

# Z NEWS

MAY 2013

Newsletter of the  
Zilker Neighborhood  
Association

Austin, Texas  
Established 1981

## More Fun Than We Can Manage

OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS, as downtown parkland along Waller Creek has been closed for tunnel construction, the Austin City Council has allowed the number of events on Auditorium Shores to climb, leaving the south shore parkland in a sorry state. The end of April was particularly bad, after the area was double-booked.

You have probably heard that C3, the promoter for the Austin City Limits Music Festival, is donating \$3 million for improvements to Auditorium Shores, similar to the improvements a few years ago to Zilker Park. What you probably haven't heard is that C3's gift will require the City of Austin to clean up its act when it comes to scheduling and managing events in city parks.

The city has been gathering input and studying possible changes to its event policies for a few months now. At the same time, south shore neighborhoods (Bouldin Creek, Zilker, and Barton Hills), along with affected West Austin neighbors, have been discussing growing problems with traffic *(Continued on page 4)*



Construction near the Broken Spoke and a future traffic light on South Lamar. The gray point at the end of the sidewalk is the Capitol dome. Changes to Austin's roadway design criteria and their effect on South Lamar will be presented at the ZNA Quarterly Meeting on May 20.

## Zoning Updates *by ZNA Zoning Committee*

THE GOODWILL/Foundation Communities affordable housing project at 2800 South Lamar is on its way to winning state funding, thanks to ZNA's vote to support the project back in February. The state housing agency recently awarded the project the maximum number of points for community support, based on ZNA's application.

As noted in the February *ZNews*, the next step is to determine the best zoning for two *(Continued on page 5)*

### Inside this issue:

Pages 2-3, *West Mary, WaBuCy, Kindergarten Kamp*  
Pages 4-5, *Barton Springs Pool back entrance, Parking on Parkland ordinance, Zoning update, 1201 Robert E. Lee*  
Pages 6, *Zoning update, Taco PUD*  
Page 8, *More WaBuCy, Historic Districts, ZNA membership*  
Page 10, *Wheatsville opening*

## ZNA Meeting

May 20

Monday 6:30-8:30 PM

FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
2701 South Lamar Blvd.



Roadway Design Changes and  
South Lamar

May 11 School Bond Election Results  
Zoning Updates: Robert E. Lee, Taco  
Cabana PUD, Goodwill



Newcomers, homeowners, renters,  
business neighbors

❖ ❖ All Welcome ❖ ❖

### WaBuCy Rides West Mary: The Library Connection

IN APRIL the Austin Public Works Department announced that "In coordination with routine street maintenance," the portion of West Mary Street between South Lamar and the railroad tracks will be restriped "to modify parking and improve existing bicycle lanes." For about 200 feet midblock on the south side of Mary (the stretch in front of the Bouldin Creek Apartments), on-street parking will be allowed. Parking will be prohibited everywhere else, on both sides of the street. The department invited input from the public before the changes are implemented.

In a Wabucy Zilker event on April 27, neigh-

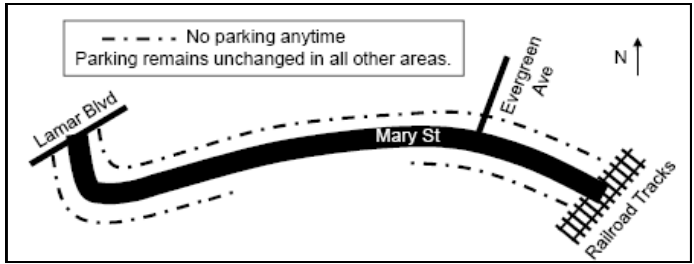


Diagram of West Mary "No Parking" zones, from City of Austin Transportation Department

several recommendations to the Public Works Department. Their report suggests that no parking should be allowed on this part of Mary and that the new bike lane should be wide enough to accommodate foot and bike traffic.



Cyclists headed east on Mary dodge a car parked at a fire hydrant. It's a tight squeeze for the west-bound vehicles, too. Photo by Rene Renteria

bors walked and biked to Twin Oaks Library (at the top of the hill on Mary and S. Fifth) to identify ways to improve access to the library for people on foot and on bicycles. They found that the area to be restriped lacks bike lanes, sidewalks, and crosswalks. As a result, Wabucy Zilker submitted

You can help Wabucy promote walking and cycling in Zilker. For a link to a survey on locations for Lamar crosswalks, or to learn more about the group and how to get involved, please email [wabucy@gmail.com](mailto:wabucy@gmail.com) or visit the Wabucy Zilker page on Facebook. *Lorraine Atherton*

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## Incoming Kinder Kids: Check Out Zilker Elementary's Kinder Kamp

ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD to starting kindergarten next fall? Well then join us on Friday, May 17, at 9:30 AM to get a kid's eye view of Zilker Elementary! We'll meet in the library for story time with our librarian and principal, tour the school, have a snack, and finish up with playtime on our playscape. This is a great way for kids (and their parents) to check out the inside of their new school.

Any child who will be 5 years old on or before Sept. 1, 2013, is eligible for kindergarten for the 2013-2014 school year, but a parent or guardian must register the child. If you missed the Kindergarten Round-up on May 7, you may still register your child at the Zilker Elementary School office, at 1900 Bluebonnet Lane (8:30 AM to 3 PM), until May 31.

When registering, please bring the child's birth certificate, Social Security card (we need to see the original card), current immunization record, proof of parent's address in the Zilker attendance area (such as a current utility bill or lease agreement with valid address), and parent's or guardian's driver license or other photo ID.

**If you bring two copies of each document with you, it will speed up the registration process tremendously and will be greatly appreciated!**

Please try to register in May so the school staff can plan for fall classes. Late registration will also be available in early August.

If you have questions about Kinder Kamp or registration, please call the school at 414-2327.

*Randall Thomson, Principal  
Zilker Elementary School*

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(Continued from page 1) and park use.

To top it all off, the annual round of planning meetings begins this month for the ACL Festival, which is expanding to two weekends. The ZNA executive committee is already stretched thin, so ZNA needs some fresh recruits willing to work together with the Parks department, other neighborhoods, and event organizers to protect and improve our parks and to raise the standard for event management in Austin.

If you think you can help, please call ZNA President Gardner Sumner, or any of the ZNA officers listed on the back of this newsletter.

**Other Park News**

*by David King, Zoning Co-chair*

**Barton Springs Back Entrance**

At the April 11 City Council meeting, the Council voted 6-0 for the Barton Springs Pool General Grounds Improvement Plan, with these changes:

- 1. The South Overlook Trail is to be moved away from the South Lawn and closer to the new ADA walkway.
- 2. Before construction on the Grounds Project begins, staff will present the proposed lighting design to the Design Commission, which will provide feedback specifically on the appropriateness of lighting design that ensures safety and mitigates negative environmental and aesthetic impacts while enhancing the overall ambiance of Barton Springs Pool.
- 3. During construction, staff will provide progress reports and design development details regarding the ADA paths at least bimonthly at the Austin

- Mayor’s Committee for People with Disabilities.
- 4. The historical marker is to be moved from its current location to a spot near the south gate. Before construction begins, staff will apply to the Texas Historical Commission for approval to move the marker to a more accessible location.
- 5. No net increase in impervious cover will be allowed in the Barton Springs Zone.
- 6. No fewer than 80 bicycle parking spaces will be provided on the South parking lot.

**Parkland Parking Ordinance**

Since the last ZNews, the Austin Neighborhoods Council voted unanimously against the ordinance, and many neighborhoods throughout Austin, including the ZNA executive committee, have expressed opposition to it. The City Codes and Ordinances committee voted unanimously against it on April 16. In addition, several members of the Parks and Recreation Board expressed serious concerns about the ordinance.

Parks staff released a list of 93 city parks that could be affected. Thousands of businesses are located within 1,000 feet of these parks and could use them for commercial parking, if this ordinance becomes law.

The ordinance is scheduled for public hearings at the Planning Commission and the Parks and Recreation Board on May 28 and at the Austin City Council on June 6. Now is the time to e-mail and call members of the Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Board, and City Council and tell them to vote against the parkland parking ordinance.

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(Continued from page 1) fourplexes at 2805 and 2807 Skyway Circle, immediately behind the Goodwill store. The two parcels will be used as a parking lot with about 30 spaces, or roughly half the spaces required by city code for the 100+ apartments to be built above the renovated Goodwill store. (The entire project, apartments and store combined, will have about 90 spaces on site.)

City staff has recommended a commercial Vertical Mixed Use zoning (GR-V). Most of the uses allowed under GR zoning, however, would not be appropriate on Skyway Circle or in connection with the proposed housing, and the V designation prohibits residential uses that would be appropriate. Given that these parcels are now zoned for multifamily residential use (MF3), and that they will be used to fulfill a residential parking requirement, the ZNA zoning committee has questioned the staff recommendation that they be rezoned for commercial uses.

ZNA is working with Foundation Communities to find a simpler zoning solution. As this newsletter goes to press, there are indications that city staff will revise its recommendation and a resolution will be ready for the Planning Commission hearing on May 14. The City Council will hear the case on May 23.

Look for an update at the May 20 ZNA meeting.

**1201 Robert E. Lee**

At the February 25 ZNA meeting, the general membership voted to support the neighbors who have signed a valid petition opposing the rezoning of 1201 Robert E. Lee Road. The membership directed the executive committee of ZNA to help the neighbors negotiate a



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more appropriate plan for the property in question than that proposed by the developer.

The neighbors have made an alternative proposal of the most intense single-family zoning (SF6) with a limit of seven residences. The ZNA executive committee made a similar proposal, for SF6 with a limit of six units. Both have been rejected by the applicant.

In general, ZNA objects to the proposed project because:

- The steep terrain and the presence of potentially critical environmental features (spring-fed Little Zilker Creek) limit the buildable space to about 25,000 square feet, with an impervious cover limit of around 15%.
- Robert E. Lee Road is inadequate to handle any additional driveways or additional residential traffic on the hill between Melridge and Barton Hills Drive.
- Additional zoning density is not necessary or desirable within the SF3 areas of the Zilker and Barton Hills neighborhoods, even in areas that are not environmentally sensitive. Under the circumstances, an increase above the existing entitlement of six housing units would serve only to destroy a valuable site and leave the new residents stranded in inaccessible and dangerous houses.

By the way, if you have photos of Little Zilker Creek (especially the grotto area) before 1990, the neighbors would like to see them, to get an idea of how much the creek has changed.

In March, the Planning Commission voted against the staff recommendation to rezone to SF6 with 18 units. The case is now scheduled to be heard by the City Council on May 23. Because the neighbors have a valid petition against the rezoning, a supermajority vote by the City Council is required to approve the project. Look for updates at the May 20 ZNA meeting.

### 211 South Lamar

At the February 25 ZNA meeting, the general membership voted once again, as we have numerous times since the 1980s, to support the Waterfront Overlay and to oppose the construction of a highrise on the banks of the Colorado River. The subject of this particular vote was the Planned Unit Development proposed at 211 South Lamar, known as the Taco PUD, for the Taco Cabana on the site.

In general, ZNA objects to the creation of this PUD on this site because:

- The primary objective of the Waterfront Overlay is to preserve the views and public open space along the river by preventing the construction of tall buildings too close to the river. A 96-foot high building 35 feet from the south end of the Lamar Bridge and the Pfluger pedestrian bridge is a classic example of what the Waterfront Overlay was created to prevent. The 60-foot maximum height limit must be enforced on this site.
- Besides the Waterfront Overlay, ZNA's Vertical Mixed Use proposal, which was approved and

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praised by the Planning Commission and the City Council, governs both parcels in this case. The west parcel, fronting on S. Lamar, was opted into VMU with dimensional standards, affordability, and 60% parking reduction. From what we have seen so far, this PUD rejects the VMU options. The east parcel, on Lee Barton in front of the Paggi House, was specifically opted out of VMU because of our desire to protect the historic Paggi House, its trees, and its connection to the waterfront and the adjacent public green spaces.

• Finally, the objective of the PUD ordinance is to "result in development superior to that which would occur using conventional zoning." ZNA has participated in ongoing efforts over the last 30 years to improve the development standards that are applied on the South Shore and all along S. Lamar. Those efforts have been codified in the WO, VMU, and current commercial design standards. The PUD proposed here does not meet those standards and will result in a project that is inferior even to nearby projects built before those standards were written into the City Code.

Since the ZNA meeting, the city's Environmental Board and the Waterfront Planning Advisory Board have voted against the PUD application. In addition to ZNA, Bouldin Creek Neighborhood Association, Save Town Lake, and the Bridges on the Park homeowners have opposed the PUD. The case is scheduled to be heard by the Planning Commission on May 14 and by the City Council on May 23.

*David King and  
Lorraine Atherton*

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**WaBuCy Walks the Walk**  
*by Eileen Nehme*

WABUCY ZILKER is a neighborhood activist group dedicated to increasing walking, bus riding, and cycling—and making it safer and easier to do so—in and around Zilker and South Lamar. We're also about getting to know our neighbors, being creative, having fun, and building community. Our approach is light-hearted, supportive, and collaborative—and we aim to get things done! (Read about our April library ride on page 2.)

Wabucy Zilker's June event will be a walking tour of Zilker landmarks, both historic and contemporary, including the Barton Springs Baptist Church and Cemetery on Goodrich and the Purple Martin sanctuary on Virginia. To find out more about this and other Wabucy events, e-mail wabucy@gmail.com, or visit the Wabucy Zilker page on Facebook.

**Local Historic Districts in Austin**

*by Steve Sadowsky, City of Austin Preservation Officer*

AUSTIN'S HISTORIC BUILDINGS and neighborhoods reflect the unique heritage and character of our city. In December 2004, the Austin City Council adopted an ordinance authorizing the establishment of local historic districts to recognize and protect those areas with particular historical significance to maintain Austin's rich heritage.

Local historic districts provide several tools for preservation, starting with a greater appreciation and understanding of the development and history of a neighborhood and its buildings. Historic district nominations contain a history of the district, an inventory of properties, photographs of every building in the district, and an evaluation of which buildings are contributing to the historic character of the district. To qualify as a City of Austin Local Historic District at least 51% of the principal buildings within the district boundaries must be "contributing" properties (e.g. retain their historic appearance), and the owners of at least 51% of the land area inside the boundaries, OR at least 51% of the property owners within the boundaries must consent to initiate the Local Historic District zoning.

Local historic districts provide a higher bar for evaluating the demolition or relocation of important

**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.

Membership affords you the opportunity to vote on important issues that are addressed at our association quarterly meetings. Please note that voting privileges are activated thirty days after membership dues are received. However, if you were a paid member last year, you can renew your membership anytime this year (prior to and including the general meeting dates) and retain voting privileges.

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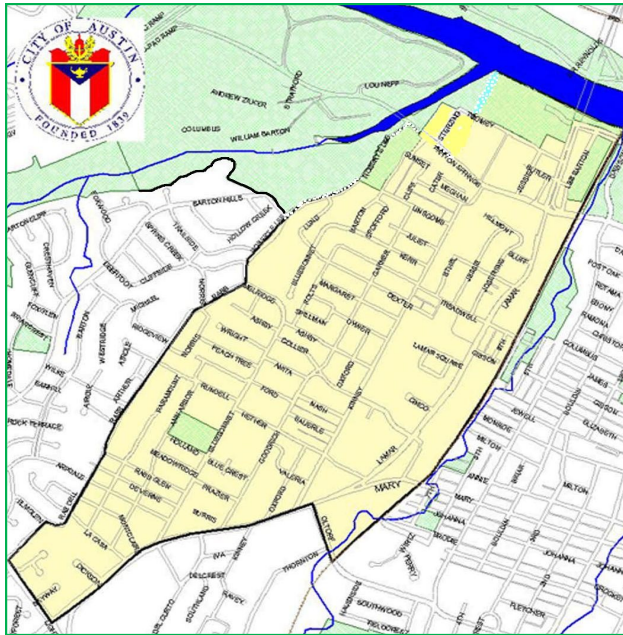
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buildings in a neighborhood. Currently, the City Historic Preservation Office and the Historic Landmark Commission review applications for demolition or relocation permits to determine whether a building meets the criteria for designation as a historic landmark. The determination is made according to objective criteria designed to protect those buildings with exceptional significance to the city because of their architecture and historical associations. Buildings which are contributing to a local historic district may not qualify as individual historic landmarks. The establishment of local historic districts helps protect those properties that are significant to the neighborhood for their architecture (“contributing” to the historic character of the district) but which do not meet the high standards necessary for designation as a historic landmark.

Local historic districts also provide design standards for new construction within the district. The Historic Landmark Commission currently reviews applications for building permits within National Register Historic Districts and provides recommendations to the property owner to make the new construction more compatible with the character of the district. While the Commission encourages the property owner to develop plans that preserve the historic character of the neighborhood, there is no requirement that the property owner do so. Local historic districts have mandatory design standards, which provide property owners and builders parameters for the design of new construction, as well as providing neighbors a higher level of comfort knowing that new construction will be required to follow accepted design standards based on the existing architecture within the district. *(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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## Spreading the Love: Wheatsville Expands to 78704

*by Raquel Dadomo, Brand Manager, Wheatsville Food Co-op*

THIS SUMMER Wheatsville Food Co-op will finally be opening a second store, at 4001 South Lamar in the Lamar Oaks Shopping Plaza. If you've never shopped with us before, we are a local natural foods retailer, and we're the only retail grocery cooperative in Texas! We have more than 13,000 owners (even though you don't have to be one to shop with us), 1,500 of whom already live in your South Austin neighborhoods.

Currently we have more than 1,700 local products in store, and our produce department is about 80% organic on any given day. You'll find that our shelves are lined with local farmer's market favorites and vegan, vegetarian, and gluten-free items that are hard to find in other stores. The new store will also have an in-house artisan bakery. We'll even have indoor and outdoor seating with free wi-fi so you can sit down and relax.

Wheatsville has long been known for giving our customers the best local food Austin has to offer, the biggest selection of foods to suit special diets, and a healthy dose of recipe staples you just can't live without – Velveeta and Ro-Tel, we're lookin' at you.

We look forward to being a part of the South Austin community and getting to know our new neighbors. To keep up with all the latest news and learn more about us, visit [www.wheatsville.com](http://www.wheatsville.com) or drop in at 3101 Guadalupe, 7:30 AM to 11 PM, any day of the week.



*The Wheatsville South store, in the old Wells Fargo building in Lamar Oaks, near Ben White. See photos of the renovations and follow store news on the Web at [www.wheatsville.coop](http://www.wheatsville.coop).*

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(Continued from page 9) District design standards are individually tailored to meet the character and needs of the particular district, and may address building materials, height limits, and setbacks for new construction within the district. Additions to contributing buildings and new construction require a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Landmark Commission prior to receiving a building permit.

For those who fear that local historic districts will result in onerous burdens and long delays in approval of projects, rest assured that the Commission meets every month (usually the fourth Monday). The City Historic Preservation Office also may approve minor projects which comport with the district design standards, such as one-story rear additions, rear decks and porches, and pools, without a hearing before the Commission, streamlining the process further.

Finally, local historic districts enable a new provision to provide a City property tax incentive for rehabilitating buildings within the district. The Historic Landmark Commission will review rehabilitation proposals and certify the project upon completion, at which time the owner is eligible to receive a City property tax abatement on the added value of the project for 7 years. For example, if the owner of a \$100,000 house invests \$30,000 in rehabilitation work approved by the Landmark Commission and the value of the property jumped to \$150,000 after the completion of the project, the city property tax assessment would be frozen at the \$100,000 value for 7 years.

For more info on local historic districts contact Alyson McGee, Austin's Deputy Historic Preservation Officer, at 512-974-7801 or [alyson.mcgee@austintexas.gov](mailto:alyson.mcgee@austintexas.gov).

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### **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 quarterly meetings, usually the last Monday of February, April, July, and October, at Faith United Methodist Church, 2701 South 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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Pastor David Gilliam

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