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From the bylaws of WANG:

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. 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 to protect it from deterioration.

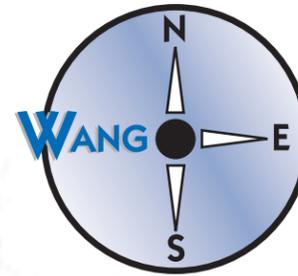
Protect Our Water!

If you see anyone dumping illegal or unknown substances into the storm sewers, please report this to the City of Austin Environmental Hotline: **499-2550**.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Howson Branch Library
August 7th, 2000, 7:00 pm

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

West Austin Neighborhood Group



West Austin Neighborhood Group
Organized 1973

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

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Blake Tollett
President

Hal Katz
Vice-President

Gwen Jewiss
Secretary

Ian Inglis
Treasurer

STANDING COMMITTEES

James Allman
Membership Chair

Linda Dickens
Historian

VACANT
Zoning Chair

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Joyce Basciano
Michael Cannatti
Becky Combs
Don Cook
Chris Garrigues
Balie Griffith
Dudley Houghton
Gwen Jewiss
Sara Madera
Irwin Spear

HONORARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mary Arnold
Sinclair Black
Hon. Lloyd Doggett
Hon. Sherri Greenberg
Hon. Beverly Griffith

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

THE NEIGHBOR

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

July 2000

President's Message July 2000

Fellow Neighbors:

If all goes as planned, this issue of *The Neighbor* will be an expanded eight page effort. Not counting the annual newsletter, we are hoping to put out at least three of these editions a year. The Communications Committee, chaired by ExComm Vice-President Hal Katz, envisions not only a forum by which pertinent information is passed on to the neighborhood, but also a means of collecting historical anecdotes about the West side. We will be actively seeking community input, so give me, or ExComm Historian Linda Dickens (458-9408) a call.

1504 Robin Hood Trail: The intersection of Robin Hood and Bonnie Road is interesting in a zoning sense in that all four corners are zoned CS—"commercial or industrial activities which typically have operating characteristics or traffic services requirements generally incompatible with residential environments, such as sales, custom manufacturing, vehicle storage, or construction services." This is a very intense zoning category. Research is being done to establish when the zoning was placed on the land, but I have been told that a grocery store and a French restaurant were once located at 1504 Robin Hood. It appears now that the WestSide Group office building has been sold to an association rather

than a restaurant group, and the neighborhood impact will not change. It should be noted that even though the zoning is in place on the land, to fully utilize that zoning would require substantial variances from the City codes. It is at these Board/Commission hearings that neighbors have a chance for input. Down the road, when all the information is in, WANG should meet with the corner property owners, affected neighbors, and the City to address this zoning anomaly.

Zero Lot Lines: We all know about skyrocketing property values in the neighborhood. To maximize, or justify, such large investments, some property owners may choose to build "houses on steroids" and/or seek variances to decrease side, rear or front yard setbacks, or increase the maximum impervious cover allowed on the lot. Aesthetically, a homeowner should be able to do as he pleases. Variance requests, however, go before the Board of Adjustment, and again, this is where the neighborhood has input. We need to formulate a policy now to address our response to such requests. Call or write me, or come to the next meeting, on Monday, August 7th, at Howson Library and the ExComm will discuss it.

Westenfield Park: When Johnson Creek Neighborhood Committee (JCNC) disbanded several years ago, they left approximately \$750 to

Continued, page 3

Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting

JUNE 5, 2000

Members Present: Michael Cannatti, Linda Dickens, Balie Griffith, Dudley Houghton, Gwen Jewiss, Hal Katz, Irwin Spear, Blake Tollett.

Guests present: Elizabeth Willis, Mike O'Leary, Anne Veeraghavan, Jeannie & Carl Hutchison, Lisa Weston, Richard Viktorin, Beverly Griffith, Roberta Crenshaw

Sidewalks

Ms. Willis reported that she has spoken with Linda DuPriest, the City Sidewalk Coordinator. She noted that the current procedure for working towards getting sidewalks is as follows: meet with the neighborhood group, develop a comprehensive plan, present the plan to City Council/City Planning Commission, and, finally, report back to the neighbors with the subsequent decisions. On a motion by Irwin, WANG members voted to have Blake write a letter to Ms. DuPriest explaining that we have a sidewalk task force in place. The first neighborhood we will consider for sidewalks includes the Deep Eddy area.

Renovation of Rock Windmill at Johnson Creek

Richard Viktorin presented photographs of an old rock windmill that stands in the greenbelt along the Johnson Creek Hike and Bike Trail. The windmill was built in what was once the yard of Mr. Reilly Bennett, prior to the construction of MOPAC, and Mr. Viktorin now intends to restore the windmill to its former glory. He noted that the Austin Parks Foundation has been soliciting grant applications for parks improvement, and he proposes to submit an application for funds to clean and repair the windmill as well as complete some remedial work to an existing concrete paved area and picnic table. One of the conditions for receiving the grant funds is that the neighborhood group supports the proposal. Mr. Viktorin stated that he would accomplish the work with sweat equity and by soliciting donations from local businesses. After some discussion regarding what WANG sponsorship could mean, the ExComm voted to support Mr. Viktorin's efforts, as long as no financial commitment from WANG is required.

Sandy Beach Preserve

Balie Griffith outlined a plan for the City to reacquire the Sandy Beach Preserve as well



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as adjacent property in order to create a five-acre tract. Both Mary Arnold and Roberta Crenshaw have supported this project for many years and would like to see this land available for public use. The issue will be brought before City Council in the near future. Balie also distributed updates on the Seaholm Power Plant project, and discussion ensued regarding the potential impervious cover. The ExComm agreed to support the acquisition of Sandy Beach and adjacent property for public use, with the request that as much green space remain available as possible.

Oak Wilt at Reed Park

Blake read a letter reporting that oak wilt has been discovered in three trees close to the swimming pool at Reed Park. At this time, The Friends of Reed Park, chaired by Ann Phipps, is requesting no funds; the City currently has the needed chemical available. There may be a request, however, when a follow-up treatment is needed in three to four years.

Tarrytown Methodist Church

Blake and Dudley reviewed the proposed contract for the development of the Church and adjacent properties. Discussions between WANG and Church representatives are ongoing, and several items still are not finalized

Nominating Committee and Annual Meeting Committee

The Communications Committee met prior to the ExComm meeting to discuss possible dates and ideas for the annual meeting. The Nominating Committee has been established to propose names for election to the

ExComm. Committee members are: James Allman, Vicki Tatum, and Karen Cannatti.

Tarrytown Shopping Center

Some neighbors would like to revive the Farmer's Market at Tarrytown Shopping Center. Hal has calls into Diane Land, still trying to maintain a dialogue with Ms. Daniels' representative.

2509 Scenic Drive

The resident is requesting a variance to increase impervious cover from 45% to 49% in order to install a swimming pool. Blake will speak with adjacent property owners to hear their views.

1504 Robinhood

This property currently is for sale, and because of a previous zoning fluke, it is zoned CS (commercial). The neighbors are concerned that a new owner may elect to open a high traffic business at that site. The ExComm will send a certified letter to the property agent regarding neighborhood compatibility issues.

3207 Bonnie (at Dilman)

A metal fence installed at the curb sits within the City right of way, and some neighbors who drive along this corner have complained about low visibility. The location of the fence poses a hazard to motorists and pedestrians. The homeowner has refused to negotiate the removal or replacement of the fence. WANG will seek a resolution of the matter by writing a letter to the City explaining its objection to the fence and requesting assistance.

Minutes prepared by Gwen Jewiss



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Youths Spray Tarrytown

On July 17, neighbors driving on Exposition Blvd., along with some adjacent streets, may have noticed many signs of graffiti painted along sidewalks, the street, building walls, and retaining walls. The juveniles struck sometime between 11:30 p.m. on 7/16 and 5:30 a.m. on 7/17, leaving behind black and green tags. The City Crime Unit appeared early on Monday to investigate the graffiti, and officers were able to take many pictures, as well as lift fingerprints from paint cans that were left behind; yet chances for a match are unlikely since, by law, juveniles' fingerprints are not in the police database.

Police are certain that this activity is not gang related; it has the hallmarks of a juvenile prank, albeit an expensive one. Similar graffiti appeared at the same time in Oak Hill.

If you saw anything suspicious during the night in question, please contact Officer Tim Atkinson, 974-5341. Although Officer Atkinson reports that leads are surfacing, he still would like to hear from anyone who may have witnessed the tagging. He emphasizes that observation is the key to fighting crime.

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.

Yes, I want to join WANG. I want to renew my WANG membership.

I have enclosed:

\$20 household membership \$10 student/senior membership

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

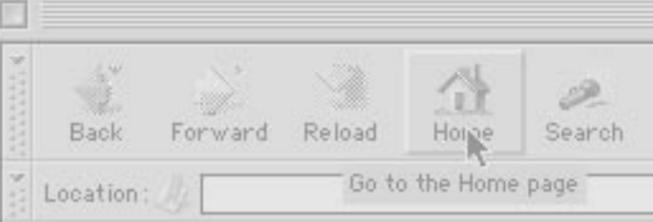
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Joni K. Wallace, DDS
TarryTown Center
2414 Exposition Blvd.
Suite B105
(512) 236-1611

FAMILY & COSMETIC DENTISTRY



WANG Web Site

WANG had the first neighborhood association web site in Austin, but we allowed it to get stale. We are updating the web site and now have recent newsletters on-line.

We're making incremental changes and improvements, and there is still much to do. If you have web skills and are interested in assisting with this effort, please send an email message to wang-internet@deepeddy.com. If you don't have web skills, but would like to be of assistance in other ways, please send an email message to wang@deepeddy.com or call Blake Tollett at 477-4028 to let us know what your interests are. Thanks for helping to improve our neighborhood association.

Officer Atkinson On Duty

Ever wonder who in the Austin Police Department (APD) is looking out for you? On the West side, we are lucky to have the accessible, friendly, and energetic Officer Tim Atkinson representing our safety needs, and he wants to hear from you. As Officer Atkinson says, "I really really really like it when people call me about [situations] and clue me in before I find out later."

As our District Representative (DR), Officer Atkinson tracks neighborhood crime trends, coordinates safety services, and acts as liaison between neighbors and APD patrol officers. He also attends all the neighborhood meetings that he can in order to meet residents and respond to concerns. An officer for seven years, he has represented our neighborhood for nearly two, after previously patrolling in Dove Springs and around the infamous Rio Motel on I-35. Officer Atkinson has a lot of territory to cover, west from Shoal Creek Blvd. to Westlake, north from Townlake to RR 2222.

One current project on Officer Atkinson's agenda focuses on establishing a street response unit in Central West Austin, which should be in force by late October. He explains that Street Response depends on officers both in uniform and undercover to help make our neighborhoods safer. These officers may patrol the area in marked or unmarked vehicles, might be riding bicycles or walking. They will respond to issues in priority order, including such challenges as narcotics stings, transient matters, car burglaries, and other

major crimes. According to Officer Atkinson, "This will help our neighborhoods tremendously."

In addition to this project, Officer Atkinson takes a day-to-day interest in the well-being of our neighborhoods. He usually arrives at his office early in the morning to handle phone calls, e-mails, etc., then heads out to the streets by 10:00 or 11:00 a.m. In the afternoon, he's back in his office to complete paperwork before calling it a day. You can reach him by phone at 974-5341 or by e-mail at timothy.atkinson@ci.austin.tx.us.

After work, Officer Atkinson heads home to his wife and two rambunctious, young sons. Two dogs, too. He knows that after he retires from rallying across our neighborhood in his Crown Victoria, he'd like to do some rally races across Europe. Do you think the APD will buy him an Audi S4 as a bonus for all his dedicated service?

Frequently Asked Questions for Officer Tim Atkinson

Beginning this month, we plan to have Officer Atkinson answer FAQ's in our monthly newsletter. If there's a particular question about neighborhood safety that you'd like him to address, please contact him by phone at 974-5341 or by e-mail at timothy.atkinson@ci.austin.tx.us.

Q.: What can I do about a really loud neighbor?

A.: The City of Austin has guidelines about what is termed 'disorderly conduct noise.' Generally, anything above the 70-75 decibel range is considered

prima-facia violation, whether it's frequently loud music, barking dogs, something disruptive to a reasonable person. If the loud noise comes from, say, a construction site and is temporary, we can't do much about it.

If the neighbor repeatedly disrupts the peace, then you simply might want to talk to him or her about the noise. It's possible that they're not aware that the activities are causing a nuisance, and often, just mentioning it may solve the problem. If this doesn't work or if you're not comfortable approaching the neighbor, then I will schedule a time to come out to talk with them. If you need immediate assistance for noise violations, you can call 911 and request an officer to assist. Make sure you ask to speak to an officer, requesting that they come to your home so you can have them hear the noise from your property. Once they understand your point of view, the officer is more likely to intervene on your behalf. If an officer has to come out more than once for one continuous event like a party, we'll give a warning on the first visit and a citation on the second one. The City has established fines of up to \$500.00 for violating the noise ordinance.

Court-ordered mediation typically is a first step. Then you both work together to find a solution along with the assistance of a neutral, trained mediator.

Finally, you can file a complaint on the loud neighbor. For a Class C misdemeanor, you can make a formal statement at the Municipal Court building.

Continued from cover

WANG with the understanding that the money would eventually be used to benefit Westenfield and Tarrytown Parks. Together with general membership funds WANG purchased a thousand dollar CD. Over the last two years there have been discussions about using the CD to purchase, plant and maintain trees, in conjunction with PARD, in these parks. This idea appears to be moving forward again—updates will be forthcoming.

Annual Meeting: Our organizational By-Laws state the annual meeting will be held in September unless the ExComm decides otherwise. I will be asking the ExComm to move the meeting to Saturday, 14 October because of religious observances, football schedules and the heat. It will be from 10am to noon at Reed Park. I will keep you advised of further details, but I want to promise you now that the coffee will be ready at 10am sharp.

Agenda: Beyond updates of ongoing interests and committee reports, the only discussion item is formulating WANG's response to future variance requests. If you would like to bring a matter to the ExComm meeting, please call me. As always, everyone is welcome at the meeting, check your mailing label for your membership renewal date, and feel free to call me on matters of neighborhood concern.

Blake Tollett

3701 Bonnie Road
477-4028

Casis Improvements

In case you have not noticed, there is a great deal of exciting activity going on at Casis this summer. Asbestos abatement crews have been working day and night since the last day of school to clean the building completely. Every item of furniture has been cleaned and stored. All of the floor and ceiling tiles have been removed. Basically, the inside of the building has been power-washed, leaving it clean and free of accumulated dust and debris. The abatement project should be finished before the end of summer, making way for construction crews to come in and begin installing new air-conditioning and heating systems in the classrooms. The current plan calls for the core areas of the building—library, cafeteria, gymnasium, computer lab, office area—plus the fifth grade wing to be finished before school begins in August. Unfortunately, the remaining classrooms will not be ready for the beginning of school, thus necessitating the installation of nine portables on the back field until construction is complete.

We recognize that placing portables on the Casis field is both an eyesore and an inconvenience. Yet we are looking forward to moving back into a building that is safe, clean, and comfortable. We have been assured that the new portables will be moved out when construction is complete and that the field will be returned to its original condition.

Casis also will receive new playground equipment soon. The District has hired a firm to install equipment that meets current safety codes; the Casis PTA has donated additional funds to provide equipment that will meet the needs of our students. We look forward to the completion of the installation soon after the school year begins.

Of course, Casis always has many opportunities for volunteers, from helping in the office to reading with a child. Our outstanding reading buddy program serves more than 70 students, with more on a waiting list. If you are interested in assisting in any way, please feel free to give us a call or drop us a note. Our web site address is www.casis.org.

We are looking forward to celebrating the 50th anniversary of Casis in the spring. The tradition of excellence established so many years ago continues today. Superb students, committed parents, a dedicated faculty, and a supportive community help to make Casis an outstanding place for young people to learn and grow.

— Dr. Barry Aidman, Principal

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July Fourth Celebration at Reed Park



Neighbors enjoy Dixieland favorites



The firefighters are always a big hit!



Ann Phipps, looking dapper in her chapeau



WANG ExComm members, Rep. J.J. "Jake" Pickle, and Mayor Kirk Watson

Helpful Numbers

(taken from the Austin Police Department's Community Liaison Office Resource Manual)

Boarding of Houses - 499-2875 (fax 499-2326)

In order for a home to be boarded the house needs to be open and completely accessible to the public. If the inspector considers it to be a danger to the public it may be boarded within three (3) days.

Creek Drainage Complaints - 499-3366 (fax 499-6660)

Report overgrown/trashed creeks and drainage areas to the Watershed Protection Department. The exact location of the problem is needed. An inspector will be sent to investigate the reported area. If the location is the responsibility of the private property owner the owner will be contacted.

Curb Ramps and Sidewalk Requests -499-7202

To request the installation or repair a curb ramp, call the Architectural and Engineering Services Division of Public Works and Transportation Dept. Give exact information (i.e. the ramp on the southwest corner of ABC Street has concrete missing.) An engineer will be sent to the access the damage and/or need and arrange for repair. If request may involve child safety issues call 499-7273.

Crosswalks - 457-4860 (fax 457-4868)

To request installation of a new crosswalk or the maintenance of

an existing crosswalk, call the above number.

Dead Animals - 499-2111 (fax 499-1999)

Dead animals in the right of way are collected within a twenty four (24) hour period Monday Saturday by calling the above number.

Flooding Complaints - 499-3366 (fax 499-3360)

Complaints about areas prone to flooding should be directed to the Watershed Protection Department. An inspector will visit the location and determine what might be done to cure the problem. These situations are often complex and may require a large amount of money to fix. Should the problem be of sufficient size and cost, it may require scheduling and funding as a Capital Improvement Project.

Garbage Pick Up - 499-2111 (fax 499-1999)

The Solid Waste Services Department picks up residential waste and recyclable products. If you have questions about garbage that has not been picked up or how to get a recycling bin call the number above.

Graffiti Removal - 473-4125 (fax 473-4273)

The City can assist property owners at no charge in the removal of graffiti. The City's Graffiti Abatement program can also supply free paint or other graffiti removal materials to property owners. To report graffiti or for assistance in graffiti removal, call the above number.

Oak Wilt Discovered at Reed Park

Friends of Reed Park chair Ann Phipps recently discovered symptoms of oak wilt at Reed Park. The trees affected are on the south side of the pool, inside the fence. Two of the five trees in the group appear to be sick, while the others still look healthy right now. Phipps contacted Jay Culver, Oak Wilt Suppression Manager for the Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) Forestry group. Mr. Culver inspected and confirmed the presence of oak wilt.

Within a day, Mr. Culver was able to confirm a plan of action. Five days later (after the 4th of July weekend), the five trees in the immediate area were injected with appropriate chemicals. In August, PARD will trench to prevent the spread of oak wilt to the other nearby live oaks, including the landmark stand of four trees at the low-water crossing of the creek.

The needed chemicals were available, so there was no cost to the neighborhood for this treatment. The treatments may need to be repeated every three-four years, however, which may require some cost in the future. Friends of Reed Park will monitor the situation and do everything we can to keep the trees alive and prevent spread of the disease in the park.

We would like to thank Jay Culver for his responsiveness and courtesy. He cancelled vacation plans for the first week of July to take care of the trees.

In the meantime, the Friends of Reed Park completed an application for a grant from the Austin Parks Foundation. The project for which we seek funding is a comprehensive tree management program for Reed Park. If funding is approved, we will seek matching funds from other donors and volunteers to do the first part of the project: mapping and measuring all the trees in the park. Once the trees are inventoried, we will engage a professional arborist to develop a plan for maintaining existing trees and plant-

ing new ones. The next step will be to begin trimming and planting according to the plan. If you have comments on this plan, wish to volunteer, or have questions about the oak wilt, please contact Ann Phipps at 472-3199. Tax-deductible donations can be mailed to Friends of Reed Park, 2100 Stamford Lane, Austin, TX 78703.

— Ann Phipps

Sand Beach Reserve and the Lumberman's Tract

It's a long story — going back to the Republic of Texas and the founding of the City of Austin... When the City of Austin was laid out, the Republic "reserved" land along the Colorado River, and called it "Sand Beach Reserve"...

In 1945, the "reserve" acreage on the north side of the river was deeded to Austin — in anticipation of the city trying to enhance the edges of the river for public enjoyment — with the proviso that the land be used for "public purposes" and that should the land be sold it would revert back to the state.

During a lawsuit initiated in 1984, the State Attorney General's office discovered that the northern boundary of the Sand Beach Reserve represented on city maps, based on a 1916 survey, was too far to the south, and was NOT representative of the true boundary.

To make a long story shorter, and to skip the details of the 1984 lawsuit and another in 1989, the five acres of supposedly private land south of the railroad and bounded by Lamar on the west, Sand Beach Reserve on the south, and railroad land on the east between the tract and Seaholm Power Plant, ended up being "owned" by Lumberman's Investment Corporation (LIC).

When a newspaper article in 1997 said that Gables Apartments was planning to build 300+ apartments on the 5 acres, and take access over Sand

Beach Reserve, Roberta Crenshaw and Mary Arnold got busy opposing the apartments, and were successful in getting the City of Austin to investigate the "true" boundary line.

Although the Citizen's Bond Advisory Committee recommended purchase of the Lumberman's Tract as part of the 1998 Bond election, in response to testimony from the Seaholm Reuse Committee stating that the LIC tract was very essential to a viable public reuse of Seaholm, the City Council final bond ballot did not include those funds.

In 1999 the City Council was sufficiently convinced that indeed the boundary should be to the north and encompass approximately two of the five acres claimed by LIC, and the city filed suit against Lumberman's on the boundary issue.

Since that time, the city has been negotiating with the LIC representative in an effort to resolve the boundary issue. As we have all noticed, since 1997 there has been significant downtown development initiated. Including the Pole yard lease to Post, the City has allowed in excess of four acres of downtown city-owned land to be leased for private use as part of a downtown re-development incentive and effort.

PREMISE: The LAND (Sand Beach Reserve approx. 2 ac. plus approx 3 acres owned by LIC) is SO important to the public (for improvements and enhancements to Town Lake Park, considering future public reuse of Seaholm Power Plant, and possible future intermodal transit uses) that BOTH pieces MUST be secured for public uses.

WANG Executive Committee has written a letter to the City Council supporting public acquisition of the entire five acres.

For additional information, you may contact Mary Arnold (459-9460).

—Mary Arnold