



Newsletter of the
Zilker Neighborhood
Association

MAY 2014

Austin, Texas
Established 1981

Zilker Artists Open Their Studios

THE WEST AUSTIN ARTS STUDIO TOUR has Zilker covered this May. From Barton Springs Road to Montclair, and from South Lamar to Robert E. Lee Road, dozens of artists will be displaying their work at private studios, and many more can be seen at gallery exhibits, including Umlauf sculpture garden and Zilker Elementary School. This free tour is two weekends, May 10-11 and 17-18, 11 AM to 6 PM.

Catalogs listing hundreds of artists and studio locations across the city are available at Austin Public Library branches and online at west.bigmedium.org. Look for numbers 91-108 to find studios within Zilker neighborhood. Exhibits in Zilker or along South Lamar are numbers 215-233. And don't overlook the community of artists on Thornton, just south of Oltorf.



Zilker school artists created this mosaic in Little Zilker Neighborhood Park in 2009.

From the Zilker Elementary School PTA website: Zilker's first Art Fest for W.E.S.T. will take place May 10-11 and 17-18 from 11 AM to 6 PM. This is the first time an AISD school has been included on the tour, so we are excited about this opportunity!

The Fest will take place on the front lawn of the school and will feature artist booths, food vendors, a self-guided tour and map of campus beautification/art projects, and musical performances.

Artist booths are \$25 per day. You are encouraged to sign up for multiple days. Please feel free to share this with other artists. If you have questions, contact Arts in Ed Co-chairs Monica Boulton pandejamon@hotmail.com and Susan Slattery sumsurf@gmail.com. Booth forms are available at zilkerelem.org.

ZNA General Meeting

May 19

Monday 6:30-8:30 PM

Zilker Elementary School
1900 Bluebonnet



Updates on

South Lamar Corridor Study

ANC City Council Platform

Little Zilker Neighborhood Park

Land Development Code Rewrite

Zoning Cases



Newcomers, homeowners, renters,
business neighbors

❖ ❖ All Welcome ❖ ❖

ANC Plans Platform for City Council 10-One Races

*by Lorraine Atherton, ZNews editor,
with contributions from
David King, ZNA vice president*

THE CAMPAIGN SEASON for the new 10-One City Council has begun, with the official first day of fundraising on May 8. The ZNA executive committee is asking you to help us develop neighborhood positions on the major issues now, so that we can work with the Austin Neighborhoods Council (ANC) and with other neighborhoods in District 5 to educate this new crop of candidates. Neighbors should be prepared to ask questions and discuss the issues when candi-

dates come seeking endorsements and financial donations.

A Different Kind of Job

ANC has an impressive collection of questionnaires documenting neighborhood issues and candidate responses from more than 10 years' worth of Austin City Councils (see ANCWeb.org). One of those issues was the inability of the at-large council to address problems at a neighborhood level. With the introduction of single-member districts, we now have the opportunity to put the City Council back in touch with the citizens and change the nature of the job itself.

At-large members traditionally treated the city council as a part-time job. They tend to stick to city hall, expecting constituents and lobbyists to come to them. They seldom become involved in individual land use cases, leaving neighbors to negotiate with developers on their own. Average citizens can't afford to hire a lobbyist to meet with council members one on one, so their contact with the City Council is generally limited to public hearings at city hall, where they may wait all night for a chance to speak for 3 minutes.

Under the 10-One system, citizens should expect their district representative to come to them, to maintain an office in the district, and to hold meetings in affected neighborhoods to discuss particular issues. The relationship between council members and their appointees to boards and commissions should change as well. Voters should look for candidates who are willing to engage the entire community and to provide con-

stituent services, rather than simply attending meetings at city hall.

All Things Environmental

The Zilker neighborhood has always been big on environmental issues, from the elimination of tank farms in East Austin to protecting the Edwards Aquifer. Recently, however, every issue seems to have an environmental element, and environmental concerns are more urgent than ever.

At the top of the priority list is water. The City Council passed a resolution in April regarding the lack of "integrated water resource planning" in Austin, calling on a task force to issue a report on alternative water sources by June 20. Conservation has long been Zilker's preferred method of protecting our water resources. By June 21, will the task force and the District 5 council candidates agree?

In the past, ZNA has supported conservation over the construction of Water Treatment Plant 4 (a.k.a. the Mistake on the Lake). Today the issue is whether to mothball the plant before it is finished. Some argue that it is primarily a budget and financial question, and others say it directly affects affordability by increasing utility bills.

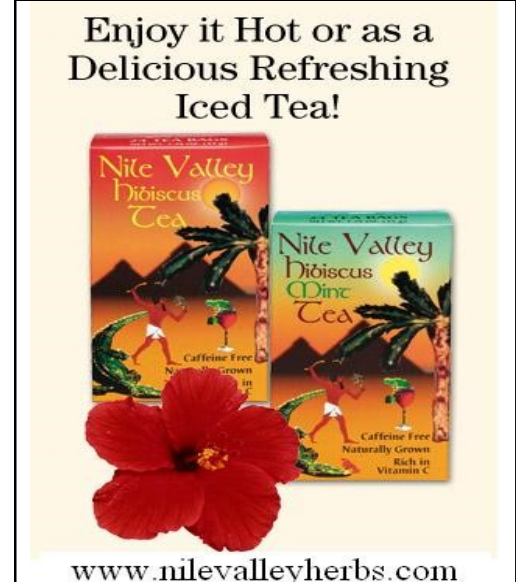
There seems to be wide agreement that Austin should increase its use of renewable energy sources while reducing the use of fossil fuels, but many Zilker residents are dissatisfied with the rate at which Austin Energy is making the transition. The City Council passed a resolution in April to update Austin's Climate Protection Plan. Are the plan's goals for *(Continued on page 4)*

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Incoming Kinder Kids: Check Out Zilker's Kinder Kamp

ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD to the start of kindergarten next fall? Well then, join us on Tuesday, May 20, at 8:30 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 the playground. This is a great way for kids (and their parents) to check out their new school.

Any child who will be 5 years old on or before Sept. 1, 2014, is eligible for kindergarten for the 2014-2015 school year, but a parent or guardian must register the child. If you missed the Kindergarten Round-up on May 6, you may still register at the Zilker Elementary School office, 1900 Bluebonnet Lane (8:30 AM to 3 PM), through the end of the month.

If you will bring the originals (that you will keep) along with two copies of each of the following documents, the registration process will be much smoother and go much more quickly for you:

- * Birth certificate
- * Social security card
- * Immunization record
- * Photo IDs (driver's license or other government issued identification) for parent(s)/guardian(s)
- * Proof of address (home contract or lease OR gas or electric bill; must have parent/guardian's name on it).

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 512-414-2327.

*Randall Thomson, Principal
Zilker Elementary School*

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(Continued from page 2) reducing greenhouse gases and increasing energy efficiency aggressive enough for Zilker voters?

There also seems to be agreement that the City Council must maintain control over Austin Energy so that we can achieve our environmental goals. Do any District 5 candidates support selling or privatizing Austin Energy?

Zilker activists have long supported underground utility lines, not just to save our trees but also to reduce maintenance costs, prevent storm damage, and increase the efficiency of the electricity and telecommunications networks.

In Zilker, we can't say "environment" without thinking "SOS" and "development over the aquifer." See page 6 for the latest on those issues.

Environmental issues surrounding a lack of water usually come back around to the issue of too much water. Our neighborhoods are laced by creeks and small drainages that are susceptible to flash floods. The City Council recently passed a resolution proposing a mitigation plan for the South Lamar neighborhood along West Bouldin Creek to address street flooding and creek erosion "exacerbated by recent infill developments where inadequate infrastructure exists." The Onion Creek neighborhoods suffered the same sort of problems in the Halloween flood (not to mention failures of emergency and disaster response). All of District 5 needs a council member who will work to strengthen watershed protections and prevent the construction of housing in floodplains.

Parks and greenspace are another environmental priority for Zilker voters. Neighbors on the south bank of the lake are besieged year-round by special events that are allowed to monopolize public parks and streets. Subsidies from the Texas Enterprise Fund have ratcheted up the pressure to turn Zilker Park and Auditorium Shores over to these events and to limit public access to the parks. ZNA is looking for candidates who will limit the use of parks as event venues and restore the parks budget without selling the parks off to private interests.

More than a third of Austin's greenhouse gas emissions are attributed to transportation, but the need to restrict car travel is seldom directly addressed in Austin. For Zilker, air and water pollution, development over the aquifer, and transportation all collide at the intersection of Mopac South and State Highway 45 SW. KeepMopacLocal.org contends that the aquifer toll road "will divert traffic from I-35 to Mopac, which is already overloaded," and the "\$100 million cost should be directed to projects that improve traffic flow on I-35, provide transit options to north-south commuters, and encourage development and use of the SH 130 corridor." The question for District 5 candidates will be, Will you keep SH 45 SW out of Austin's transportation plans?

Expanding Affordability

Other major issues being considered for the ANC platform are affordability, infrastructure, public

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services, and the rewrite of the Land Development Code.

"Affordability" is no longer just about low-income housing.

There are initiatives to make residential property taxes fairer by limiting equity appeals for commercial properties, requiring disclosure of sale prices, and phasing in a homestead exemption.

The City Council is considering expanding the City's living wage and prevailing wage policies and looking at ways to increase the minimum wage.

On the housing front, the City Council has scheduled an evaluation of its Permanent Supportive Housing policy for June 30, a Comprehensive Housing Market Study is due in August, and a study of commercial short-term rentals is pending. It is also considering adding "source of income" to the Fair Housing Ordinance, which would expand the acceptance of Section 8 vouchers to most rental properties in Austin.

This year ANC's zoning and neighborhood planning issues are focused on the process of rewriting the Land Development Code. The new 10-One City Council, not the out-going council, must be allowed to set the direction for the new code, especially in three areas. The new council should approve the part of the process called Code Alternatives and Approaches. Neighborhood plans must be respected as required in the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan. Austin's density goals must be based on the availability of affordable and sustainable long-term water supplies and infrastructure.

And that brings us back to the first priority: water.

To help define neighborhood issues for the City Council elections, contact ZilkerNA@austin.rr.com.



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City Reverses SOS Overlap Decision

by Jeannie DeFrese, ZNA member

THERE IS SOME VERY GOOD NEWS to report on city action in regards to the proposed Blue Bonnet Hills Subdivision at 1201 Robert E. Lee. This is on the western edge of ZNA, where the Barton Springs Zone overlaps the area designated by the City as "urban" watershed.

Recently City staff had contended that this area is subject to the less restrictive urban watershed development guidelines, rather than the SOS Ordinance. As reported in the February *ZNews*, the nearest neighbors, the ZNA executive committee, City Council members, the City's environmental board, and environmental groups all questioned staff's ruling. In April, City staff effectively reversed its position, announcing that there was not a longstanding precedent to develop these properties under urban regulations and that each development in the area had actually been individually and technically reviewed to determine whether it was part of the Barton Springs Zone. To quote City Environmental Officer Chuck Lesniak on this reversal, "the [past development] cases do not illustrate a longstanding administrative interpretation that property within an urban watershed be reviewed under urban watershed regulations regardless of their potential to meet the definition of Barton Springs Zone and be subject to the SOS ordinance."

Consequently, because the proposed Blue Bonnet Hills subdivision is indeed in the Barton

Springs Zone, the applicant has been informed that it must conform to SOS regulations. As of yet, the developer has not submitted such a plan. The case is still pending with the City.

Meanwhile, dye trace tests have been conducted on the lower part of Little Zilker Creek and the first part of the drainage canal on Robert E. Lee. The results confirm what the City had already accepted to be the case, that the property is indeed in the Barton Springs Zone, as are all the areas of the neighborhood that have surface drainage to Little Zilker Creek and the beginning of the drainage canal on Robert E. Lee.

The enforcement of SOS in this area is a victory for Barton Springs. It was truly a group effort to get the City to take a hard look at the situation and do the right thing to protect water quality and Barton Springs. A big thanks goes out to all involved in the effort, including Council Member Laura Morrison, neighbor Bill Bunch with the SOS Alliance, and all the awesome Zilker neighbors who worked long and hard on this issue.

Zombie Projects Return

by Lorraine Atherton

WHILE JEANNIE DEFRESE and her neighbors were struggling to persuade the City to enforce SOS on Robert E. Lee, other neighbors were trying to defend the city against an enormous expansion of grandfathered exemptions from most city regulations. As a group of environmentalists including Lauren Ross and Bill Bunch wrote to the City's

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Development Review Department, "The cumulative impact on the City's regulatory authority has been devastating. It is extremely rare for a development project to have to comply with the SOS Ordinance, even though Austin citizens overwhelmingly voted to enact it more than 20 years ago, back in 1992. Although tremendous work has been put into improving watershed ordinances for East Austin and into a rewrite of the Land Development Code, it appears that these new ordinances will not be applicable to major development projects for a long time in the future, if ever."

Last year, the Real Estate Council of Austin (RECA) persuaded the City Council to repeal the City's project duration ordinance, essentially allowing developers to claim exemptions from environmental regulations in perpetuity. Since then, RECA has refused to acknowledge the authority of the City to adopt any grandfathering ordinance.

SOS is not the only ordinance undermined by RECA. The letter concludes: "For thirty years, the City has been pushed to apply increasingly obsolete regulations to more and more development projects due to the efforts of RECA and its allies. . . . This perspective, and RECA's specific demands, should be rejected in favor of an ordinance that supports local control and the democratic process."

On May 1, the City Council passed a compromise ordinance on first reading only (no word yet when it might return for second and third readings). This will be an issue for District 5 candidates, especially those who have ties to RECA.

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All About ZNA

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 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. ZNA is registered with the Secretary of State as a Texas Uniform Unincorporated Nonprofit Association.

ZNA's objectives, under our bylaws, are to:

- Represent and advance the interests of residents in the neighborhood.
- Keep all residents informed of issues vital to the neighborhood by appropriate communications and meetings.
- Establish standing and ad hoc committees to investigate and make recommendations to the association on all matters of neighborhood concern.
- Seek the improvement of single and multiple dwellings by residents and absentee owners.
- Establish mutual protection and safety.
- Improve safety of the streets through better traffic control.
- Provide a greater emphasis on inclusion of apartment dwellers as integral members of the community.

Facilitate the education of residents regarding available options relating to home ownership, zoning, rights, etc.

Work toward development and preservation of natural green spaces, parks, trees, landscaping, and general land-use management.

Develop, adopt, and monitor a neighborhood plan, including an inventory of land uses and facilities.

ZNA has a proud history of strong advocacy for our neighborhood. We encourage you to join today and help keep Zilker a great place to live.

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, school, and parks projects. 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.

How? Annual dues are \$7 per person. Fill out the membership form below and mail it with your payment to the address provided, or join in person at the quarterly meeting on May 19. All memberships run from November 1 to October 31.

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.

Members may vote on issues addressed at ZNA quarterly meetings. Voting privileges are activated 30 days after membership dues are received. However, if you were a paid member last year, you can renew your membership anytime this year (including the general meeting dates) and retain voting privileges.

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, 2009 Arpdale St, Austin, TX 78704
or bring this form with you to the next ZNA meeting

For ZNA bylaws and other info, visit zilkerneighborhood.org.

ZNA Voting Privileges

To be eligible to vote at ZNA meetings, you must be a member for at least 30 days before the date of the vote. Current members (those who paid dues the previous year) can renew their membership anytime in the current year and retain voting privileges. If you were a ZNA member in 2013, you may pay your 2014 dues at the May 19 meeting and still be eligible to vote at that meeting.

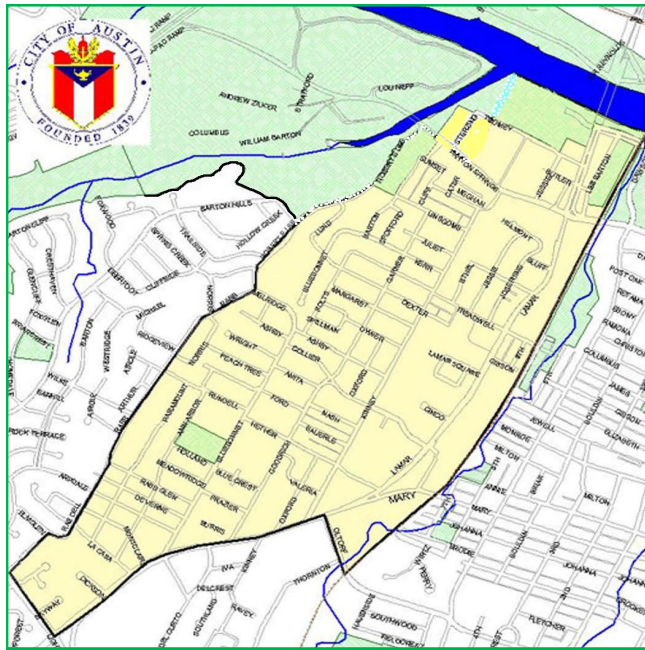
Frequently Asked Questions

How often does ZNA meet? Quarterly, on the last Monday in February, July, and October and the third Monday in May, at Zilker Elementary School, 1900 Bluebonnet Lane. The Executive Committee meets the first Monday of each month, at 7 PM at Austin's Pizza, north of Mary at S. Lamar (until further notice).

How many members does ZNA have? Usually about 300, including neighbors who have paid current dues or would be eligible to vote as soon as they renew.

Is Zilker@yahoo.com ZNA's official list serve? No. It is owned and managed by Richard Gravois, one of the founders of ZNA and currently a vice president. Richard's Yahoo group is a vital communication vehicle for neighbors, with more than 1000 members. All residents are welcome to join, whether they are ZNA members or not.

I want to build something that does not comply with city code. Will ZNA support my request for a variance? ZNA encourages all neighbors to comply with city ordinances. ZNA has a longstanding policy of not supporting variance requests if the property does not have a unique physical feature that qualifies as a hardship under city code (for instance, an oddly placed drainage easement). Personal or financial circumstances do not qualify.



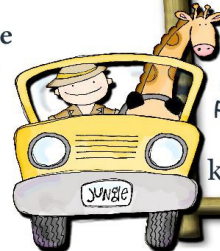
ZNA boundaries include Zilker Park and Rabb Road on the west and extend to the railroad on the east, Barton Skyway on the south, and Lady Bird Lake on the north. Residents on both sides of boundary streets are eligible for membership.

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Transportation Updates

Contributed by Eileen Nehme and Lorraine Atherton, for Wabucy Zilker Advocating for greater walking, bus ridership, and cycling in the Zilker/South Lamar area

CHANGES TO CAPITAL METRO routes 3 (on S. Lamar and Manchaca) and 30 (on Barton Springs Road) will be improving Zilker's bus service beginning Sunday, June 8. That's when several bus routes operating on Congress Avenue will be moved to Guadalupe and Lavaca.

Eliminating the Route 3 loop along Brazos should cut the time it takes Zilker riders to reach the Capitol and the University of Texas. Heading straight up Lavaca, buses will avoid much of the congestion and event-related detours downtown. The routes will stop near 4th, 8th, and 12th streets on Lavaca (northbound) and Guadalupe (southbound), enabling transfers to the MetroRapid Route 801.

But if you are eagerly awaiting the start of MetroRapid bus service on South Lamar this summer, to zip you north to the Pickle Research Center or the Domain, get ready to wait some more. Service on the new Route 803 has been pushed back to fall 2014.

Route 803 was expected to replace Burnet/Manchaca Route 3 entirely. Thanks to protests from riders, especially those along Manchaca, Capital Metro has changed course. In April, the CapMetro board approved an extension of Route 3 to Southpark Meadows, to take effect

in the fall, along with the start of MetroRapid service on S. Lamar.

Route 803 will connect the Domain to Westgate Shopping Center via the Drag at UT and Downtown Austin. Much of Route 3 will overlap 803, but it will go to the Arboretum in the north and to Southpark Meadows in the south. Its frequency will be adjusted from every 22-30 minutes to every 30-40 minutes.

For more info, visit www.capmetro.org. To comment on changes to bus service, call Lawrence at 512-369-6272 or e-mail feedback@capmetro.org.

Redesigning South Lamar

As reported in the February *ZNews*, the City is in the process of selecting an engineering firm for the South Lamar corridor study; meanwhile, a UT undergraduate design class has been exploring solutions for South Lamar, and we look forward to hearing their ideas as the semester comes to a close.

City transportation engineer Lee Austin says that traffic lights are in the works for Toomey at S. Lamar and near the Broken Spoke. Two locations on South Lamar are on a list to get pedestrian hybrid beacon signals (see July 2013 *ZNews*); unfortunately, funding for these improvements is currently unavailable.

Neighbors on Treadwell are interested in increasing safe access to South Lamar by extending the new Lamar Union sidewalk to Kinney. One idea is to advocate for a shared bike/ped path designated from the existing pavement. A Neighborhood Partnering Program proposal (whereby neighbors come up with matching funding for improvement projects) is being discussed.

Crossing the bike lane

If you subscribe to zilker@yahoo.com, you know that parents have voiced concerns about drivers crossing into the Bluebonnet cycle track during school drop-off and pick-up times. APD paid a visit to the area one morning in April and will come out again if needed. If you have concerns about driver behavior around the cycle track, call 311 or contact our police district rep, Officer Stephen Woytkewicz, at 512-974-4281.

Farther north, safety improvements requested by neighbors near Ashby and Melridge are reportedly in the works for this month. Four young neighbors who painted signs encouraging drivers to slow down along Melridge were recognized for their work at the April Commander's Forum.

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Finally, the plastic poles marking the edge of the cycle track are turning into a maintenance headache for the City. Any artsy folks interested in proposing (and creating) something different? The Bicycle Program might just be willing to entertain ideas.

Bridging Barton Creek

The City of Austin has issued an RFQ to replace the Barton Springs Road bridge over Barton Creek. The bridge currently consists of four vehicle lanes and narrow sidewalks. To cross it, cyclists must join motor vehicle traffic or share the sidewalk with pedestrians. The proposal is to add capacity for pedestrians and cyclists, along with a median, without changing the capacity for motorists. It would also have to accommodate changes to the Robert E. Lee intersection, which requires a retaining wall and slope stabilization along the Umlauf property. Concerns have been raised about environmental impacts in this sensitive area, as well as a desire to preserve the bridge's historic value.

Jacqui Schraad, executive director of Preservation Austin, will be posting updates on the bridge project on zilker@yahoo.com.

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

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2014 Executive Committee of ZNA

The Executive Committee may be contacted by e-mail through www.zilkerneighborhood.org

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2nd VP: David King
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Treasurer: Natalie Gray
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ANC Delegate: Elizabeth Yevich
ZNews Editor: Lorraine Atherton, 447-7681

About the Zilker Neighborhood Association

ZNA holds quarterly meetings, usually the last Monday of February, May, July, and October, at Zilker Elementary School, 1900 Bluebonnet Lane. 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: Tony Giustino
Parks and Environment: Gardner Sumner, 468-6200
Sound: Bill Neale, bneale15@yahoo.com
Voter Outreach: Elizabeth Yevich
Web site and ZNews Advertising: Dave Piper, 916-9636
Zoning: David King, 415-6016, and Bill Neale

How Zilker Voted

2014 Travis County Primaries

Turnout and Democratic County Judge Results

In Precinct 332, 528 Democrats and 97 Republicans voted in the March primaries (about 22% of the 2812 registered voters).

In Precinct 340, 183 Democrats and 59 Republicans voted (about 12% of the 1988 registered voters).

In the two Zilker precincts combined, 454 votes were cast for Sarah Eckhardt in the County Judge race
234 for Andy Brown

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