



Newsletter of the  
Zilker Neighborhood  
Association

FEBRUARY 2013

Austin, Texas  
Established 1981

**Austin's First Ever Independent Districting Commission  
You voted for 10-1, so sign up for it by February 22**

In November, Zilker neighbors voted overwhelmingly in favor of an independent commission to draw the lines for 10 new City Council districts. This commission could set a new standard for redistricting across the state, but it won't work if ordinary Austin voters don't volunteer to serve. It especially needs more women and minority applicants. Visit [austintexas.gov/10-ONE](http://austintexas.gov/10-ONE) to find out if you qualify.

**Goodwill Seeks Housing Grant**

*by Lorraine Atherton, ZNews editor*

GOODWILL AND FOUNDATION Communities have asked ZNA to support their application for funding from the state's affordable rental housing program. They are proposing to renovate the existing Goodwill store at 2800 South Lamar and build 108-115 affordable apartments above the new store. ZNA's membership will be asked to vote to support the application at our general meeting on Feb. 25.

All the properties fronting on this part of South Lamar are zoned for vertical mixed use (VMU) under a proposal presented to the City Council by ZNA in 2007. In terms of ZNA's VMU criteria (*ZNews* July 2007, p. 3), the Goodwill proposal is nearly perfect, and that is why the ZNA executive committee is recommending that we support it.

Most of the mixed use projects (*Continued on page 5*)

**Austin ISD Bond Proposal Overview**

*by District 5 AISD Trustee Amber Elenz*

I AM HONORED to represent the Zilker neighborhood as your District 5 Austin ISD Trustee. Thank you for this opportunity to provide some highlights about the proposed AISD bond election.

The Board of Trustees is scheduled to vote February 25 on the scope, size, and tax implications of a final version of a proposed May 2013 Bond Program to address capital improvements across the district. In the current version of the proposal, *all* AISD schools are slated to receive systemic repairs such as (*Continued on page 4*)

**ZNA Meeting**

**February 25**

**Monday 6:30-8:30 PM**

at

**FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
2701 South Lamar Blvd.



**Vote on the Goodwill housing project**  
**Sign up for the South Lamar**  
**Planning Committee**

**Updates on Robert E. Lee rezoning,**  
**Taco Cabana PUD, Helipads**



Newcomers, homeowners, renters,  
business neighbors

❖ ❖ All Welcome ❖ ❖

**Inside this issue:**

Page 2, *Little Zilker Park, Parking on Parkland petition*

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## Become a Friend of Little Zilker

*by Gina Diehl, FLZP chair*

DO YOU LIKE THE TREES in Little Zilker Park? Do you enjoy the park after dusk under the field lights? Do you walk or jog on the granite path? Are your kids wild about the playscapes? Are you glad to have working water fountains and trash cans that get emptied? If you think any of these are important, then please join the Friends of Little Zilker Park (FLZP).

The volunteers of FLZP have made these and other park improvements a reality over just a few short years. ZNA established the group with its share of the 2006 Rolling Stones parks donation, and now we need your help to continue these efforts.

Austin's Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) operates as an underfunded, thinly stretched organization, and city staff respond to the initiatives of parks volunteers. That means that improvements and adequate maintenance in neighborhood parks require neighborhood time and effort.

Besides adding more than 100 trees to the park and school campus, FLZP volunteers have helped to install irrigation systems and have even hand-watered trees through the drought. We worked with Austin Energy to upgrade the field lights, with PARD to fund and place the granite trail, and with the Zilker PTA and ZNA to purchase a drinking fountain and coordinate the design, permitting, and hiring of a local



On FLZP's wish list: redesigning the ramp and Bluebonnet entrance to Little Zilker Park. Photo taken in July 2012, during installation of the new playscape.

licensed contractor required to get it installed.

FLZP has more ideas and some funding.

Would you like to have a bocce ball court or washer pit in the park? Does the park need a shade sail? Do you have gardening or landscaping skills to contribute? Can you write a grant application? Do you want a more inviting and safer entry to the park? The ZNA executive committee has dedicated the last of the Rolling Stones fund to redesign the Bluebonnet entrance to the park, focusing on improvements to the concrete ramp. FLZP and the hard-working parks staff will need your help to plan and complete new projects and to maintain what we have already accomplished. Please join us!

Contact us at [littlezilker@gmail.com](mailto:littlezilker@gmail.com). Subscribe to the FLZP Yahoo group to keep up with planning, meetings, and events. Get involved. Little Zilker Park needs you!

## Stop Commercial Parking in Our Parks

*by David King, ZNA Zoning Co-chair*

THE AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL recently passed a resolution to create a new ordinance that would allow businesses located within 1,000 feet of city parks to use public parking lots within those parks to meet commercial parking requirements.

More than 3,200 businesses are located within 1,000 feet of city parks throughout the city. That represents thousands of parkland parking spaces that could become unavailable to park users. There's no doubt that if this ordinance passes, park users will have to compete with businesses to park at city parks.

Taxpayers pay for park parking lots. Allowing businesses near parks to use these lots provides them with parking at taxpayer expense and is unfair to other businesses. Using park parking lots for commercial business purposes is a bad precedent and will further increase the commercialization of our parks.

Council members Laura Morrison and Kathie

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\*color treatments at birds start at \$50

photo by alison narro

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FLZP's next big event is  
**It's My Park Day**

on Saturday, **March 2.**

We will be weeding and mulching the crepe myrtles and other trees. Bring work gloves, shovels, rakes, wheelbarrows, and other useful implements.

Be sure to wear a hat and bring your own water bottle and coffee mug.

Please RSVP to [littlezilker@gmail.com](mailto:littlezilker@gmail.com) so we can send you updates.



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Tovo voted against the City Council resolution and are fighting to increase funding for city parks. The ZNA executive committee is opposed to the new ordinance and will be supporting an Austin Neighborhoods Council resolution to that effect (see [ANCWeb.org](http://ANCWeb.org)).

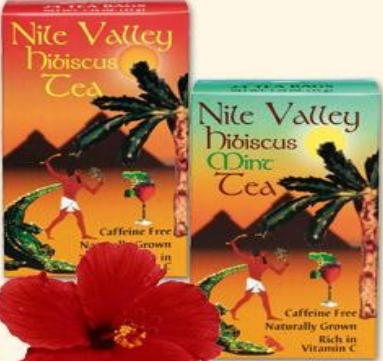

Please tell the Austin City Council to vote against the parkland parking ordinance and urge them to increase funding for our Parks and Recreation Department. You can do that by signing the For Austin Parks petition at [tinyurl.com/ForAustinParks](http://tinyurl.com/ForAustinParks).





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(Continued from page 1) air conditioning, plumbing, and roofing that were identified through a comprehensive facility analysis. In addition, campuses had the opportunity to submit recommendations through school-driven individual campus plans. For the first time ever, each school community had direct input into these plans through their Campus Advisory Councils.

In my opinion, this move toward a greater community voice was driven in part by Zilker-area parents and neighbors who have invested time and energy into understanding and speaking out about the true needs for their school. While there is room for improvement in this new process, it is a step in the right direction, and Zilker is leading the way! As a result of its proactive approach, Zilker Elementary is slated to receive more than just the basics in this bond proposal, including a new gym, multipurpose room, and music room and renovations to some rooms and restrooms to accommodate Zilker's large numbers of special needs students. District-wide improvements to technology, energy, food services, Fine Arts, P.E./Athletics, and Career and Technology also show up in the bond proposal. All of today's Zilker-area children are likely to benefit from these improvements in some form over their AISD careers.

If this bond package passes, AISD estimates that new permanent additions will reduce portables by 16%. This, too, is a step in the right direction. Several trustees have expressed a desire to devise a plan to decrease the use of portable

**Zilker Voter Scorecard**

In the November election, redistricting moved Zilker to AISD District 5. Amber Elenz won 63% of the Zilker vote. Despite intense interest in neighborhood school issues, turnout for this race at the bottom of a long ballot was low in Zilker, 27% overall and only 9% in precinct 340.

buildings. I will keep you updated on this.

As always, there is a cost to consider. The total now stands at about \$898 million (down from the \$1.3 billion originally proposed), which would require AISD to increase taxes for its interest and sinking budget (I&S) by 3.5 cents, adding about \$70 per year to the taxes on a \$200,000 home. The income that AISD receives from bonds goes directly into our schools and is not subject to "recapture" (or Robin Hood distribution) to other school districts.

The proposal could change dramatically between now and February 25. Polls and surveys are being conducted (paid for privately) to gauge Austin voter support for a tax increase. With that information and more discussion, the Board of Trustees may decide to change the proposal. I encourage you to stay involved, stay informed, and stay active in supporting what Zilker and all AISD schools and their students need.

If you are looking for more details on the bond proposal, please visit [www.austinisd.org](http://www.austinisd.org) and search for "Potential Bond Package." These numbers and plans can change daily until the vote on Monday, February 25.

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(Continued from page 1) on South Lamar today include retail space on the ground floor as an after thought, to meet the city code's minimum requirements. Same for affordability: most of them are designed for and marketed to higher income, car-dependent residents. In contrast, the driving force behind the Goodwill project is an established and popular local non-profit employer, and it would provide 100% affordable housing for people who work in the neighborhood. It could actually relieve some traffic problems on South Lamar while preserving an iconic South Austin retail business. On that basis, it's hard to imagine a VMU project that would be more beneficial to the neighborhood and more worthy of funding under the state's rental housing program.

Here's the hitch. To meet the parking requirement, the project requires more land than Goodwill owns. The adjacent commercial properties have the necessary zoning, but the real estate market being what it is on South Lamar, the assumption is that they are out of reach for a nonprofit buyer. If the project is funded, Foundation Communities will probably apply for rezoning of a parcel behind Goodwill, currently occupied by two four-plexes that provide eight affordable residences for Zilker neighbors. That would put the project crosswise with the guiding principle of ZNA's VMU plan, which is to add new housing to the South Lamar corridor without destroying any existing housing.

The ZNA executive committee has discussed these concerns with representatives of Goodwill and Foundation Communities, and we have talked about ways to close off the proposed parking lot from Skyway Circle and protect that part of



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## Hey, Neighbors!

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the neighborhood from South Lamar traffic. As eager as ZNA officers are to secure this state funding for our neighborhood, we first need to be sure that our members understand that ZNA's support of the grant application also commits us to some intense negotiations regarding a future rezoning case and the creation of a program to relocate neighbors who may be displaced from the eight households on Skyway Circle.

For more information on Foundation Communities and its 20-year history in Austin, visit [www.foundcom.org](http://www.foundcom.org).

Foundation Communities has invited neighbors to an info session on Monday, Feb. 18, at 6 pm at Maudie's (1212 S. Lamar), and a tour on Wednesday, Feb. 20, at Skyline Terrace (1212 W. Ben White).

### ZNA Voting Privileges

To be eligible to vote at a ZNA meeting, you must be a member of ZNA for at least 30 days before the date of the vote. If you were a member in 2012, you may pay your 2013 dues at the Feb. 25 meeting and still be eligible to vote at the meeting. See pages 8 and 11 for more membership information.

### Zilker Voter Scorecard

In the November election, Zilker's support for the bond propositions averaged 8 points higher than the citywide vote. Most notable is our 55% support for the affordable housing bonds, which failed citywide.

## Mobilizing the South Lamar Mobility Study

*by Lorraine Atherton, ZNews editor*

LAST APRIL, ZNA president Andy Elder led the way in securing funding for a Mobility Corridor Study of South Lamar in the City of Austin bond package. The bonds passed in November, and now it is time for Zilker to coordinate with the other South Lamar neighborhoods to plan for the "sustainable connectivity" that Andy wrote about last year.

It's clear that we need to rethink South Lamar. Although traffic counts have held steady or declined over the last 20 years, the recent explosion in apartment and condo construction on the Boulevard has us all worried about the strain on the area's aged infrastructure, from water and wastewater to overhead power lines and Internet access, from the streets and sidewalks to parks and shade trees. Transportation is just one of the systems that needs to be overhauled to serve a new generation of residents.

The Federal Highway Administration has been reporting for some time that young Americans are less and less interested in driving. Teenagers with licenses to drive dropped from 64% in 1998 to 46% in 2008, and drivers under 30 are driving fewer miles. One study reported that close to half of drivers between 18 and 24, when asked to choose between Internet access or owning a car, picked the Internet. Last month

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the Austin Transportation Department announced that 2% of Austinites (about 8,200 of us) use a bike to commute to work (based on the American Community Survey of the U.S. Census). The Austin City Council had set that as a goal—for 2015. The next goal is 5% by 2020.

In last April's *ZNews*, Andy identified potential crosswalk locations on South Lamar, sidewalk connections at West Mary, Treadwell, and Kinney, and the bridge over Barton Creek as ZNA priorities in the bond package. But the Corridor Study will require us to think beyond immediate priorities to a long-term transformation of the Boulevard. For starters, we must confront traffic management issues, including reducing speed limits, limiting left turns, closing curb cuts, and persuading businesses to share driveways and parking. Potential big-ticket projects are the problem intersections of Hether-Mary, Bluebonnet-Del Curto, and Manchaca-Barton Skyway. At the same time, given the potential for an urban forest and hike and bike trail along the open right-of-way on the east side of the Boulevard, from Bluebonnet Lane to Panther Trail, we need to find out where the parkland dedication fees paid by the new developments are being spent and whether they are providing recreational benefits for the new residents they are supposed to serve.

There's much more to think about, and we know that our neighbors have great ideas on how to improve South Lamar. That's why the ZNA executive committee is forming a new South Lamar planning committee. To join it, e-mail us at [ZilkerNA@austin.rr.com](mailto:ZilkerNA@austin.rr.com).

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## Our Zilker Neighbors Come Through Again!

*by Barbara Cossie, ZNA Holiday Families Program Coordinator*

FOR MOST OF US living here in Zilker, the holidays are a happy time. But for some families, with the economy the way it is these days, the holidays can be difficult. This is where the ZNA Holiday Families Program steps in. For many years, this outstanding program has provided families in need with toys, clothes, gift cards, food, and, most of all, compassion. In 2012 eight Zilker Elementary School families celebrated a wonderful holiday thanks to the many neighbors who donated time, money, and gifts to our families.



And there are so many people to thank! This year we had several more Zilker elves than usual. As this coordinator gets older (I know, I don't look any older!), that help comes in handy! A big Zilker high-five goes to these wonderful Zilker neighbors for their support.

Awad Abdelgadir	Tom Doyal	Mary Christine & Robert Reed
Hill Abell, owner, Bicycle Sport Shop	Janet Dunkelberg	Jo Reichler
Laura Albrecht	Rachel Elder & Family	Rene Renteria
Lorraine Atherton & Mike Meier	Susan Geist & Brian Lewis	Bobby Rigney
Brandie Baker	Richard & Paulette Gravois	Jill Rhoden & Family
Luan & Chuck Borgeson	Aletha Huston	Mary & David Rogerson
Linda Boxberger	Whit & Andrea Hutson	Steven Schrom
Pam Bradley	Irie Bean Coffee Bar (Raf, staff & customers)	Molly Shannon
Lila Carl	Jeff Jack	Steve, Marianne & Grant Sides
Dorsey Cartwright	Charles Kastner	Skip Smith & Connie Temple
Jan Castleberry & Michelle Martin	David King	Marilyn & Jerry Smolinsky
Kevin, Erin & Zoey Clifford	Mike Kintner & Jaime Shimkus	Rosalind & Ron Steele
Pat Cramer	Steve & Becky Lang	Ryan Stryker
Curtis & Sharon Dieke	David La Pier	Gardner Sumner
	Eileen Nehme	Bratten Thomason
	Amelie Parks	Elizabeth Yevich and other anonymous donors

### BECOME A ZNA MEMBER TODAY

Membership is open to Zilker residents (renters or homeowners) 18 years old or older.

Nonresident property owners are not eligible for membership.

**Annual dues are \$7 per person. Please list each member name and e-mail address below.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Dues amount: \_\_\_\_\_ Additional contribution: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to Zilker Neighborhood Association and mail with this form to:

ZNA Memberships, 1115 Kinney Ave. #42, Austin, TX 78704

Questions? Please e-mail: [membership@zilkerneighborhood.org](mailto:membership@zilkerneighborhood.org)



## 2013 ZNA Officers

THE ZILKER NEIGHBORHOOD Association has had the good fortune of having outstanding leadership for many years. We elected new officers at the October general meeting. The neighbors listed below will serve as officers or committee chairs through October 2013. I am especially happy to introduce four new executive members, Jacob Scheick, Tony Giustino, David King, and Kathy Green, and to welcome back Elizabeth Yevich. As the incoming president of ZNA with an excellent executive committee, I will continue to provide neighborhood support to the best of my ability, and welcome any suggestions or inquiries regarding the well-being of our neighborhood.

*Your neighbor,  
Gardner Sumner*

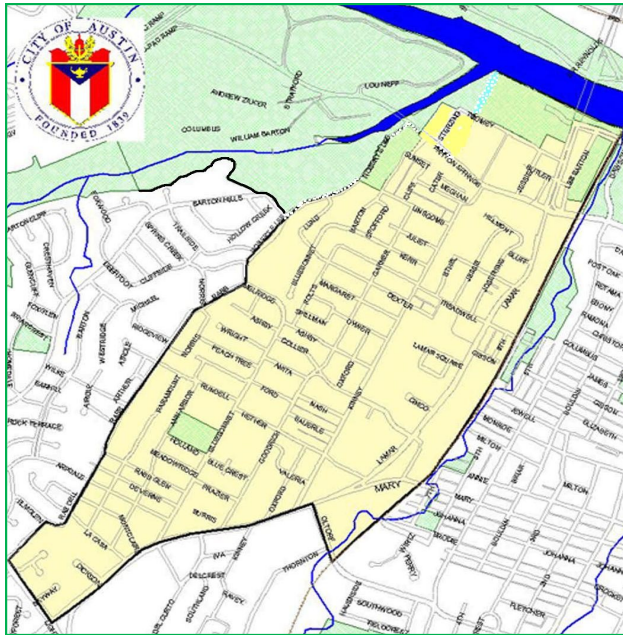
### Elected Officers

- President:* Gardner Sumner
- First VP:* Richard Gravois
- Second VP:* Andy Elder
- Secretary:* Jacob Scheick
- Treasurer:* Merriman (Skip) Smith
- Social Chair:* Open
- ANC Delegate:* Tony Giustino
- ZNews Editor:* Lorraine Atherton

### Committee Chairs

Barbara Cossie is still coordinating the Holiday Families Program, Connie Temple is handling membership, Bill Neale and David King will co-chair the zoning committee, with Bill continuing to specialize in sound issues, and Elizabeth Yevich, a former VP, will be heading up a new committee to help Zilker voters prepare for single-member City Council districts. The ZNews team now includes Dave Piper on advertising, Kathy Green on distribution (replacing the sorely missed Matt Ditlow), and Ryan Stryker on the Web site.

There are many other ways to participate *(Continued on page 11)*



*ZNA boundaries include Zilker Park and Rabb Road on the west and extend to the railroad tracks on the east. The south boundary is Barton Skyway, and the north limit is Lady Bird Lake. Residents on both sides of boundary streets are eligible for membership.*

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### Kite Time in Zilker Park

DON'T MISS THE ZILKER PARK KITE FESTIVAL on Sunday, March 3. Thanks to the generosity of our Zilker neighbors in 2012, ZNA is pleased to be a sponsor of this year's Kite Festival, promoting creativity and healthy homes for children in Zilker and across the city.

The Exchange Club of Austin created the event as a kite tournament in 1929, with a mission to encourage creativity in children. The national mission of the all-volunteer civic club is the prevention of child abuse.

Zilker's donation is our way of supporting fun, family, and free community events in our most treasured park, while continuing to provide for all of Austin's children. Go fly a kite with us on March 3.

Visit [ZilkerKiteFestival.com](http://ZilkerKiteFestival.com) for more info.

### The Purple Martins Return to Virginia Avenue

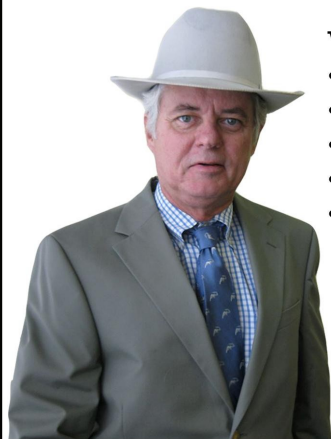
by Laura Joseph

FOR THE PAST TWENTY YEARS, one of the largest colonies of purple martins has made the Zilker neighborhood its home at 1610 Virginia Avenue. Cater and Laura Joseph started the colony in their front yard in an effort to preserve this native American song bird, which was fast becoming extinct due to sparrows and starlings and loss of nesting opportunities. Purple martins will be returning shortly to their home following their migration to Brazil, and we are gearing up for another good year at the Virginia Avenue Purple Martin Sanctuary. You can join in the fun. Please e-mail Laura at [ljoseph@austin.rr.com](mailto:ljoseph@austin.rr.com) or call 444-8765 if you are interested in participating. Training is required for "landlord" status, and each new volunteer is mentored by a neighbor who is an experienced landlord. Children must be accompanied by a parent.

A special seminar will also be offered to teenagers in May. For more details, please e-mail [Ljoseph@austin.rr.com](mailto:Ljoseph@austin.rr.com).

Lost your piggies? Looking for a little wildlife in Zilker? Yearning for that old South Austin yard sale vibe? Join the Zilker neighborhood Yahoo group. Go to [www.Yahogroups.com](http://www.Yahogroups.com) and search for "Zilker"

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(Continued from page 9) in ZNA. If you want to get involved, contact any executive members on page 12 or at [www.zilkerneighborhood.org](http://www.zilkerneighborhood.org). We will be happy to help you find just the right job. We especially need folks to help us organize a South Lamar corridor planning effort and to replace Steve McGuire, who did such a great job monitoring Austin City Limits and other events on our Park Events committee.

**ZNA Membership**

ZNA was established more than 30 years ago with the mission of protecting the character of our neighborhood and enhancing the quality of life for all residents. As a volunteer organization, ZNA works to ensure appropriate code enforcement, resolve traffic safety issues, maintain our historic and cultural resources, protect our environment, and ensure that neighborhood interests are heard at City Hall.

To be effective, ZNA needs your participation. Membership is open to all Zilker residents who are at least 18 years old. Membership dues support our quarterly newsletter, *ZNews*, as well as activities such as our summer Watermelon Social. Additional contributions above the annual dues are welcomed and support neighborhood projects such as the Holiday Family Fund (see page 8).

ZNA has a proud history of strong advocacy for our neighborhood. We encourage you to become a member today and help keep Zilker the most wonderful neighborhood in town!

Dues may be paid with PayPal <http://zilkerneighborhood.org/dues-and-donations>. Alternatively, you can mail in the form on page 8 with your payment. *Connie Temple*

For ZNA bylaws and other info, visit [zilkerneighborhood.org](http://zilkerneighborhood.org).

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# **Z** Newsletter of the Zilker Neighborhood **NEWS** Association

[www.zilkerneighborhood.org](http://www.zilkerneighborhood.org)  
2009 Arpdale St., Austin, TX 78704

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*Advertisers:* ZNA reserves this newsletter's limited advertising space for businesses based within the boundaries of the neighborhood association.

### **2013 Executive Committee of ZNA**

*President:* Gardner Sumner, 468-6200  
*1st VP:* Richard Gravois, 441-3430  
*2nd VP:* Andy Elder, 428-9180  
*Secretary:* Jacob Scheick,  
*Treasurer:* Merriman (Skip) Smith,  
treasurer@zilkerneighborhood.org  
*Social Chair:* Open  
*ANC Delegate:* Tony Giustino, 925-4821  
*ZNews Editor:* Lorraine Atherton, 447-7681

### **About the Zilker Neighborhood Association**

ZNA holds general meetings the last Monday of February, April, July, and October, at Faith United Methodist Church, 2701 S. Lamar. The Executive Committee meets at 7 PM the first Monday of each month. Watch the Web site for updates.

**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.

### **Committee Chairs:**

*Holiday Families Program:* Barbara Cossie, 447-4437  
*Membership:* Connie Temple, membership@zilkerneighborhood.org  
*Parks and Environment:* Gardner Sumner, 468-6200  
*Sound:* Bill Neale, bneale15@yahoo.com  
*Voter Outreach:* Elizabeth Yevich  
*ZNews Advertising:* Dave Piper, 916-9636  
*Zoning:* David King, 415-6016, and Bill Neale



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