

Z - NEWS

Austin, Texas

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Zilker Neighborhood Association

CONCRETE PLANS AFOOT FOR KINNEY SIDEWALK

By Deborah Bice-Broussard

A multitude of Zilker residents and visitors regularly use Kinney Ave. to get to and from Zilker Park, Town Lake, Auditorium Shores, bus stops, and the many restaurants and other businesses on or near Barton Springs Road and Lamar Blvd.

The block of Kinney Ave. just south of Barton Springs Rd. is steep and curves, and vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists share the roadway because there is no sidewalk. People walking the hill are in the path of vehicular traffic, which is bad in the day, and very scary at night. The safety problem for walkers and drivers has been a significant concern for Zilker residents for many years.

Along with the development of the condominium complex in this block of Kinney came the promise of sidewalk. Unfortunately, there was a catch. The developer is not required to put sidewalk in until the City installs concrete curb and gutter. Due to City site selection criteria and budget constraints, however, this block is not slated for such work. If we simply waited, it probably wouldn't be installed in our lifetime.

Luckily, we were able to enroll in a matching program, and once we raise half the money, the City will install the necessary concrete curb and gutter. The condo complex developer has assured

for this street.

The Kinney Ave. Hill Sidewalk Project involves two phases. Phase One is raising \$4,875 for half of the cost of City-installed concrete curb and gutter for the east side of Kinney Ave. between Virginia and Barton Springs Rd., so that the Lost Canyon Condominiums developer will be required to fulfill his obligation to provide sidewalk in front of his property on Kinney Ave.

Phase Two entails raising money to pay for the installation of sidewalk to fill an anticipated gap at the top of the hill, which it seems we will be able to do for about an additional \$1,500.

We need to move forward quickly with Phase One, and hope to raise that \$4,875 by March 31, 2004. As of February 4, we had 17 pledges from residents totaling \$1,275 and had received \$820 in contributions.

Checks should be made payable to "Zilker Neighborhood Association," with either "Kinney Ave. Hill Sidewalk Fund" or "KAHSF" noted on the check. The mailing address for contributions is: ZNA KAHSF, P.O. Box 33546, Austin TX 78764-0546. Flipnotics has scheduled a fundraiser concert for

NEXT MEETING

Monday Feb. 23, 2004

6:30 p.m. - Meet & greet

7:00 p.m. - Meeting

Note New Location:

Zilker Elementary,

1900 Bluebonnet

Homeowners, renters, and business owners are welcome!

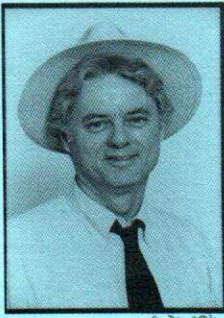
MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS,
LEARN ABOUT ISSUES
AFFECTING YOU AND
THE NEIGHBORHOOD
YOU LIVE IN

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ZNA and City Development Review staff that as soon as the curb and gutter are in place, he will fulfill his sidewalk obligation. Then we will have only an anticipated gap at the top of the hill to fill with sidewalk to finally have a safe path

President's Message



IF THE PEOPLE LEAD, THE LEADERS WILL FOLLOW

We've set some pretty ambitious goals for ourselves in the Zilker neighborhood. When I say "we," I mean the Association's Executive Committee. While we're committed to the goals we've chosen, we're going to be hard put to achieve them with-

out reinforcements. Moreover, we're just flat missing a number of important things we should be doing. Hopefully some neighbors will be willing and able to step up to some of those projects.

GOALS AND PROJECTS

We had a brainstorming session and a retreat during December and hammered out a few principal goals for the coming year. Building the sidewalk on Kinney Avenue Hill and designing the future of South Lamar were the two physical improvement projects we settled on.

We also reconfirmed our commitment to prepare for our turn in the city's neighborhood planning process. Focusing on the association itself, we resolved to better the workings of the executive committee, improve communication, and get more people involved.

Getting the sidewalk built on Kinney Ave. Hill is a visible project that will make a real difference to the neighborhood. It will improve safety and mobility. See Deborah Bice-Broussard's article on the front page of this issue.

Designing the future of South Lamar is not a project we can expect to complete this year. But it will make an immeasurable change in the neighborhood! Think of the improvement brought about by the creation of the beautiful shady boulevard on Barton Springs Rd. Designing the future of South Lamar can have a far greater effect. Taking on a project like South Lamar, and seeing it through in a spirit of cooperation, will take planning and patient effort.

Planning is the bailiwick of our Greater Zilker Committee, formed last summer to prepare for the City's Neighborhood Planning process. The South Lamar renovation is just one chunk in the work this committee is chewing on. I've been chairing this committee, and you'll find my report on page 10 of this issue.

The success of these projects and others

depends on hard work. The officers and committee chairs, like any handful of volunteers, try to use our time efficiently, reach good decisions, work cooperatively, and make our efforts count. We're all over-worked, and sometimes we miss deadlines, but we're making things happen.

Of course, the success of the leaders depends on the members. We need good communications with you, so that we know what you're thinking, you know what we're doing, and you know how to get active. Joining the team effort is what we want most from you. But while recruiting members may be what we scheme about, it's the thoughts of our members and non-members, we need most.

LEADERS AND REPRESENTATIVES

I've referred to the association officers as leaders to make a point. We have titles. We plan and we push for the things we believe are important for the neighborhood. We'd like to believe the goals and projects we work on are supported by the neighborhood. But we don't really know. That's dangerous.

"Joining the team effort is what we want most from you. But while recruiting members may be what we scheme about, it's the thoughts of our members and non-members, we need most."

"The world is run by those who show up," reads a bumper sticker of one of our distinguished former officers. It's true. The executive committee is elected by a few ZNA members and mostly officers are elected because no one else is willing to do the job. To be sure, it's an honor to hold a neighborhood office, and it's a privilege to serve, but are do we represent them?

I ask this because the neighborhood faces great challenges and opportunities. Among us there is debate over the best methods, the highest priorities, and even the meanings of what we're doing.

Two strands run through most of our debates. To oversimplify: one is between defenders and visionaries; the other is between closers and openers. Defenders argue the neighborhood is threatened by change that must be warded off. Visionaries argue the neighborhood is poised for great improvements that must be shaped. Closers

argue that a small group should carefully work out our plans before disturbing the larger community. Openers rally for engaging the larger community before settling on a plan. These opposites and a few others color our debates on many issues. The danger is that in crucial times we may make decisions that don't reflect the neighborhood.

PARTNERING

The association would be stronger if we partner more. Some of this will be done as we call on stakeholders to assist us in neighborhood planning. And holding the meeting at Zilker Elementary helps connect with the school. But more can be done.

There are many city and external processes that affect us that we should monitor or participate in. For example, the writing of the next city budget has begun, and it will have sweeping effects on our neighborhood. CAMPO's ongoing plans for the road system can make or break South Lamar. Many groups could make valuable allies, if only we had the time to work with them.

MOVING AHEAD

I've talked about neighborhood challenges and opportunities, the many things we'd like to do, and the far fewer things we can realistically accomplish. I've talked about the ZNA's work to build a team, and to move the neighborhood forward. So tell me: what do you think?

Sincerely,

Robin Cravey

Meeting Agenda

Monday, February 23

*New Location: Zilker Elementary
Cafeteria at 1900 Bluebonnet*

6:30 Happy half-hour

7:00 Call to order,
introductions, and
announcements

7:15 Neighborhood
planning, Lydia Ortiz, Chairwoman, Austin
Planning Commission

7:45 Greater Zilker Committee discussion

8:00 Officer and committee reports

8:20 Kinney Avenue Hill sidewalk project

8:40 New business -- Members, bring
your issues!

9:00 Adjourn



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What Would We Do Without Neighbors?

By Barbara Cossie

Five years ago a simple plan was hatched: Sponsor a family from Zilker Elementary who needed help for the holidays. This plan continues to grow. In 2003, ZNA sponsored not just one family, but five!

Our families have children that attend Zilker Elementary, so working with school counselor Vicki Samuelson is important. "They know who best needs help for the holidays in our neighborhood," said Kaye Trybus, co-coordinator of the Holiday Family Project. "Of course, this program would not be successful without the help of Zilker residents."

This holiday season, more than 50 neighbors answered the call and donated more than \$700 to purchase toys, clothes, and household items for our families. "With the money and gifts that were donated, we were able to get each person pretty much what she or he wanted," said Trybus.

The money that came in after the collection deadline will be given to Zilker Elementary to assist children who need items throughout the year.

Thanks to all neighbors who supported our fifth annual Zilker Holiday Family Project. Special thanks to Lorraine Atherton and Mike Meier, who helped deliver the presents, and to Noe Maza, who delivered presents and acted as a translator for our Spanish-speaking families.

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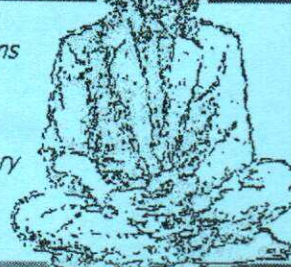
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Continued from the front page

March 6th (see ad on page 5 for details), and has a donation jar by the cash register. They will match donations collected in that jar. People interested in this project met recently and are contacting owners and managers of other businesses frequented by Zilker residents to request contributions and assistance. If you would like to work on the project, please contact me at dbb@austin.rr.com or 689-6724.

An update on the project status will be part of the Feb. 23rd ZNA meeting. Between ZNA meetings, news will be shared via the Zilker neighborhood Yahoo!Group.

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**A benefit to raise funds for the
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(see Deborah Bice Broussard's article for more info)

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Saturday March 6th, 2004 8pm

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GUESS WHO'S GETTIN' A MAKEOVER!

by Andrew Murphy

If the pounding of hammers and the smell of paint get you excited, then Zilker Elementary is the place to be this spring. Three improvement projects are in the works and all will have a major impact on the way the children learn.

The first project is to beautify the area surrounding the portable classrooms located on the Northwest corner of the campus. Patricia Hardwick, a fourth grade teacher and long-time Zilker resident, is leading the campaign.

"Portable buildings tend to be unattractive in the first place," said Hardwick, "and because they look temporary, they aren't given as much attention as the rest of the buildings." The wooden landings leading to the classrooms are subjected to a lot of foot traffic and more than a little bicycle and skateboard traffic. "After considering that this is the 'living space' of our children, I concluded that it needed to be more aesthetically pleasing," noted Hardwick.

Hardwick asked parents for help and before long, she had donations of a power washer and gallons of stain, and a group of UT volunteers. "I was

impressed by what such a small group could accomplish so quickly," she said. But the group had only enough materials to do a few landings. Undeterred, she is pursuing materials and volunteers to complete the rest of the landings. "Since Gilbert Cantu offered me a job in this beautiful neighborhood, I have been committed to working to make Zilker a better place for the kids to learn."

The second project is a facelift to the school's front entrance. Faith Schexnayder, an Austin artist, designer, and Zilker parent, envisioned transforming the front of the school.

"I thought how nice it would be to take the existing school front and add some visual interest - to make it more homey and inviting," Schexnayder recalled. She decided having each child paint a tile would give them input into their environment. But adding tiles won't be enough. "There is also that old wooden deck; it needed to be rebuilt completely," she said. She recruited Andrew Murphy to spearhead the project.

After meeting with architects, the PTA and Principal Bren McCullar, Schexnayder and Murphy drew up a plan to rebuild the deck, add low walls to display the tiles, and build an arbor for shade. Murphy is seeking material donations and volunteers. The 700 tiles have been purchased and the awesome task of coordinating their painting and firing has begun.

The third project, which is still in the planning stages, is the cafeteria renovation. Seja Rachael is leading this project. "I have been hearing for years how the cafeteria is old, loud and run-down," she said. The cafeteria doubles as the assembly hall and has a stage at one end, but the acoustics are poor.

In addition to sound dampening, the project calls for better lighting and a new interior design. "When I started the project it was just to redesign the cafeteria, but it turns out that a lot of people use the room for a lot different purposes. Addressing all those needs has turned into quite a challenge," said Rachael. The second-grade parent remains undaunted. "I feel it is my purpose to give all of these people and the kids an ear, so that they get heard and their needs get met."

"It's about the education of the children really," said Principal McCullar when asked about the projects. "When the children see what is being done for them, by their parents and the community, it instills in them a sense of pride and self-worth."

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Stepping Up South Lamar

by Lorraine Atherton

Good news for South Lamar pedestrians and bus riders: The City of Austin has started the permitting process for Capital Metro sidewalk improvements on South Lamar.

Darryl Haba, a city engineer working on the project, said they plan to start construction in May. "We will limit the construction to one site at a time in an effort to limit the impact on traffic," Haba reported, noting that projects may require the closing of one lane "from time to time during the day."

The first project is in the 1900 block, from Mary to Evergreen, which includes the dangerous sidewalk gap at the ditch next to Austin's Pizza. The plan is to span the ditch with a 22-foot bridge. Sidewalk also will be installed along the northern edge of the triangular island at Mary so people can reach the crosswalk across Lamar. Wheelchair ramps will be installed on both sides of Evergreen.

Another scheduled project is on the northeast corner of Oltorf and Lamar. Sidewalk will be installed to prevent cars from parking on and blocking the right-of-way by the taxidermy shop.

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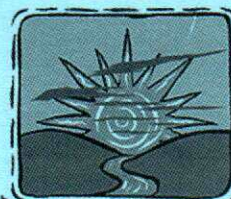
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MEET YOUR NEW OFFICERS - THEY'RE DEAD SEXY

Lorraine Atherton, Austin Neighborhood Councils representative, has lived in the neighborhood since 1981 and has been a ZNA officer since 1998. She works at home as a freelance copy editor. One of her favorite things about the neighborhood is having everything within walking distance, from food to computers.

Steve Barnick, your ZNA secretary, moved to Austin (Zilker) in 1993 to work as an engineer for a company that was part of the technology development incubator system at UT. He decided on the Zilker area because he likes being able to walk and bike to the parks, shops, restaurants, and music in the area. His hobbies are gardening, biking, fishing, and sailing. Steve got involved with ZNA over a bike path issue on Barton Springs Road. That success encouraged him to become an officer. He's excited about being part of the neighborhood planning process because he enjoys what we have here and wants to be a part of its future.

This is 2nd Vice President **Deborah Bice-Broussard's** third year on the Executive Committee. She moved into Zilker (on Oxford at Ashby) in 2000 and joined ZNA immediately, to meet people and learn more about the neighborhood. Deborah remains especially interested in increasing



Front row from left, Wendy Papasan, Richard Gravois, Jane Cravey, Andrew Murphy and Lorraine Atherton. Back row, Bobby Rigney, Steve Barnick, Robin Cravey and Deborah Bice-Broussard

neighborhood communication and social activities to help strengthen this wonderful community, and seeing sidewalk built on the Kinney Avenue hill. When she's not working on a volunteer project or in her yard, she's applying her skills as a social scientist in employment by the Great State of Texas.

Jane Kurzawa Cravey, your ZNA treasurer, moved to Zilker with her husband Robin back when you could still make a left hand turn onto Lamar from La Casa Drive - and not take your life in your hands! She's lived there having raised two daughters and numerous cats. She keeps track of the budget for a city department and is training to complete the Danskin triathlon in June.


Robin Cravey, your ZNA president, moved to Austin in 1969 to attend UT, drive a taxi, and write poetry. He moved into the Zilker neighborhood in 1979 with his wife Jane to raise daughters, publish literature, and agitate city politics. When he thought about it, he went to law school. Recently he's worked at city hall and served on the Planning

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Commission. Lately he practices law, bakes bread, writes more poetry, and swims at Barton Springs almost every day.

ZNA Zoning and Code Committee Chair **Michael Heffernan** is an architect interested in zoning issues. His wife, Tina, and he both work from home and have a 13-year-old son Scott who attends O'Henry. He and his wife both love to make architectural models! Anyone with questions or issues about zoning in the 'hood can call him @ 448-2801.

Fontaine Maverick grew up in Austin and has lived on Kinney Avenue since 1975. In addition to her duties as ad sales coordinator for Z-News she is the bookkeeper for Nomadic Notions and the grandmother of Manny, age 7. She lives with her husband, Walter and Persephone a 19-year-old cat. She enjoys designing jewelry, sketching with colored pencils and traveling to Mexico.

Andrew Murphy is the Z-News committee chair and Zilker Elementary liaison. He and his wife, Amy, moved to Kinney Avenue in 1994 and a few months later, their daughter Josephine was born. You can usually find the family sitting on the front porch in the warm evenings or going for late night dips

at Barton Springs. Stop by sometime and they'll show off the two pond turtles that live in their front yard.



Robin, Deborah and Jane at a monthly executive committee meeting at Artz.

Wendy Papasan, Z-News editor, and her husband Jay have lived on Hether for about three years. She is interested in historic preservation and works for the Texas Historical Commission. In her spare time she enjoys travel, cooking, gardening and getting to know her neighbors. They are expecting their first child in June.

Vice President **Elizabeth Yevich** has lived in the neighborhood since her move from Richmond, VA in 2001. Her involvement with ZNA began after attending a City Council meeting where she met other ZNA members opposing the widening of S. Lamar. This issue was important as her apartment faces the boulevard and widening it would remove her living room!



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Shaping Zilker's Future

by Robin T. Cravey

The Greater Zilker Committee is in a race against time. Our drafting subcommittee is working to outline the topics that our neighborhood plan should cover and to research the history and character of the neighborhood. Our outreach subcommittee is working to bring more people into the process and to solicit ideas from the neighborhood. These things take time.

Planners are always working to lay plans before events overtake them. Yet our committee must take the long view. Planners must be sure that they consider a broad enough array of information and opinions to make their plans realistic, well-supported, and lasting.

The Greater Zilker Committee came together last year when we learned that our neighborhood will enter the city's Neighborhood Planning process late this year or early next. Our objective was to be prepared to take maximum advantage of that process, and to maintain the highest level of autonomy we can.

There's a tremendous amount to be done, but we can't hurry. Not only do we need time to be thorough, we have to conserve our energy for what will be a long effort. All our work could be wasted if the members of this committee are exhausted and burned out before the city process even begins. We will enter the city process in about 10 months, and that process will last a year or more. It's a marathon.

Drafting the plan

By coming up with a rough draft of a neighborhood plan on our own, we can enter the city process with a good sense of what's important. Moreover, our final plan will have more of a home-grown flavor. We are discussing zoning, the South Lamar Corridor, transportation, historic preservation, and environmental preservation. We've also talked about planning for parks, health and human services, public safety, economic development, and urban design. We are fortunate to have a couple of dozen plans from neighborhoods that have been through the process, and Steve Barnick, Dave Piper, and others have sifted through those.

In researching the history and character of the neighborhood, we have many sources to draw on, including city records, the U.S. census data, and others. Lorraine Atherton and other members have

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compiled a research folder containing land use tables, census tracts, zoning districts, amenities and services, neighborhood history, and much more. Jeff Jack and others have given a lot of attention to infrastructure issues. These ingredients will gradually take shape over the months to come. We'll keep you informed.

People and ideas

While Zilker Neighborhood Association is guiding the work we are doing, it must have a wider base. To give the plan a broad base, we're reaching out to as many people as we can.

"We will be reaching out to members, residents, and to other stakeholders in the neighborhood through mailings, questionnaires, and public meetings."

Because South Lamar is such a huge influence on our neighborhood, we're involving the South Lamar merchants. Steve Barnick and others hiked up and down the road, collecting contact information for business owners and managers. Wendy Papasan and others are coordinating a get-acquainted session for those business folks to take place in early March.

We will be reaching out to members, residents, and to other stakeholders in the neighborhood through mailings, questionnaires, and public meetings.

One of our chief goals is to recruit more people willing to commit their time, energy, and intelligence to the planning process. When we enter the city process, it will not be through the neighborhood association. Rather, the city will invite all residents and stakeholders. When the city holds its first meeting, we hope to arrive with a strong group who have had some experience working together.

If you're wondering how to get involved, call Wendy Papasan (383-1929) or me (447-8014).

Shaping the neighborhood

The plan is not the goal. Entering the city process with a good outline of the issues and the information, and a good group of far-sighted neighbors is the short-term objective. Emerging from the city process with a solid plan that reflects our best ideas for the future is the intermediate goal. Using the plan as a living document to shape the growth and change of our neighborhood is the long-range plan.

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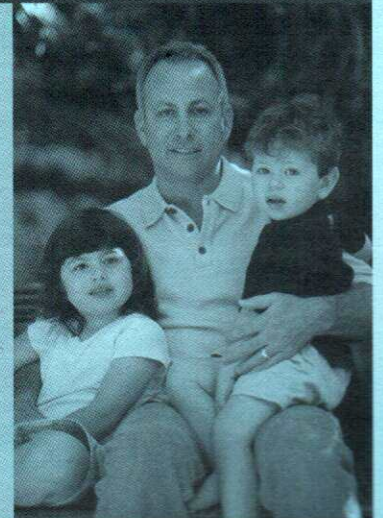


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Zilker Neighborhood Association

P.O. Box 33546
Austin, TX 78764-0546
ZNAec@yahoo.com

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Andrew Murphy, 442-9380

Zoning and Code

Michael Heffernan, 448-2801

About the Zilker Neighborhood Association...

ZNA holds general meetings the 4th Monday of February, April, July and October. The executive committee meets at 7 p.m. the first Monday of each month usually at Artz Rib House.

Our Purpose: To improve the quality of life in the neighborhood in matters of land use, environmental protection, public services, consumer protection, preservation of the historic and unique character of the community; to provide support in other matters of neighborhood concern and to promote and participate in the civic life of the city.

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