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**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**  
*Howson Branch Library  
February 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."*

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Linda Neavel Dickens  
Vice-President

Gwen Jewiss  
Secretary

Ian Inglis  
Treasurer

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COMMITTEES**

James Allman  
Membership Chair

Blake Tollett  
Zoning Chair

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

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

# THE NEIGHBOR

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

January, 2001

## President's Message January 2001

### Preserving Austin: What Makes it Special?

How many times have you heard, read, or told someone how wonderful it is to live in Austin? Anyone who lives here will tell you Austin has a unique atmosphere that distinguishes it from every other major city in Texas. Most people believe in spite of Austin's rapid growth and tremendous development that the city has maintained a small community feeling. But you have to wonder how this has been possible with the influx of so many people. I believe the difference can be attributed to the attitude of many that Austin is more than just a place to live and work. This feeling is what makes Austin special and it is one of the many qualities that continue to draw vast numbers of new residents to the city each year.

Whether you have agreed or disagreed with the different groups that have been vocal over the years, these activists have helped shape Austin. This city has always been a place where people are willing to be a part of the political process and dedicate their time to serving the community. Residents understand the issues that affect the city and are involved in addressing problems that face the community. Consequently, they have played a significant role in shaping the city, creating what Austin is today. It is this willingness to serve the community that has sustained Austin's intimate nature.

Thus, as the city continues to grow, it is important to encourage new residents to get involved in the community.

Otherwise, this unique quality may be lost. For me, I decided to get involved in areas where I had some knowledge or had some interest. After researching my opportunities, I was surprised at all my options. There are a vast number of different activities in which people can participate. These vary widely in the amount of time and energy one must commit, from one meeting a month to a few hours each week. The quantity of one's involvement does not really matter. All that is important is that Austin residents continue to dedicate themselves to their community in some capacity.

Residents who are looking to get involved might consider applying to serve on one of the city's boards or commissions. The City of Austin has more than 60 Boards and Commissions composed of citizens appointed by the City Council. These boards and commissions serve to oversee the city's role in everything from approving historical landmarks to addressing race relations. Several, such as the Planning Commission and Board of Adjustment, are sovereign boards with decision-making authority. Others are advisory boards that provide the Council recommendations for action. Detailed information can be found on the City's internet site at <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/cityclerk/boards.htm>. A current list of the vacant city-appointed positions can be found at <http://malford.ci.austin.tx.us/boards/vacancy.cfm>. You may also call Candy Parham, the Boards and Commissions Coordinator in the Office of the City Clerk, at 512-499-2497, and she will fax or mail you a list of the vacant positions and answer any questions you might have. To apply for one of these positions, simply pick up an

*continued, page 6*

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

**Minutes of ExComm Meeting  
January 8, 2001**

On January 8th, WANG began the new year with a full meeting agenda. As usual, the Executive Committee's (ExComm) liveliest discussions centered around transportation and zoning issues.

In transportation news, the most significant issue concerned the future of MoPac between 2222 and the river, and area residents are finding creative ways to minimize potential neighborhood disruption. One strategy includes seeking registration as National Historic Districts for Pemberton Heights, Old West Austin, Old Enfield, Brykerwoods, and Tarrytown. This designation would greatly slow down the efforts of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to raze homes along MoPac. Transportation Co-chair Susan Pascoe announced a training meeting held on January 20, 2001, from 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. at the Senior Activity Center at 29th and Lamar to teach interested residents about volunteering for the registration program. Estimated costs for the designation effort are \$25,000.00. If you are interested in helping with this project, please contact Susan at SPascoe@AscensionHealth.org.

Another meeting concerning possible MoPac changes will be held on January 31, 2001, at 6:30 p.m. at 1012 Rio Grande. This meeting is sponsored by MONAC, an umbrella group representing all of the central neighborhoods potentially impacted by TxDOT's plans. ExComm member Ian Inglis urges representatives from all of the affected neighborhood groups to attend this meeting in order to organize and coordinate efforts. Additionally, neighbors need to attend the March or April CAMPO

meeting during which TxDOT staff will present narrowed recommendations after Phase I of the MoPac study.

The ExComm, upon the recommendation of James, agreed to publish a special WANG Neighbor to review the MoPac dispute. Blake proposed paying for expanded publication focusing on MoPac issue after the January regular newsletter.

Other transportation committee pursuits include installation of sidewalks in West Austin and improvement of recently re-paved roads.

Sidewalk chair Selina Serna reported that as a phase of the "Build Greater Austin" program, plans are currently being drawn for improvements to the sidewalks on Enfield (both east and west of MoPac) and Exposition (from Enfield north to 35th Street). Details of the specific improvements are being forwarded by the Capital Metro planning department and will be reported as soon as they become available. Construction on these improvements should begin in the summer of 2001. As "Package 5" of the Build Greater Austin program, additional survey work will begin soon on other streets in our neighborhood. Capital Metro welcomes suggestions on additional streets in our neighborhood with heavy bus traffic that could use sidewalk improvements. Forward suggestions to the WANG Transportation Committee via our website at wang@deepeddy.com or contact Selina at 477-5913.

The ExComm agreed to send a letter to Mayor Kirk Watson requesting an assessment of recently paved roadways in Tarrytown. Neighbors have complained about the loose gravel that creates dangerous driving, biking, and walking conditions.

In zoning news, Zoning Chair Blake Tollett reported on several items of interest. Most

notably, continuing negotiations with Tarrytown United Methodist Church (TUMC) have led to recent changes in the Church's expansion plans. WANG supported and TUMC received from the Board of Adjustments a variance for off-site parking. Additionally, the City will allow the campus expansion under SF-3 zoning and TUMC will be allowed to increase its impervious cover on the main campus because of a site plan filed in the 1950's. The Church wants to rezone two houses it owns at the Southeast corner of Greenlee and Exposition to NO-CO (neighborhood office-conditional overlay). Finally, TUMC is selling its two empty lots on Spring Lane. Blake will be talking to the Church's neighbors about these developments and reporting at the next WANG meeting.

Other zoning cases involved several variance requests. WANG chose to not comment on a request at 2206 W. 11th (decreasing minimum rear yard set back) and to continue discussion on a request at 608 Upson (building a "granny flat"). WANG reviewed and opposed the request for properties at 3701/05 Gilbert (increasing fence above maximum allowable height) and also re-examined the case for rezoning the Pemberton Castle, 1415 Woolridge.

Balie Griffith, Liaison Chair, reported on this committee's work. James Allman noted discrepancies on completion dates of the Deep Eddy EMS between the City and the project architects. He urges an earlier completion, and the ExComm passed a motion to send letter expressing urgency for EMS construction.

Treasurer Ian Inglis reported the following WANG balances:

Checking	\$3208.08
Saving	\$3548.66
Oak Wilt	\$1181.54

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

- I. Call Meeting to Order (7:10)
- II. Citizen Communications
  - A. 510 Atlanta Street
  - B. Other
- III. Approval of Minutes
- IV. Committee Reports
  - A. Communications
    1. Newsletter
  - B. Membership
  - C. Transportation
    1. Update on Historical Landmark Designation
  - D. Zoning
    1. Update on Methodist Church
    2. Variance Requests
      - a. 608 Upson
      - b. 2206 W. 11th
  - E. Liaison
- V. Treasurer's Report
- VI. New/Old Business
- VII. Adjourn (8:45)



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**Ms. Ann Irwin, Director  
Cultural Resources Management  
Environmental Affairs Division  
Texas Department of Transportation  
125 East 11<sup>th</sup> Street  
Austin, Texas 78701-2483**

Dear Ms. Irwin:

I am a concerned citizen of Austin, Texas, and reside at \_\_\_\_\_, close to MoPac. Please accept this letter as evidence of my request to obtain consulting party status with regard to the potential expansion of MoPac in the area roughly between Town Lake and 45<sup>th</sup> Street.

Potential changes to MoPac will affect several historic neighborhoods, including Clarksville, Old Enfield, Pemberton Heights, Brykerwoods, and Tarrytown. The Clarksville Historic District already is included on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). On December 15, 2000, the Texas Historical Commission determined that the proposed Old West Austin Historic District, bounded by 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Lamar, 35<sup>th</sup> Street and MoPac, also meets requirements for inclusion in the NRHP. In addition, Camp Mabry appears on the National Register of Historic Places and is a State Archeological Landmark.

Along with many other neighbors in central Austin, I am concerned that a great number of properties would be affected adversely by expansion of Mopac, reconfiguration of its exit/entry ramps, or widening its feeder or connecting streets. The demolition of historic homes, loss of open space, and increase in noise, vibration, water run-off and traffic would compromise the character of some of Austin's most historic neighborhoods.

Thank you for notifying the TxDOT Austin district office, FHWA, and the Texas Historical Commission that I am a consulting party to their Section 106 consultation process for this undertaking. As I understand it, the process includes identification of potential adverse effects on historic resources and gives full consideration to options that avoid harmful results.

## MOPAC MEETINGS

On March 12, TxDOT and its consultants will present to the Capital Area Mobility Planning Organization (CAMPO) several alternative concepts about changing traffic mobility on MoPac. The concepts range from doing nothing to adding one or two high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes to adding general purpose lanes. CAMPO will narrow down which option or options it wants to pursue, and another phase of the mobility study will ensue. MoNAC [MoPac Neighborhood Associations Coalition] leaders held meetings on November 20, 2000, and January 5, 2001, to discuss strategies for responding to TxDOT's presentation and for revising our position statement in light of recent disturbing proposals from TxDOT and its consultants regarding the central Austin MoPac interchanges. The meetings were productive and we agreed to meet again at 1012 Rio Grande on January 31, 2001, at 6:30 p.m. MoNAC leaders anticipate speak-

ing with CAMPO members beginning in January, and we will appear at the April 9, 2001, CAMPO public hearing on TxDOT's proposals. MoNAC encourages all interested citizens to attend the hearing on April 9. Call Ian Inglis for details at 472-1950, or e-mail ian at hiker@ccsi.com.

### MONAC MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDE:

- Allandale Neighborhood Association (NA)
- Balcones Area/Highland Park West NA
- Brykerwoods NA
- Johnson Creek NA
- Oakmont Heights NA
- Old Enfield Homeowners Association
- Old West Austin NA
- West Austin Neighborhood Group

Many neighbors have expressed concern about potential changes along MoPac, wondering how its expansion might affect homes situated close to the corridor. Not only will contiguous properties feel adverse effects, but those homes deeper in the neighborhoods may also experience unwelcome change because of a ripple effect. Besides attending meetings of MONAC, you can voice your concerns about MoPac changes by copying and sending the letter on the next page or writing a similar one of your own. By becoming a consulting party to the process, you will be notified any time a relevant meeting or decision-making event occurs. Please think about what you might be able to do to help minimize destruction of any properties in our central neighborhoods.



## TOWNLAKE BRANCH YMCA

Since 1969, the TownLake Branch YMCA has been a focal point of fitness and family activity for the Central and West Austin community. Located at 1100 W. Cesar Chavez (at Lamar & Town Lake), the facility supports a wide variety of activities that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

TownLake offers a 5,000-square-foot weight room with state of the art strength training equipment as well as a cardiovascular room with treadmills, exercise bikes and stair-climbers. The indoor gymnasium is also a popular attraction for basketball and indoor soccer leagues. With a 25-yard, six-lane heated indoor lap pool and a specialized teaching pool, the TownLake Natatorium is a landmark for area swimmers of all ages. A hot tub is located next to the pool for therapy or relaxation.

TownLake also offers numerous classes open to both members and non-members. Group or private instruction is available in strength training, aerobics, swimming, and other specialty areas

such as senior fitness. Kids activities include sports, aquatics and summer & holiday camps.

The YMCA offers financial assistance for membership and programs for anyone qualifying. In 2000, the YMCA distributed more than \$500,000 to deserving individuals and families. The YMCA also offers after school child care in 17 elementary schools throughout Austin. More than 2,000 Austin kids participate in Y-Youth Sports such as basketball, soccer, baseball and flag football around the city. And the Association has adopted 5 character development values — respect, caring, faith, responsibility and honesty—which are woven into the curriculum of every program.

Open to persons of all ages, races and religious backgrounds, the YMCA of Austin is more than just a fitness facility, it's your family away from home, providing support and values-based enrichment opportunities to build strong kids, strong families, strong communities.

— Sean Doles

### President's Message, from cover

application from the City Clerk's Office, Room 116, Municipal Building, 124 W. Eighth Street or download an application from [http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/cityclerk/b\\_forms.htm](http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/cityclerk/b_forms.htm). Once it has been completed, this application can then be returned to the City Clerk's Office.

Working for one of these boards or commissions is, of course, only one of many ways that Austin residents can become involved in their city. Hundreds of other organizations are in need of volunteers. And of course WANG is always looking for individuals willing to help with its many objectives, such as the current effort to evaluate historical district designation. Giving even a small amount of one's time can help to preserve what makes Austin special.

**Hal Katz**  
703-5715  
hkatz@hwlaw.com

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## Don't Drink the Water!

There is probably no dog friendlier city than Austin. Dogs can run free at designated dog parks and mingle with neighbor pups. Most areas have flowing or standing bodies of water; some have communal water bowls. What could be better! Your pet has water to refresh itself, and those breeds that love to swim can just jump into the creek or lake to cool down and quench their thirst at the same time. Saves you from having to haul a water container. The best of both worlds, right? Wrong. Do you know about a nasty little protozoal organism called giardia? Giardia typically inhabits the small intestines of an affected animal, potentially resulting in diarrhea and vomiting. This definitely is not something you want your pet to contract. Furthermore, you can contract it from your pet and in humans it can take months to resolve.

Central Texas is a hotbed for giardia, and many wild animals serve as reservoirs of the organism. Giardia is spread by way of fecal contamination of water or food. Wild animals get their water from creeks and lakes; unfortunately, they also may use the banks of these waterways as their personal toilet. Along comes the unsuspecting pet owner and his very thirsty dog. . .well, you know the rest. As quickly as five days later, the poor pup has a raging case of diarrhea.

Giardia may be the worst organism threatening area waterways, but there also are any number of bacteria, protozoa, rickettsia, and algae that can cause illness in your pet. Community water bowls may also be a source of viral transmission.

So next time you go for that romp, do your pet a favor. Bring his own water bottle.

—Priscilla Pulver, DVM

## MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Make checks payable to WANG and mail to:  
WANG  
P.O. Box 5722  
Austin, TX 78763-5722

- 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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## WANG LEADERSHIP — IN THEIR OWN WORDS

The voice of Austin's neighborhood associations continues to grow louder and gain respect among City leaders, and West Austin Neighborhood Group (WANG) members have proven particularly adept at being heard. From securing a neighborhood EMT Station to facilitating property expansion discussions, WANG executive committee members volunteer their time and skills to protect and enhance quality of life in West Austin. If you would like to contribute your own time or have a neighborhood issue you would like to see addressed, please join one of our meetings, held at 7:00 p.m. on the first Monday each month at the Howson Library.

WANG recently elected a new slate of officers to lead the association's efforts for the next year: President: Hal Katz; Vice-president: Linda Dickens; Treasurer: Ian Inglis; Secretary: Gwen Jewiss; Assistant Secretary: Michael Cannatti. Other members include Brykerwoods Liaison and Austin Neighborhoods Council co-representative Joyce Basiciano, Transportation Committee co-chairs Susan Pascoe and Irwin Spear, Membership chair James Allman, Liaison chair Balie Griffith, Webmaster Chris Garrigues, Selina Serna, Eric Cary, and Sara Madera. In addition to our monthly meetings, the executive committee members hold a couple of retreats each year to determine goals, refine strategies, and build community. Outlined below are some of the members' objectives, as well as what they value about West Austin.

### Hal Katz, President:

I'm most interested in working closely with the neighborhood to respond to specific concerns and challenges and in being effective in facilitating solutions. My specific goals include moving forward with the sidewalk effort by identifying one street in the neighborhood and obtaining a sidewalk for that street. Also, we should continue working with the city to obtain a traffic study. I want to increase our interaction with other neighborhood associations to strengthen our understanding and effectiveness in addressing neighborhood challenges.

What I appreciate most about what the neighborhood offers its residents is its strong sense of community, its history and beauty.

### Linda Neavel Dickens, Vice-president:

My goals for WANG include enhancing our contributions to central neighborhoods and to Austin. We are here to facilitate problem solving for our neighbors and to maintain the services and quality of life we currently enjoy. I would like to see WANG members—both ExComm and general membership—create more partnership among the city's neighborhood associations.

Our West Austin area provides a beautiful mix of green space, homes, and business that helps support the community feeling. We have a safe and friendly neighborhood that should be protected and loved.

### Ian Inglis, Treasurer:

My chief goal for WANG is to help keep MoPac from swallowing the neighborhood. I also think WANG should continue to carefully monitor zoning

variance requests and register opposition (and support) when called for. I would like WANG to support sidewalks and other pedestrian issues, because our neighborhood is very pedestrian unfriendly.

The central location of our neighborhood is vitally important. Due to our convenient location, we are subject to gentrification pressure; maintaining our middle-class roots is important to me. In this light, I would prefer to see quality multi-family units (condos, townhomes fit for families) built than gigantic sprawling single-family rock mansions. With the increased density that implies, we need more sidewalks and much better public transit and commercial districts that serve residents' basic needs within walking distance.

### Blake Tollett, Zoning Chair:

I take seriously the purpose of the association as set out in our bylaws: "This association shall be a non-profit, non-partisan organization open to all residents within the boundaries of a designated area within the City of Austin, Texas, who may through such association consider and deal by all lawful means with the common and shared concerns, goals, and activities that affect the quality of life of its members.

"The association shall be concerned with community development, the ecology, the safety, and other related matters that indirectly and directly affect the quality and character of the neighborhood and the City of Austin.

"The association's goal is to preserve the neighborhood and protect it from deterioration."



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Austin, Texas 78746  
email: maderam@texas.net  
Fax (512) 328-3922  
Office (512) 328-3939

This next year, I would like to see us formulate and implement a comprehensive neighborhood traffic plan as well as update our master neighborhood plan.

### Gwen Jewiss, Secretary:

We need to continue the expansion of our strategic thinking and follow through on those items we've already identified. The transportation in and around our neighborhood may be up for some dramatic changes in the near future. WANG should be an advocate/facilitator for communication to our neighborhood for the latest discussions on those plans.

The quality of life here is significant! I like the ability of residents to walk to local businesses, children to walk/ride bikes to school, and play in their neighborhoods. It's important that there is a sense of neighborhood. We have strong identities.

### Joyce Basiciano, Brykerwoods Liaison:

I believe WANG should act with others as a coordinated association of West Austin neighborhoods to defend, protect, and preserve the residential quality of those neighborhoods from all threats.

For the next year, the issues we should focus on include transportation and neighborhood development. Let's maximize our urban forest.

### Irwin Spear, Transportation Co-chair:

Goals for WANG: 1.) To protect the quality of life in the West Austin neighborhoods. 2.) To represent the interests of the majority of West Austin residents when threatened by development, traffic problems, zoning changes, etc. 3.) To protect and aid the development of parks, green belts and other open areas of West Austin, including Camp Mabry and U.T.'s Brackenridge Field Station. 4.) To resist changes that threaten the welfare and interests of surrounding property. 5.) To represent the interests of West Austin residents before the City Council and other governmental bodies.

What I like about West Austin: 1.) The preponderance of single family homes. 2.) The parks, green belts and other open areas. 3.) The proximity of

required food, gasoline, shopping and other needs. 4.) The stability of West Austin. 5.) The availability of such "governmental" agencies as the post office, library and schools. 6.) The proximity of cultural events at U.T. and downtown.

### Susan Pascoe, Transportation Co-chair:

My goals for participation in WANG include actively pursuing opportunities to preserve the integrity and character of our neighborhoods while working with others to build a community of aware residents. Change is inevitable, but it does not have to be destructive. Preserving the quality of central Austin is essential to maintaining the city's character.

Although my husband and I are not long term residents of Pemberton, we are committed to conserving the qualities that make it special - the varied architecture, the tree cover, the sense of history. It is my belief that the neighborhoods of central Austin share a uniqueness that must be cherished and protected.

### Mike Cannatti:

Other than the overarching goal of preserving and protecting our neighborhood character and quality, my personal goal is improvement and construction of sidewalks.

The present state of the neighborhood is what has attracted its residents and made the property values increase. Therefore, we should strive to maintain West Austin's current character and limit the corrosive effects of the city's growth. We should pay special attention to minimizing the pressures created by the high property valuations (such as new construction of inappropriate housing and inappropriate commercial uses) and the other effects of growth (such as MoPac expansion or development of Camp Mabry or the Municipal Golf Course properties).

### Selina Serna:

As a board member, I'd like to work on quality of life issues in our neighborhood, making it a safe and enjoyable place to raise a family. My areas of concern include parks, sidewalks and traffic calming.

## APD West Austin District Report

Austin Police Department (APD) West Austin District Representative Tim Atkinson reports on the latest police news for our area. A significant trend in West Austin crime of late involves scams that target the elderly. In particular, watch out for scams that involve promises of asphalt repair. The more that neighbors know about such crimes, the better prepared they are to avoid them.

Officer Atkinson also reports the bad news that home burglaries have increased. The good news, though, is that APD detectives believe these episodes will be short term. They do have definite suspects in mind and will stop the spree soon. With the addition of increased communication and item registration with Second Hand Goods Retailers, AKA, pawnshops, APD hopes to track those individuals who try to sell stolen goods.

The APD has established a Street Response Unit for West Austin, with two officers, one detective and a sergeant. The unit will address issues such as multiple vehicle burglaries occurring over many nights in a confined geographic location or multiple residential burglaries that follow similar patterns. Working just in West Austin, the unit becomes familiar with crime issues that may be particular to our area and can help minimize them.

Finally, Atkinson explains that the upcoming budget will provide West Austin with a new tool to help combat illegal traffic moves. The traffic monitor, an automatic sensor that reports traffic flow, speed, and time of day, provides APD with information that helps them determine where to place officers at critical positions and times. Additionally, overtime salary will be available for officers to monitor traffic at rush hour, typically when the district officers are too busy with call load to respond to traffic issues.

As always, if you have safety concerns or suspect suspicious shenanigans, contact Officer Atkinson at 974-5341 or Timothy.Atkinson@ci.austin.tx.us.