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**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**  
*Howson Branch Library*  
*March 5th, 2001, 7:00 pm*

**West Austin Neighborhood Group**

P.O. Box 5722  
Austin, Texas 78763-5722



West Austin Neighborhood Group

Organized 1973

*"To preserve our neighborhood and protect it from deterioration."*

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Hal Katz  
President

Linda Neavel Dickens  
Vice-President

Gwen Jewiss  
Secretary

Ian Inglis  
Treasurer

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James Allman  
Membership Chair

Blake Tollett  
Zoning Chair

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Michael Cannatti  
Eric Cary  
Chris Garrigues  
Balie Griffith  
Sara Madera  
Susan Pascoe  
Selina Serna  
Irwin Spear

### HONORARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mary Arnold  
Sinclair Black  
Hon. Lloyd Doggett  
Hon. Beverly Griffith  
Hon. Ann Kitchens  
Hon. Will Wynn

# THE NEIGHBOR

P.O. Box 5722 • Austin, Texas 78763-5722

February, 2001

## President's Message

March 2001

### The Neighborhood Association: What Role Do We Play?

WANG's efforts to work with Tarrytown United Methodist Church and residents near the church have once again required WANG to focus on its role as a neighborhood association. As many may know, TUMC has been working with neighbors and WANG for some time to address concerns over TUMC's proposed expansion. After 18 months of negotiations, TUMC and WANG reached an agreement, which was not supported by all of the residents near TUMC. When looking to WANG's bylaws and Neighborhood Plan for guidance, the committee still had difficulty in coming to an agreement on what should be the guiding principles for WANG. This article is not intended to address the agreement with TUMC, but instead to be a context in which to consider the role of WANG, an endeavor the Executive Committee will be embarking upon as it revisits the Neighborhood Plan.

Neighborhood associations like WANG can be found in nearly every city across the United States. Associations can help direct a city's efforts to the citizen's highest priority issues. Through research, cities have realized that well-organized neighborhood associations can play an important role in local government. Great things such as crime reduction, creation of parks and addressing traffic concerns have been among the successes noted in many communities. The common link in each success story is a well-organized neighborhood association working to reach clear goals. The association can effectively work with city staff to assess the needs and assets of the neighborhood, and develop and implement action plans to address concerns. Another commonly played role is to serve as a liaison for residents when dealing with other city departments. The opportunity for allowing people to get to know their neighbors, something many people never have a chance to do these days, cannot be overvalued.

WANG has clearly been effective over the years in making recommendations to the city council, lobbying for ordinance, and policy changes, and thereby influencing governmental decisions. In order to better serve the community, WANG will be working to update the Neighborhood Plan, which was adopted in 1986. In the City of Austin, neighborhood

planning is an opportunity for citizens to take an active role in the planning process. The neighborhood planning process involves citizens, local stakeholders, city departments, community organizations and institutions working together to address land use planning and service delivery issues. The goal of neighborhood planning is to promote mutual responsibility and joint problem solving. Neighborhood plans provide a process for concerned people to work together to improve their communities. Plans are developed by the neighborhood with assistance from City staff. Neighborhood Planning involves those people who live, work, own property, or own businesses in the neighborhood, and includes the major institutions in the neighborhood such as churches and schools. All neighborhood organizations affected by a neighborhood plan will be called upon to provide input in the planning process. The results of individual neighborhood plans will become a permanent part of the City's planning and development process.

There are advantages to neighborhoods that work together on a plan. Plans will be adopted by City Council and will help provide direction for all City programs and projects that affect the neighborhood. The City departments that provide services to the neighborhood will work alongside the neighborhood and professional staff planners. The neighborhood will have a clear vision of its priorities and needs as well as agreement on things that need to be done. The neighborhood will also have greater visibility. Businesses will know what services are needed and what development will be encouraged. Included in the Neighborhood Plan will be neighborhood needs and goals; how the neighborhood fits into the City; land use; environment; transportation and mobility; social services; compact city and sustainability goals; other City needs and services; implementation strategy; and other topics important to the Neighborhood.

Even with all this effort to adopt a common vision for the neighborhood, sharing the same community does not always mean that people will share the same interests and ideas. As with TUMC, over time there will be some disagreement among the members of WANG. It is not necessary for all of the members to agree, but to believe the associa-

*See Message, Pg. 3*

**Be sure to visit our website at <http://www.deepeddy.com/wang/>!**

**Minutes of ExComm Meeting  
February 5, 2001**

Members Present: James Allman, Joyce Basciano, Linda Dickens, Gwen Jewiss, Hal Katz, Sara Madera, Irwin Spear, Blake Tollett, Susan Pascoe, Eric Carey

Guests Present: Dennis Ackerman, Anne Boswell, Joseph Carter, Carla Crownover, Brad Cummins, Richard Miscoe, Doug O'Connell, Linda Westin, Chip & Vivian Wolfe.

**Library Announcement**

Anita Fidell noted that the library would be holding a Focus Group session regarding the 10 Year Facility Master Plan. The meeting is to be held on Tuesday, 2/27/01, at the Library. Call Anita Fidell @ 472-3584 for further information.

**Zoning Issues**

• There were a series of issues regarding the properties on Atlanta Street. There was a request to change from SF-3 to LOMU(H). Part of the proposed development would also require a variance in the side yard setback requirement from 15'-7' while the re-platting is in processing. There is also expected to be a private drive from Upson Street to the group of houses, in conjunction with the reclaiming of the unused portion of the Johnson Street ROW. The reclaiming of Johnson Street will enable the lots to be legal size. In keeping with the City's desire to keep the Johnson House on or near the original property, it is expected to be moved from Lot 11 to Lot 10. It will be used as office space and be accessed via the alley. There has been opposition expressed by the neighbors to the proposed alley access. WANG ExComm to take no action at this time.

• At 2206 West 11th Street, a variance is requested regarding the rear yard setback. The Owner-Contractor erected a deck at the back of an existing house that is in violation. As a response to the neighbors, the Contractor has proposed to either remove the illegal deck, or pay into an escrow account for the neighbors. Mr. Carter presented signatures from fourteen neighbors objecting to the deck. Another area of concern is that there was a deed restriction on the property regarding the construction being limited to a 1-2 story single family home. It appears that this may also have been violated. There is also great concern that there will be subsequent violations should this one not be dealt with. It was noted that on a long narrow lot on Meridan, there are four town homes being proposed in the Johnson Creek floodplain. WANG ExComm voted to oppose the variance. It was noted that those concerned with issues such as this may wish to attend a Watershed - Citizens Advisory Board Meeting on 2/7/01 at 305 Barton Springs Road.

• Doug O'Connell - Since 1996, Mr. O'Connell has been dealing with the light and

noise pollution, as well as the debris from the Goodwill Drop-Off. There has been a history of correspondence with the head of the Austin Goodwill and promises to remedy the situation. There has been some action taken, but it is not sufficient. Continuing problems include debris blown in to the neighborhood, floodlights, donated items left on the sidewalk, scavenging in the unlocked dumpster, noise from the tractor-trailer trucks and forklifts used at the facility. WANG ExComm members Sarah, Madera, Eric Carey and Hal Katz to work on the issue and report back.

• Zoning Chair Blake Tollett gave a brief recap of the negotiations to date with TUMC. Most of the items were as previously noted with the exception of the Church having notified Blake that they will proceed to demolish the two houses on Exposition regardless of the ExComm vote to sign the negotiated Agreement. It was noted that there had been opposition expressed by various neighbors, and that there was a reasonable probability of a Valid Petition by the neighbors. Brad Cummins (TUMC) made a plea to the Board to finalize the decision as it has actually been a number of years since the initial talks with WANG had commenced. Mr. Cummins also refuted some of the allegations in the letters distributed to some neighbors. On a motion to postpone, WANG ExComm agreed to reconvene mid-February to vote on the matter. (At a subsequent meeting on 2/21/01, the Executive Committee voted to sign the agreement with TUMC.)

**Windmill**

Richard Viktorin provided an update on the windmill restoration. He noted that the site has been cleared up and that they have excavated down to the existing concrete base. In November/ December he obtained a used fan and with the help of Austin Pump & Supply Co. and King Ranch. It is now in Austin, waiting to be adjusted and installed. He also noted that he may be looking to WANG for assistance with the landscaping at some point in the future.

**Treasurer's Report**

The account balances were given as: checking \$3,538.45, savings \$3,553.27, and oak wilt fund \$1,183.29.

**Correction**

There was a correction to the previous minutes in that as there had only been 14 board members present. The tally was actually 12-1-1 in support of anything except SF-3 (H) zoning on 510 Atlanta Street.

**Communication Committee**

Linda requested that Board members assist in creating and/or looking for appropriate articles for the newsletter.

**Membership Committee**

It was noted that there is a proposed new membership form, and that Board members should review and comment.

**Transportation Committee**

It was noted that there will be a TxDOT presentation at the March 12th CAMPO Meeting.

**Historic District**

Sarah Madera noted that there are 2300 houses over 50 years old in the WANG area. Approximately 525 of those are west of MOPAC. Gregory Smith of the Texas Historical Commission is starting the process of Historic Designation of our area, which is expected to take approximately one year. WANG members are asked to help the board in identifying which neighborhoods should be recognized and why.

**Liaison Committee**

Letters are going out to the City Manager and the EMS regarding delayed opening of the EMS station.

Minutes prepared by Gwen Jewiss

**WEST AUSTIN  
NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING  
AGENDA  
MARCH 5, 2001**

- I. Call Meeting to Order (7:10)
- II. Citizen Communications
- III. Approval of Minutes
- IV. Committee Reports
  - A. Communications
  - B. Membership
  - C. Transportation
    - 1. Update on Historical Landmark Designation
  - D. Zoning
    - 1. Update on Methodist Church
  - E. Liaison
    - 1. EMS Station
- V. Treasurer's Report
- VI. New/Old Business
  - A. Tarrytown Shopping Center
  - B. Friends of the Parks
  - C. Air Traffic Noise
  - D. Other
- VII. Adjourn (8:45)

**Mopac Expansion Survey**

Central Austin residents are urged to complete a transportation survey on the proposed expansion of Mopac at <http://www/mopac183.com>. Those without internet access can logon at the Howsen branch library on Exposition.



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Yes, I want to join WANG.

I want to renew my WANG membership.

I have enclosed:

\$20 household membership

\$10 student/senior membership

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*Message continued from cover*

tion has vision for the neighborhood consistent with that of its members and a process for identifying challenges and implementing solutions. Unfortunately, there may come down to an issue being good for the neighborhood and not as good for some of the neighbors.

Overall, it is my hope that WANG will continue to serve as a watchdog and an advocate for the community, and allow community members to get to know one another, to support one another, and to welcome new residents into the area. A significant amount of work is required in adopting a Neighborhood Plan. The Executive Committee invites input into this process and welcomes anyone who is willing and able to assist.

**Hal Katz**  
703-5715  
[hkatz@hwlaw.com](mailto:hkatz@hwlaw.com)



**MEMBERSHIP DRIVE**

Take care of your neighborhood! Send in this membership form or call Blake Tollett at 477-4028. Please take forms to your friends and neighbors and ask them to join WANG. An active membership will be a strong voice that's heard when critical issues are debated.