



# Newsletter of the Zilker Neighborhood Association

OCTOBER 2011

Austin, Texas  
Established 1981

## The Future of Lamar Plaza, and Beyond *A Message from ZNA President Andrew Elder*

ANOTHER MAJOR PROJECT is coming to South Lamar. Greystar plans to redevelop the iconic Lamar Plaza as a vertical mixed use (VMU) project, adding more than 400 apartments alongside businesses on the nine acres.

To promote neighborhood compatibility, a mix of single- and two-story apartments will front Treadwell and Dexter, with doorways facing the streets. The rest of the site will rise to a five-story peak at the southeast corner (where Suzi's is now). Ten percent of the housing units should be affordable at the 60% level. The Alamo Draffthouse will remain, and a small grocery and some restaurants and retail shops are also likely. Three parking garages will be hidden inside the commercial and residential buildings, holding nearly three times the current parking spaces. Access to the garages will be on Treadwell, and the driveways on Lamar will be reduced to one in the center of the block. There will be no vehicle access to the site from Dexter.

The new Alamo Plaza represents a major change to our neighborhood. Counting other nearby projects, more than 1000 new housing units are planned within a few blocks, but we may also lose several longtime local businesses. The designers have worked to minimize overflow parking and integrate the project with neighboring residences, but new traffic problems are certain at Treadwell and Lamar. The new projects on South Lamar are building on the VMU plan that ZNA submitted to the city a few years ago, and we hope they will deliver the expected benefits.

**THREE RESOLUTIONS** on city policies that will define the future direction of change in Zilker will be featured at ZNA's Oct. 24 meeting. These resolutions represent recommendations on how we elect our City Council, on the comprehensive planning process, and on commercial short-term rentals in residential areas. The Austin Neighborhoods Council (ANC) is asking its member organizations to vote on these resolutions at its Oct. 26 meeting, and so the ZNA executive committee is asking you to participate in the discussion at our Oct. 24 meeting. I hope you will join the debate on where we go from here.

### Short-Term Rental Resolution

As reported in the July issue of *ZNews*, the Austin Planning Commission is working on a new ordinance to define and regulate short-term rentals (STR) in single-family residential areas. For many months now, ZNA vice president Steven McGuire has participated in a working group formed by the Planning Commission. Members of the working group representing various neighborhoods have concluded that the current recommendations for this ordinance are too restrictive for homeowners who rent their houses only occasionally (during SXSW, for instance) and too *(Continued on page 6)*

## ZNA Meeting

**October 24**

**Monday 6:30-8:45 PM**

Zilker Elementary School  
1900 Bluebonnet



Meet your neighbors and  
Elect officers (page 10)

Volunteer for Little Zilker  
Park (page 4)

Support Holiday Families  
Program (page 8)

Vote on Single-member  
districts (page 7)

Comprehensive plan (page 6)  
Short-term rentals  
(page 1)



Newcomers, old-timers,  
homeowners, renters,  
business neighbors

All Welcome



**Zilker School Calendar**

**Zilker Zamboree**

**Saturday, Oct. 22, Noon-4 pm**

This year's Zamboree, the Zilker PTA's fall carnival, features a Halloween theme, so come in costume to add to the festivity! You won't want to miss the karaoke booth, moon-walks, photo booth, and (surprise!) the return of the Haunted House.

Parents, please remember to sign up for your class booth or donate items for the carnival and/or basket raffle. Help make this a great event for everyone!

**Calling all artists**

Zilker PTA is looking for skilled artists to help decorate the walls of the Zamboree Haunted House with special spooktacular paint! If you can volunteer to help the Zamboree in any way (including the Haunted House preparation), contact Andi Loo through [zilkerpta@gmail.com](mailto:zilkerpta@gmail.com).

**AISD Hearing**

**Tuesday, Oct. 25, 6-8 pm**

Austin ISD Facilities Master Plan public hearing, Carruth Board Auditorium. Check [ZilkerElem.org](http://ZilkerElem.org) for updates.

**ZILKER ELEMENTARY ZAMBOREE**

**HALLOWEEN SPOOKTACULAR**

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**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2011**

**NOON - 4:00 PM**

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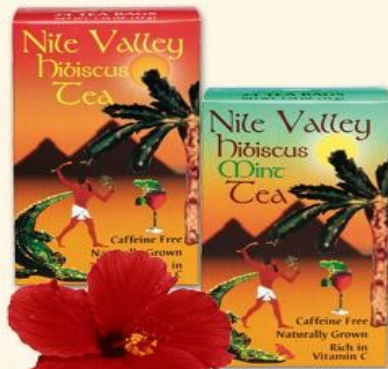
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**Zilker PTA-BookPeople Fundraiser**

**Nov. 12-19**

Support reading, the local economy, and the Zilker PTA by shopping at BookPeople the week of November 12. It's simple: during the week, Zilker families, friends, and neighbors shop at BookPeople for books and gifts. At check-out, present the Zilker BookPeople flyer (distributed through the school and the Web site zilkerelem.org). The store will donate 20% of net sales to the Zilker PTA. If you forget the flyer, just say you're shopping on behalf of Zilker.

Zilker PTA/BookPeople Family Shopping Night: On Wednesday, Nov. 16, Zilker PTA will host a special event at BookPeople, beginning at 5:30 pm and running all night. Children (and parents) can come to the store in their pj's to shop, eat yummy treats, and listen to special readings throughout the evening by Principal Thomson and Zilker teachers. *Amy Spiro*

*More school events on page 5*

**Join Zilker PTA** We want to hear from you! Contact Akua Woolbright, president, zilkerpta@gmail.com.

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## A Little TLC at Little Zilker Park

IT'S OFFICIAL. This is Austin's worst drought ever. The past year has replaced the peak of the 1950s drought as the driest year in Central Texas, and long-range forecasts predict that the dry weather will continue through the winter.

In the spring of 2010, the Friends of Little Zilker Park celebrated the end of our two-year watering obligation for the trees we planted in 2008. All of those trees did well under the care of our watering and mulching teams, especially considering the brutal summers of 2008 and 2009. In 2010 we decided to keep a skeleton crew of volunteers together for supplemental watering once or twice a month, but as the drought has deepened, the need has gone far beyond "supplemental." Volunteers now provide the only water that most of the park and school campus receives, and even the established trees are suffering. The city parks staff has done a great job of keeping the Little Zilker irrigation system running, but they are stretched very thin.

So this fall's Little Zilker Park workday has a special urgency. The Friends of Little Zilker Park and the volunteer gardeners for Zilker Elementary need your help to preserve the trees and gardens that hundreds of children and neighbors have planted over the last 10 years. If you can't attend the workday on October 29, please sign up to help out some other time during the next six months.

Join other Zilker families on Saturday, Oct. 29, from 9 am to 1 pm, to give Little Zilker Park a

little TLC. We will mulch, cut back dead plants, and water trees and plants. This is a fun event that brings together our community for the benefit of this wonderful little neighborhood park next door to Zilker Elementary School. We'll have coffee and snacks for volunteers. Be sure to bring any garden tools you have (rakes, pruning shears, and wheelbarrows). Closed-toe shoes and hats are a good idea. Also, bring your own coffee cup and water bottles to help reduce waste. To help the planning team have a volunteer count, please RSVP at [littlezilker@gmail.com](mailto:littlezilker@gmail.com).

*In August 2010 we asked Emily King, our tree advisor with the Austin Parks Department, to help us evaluate our Little Zilker trees. In addition, she offered this advice on watering technique, which applies to all our trees, at home and in the parks:*

"Be sure that the water is percolating deep. Think long slow drinks of water spread as much as possible around the root zone. Try to avoid only watering right at the base of the trunk. Use the drip line of the tree as a measuring tool for where to saturate soil (hopefully the roots go much further out than the drip line though). Aiming for every other week sounds like a reasonable goal. The trees will appreciate it! You do a great job keeping the trees well mulched, so that will also do a lot of good. If you are unsure if the water is really percolating you can use a hand trowel to dig down to see what is going on in the soil."



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## Sustainable Zilker

TREE FOLKS has awarded Zilker Elementary a grant to plant 15 fruit and nut trees in the school's front lawn. This urban orchard will afford Zilker children an opportunity to nurture the trees as well as harvest and distribute the bounty. The planting day will be in January 2012. To raise funds for irrigation and rainwater collection tanks, the Zilker Sustainability Committee is holding a "Skill Share" lecture series the first Thursday of each month in the school cafeteria. The lectures will be open to the public (donation of \$5 is suggested for each participant). Kids are welcome! The Skill Share lectures in 2011 will be:

**Thursday, Nov. 3, 6:30-8 pm:**

**Bike to school and work:** a primer and workshop on basic bicycle maintenance and safety.

**Thursday, Dec. 1, 6:30-8 pm:**

**Slow family holidays:** a talk about keeping the holidays feeling fun and sane with Carrie Contey, PhD, and Bernadette Noll.

.....

### Another way to keep Zilker

**green:** Water the plants in the garden beds along the sidewalk to the front entrance of the school. The plants in these beds were installed by volunteers last year and continue to hang in there in spite of the drought. The team that waters this important space also assists occasionally with plant selection, installation, and mulching. This is a fun activity to do right after school, and children really enjoy helping. For more information, contact Kim McKnight at [texaskmck@gmail.com](mailto:texaskmck@gmail.com) or 512-663-6422.

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(Continued from page 1) permissive for absentee owners, essentially allowing them to operate motels in residential areas without the onsite management and regulation required of such businesses in commercially zoned areas. They note that some cities have left occasional short-term rentals unregulated but have restricted commercial STRs to areas with commercial zoning. This ANC resolution follows that logic, prohibiting commercial STRs in single-family neighborhoods.

**Whereas**

1. the Land Development Code's definition of permissible residential uses in single-family zoning districts states: "Residential uses include the occupancy of living accommodations on a nontransient basis"
2. the Board of Adjustment has determined that a transient residential rental use is one in which a property is rented for less than 10 consecutive days
3. there is a definable distinction between transient residential rental use in single-family zoning districts where the property is homesteaded and is the property owner's principal place of residence and transient residential rental use where the property is not homesteaded and not the owner's principal place of residence
4. the latter category is defined as a Commercial Short-term Rental (CSTR) for this resolution
5. in the "City of Austin Guide to Land Use Standards," May 2008, the purpose of the single-family land use category includes to "preserve the land use pattern and future viability of existing neighborhoods" and to "protect residential neighborhoods from incompatible business or industry and the loss of existing housing"
6. owners of single-family residential property rely on the Land Development Code as a covenant with the City of Austin, trusting our city to insure single-family use in single-family zoning
7. the constant flow of strangers and their vehicles undermines neighborhood crime watch efforts to know who is a legitimate resident and who is a potential criminal
8. allowing CSTR use in single-family zoning districts, by definition not a long-term use, removes residential housing stock from our city and weakens enrollment in inner-city elementary and middle schools
9. it is city policy that the inner-city neighborhoods need to accept more residential density
10. CSTRs threaten the meaning and purpose of Austin's family-oriented neighborhoods;

**Be it resolved** that the Austin Neighborhoods Council calls on the City Council of Austin to:

1. expand the definition of permissible residential uses in the Land Development Code to allow properties that are homesteaded and are the owner's principal residence to be rented on a transient, short-term basis for a maximum total of 30 days per calendar year.
2. enact an ordinance disallowing short-term residential use in single-family zoning districts as being a transient use. This ordinance must emphasize that STRs, unless

exempted by the property being homesteaded and the owner's principal place of residence, have always been in contradiction with the permissible residential uses allowed in single-family zoning districts. This proposed ordinance shall not grandfather properties that are operated in contradiction to the Land Development Code.

The Planning Commission recommendations, along with other background information and links, are posted on [zilkerneighborhood.org](http://zilkerneighborhood.org).

**Comprehensive Plan Resolution**

A year ago the Austin Neighborhoods Council identified shortcomings in Austin's comprehensive planning process and asked the City Council to address those problems. By February 2011, the Planning Commission had offered assurances that the concerns would be addressed in the Working Group phase of the plan. City staff, however, continued to limit community input, to prevent working groups from dealing with neighborhood concerns, to refuse to provide essential data, and to ignore key points in the ANC call to action and many of the requests and recommendations of the Citizens Advisory Task Force.

The recently released draft plan does not address ten important issues faced by our community (see [ancweb.org](http://ancweb.org)). This ANC resolution is similar to a proposal by Council Members Laura Morrison and Kathie Tovo in its reliance on the Task Force to fill certain gaps in the draft plan.

Whereas the city staff intends to rewrite the Land Development Code based on this comprehensive plan, and the draft plan contains many "Action Items" that are ill

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defined and in many cases contain code words for eventual modifications to the LDC to remove or weaken many of the current protections for residents and neighborhoods in the code, the ANC calls on the City Council to address the concerns noted above by

1. Empowering the Citizens Advisory Task Force to take control of the planning process in order to address the plan's current shortcomings by allowing wider community input, obtaining critical planning data and information, providing the opportunity to fully vet alternative ideas and concepts for managing Austin's growth.
2. Directing the City Manager to rework the planning process schedule to allow more time to address the problems with the plan and to allow for more meaningful community input and evaluation of growth management land use options before determining a preferred growth concept map.
3. Delaying the Planning Commission review of the draft plan until the Citizens Advisory Task Force deems it appropriate to go forward and has garnered widespread neighborhood support.
4. Not taking any action to adopt the plan until these matters are resolved and the draft plan has gained widespread community support.

**Charter Revision Resolutions**

In August, the Austin City Council appointed a charter revision committee (CRC) to recommend plans for geographic representation in the council election system, among other charter amendments. The primary ANC resolution recommends "that the CRC and City Council place a charter amendment before the voters in 2012 establishing a minimum of eight geographic districts for the election of City Council members."

Seven charter resolutions are posted on ancweb.org, along with sample maps and Census data for 6, 8, and 10 district options, links to the CRC materials on the city's Web site, and other background information. *Lorraine Atherton*

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## ZNA Makes Santa's Job a Little Easier

by Barbara Cossie, Holiday Families Program Coordinator

THE ZNA HOLIDAY FAMILIES Program has been helping Zilker families in need for more than a dozen years now. As the neighborhood and the Zilker Elementary School community have grown, so has the number of families and children who want to share in Zilker's holiday spirit, both giving and receiving. How many excited children have been delighted to find that a pile of brightly wrapped presents has suddenly appeared under the Christmas tree? The number is in the hundreds, I think, and the neighborhood elves have certainly lost count of the gifts that have been wrapped and delivered over the last decade. I hope it gives our Zilker neighbors a good feeling to know that the Zilker Neighborhood Association is continuing on with this tradition of caring and sharing.

However, it takes many hands to make the Holiday Families Program successful. First, we start with the counselor at Zilker Elementary School, who gives us the wish lists of the families that need assistance during the holidays (usually eight or more families, depending on the number of children in each family). Then it's your hands that buy the gifts and write the checks. Of course, after the gifts are purchased, all our Zilker elves work very hard to wrap and deliver the presents—and make a lot

### ZNA Holiday Families Program Volunteer Sign Up 2011

Yes, I want to help make the holidays happier for Zilker families.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

- I would like to purchase a gift from a family's gift list. Please contact me when the lists arrive.
- I would like to become a Zilker elf. Please contact me about wrapping presents.
- I would like to donate money to the ZNA Holiday Families Program.
- I have enclosed a check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to Zilker Neighborhood Association and mail with this form to:  
ZNA Holiday Families Program, 1115 Kinney Ave. #42, Austin, TX 78704

### BECOME A ZNA MEMBER TODAY

Membership is open to Zilker residents (renters or homeowners) 18 years old or older.  
Annual dues are \$7 per person. Additional contributions are welcome. (Many couples pay \$25.)

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

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

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

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of kids very happy! So, if you would like to contribute to this wonderful cause, here is how you can help:

**DONATE a new gift to a boy, girl, or a parent.** The gift list will be posted on the Zilker Web site ([www.zilkerneighborhood.org](http://www.zilkerneighborhood.org)) and through the Zilker Yahoo Group before December 1.

Check the list to see what you would like to purchase. Bring your unwrapped gifts to Santa Central at 1704 Kerr Street before **Sunday, December 18**. Canned or packaged food, household supplies, and gift cards from HEB, Target, Walmart, Academy, etc., also are appreciated.

**DONATE money.** Make your check payable to Zilker Neighborhood Association. Write "Holiday Families Program" on the memo line. Send your check to Skip Smith, the ZNA treasurer, at 1115 Kinney Ave. #42, Austin, TX 78704.

Your donation can be in any amount, and it will be used to purchase clothes, toys, and other items for family members.

**Become a Zilker Elf!** The same four neighborhood elves have been doing most of the gift wrapping and deliveries, lo, these many years, and they are starting to slow down. Santa says it's time to recruit some more nimble fingers. If you have a few extra hours in your busy holiday schedule, perhaps you could wrap presents for one family. Call Barbara at 447-4437, and leave a call back message with your number.

You may also sign up in person at the ZNA meeting on Monday, October 24, at Zilker Elementary School, 1900 Bluebonnet.

Whatever you can do, I hope you will join your ZNA neighbors to make this a very happy holiday for several families in need this year. Let's give the next 12 years a running start!



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## Election of 2012 ZNA Officers

FOR THE FIRST TIME in many years, the Executive Committee of the Zilker Neighborhood Association is nominating a full slate of officers for election at the October general meeting.

The nominees are:

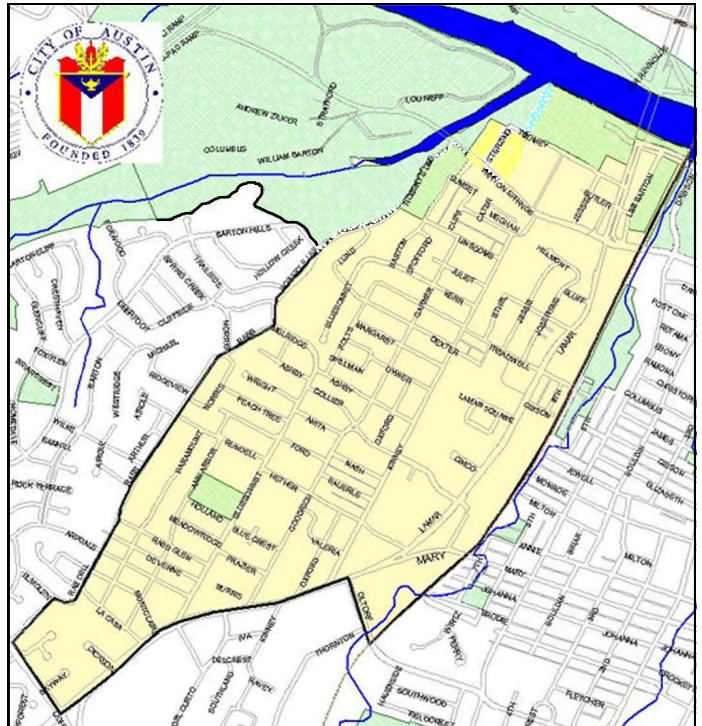
- President:* Andy Elder
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- Second Vice President:* Steve McGuire
- Secretary:* Ryan Stryker
- Treasurer:* Skip Smith
- Social Chair:* Matt Ditlow
- ANC Delegate:* Connie Temple
- ZNews Editor:* Lorraine Atherton

ZNA's bylaws allow the executive committee to accept nominations for elected positions up to a week before the fall meeting, so you have until Monday, October 17, to volunteer to serve or to nominate someone else. Call any of the executive committee members listed on page 12, or e-mail [ZilkerNA@austin.rr.com](mailto:ZilkerNA@austin.rr.com).

The following neighbors have volunteered to serve in unelected positions:

- Barbara Cossie, *Holiday Families Program* coordinator
- Dave Piper, *ZNews* advertising coordinator
- Gardner Sumner, *Parks and Environment* committee chair
- Bill Neale, *Sound* committee chair

There are many other ways to participate in ZNA. If you want to get involved but do not want to hold an elected office or commit to serving on



ZNA boundaries include Zilker Park and Rabb Road on the west and extend to the railroad tracks on the east. The southern boundary is Barton Skyway, and the northern boundary is Lady Bird Lake.

the executive committee, talk to any of the neighbors listed on page 12, and they will be happy to help you find just the right job.

For more information, including ZNA's bylaws, visit [www.zilkerneighborhood.org](http://www.zilkerneighborhood.org).

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## Join ZNA Today

THE ZILKER NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION (ZNA) was established 30 years ago with the mission of protecting the character of the neighborhood surrounding Zilker Elementary School and enhancing the quality of life for all of our residents. ZNA is a volunteer organization that works to ensure appropriate code enforcement, resolve traffic safety issues, maintain historic and cultural resources, protect the environment, and ensure that our neighborhood's interests are heard at City Hall. It is registered with the Secretary of State as a Texas Unincorporated Nonprofit Association.

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

**Why?** To be effective in our mission, ZNA needs your participation. Membership dues support our meeting expenses, the neighborhood newsletter, and the Web site, as well as activities such as the July Watermelon Social. Contributions above the annual dues are welcomed and support neighborhood and Zilker Elementary projects such as the Holiday Families Program (see page 8). Membership also affords you the opportunity to vote on important issues that are addressed at our quarterly meetings.

**Who?** Membership is open to all Zilker residents, both homeowners and renters, who are at least 18 years old. Nonresident property owners are not eligible for membership. ZNA has 128 current members.

**How?** Annual dues are \$7 per person. Please note that for new members, voting privileges are activated 30 days after membership dues are

received. Current members (those who paid dues the previous year) can renew their membership anytime in the current year and retain voting privileges.

### Three easy ways to join ZNA

1. Visit the ZNA Web site at [www.zilkerneighborhood.org](http://www.zilkerneighborhood.org). Click on the PayPal button on the right side of the ZNA home page and follow the instructions, or Click on the ZNA Information tab on the top left of the ZNA home page, follow the link at the bottom of the page to the ZNA basic membership form, print the form, and return the completed form with your payment to the address provided.
2. Fill out the membership form on page 8 of this newsletter and mail it with your payment to the address provided.
3. Join in person at a neighborhood meeting.

**Questions?** E-mail: [membership@zilkerneighborhood.org](mailto:membership@zilkerneighborhood.org)

**Join Today!**

*Connie Temple, ZNA Membership Chair*

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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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## 2011 Executive Committee of ZNA

### **Elected Officers:**

*President:* Andy Elder, 428-9180  
*1st VP:* Richard Gravois, 441-3430  
*2nd VP:* Steve McGuire, 447-2928  
*Secretary:* Ryan Stryker, 431-4245  
*Treasurer:* Skip Smith, 592-8038  
*Social Chair:* Matt Ditlow, 590-0929  
*ANC Delegate:* Connie Temple, 592-8039  
*ZNews Editor:* Lorraine Atherton, 447-7681

### **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.

### **Committee Chairs:**

*ACL Festival:* Steve McGuire  
*Holiday Family Program:* Barbara Cossie, 447-4437  
*Membership:* Connie Temple, 592-8039  
*Parks and Environment:* Gardner Sumner, 468-6200  
*Sound:* Bill Neale, [williamneale@hotmail.com](mailto:williamneale@hotmail.com)  
*ZNews Advertising:* Dave Piper, 916-9636

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