point. Over the years there have been a hodge podge of studies done on the creek’s watershed from Anderson Lane to the lake, so if there is a true desire for something other than an unimplemented plan sitting on a shelf, if folks are really serious, then treasure needs to be dedicated. Ted’s rough estimate of the projected yearly operating costs of a staffed conservancy tasked with coordinating and leveraging the financial aspects required to implement the rehabilitation project is in the range of \$50,000 to \$150,000.

At Duncan Park, the NOKONA residential condominiums in conjunction with the Parks & Recreation Department are going to aerate and mulch around the trees in the park area across W. 9th Street from the BMX bicycle park.

We discussed the two wooden structures on the west side of Shoal Creek on Wood Street behind the GSD&M building. Albert will contact the owners of the property and see if the neighborhood association can help in either the structures relocation or their demolition.

At this point having begun to run late, we set the meeting date for next month as Monday the 4th beginning at 4 PM at the Regency Apartment’s Common Room and adjourned.

Blake Tollett, Secretary