



Newsletter of the
**Zilker
Neighborhood
Association**

JULY 2007

Austin, Texas
Established 1981

Watermelon Social

Monday, July 30, 2007

Outdoor Learning Center

Zilker Elementary School

1900 Bluebonnet

6:30-8:30 P.M.

☆ ☆ ☆

Meet and Greet Social
Watermelon eating and
seed spitting

Master plan updates
for Barton Springs
and Little Zilker parks
Newcomers, old-timers,
homeowners, renters, and
business owners
all welcome.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

ZNA Weighs Vertical Mixed Use Options

A message from Jeff Jack, President of ZNA

In response to a citywide call to preserve the character of our neighborhoods, the Austin City Council has considered ways to accommodate population growth in our underused commercial zoning areas. One result is the Vertical Mixed Use ordinance (VMU), which allows residential projects to be added to all commercial zoning districts along most of our major streets. These major streets are called Core Transit Corridors (CTC), and in the Zilker neighborhood we have two: South Lamar Boulevard and Barton Springs Road.

The VMU ordinance encourages developers to add residential units to what otherwise would be all retail or office projects, by allowing them to build more than the base zoning permits in exchange for the addition of residential units. Called "density bonuses," the relaxation of dimensional standards does not allow taller buildings or eliminate the residential compatibility standards. To maintain our current housing stock, the ordinance also excludes any residentially zoned or used property.

The ordinance is different from other zoning tools in that it recognizes that all neighborhoods are not the same. Adopted by the Council as an overlay along all CTCs, the ordinance is designed to be customized, neighborhood by neighborhood. The Council may "opt-out" properties that are not appropriate for VMU and choose to apply various options for density bonuses and affordability levels. This ability to tailor the overlay to the neighborhood recognizes that VMU must be implemented selectively; one size *(Continued on page 3)*

Little Zilker Master Plan on Track

The Rolling Stones concert last year provided Austin with a great music event, but it also will enable our neighborhood to make improvements to the City-owned park next to Zilker Elementary School. As part of the agreement with the concert promoters, the surrounding neighborhoods received \$150,000 for park improvements in their areas as compensation for the inconvenience

caused by the concert to our residents. This resulted in Zilker getting over \$30,000 that has been earmarked for improvements to what we call Little Zilker Park.

To decide just how those funds would be spent, a steering committee was created to define what improvements the community wanted. Included in the committee were representatives from the Zilker Elementary School PTA and Campus Advisory Committee as well as representatives from the Zilker Neighborhood

Association. The committee, chaired by Heather Way, has been working on a master plan for the park and the associated school campus for several months.

The Broussard Group (TBG) has generously donated many hours of pro bono design work to the committee. (TBG is the firm that designed Town Lake Park.) In May the committee held a Community Planning Forum at the school, where more than 50 parents, park users, park staff, children, and neighbors contributed ideas for park improvements. Since then TBG has developed a proposed master plan that includes:

- ◆ Redesign the running track to move it all onto City property and to bring it up to park standards. It would be a quarter mile and could have exercise stations along the way.
- ◆ Irrigate some of the area and add drinking fountains.
- ◆ Plant trees around the track, along the south property line, and in other selected locations in the park.
- ◆ Add a tennis court backboard.
- ◆ Relight the ballfield.

The plan incorporates numerous other great



Draft Master Plan, Little Zilker Park

ideas from the forum, and if you have any additional comments, we would like to hear from you. The master plan will be on display at the ZNA Watermelon Social on July 30, so please come take a look and give us your input.

The ZNA Executive committee would like to thank TBG, all the folks who turned out to the planning forum, and all the committee members who have spent their time on this project. Great job, and we look forward to seeing a final master plan this summer.

(See Barton Springs Pool Master Plan and other park news on pages 6-8.)

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(Continued from page 1) will not fit all. This is a positive step by the City, effectively trading preservation of the residential areas of our neighborhoods for the opportunity to add more density along major roadways.

The ordinance relies on neighborhood associations to recommend the appropriate VMU options for their CTCs. Those recommendations were due by early June. The ZNA Executive Committee be-

gan by crafting guidelines for applying VMU consistent with our neighborhood goals as reflected in our neighborhood planning survey from 2004. The criteria were presented at the association's general meeting in April and approved by the membership. At the same time, the Executive Committee was charged with drafting our neighborhood's VMU recommendations to City Council.

Since that time the ZNA Executive Committee has held several public meetings to take community input from residents and busi-

VMU CRITERIA FOR ZNA

VMU should be applied to encourage redevelopment of properties that have

- ♦ A current undesirable use or use inconsistent with the neighborhood plan (such as used car lots)
- ♦ Under-utilized capacity (such as a vacant lot with commercial zoning)
- ♦ A potential to add new housing with some affordable units (such as an old warehouse that could be redeveloped as an apartment project).

VMU should not be applied if:

- ♦ The current use is desired and we want to keep it as part of the fabric of the community (such as cultural, iconic, or historic landmarks) or to maintain small or local businesses and services (such as the historic Paggi House).
- ♦ The local infrastructure, such as roadway and sewer capacity, is inadequate to support the added density.
- ♦ There are environmental features that should be protected, such as water quality features, scenic views, and significant tree canopy.
- ♦ The lot is small and the application of VMU would encourage the conversion of adjacent residential lots to commercial uses to make VMU feasible.
- ♦ The cumulative impact of adding VMU to multiple adjacent properties would encourage the aggregation of small properties into larger tracts and the displacement of the corresponding small businesses by larger development.

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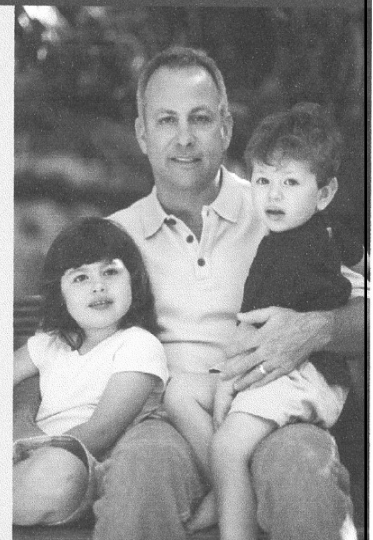


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nesses about how to apply VMU to the 172 properties along South Lamar and Barton Springs Road. While we were moving forward with our work, the City Council decided to extend the recommendation period, allowing neighborhoods to revise their recommendations up until August 9. The ZNA Executive Committee has now completed our recommendations, which will be available to the membership for review at our July 30 Watermelon Social.

The implementation of VMU in our neighborhood will have a profound effect on the future of South Lamar and Barton Springs Road. Although our area's neighborhood planning process has been on the back burner for several months (see page 10), the simple fact is that the adoption of VMU will essentially create a master plan for our major streets and their adjacent commercial properties long before our actual neighborhood plan is completed. So if you are interested in what South Lamar and Barton Springs Road could be like in the years to come, please come to the Watermelon Social on July 30 and give us your comments on these very important VMU recommendations.



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Looking Ahead to ZNA Officer Elections

Yes, it is only July and summer has just begun, but your ZNA Executive Committee is already thinking about the October meeting and the election of new officers. Over the last two years we have had a great group of volunteers working on the ZNA Executive Committee. We hope that


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they will all continue to be involved with the association. However, we also need new folks to step up and take leadership roles. So what does the Executive Committee do during the year?

Organizing the quarterly meetings (including the publication of this newsletter) is the association's primary activity. There is much more, however, that goes on between our quarterly meetings. With more than 40 zoning cases over the last 18 months, someone from the Executive Committee is standing up before a board or commission to advocate for our neighborhood almost every week. Many more hours are spent on the neighborhood plan, coordinating with other neighborhoods on citywide issues, and lobbying the City on everything from the budget to code enforcement. We even find time for our Holiday Fund drive, which brings donations and gifts to the Zilker Elementary School families we sponsor during the Christmas season.

There is no shortage of opportunities to help ensure that Zilker continues to be the great

neighborhood we all know and love. For example, ZNA needs someone to keep us in touch with AISD's new neighborhoods committee and other school issues, which requires attendance at Monday school board meetings. And as our neighborhood planning effort resumes, we will need neighbors who are interested in transit and traffic issues to become much more involved. We have long needed a committee to focus on the parking problems in the Kinney and Treadwell area.

If you care about maintaining the character of our neighborhood, have some time, and are interested in becoming a part of the ZNA Executive Committee, please let one of the current Executive Committee members know. The ZNA bylaws require that nominations for all elected offices be received early in October, but we can form a committee to address an issue at any time.

*See you on July 30!
Jeff Jack, your neighbor*

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BARTON SPRINGS POOL MASTER PLAN

The City of Austin is in the midst of a master planning effort for Barton Springs Pool. According to the City of Austin Parks Web site (ci.austin.tx/parks), "The goal of the master plan is to return the site to its former glory, where the water was cleaner and the experience of the pool was more enjoyable. . . . The plan intends to propose appropriate additions and renovations to the swimming pool, its buildings and its grounds that respect the fragility of this unique natural and historical setting and also accommodate the significant user demands on Austin's most popular park amenity."

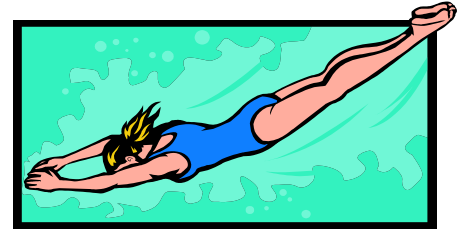
An open house and forum were held July 14 "presenting preliminary concepts for the major aspects of the plan: water quality, pool landscape and grounds, and the buildings." You can still send your comments to bspmasterplan@ci.austin.tx.us. Also, "If you have photos of Barton Springs you wouldn't mind sharing," the park planners would "love to see them. We often learn a lot about a place by studying old photos. If it's a family snapshot, we not only study the people, the clothes and

the cars, but we also look for details in the background. . . . It

would be great, for instance, if you had photos from the 50s that showed the Zilker Ponds. But photos at the bathhouse, or of people just having fun at the pool would be great, too. We'd like to learn about festivals and events and everyday life around the pool."

Architects Laurie Limbacher and Al Godfrey have been invited to the ZNA Watermelon Social on July 30 to chat informally with ZNA members about the master plan. If you missed the open house, the Watermelon Social will be your chance to get a personal update.

To get more involved in the maintenance and preservation of Barton Springs Pool, check out the Friends of Barton Springs Pool on the Web at friendsofbartonspringspool.org and the Save Our Springs Alliance at sosalliance.org.



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AUSTIN CITY LIMITS FESTIVAL 2007

Another ACL Fest is right around the corner, on the weekend of September 14-16. For those of you who don't know the drill, here are some excerpts from the festival Web site at ACLfestival.com.

Parking There is NO parking at the Festival site. Our friends at Capital Metro are providing FREE shuttle service to and from the new location at Republic Square on 4th and Guadalupe. Parking is strongly discouraged in surrounding neighborhoods. Respect the residents of the Zilker Park area! This is their home... not a parking lot, dumping site, or otherwise. In response to safety concerns from area residents, several nearby streets will be closed and parking will be restricted. In addition, the City of Rollingwood will have restricted parking and other traffic control measures in place during the Festival.

Street Closures Barton Springs Road will be closed at Robert E. Lee Road and from the Mopac frontage road heading north just past the entry ramp to Mopac north. Stratford Drive (near the canoe rental area) is also closed.

Bicycles Bike racks are available at each of the Festival entrance gates, with plenty of lighting. You must provide your own lock.

Passenger Drop Off The passenger drop-off area is at the north end of the Mopac (Loop 1) Pedestrian Bridge on Stephen F. Austin Drive. The pedestrian footbridge runs underneath Mopac. This is the closest drop point to the Festival grounds. It is a short walk across the footbridge. Access the drop off point by entering Stephen F. Austin Drive from

the east. This is the only official drop off point. It's quick and easy. For safety reasons, please don't attempt to drop off passengers at other areas near the park.

Note: There is no festival parking at Austin High School or on Stephen F. Austin Drive. It is a short walk across the footbridge to the festival portal, the Town Lake entrance. Please note that Stephen F. Austin Drive will be closed to through traffic (other than those dropping off festival goers) on Friday 9/14 through Sunday 9/16 from about 9 am to midnight. Access to Austin High parking lots will be limited to those attending Austin High events.

Zilker residents from Margaret Street to Barton Springs Road can expect their streets to be clogged most of the weekend. In the weeks before the festival, look for special instructions and notices regarding parking and detours in your area. Thanks to the great folks at Capital Sports and Entertainment, ACLfestival.com is a good source of info for neighborhood residents.



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UMLAUF TRAFFIC TAKES A NEW TURN

Larry Akers, a Barton Hills neighbor and long-time parks advocate, reported in May on his meeting with representatives from the Umlauf Sculpture Garden and Museum and Austin Parks regarding traffic at museum events on Robert E. Lee Road. They agreed to pursue these changes in traffic management: (1) At events with two crossing guards, one guard will be stationed at the curve between the Umlauf driveway and the traffic signal, so that pedestrian crossings can be coordinated with the cycle of the light. This coordination may be extended to valet parking vehicles leaving the Umlauf to turn left and park across the street at Wright Field. (2) To avoid stacking of cars trying to turn left off Robert E. Lee, left

turns into the Umlauf lot will be prohibited; cars will be redirected to the southside park driveway, where drivers can turn right, turn around, and then approach the Umlauf driveway from the south, enabling a right turn into the lot.

The first anticipated major test of these changes will be a Museum Day event in September, but the measures will be employed at smaller events as well.


"I appreciate the Umlauf folks' response, participation, and willingness to make adjustments to their operations," Larry said in his list serve post. "I'm confident we will not see any more of the traffic tie-ups that prompted all this." Many thanks to Larry and to Umlauf director Nelie Plourde for working this out.

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Zilker and North Loop Neck and Neck in Kill-a-Watt Challenge

by Richard Gravois, ZNA Vice President

The Kill-a-Watt Challenge is a community-wide competition to see who can most effectively reduce their energy use. The contest lasts for the hot summer months of June through September.

After each month, prizes will go to Austin Energy customers who reduce their energy use the most versus the same month last year. Grand prizes will be awarded for the best performance over the entire summer. To keep things fair, renters compete against renters, homeowners against homeowners, businesses against businesses, and neighborhoods against neighborhoods. The main thing, of course, is to use less than you did last year.

But nobody wins if we don't sign up. Zilker is in third place so far, with 18 participants, behind Brentwood and Cherry Creek and neck and neck with North Loop. For a green neighborhood of

Kill a Watt, Save the Planet, Win a Prize!

3,000 households, that's a poor showing.

To get the most out of the contest, visit the *Austin Chronicle's* Kill-a-Watt Web page (at austinchronicle.com) and plug into the information available there on how to save electricity and lower your carbon emissions from all sources. It has links to several carbon emissions calculators, including the EPA calculator that tells you how much you can save by changing various appliances (light bulbs, for instance) and habits (like recycling). Conversion figure for Austin is 1.41 lbs. of carbon dioxide per kWh.

Some of the Zilker businesses offering prizes and participating in the challenge are Alien Scooters, Alamo Drafthouse, PC Guru, Planet K, and SoLa, all on South Lamar. The *Chronicle* is also offering passes to the Austin City Limits Music Festival.

Sign up now, before it gets any hotter, through Austin Energy at austinenergy.com, or follow the links at austinchronicle.com.



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Neighborhood Plan Update

The Zilker, Barton Hills, Barton View, South Lamar, and Galindo neighborhoods were combined by the City into the South Lamar Combined Neighborhood Planning Area and began the neighborhood planning process in October 2005. At the beginning of the process all five neighborhood groups requested that the City provide several types of information to form the basis for land use and zoning decisions. They have been described in previous issues of Z-News.

In the fall of last year, the process was halted until these issues could be resolved. Since then, the City has engaged the Center for Public Policy Dispute Resolution at UT to facilitate negotiations between the five neighborhoods and city staff, and the facilitation is making progress.

Besides agreeing to add two categories to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) and provide an analysis of the neighborhood density that would result from building out the current zoning, the City has also embarked on an analysis of our roadway and sewer capacities. Though not

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completed yet, the data will better inform the decisions made when the planning process is resumed.

One last issue yet to be resolved concerns the actual process by which decisions will be made about the FLUM and any proposed recommendations on zoning changes. A major problem during the early part of the process was that City Staff was wearing two hats. While acting as facilitators of the process, they also came to the table with their own agenda that was never stated publicly. The City has recognized that this is inconsistent with being an honest broker and has agreed to have a third party facilitate the planning process. Recognizing the City as a stakeholder is an important step and will require staff to be up front about their goals and objectives. Exactly how decisions will be made among the various stakeholder groups remains to be worked out, along with their responsibilities to engage their constituents in the process. The neighborhood associations, with our bylaws, regular meetings, newsletters, and Yahoo groups, are very active in engaging the community and accountable to our member's interests. How will that be weighed in the planning process against one commercial property owner who speaks only for an individual's interests?

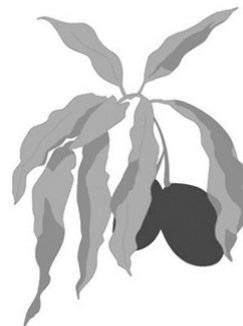
As the UT facilitation continues between the five neighborhoods and City, this remains one of the harder issues to address. But the resumption of the neighborhood planning process will be contingent on having a clear policy in place for making planning decisions. We hope this will be resolved in the next few months.

Dear Friends in the Zilker Neighborhood,

Faith United Methodist Church is having a festival on **September 22, 2007**, and you are invited to attend! This event is jam-packed with fun events for children. Bonzo Crunch, a former Ringling Bros. Circus clown, will be there from 11 AM to 1 PM. Throughout the day there will be carnival games. There will also be a moonwalk and a train ride. We'll have live entertainment, numerous vendors selling a variety of goods, and a silent auction. A registered nurse will be on hand to discuss health issues and will administer diabetes screenings and blood pressure checks at no charge.

There will be indoor restrooms and on-site parking. We hope you'll join us at **2701 South Lamar** for this family-oriented event. The fun begins at 10 AM and wraps up at 4 PM. If you have any questions, please feel free to call the church at 444-6781. We hope to see you!

*Grace & Peace,
Kathy Beth Stavinoha*



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**Newsletter
of the Zilker
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2007 Executive Committee of ZNA

Elected Officers:

President: Jeff Jack, 447-5877

jjack2@austin.rr.com

1st VP: Richard Gravois, 441-3430

2nd VP: Bobby Rigney, 471-3758

Secretary: Ryan Stryker, 431-4245

Treasurer: Andy Elder, 428-9180

Social Chair: Rachel Elder, 428-9180

ANC Delegate: Robert Singleton

ZNews Editor: Lorraine Atherton

Committee Chairs:

Holiday Family Program: Barbara Cossie, 447-4437

Neighborhood Plan: Dave Piper, 916-9636

Parks and Environment: Gardner Sumner, 462-0210

Town Lake Park Rep.: Kaye Trybus, 447-4437

Zoning: Peggy Pfaff, pfaffpt@yahoo.com

About the Zilker Neighborhood Association

ZNA holds general meetings the fourth or fifth Monday of February, April, July, and October, at Zilker Elementary School. The Executive Committee meets at 7 PM 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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