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West Austin Neighborhood Group

Organized 1973

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

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

February, 2004

**President's Message
February 2004**

Fellow Neighbors:

After casting about for some obscure literary device to use for organizing this message, I decided to use the fictional titles of Fyodor Dostoevsky to organize my thoughts. I'm sure some of you will just think that these are the ravings of The Idiot who has written one too many president's messages. But others will recognize me for The Gambler that I am, always striving to provide The Double role of reporting on neighborhood activities and also helping you recall all those old titles from college when you were reading the Great Short Works of Dostoyevsky. (Groan.)

Crime and Punishment

I know that previous messages here have argued that our modern fears about crime and terrorism are wholly out of line with the actual risks we face with life in Tarrytown. However, a number of recent events have raised questions about crime and society's response to crime, whether from the efforts of our police to enforce our laws or the desire of our neighborhood to protect our homes. So, without wanting to sound false alarms about what a very perilous and precarious life we lead (we don't), this message will nonetheless review some recent developments in the area of Crime and Punishment in our neighborhood.

Crime Alert - Burglary Report at Verde Vista:

In early February, a very serious burglary was reported in our neighborhood on Verde Vista Lane, which is just up Exposition from Tarrytown United Methodist Methodist Church. According to a preliminary report, the front door was kicked in, rooms were ransacked and the police indicated that the burglary appeared to be the first professional burglary that our neighborhood has seen in quite a while. As always, please be alert to any suspicious activity, and report any concerns you see to Austin Police Officer John Evers (at 974-5801 or john.evers@ci.austin.tx.us), or the Central West Investigations (at 974-5320).

Crime Alert - Vehicle Burglaries:

In recent months, there have been quite a few reports of car break-ins where valuables left in the car were stolen. According to Officer Evers, our APD representative, these activities are largely the result of teens who are simply breaking the window and grabbing the valuables left in the cars. Officer Evers recommends that any valuables be removed from your cars at night in

order to reduce these "temptation" crimes. My own recommendation is that if you must leave valuables in your car, just leave the doors unlocked so that you can at least avoid the expense of replacing your car window, too.

Crime Alert - Arrest Made at Richard Lane: In a development that is apparently unrelated to the foregoing alerts, an arrest was recently made by APD in the 2900 block of Richard Lane. Efforts over the past year to address concerns about criminal activity in this area have apparently not met with complete success, and our neighborhood continues to struggle with finding ways to address this problem.

Media Reporting On APD Enforcement Efforts In Minority Neighborhoods:

Lots of media attention has focused on recent allegations that the Austin police have used force against Austin's Hispanic and African-American residents "at significantly higher rates than they did against whites." While many have stepped forward to dispute these allegations and to point out what a stellar job APD does to protect our city and enforce our laws, our Mayor, City Manager and Police Chief are working hard to respond to the concerns and make any required changes. For example, and as posted on WANG's website, Police Chief Knee held a question and answer session at the February Central West Commander's Forum to address these allegations.

What Is Our Response to These Recent Developments?

Well, my first instinct is to be grateful to APD for their work in protecting our city. Given where we live, we probably can't fully appreciate what it is like to be on the short end of any enforcement statistics, but I want to believe that our police officers perform professionally and without racial motivation, even if fighting crime is messy work.

But my next instinct is to be flippant. Why don't we have our crime concerns and any racial imbalance in APD's "use of force" statistics both be remedied by having APD camp out at Richard Lane? Once our neighborhood becomes safer and APD has a chance to bust up some Tarrytown white boys, (almost) everyone is happy.

OK, so a more practical response is required. One of the best tools available to protect neighborhoods is for the neighbors to be vigilant. According to APD, participation in a neighborhood watch program can help reduce crime by having neighbors report to

continued, next page

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Howson Branch Library
March 1st, 2004, 7:00 pm
Please Check Mailing Label for Renewal Date

West Austin Neighborhood Group
P.O. Box 5722
Austin, Texas 78763-5722

Background Photo of Lime Kiln #PICA24140,
Austin History Center, Austin Public Library

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

continued from previous

police any suspected criminal activities. WANG will be working with APD and any interested neighbors to set up Neighborhood Watch Programs to address our specific concerns. The goal would be to have fifty percent of the neighborhood or block participate and attend one to three meetings where helpful information on personal and property crimes is shared.

Poor Folk

OK, so not only is the "Poor Folk" section heading a completely gratuitous reference to one of Dostoevsky's more obscure texts, but as a section heading, it's a total fib. We're not poor folk. In fact, according to the recent census data, lots of us are doing quite well, thank you very much. Would you be surprised to learn that the income for the vast majority of West Austin residents is well above the nation's top ten percentile figure (\$87,682) for adjusted gross income? Indeed, I'll bet we have lots of folks whose AGI is above the cut-off for the top five percent, \$120,846.

And as if we weren't lucky enough already, our neighborhood is blessed with numerous assets, including beautiful parks, numerous beautiful and historic homes, a golf course, TWO beautiful lakes (at least by the way we Texans define a "lake"), one resident mayor, and the list goes on and on. But we can't take any of this for granted. In fact, the neighborhood needs your help this Spring to preserve some of these assets:

Reed Park Clean Up: Friends of Reed Park and WANG are planning the First Annual Reed Park Cleanup Party, which is tentatively scheduled for Saturday morning (9:00 am) on April 24, 2004. The primary objective is to remove any trash and pull out any dead wood in the park and green belt area. This will help keep Reed Park beautiful and reduce fire risk in the green belt area. To get all this work done, we will need lots of help from the neighborhood, so bring the family, the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, the Cub Scouts, Indian Guide kids and anyone else who wants to help.

In addition to cleaning up the park, another benefit of the event will be the chance to meet your neighbors in the Reed Park area. We'll serve up plenty of refreshments and fun for all.

We really would welcome your help with keeping Reed Park beautiful and safe for our neighbors and our children. We will post additional information about the event at our website (www.deepeddy.com/wang). Please call me at the number below if you need additional information or if you would like to help finance the Cleanup Party. Also, please call me to let me know if you plan on help-

ing out.

Deep Eddy Heights Neighbor Meeting To Discuss National Register Protection: We are also moving forward with our efforts to apply for National Register protection for the Deep Eddy portion of our neighborhood. A pizza party meeting sponsored by WANG was held at Mangia's Pizza on February 18, 2004. The meeting was held to educate the neighborhood about the benefits of being listed on the National Register, to solicit support (financial or otherwise) and to organize volunteers from the neighborhood and local businesses. As you no doubt know, Deep Eddy Heights has a wonderful neighborhood architecture with lots of fun, funky, and historic homes that deserve protection, and appears to be highly qualified to meet the requirements for the National Register.

Mayfield Park Spring Gardening Symposium:

Lastly, you are invited by Friends of the Park to Mayfield's 2004 Spring Gardening Symposium, TROWEL AND ERROR, will be held on April 3, 2004 in Mayfield Park. A fundraiser for Mayfield Park and a long time tradition for Central Texas gardeners, the symposium will feature a series of "must hear" lectures by Dicke Patterson (Nurseryman and Rose Grower) entitled Growing Old Garden Roses from Softwood Cuttings; by Larry Butler (Co-owner, Boggy Creek Farms) entitled The Joys of Gardening Organically and Steve Kainer (Owner, Hill Country Water Gardens) entitled Plants for the Perfect Water Garden. Please join us in supporting a neighborhood jewel by contributing to Mayfield's sole fund-raising event. All tax-deductible donations benefit Mayfield Park/Community Project's restoration of the house and gardens.

As always, please feel free to contact me on matters of neighborhood concern.

Michael Rocco Cannatti
338-9100 or mike@hamiltonerrile.com

West Austin Neighborhood Group
Executive Committee Minutes
2 February 2004

ExComm Members Present: Mike Cannatti, Linda Dickens, Gwen Jewiss, Blake Tollett, Erik Cary, Hal Katz, Susan Pascoe, Joe Bennett, Steve Griffith, Ken Pfluger, and Joyce Basciano

Excused: Selina Serna, Michael Falk, and Jim Girardeau

Guests: Morris Gottesman, Raoul Celerier, Pete Vineyard, Mary Ann Vineyard, Molly Bowden Scarborough, Nikelle S. Meade,

John Chambliss, Sonia Taborsky, Charles Lohrman, Sara Madera and Sarah Crocker

Approval of Minutes: Erik asks that last month's minutes be amended to reflect opposition to the variances requested at 2203 Scenic Drive, not disapproval. That noted, Linda moved and Gwen seconded approval. Board unanimously supported.

Communications Committee Report: Erik said the newsletter got out on time this month and everything appears to be going smoothly. Blake reports great interest in long-term 1/4 page advertising. Mike C. explains that Karen Kocher is interested in doing a series of articles on West Austin's history. Erik will follow up with her.

Liaison Committee Report: Steve Griffith reports that he has been working with Morris Gottesman to finalize the agreement between WANG and Mr. Gottesman regarding the variance Mr. Gottesman received. Steve states that the offending driveway has been replaced with a surface that is permeable, and in lieu of a notarized letter explaining the controversy and the remedy agreed to, which was to be filed with the property's deed, Mr. Gottesman has drafted Restrictive Covenants to be filed with his property's deed. The purpose of the writing is to put subsequent owners on notice that the impervious coverage on the property is in excess of City code, but is being allowed to remain due to a variance.

Charles Lohrman speaks to the ExComm concerning Walsh Boat Landing. He mainly is concerned with the parking lot and ongoing maintenance matters at the park, such as regular attention to the trees by the City arborist, trash, and overcrowding of the facility. He passes out a memo outlining his concerns to the members. He accepts a suggestion that he form a Friends of the Park organization for Walsh and then work with the WANG Infrastructure Committee.

Mike C. reports that he went to the MoNac meeting and heard a presentation from Envision Central Texas. He comments that the presentation was very general, but somewhat informative.

Membership Committee Report: Two new projects are discussed that should raise the profile of the organization:

(1) Reed Park cleanup-On April 24th WANG will co-sponsor a Reed Park Cleanup in conjunction with the City of Austin/Austin Parks foundation "Its My Park! Day". This will be a general cleanup effort.

(2) Deep Eddy Heights neighborhood Meeting at Mangia's Pizza to discuss applying for National Registry protection for the Deep Eddy Heights area. The meeting will be 18 February.

Transportation Committee Report-

(1) The City contacted WANG with an idea of narrowing the newly reconstructed portion of Enfield between Exposition and MoPac to one lane each way, a center turn lane and bicycle lanes on both sides. In consultation with Old West Austin NA and Old Enfield NA, WANG asked that there be no changes.

(2) There was an update meeting about the Water and Wastewater project along Scenic Drive in mid-January, and minutes of the meeting will be sent to the ExComm later this month.

(3) Orphan sidewalks and new development site plans. Chairman Pfluger asks that he be able to report on this next month.

Historic District Committee Report: Joe has been working right along on identifying significant structures and persons throughout the neighborhood. He suggests that we regularly use the newsletter to seek neighbor input. As for the Deep Eddy Heights project, it may be premature, but is definitely worth exploring. The meeting with neighbors will be held 18 February at Mangia's and WANG will donate up to \$100 for refreshments-motion made by Linda and seconded by Mike C (unanimous).

Infrastructure Committee Report-None
Nominating Committee Report-None
Zoning Committee Report-

(1) C15-04-007; 2203 Scenic Drive-The applicant has requested a variance to decrease the minimum front street setback from 25 feet to 10 feet and a variance to increase the maximum impervious coverage from 45% to 48%, both variances needed in order to maintain an existing single family residence.

Applicant is going to withdraw the request for more impervious coverage. As for the setback variance, is this a remodel or a new construction? If they get a variance for a remodel and then tear down the structure, they must seek a new variance. As of now, they have no plans to tear down. The ExComm decided not to oppose the setback variance-Mike C moved and Steve 2nd (8-0-1)- if the existing structure footprint is maintained and the existing height of the front covered concrete porch is maintained.

(2) C15-03-101; 1307 Elton Lane-This is a reconsideration to the Board of Adjustment by applicant whose variance request was denied. Applicant has modified their request from a 4-foot incursion into the required 5-foot side yard setback to a 1 1/2 foot incursion and modified the request for a 40-foot garage to a 25-foot garage. After discussion and deliberation the ExComm voted to lift our opposition-Mike C moved and Ken 2nd (unanimous).

(3) Blake reports that he has received a formal complaint from a neighbor about the

Goodwill Store donation drop-off area, and received permission to investigate and report back.

Treasurer's Report:

Checking \$1,499.05; Savings \$3,178.53; Oak wilt account \$1,195.73; and paid membership approximately 291.

C i t i z e n ' s Communication from the Vineyards of the Tarry Hollow Homeowner Association. They have concerns about the maintenance of the rear of the Tarrytown Baptist Church property. They have been in contact with the Church and wanted some guidance and support in their efforts from WANG. Mike C and Erik volunteer to work with the Tarry Hollow Home Owner Association in seeking an amicable solution.

Blake Tollett
Assistant Secretary

TROWEL & ERROR!

On Saturday, April 3, from 10 AM to 1 PM, Mayfield Park will once again host Trowel & Error, the symposium that annually attracts gardeners from far and wide to hear experts give time-tested tips for beautiful gardens.

Sponsored by Friends of the Parks, Trowel & Error will feature Dick Patterson, rose grower, demonstrating how to grow old garden roses from softwood cuttings and providing the audience with cuttings they will be able to root. Larry Butler from Boggy Creek Farms will share the "joys" of gardening organically, what works, what doesn't



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work, how to make it work! Hill Country Water Gardens' Steve Kainer will round out the day with ideas and plants for the perfect water garden.

For those who arrive early enough, Mayfield's hard-to-find heirloom bulbs, perennials and water lilies may be purchased for your April garden. Also featured will be the legendary raffle of "garden goodies."

No one ever leaves Trowel & Error without a smile, many with an armful of heirloom plants. It's a wonderful way--rain or shine--to spend a morning, learning how to add color into your Spring landscape and relaxing in West Austin's own beautiful back yard...and for only a \$5.00 donation !!

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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Name _____
Address _____
Phone _____ Fax _____
Email _____
Make checks payable to WANG and mail to:
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