

Z NEWS

Newsletter of the
Zilker Neighborhood
Association

JULY 2015

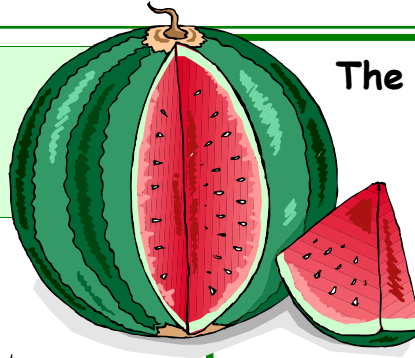
Austin, Texas
Established 1981

Keeping Zilker Great

Thank you from the
ZNA Executive Committee

"GREAT NEIGHBORHOODS don't just happen." That's how Jeff Jack, a past president of ZNA and of the Austin Neighborhoods Council, put it at the turn of the century. And once a neighborhood is established, it doesn't just naturally get better with age. It takes a lot of work to build a strong neighborhood, and it takes thoughtful planning to keep it viable in a changing city. The foundation for a neighborhood's success is often the commitment of neighbors who work together to form a neighborhood association and keep it going strong.

For over thirty years, your Zilker Neighborhood Association has been working for all of its residents and businesses to make Zilker a truly great place to live. Hundreds of volunteers have donated their time and energy for the good of our community. This issue of the newsletter highlights the differ- *(Continued on page 8)*



The Zilker Neighborhood
Association

invites you to the
**WATERMELON
SOCIAL**
July 27,

Monday, 7-8:30 PM

behind Zilker Elementary School

1900 block of Ann Arbor



Meet your neighbors, eat watermelon,
hear the latest on the
South Lamar Corridor Study



Newcomers, homeowners, renters,
business neighbors

❖ ❖ **All Welcome** ❖ ❖

Connecting with City Hall

by Ann Kitchen, Austin City Council Member, District 5

IT'S OFFICIALLY SUMMER when we're all looking forward to the Zilker Neighborhood Association's Watermelon Social on July 27. I've placed it on my calendar and hope you are doing the same.

The event allows us to catch up and share thoughts on what is going on in our lives, the neighborhood, and city at large. My last newsletter article focused on the city budget conversations we'll be heading into in August, and I want to update you on that and a few other issues and accomplishments.

Your feedback is important in anticipation of the City's annual budget conversation. There will be seven public hearings in the month of August to allow additional discussion on the tax and utility rates and the overall City budget. So far, the Budget in a Box 2.0 exercises have provided interesting results from District 5 residents. There are eight basic categories that *(Continued on page 10)*

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Plan Ahead to Prevent Oak Wilt

by Gardner Sumner, ZNA Parks and Environment Committee Chair

MANY LIVE OAKS have been lost along Rabb Road, and some on Paramount may also be infected by oak wilt, a fungal disease that invades and blocks a tree's vascular system. Some arborists admit that the nitidulid beetle spreads disease from fungal mats but believe that the principal mode of infection is root-to-root transmission. While root separation via deep trenching, together with pressurized "Alamo" anti-fungal injection, may delay disease progression, permanent disease control is problematic. We can reduce the probability of infection by avoiding any pruning or cutting from February to July and by promptly treating all fresh cuts with tree paint (or any paint).

For more information, the ZNA Parks and Environment Committee recommends the Oak Wilt Information Partnership (Texas A&M Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, and Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center) Web site at texasoakwilt.org, and the neighborhood oak wilt pages of the Northwest Austin Civic Association at nwaca.org/?s=oak+wilt.

Prevent Oak Wilt Plan Ahead and Prune Oaks from November to January

- Beetles Inactive
- Dormant Season
- Coldest Months

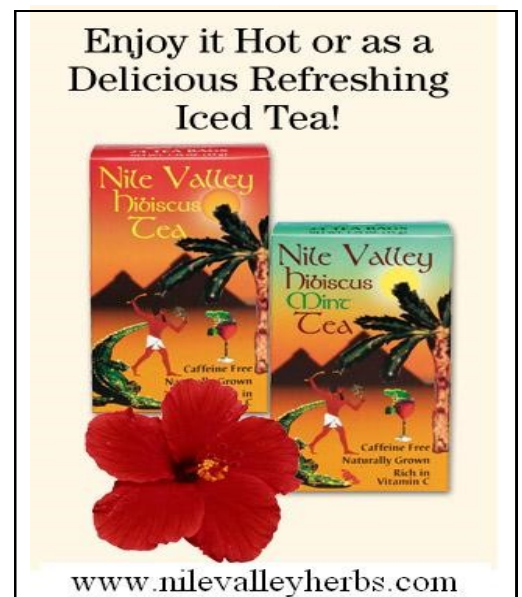
Robert E. Lee Tributary Team Scores Year One Success

by Gail Rothe, ZNA Parks and Environment Committee Member

THANKS TO VOLUNTEERS from Zilker and Barton Hills neighborhoods over the last ten months, the Robert E. Lee Tributary now adds to the beauty of the south side of Zilker Park and serves multiple environmental goals, including erosion control, improved water quality, habitat for wildlife, and others.

Only three years ago the tributary, which collects stormwater from our neighborhoods and flows into Barton Creek, was a barren, trash-filled channel. In 2012 the City discontinued mowing the channel (see April 2012 ZNews, p. 10) and in 2013 planted native trees, grasses, and wildflowers. At least 15 species of native trees and many grasses and flowers now populate the channel. So, while the "greening" of the channel was well under way when our volunteer efforts began, during a dozen workdays this past year we have:

- Removed most of three species—Brazilian vervain, bastard cabbage, and torilis—invasive plants that, if left unchecked, crowd out native plants before they can get established.
- Removed most of the ragweed from the detention pond, which has been an eyesore, and planted and seeded the area with native grasses.
- Controlled invasive trees (a multiyear effort





Three years ago the City Watershed Department selected the ditch alongside Robert E. Lee Road for "riparian zone restoration," with "No Mow" zones and protection of native plants. *Photos by David King*

involving girdling the tree trunks).

- Planted native tree seedlings in the channel and along the banks and native milkweed (for monarchs) in the areas adjacent to the channel.
- Picked up a depressing amount of garbage along the way.

This progress was possible thanks to the City of Austin, Keep Austin Beautiful, TreeFolks, Little Helping Hands, and all the great volunteers, including the crew from Hotel Van Zandt.

What's in the works for Year Two? In the fall we'll continue to keep invasive species in check, work to beautify the pond and other areas, control erosion, and protect the creek banks.

For future events and other information contact *Gail Rothe* (grothe@austin.rr.com) or *David King* (dking@austin.rr.com)

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Austin's Urban Forest Needs You

from *TreeFolks.org*

URBAN FOREST STEWARD is organized by Tree-Folks and Austin Urban Forestry to address drought, disease, and habitat degradation, which take a constant toll on urban trees. Texas A&M Forest Service estimates that the 2011 drought killed more than 5.6 million urban trees across Texas. Urban Forest Steward conducts training workshops to equip Austinites with the knowledge and skills we need to combat the loss of urban trees and keep them thriving.

This year Urban Forest Steward is partnering up with National Wildlife Federation's Habitat Steward Program to provide additional focus on urban wildlife habitat and what we can do to advocate for wildlife, promote native host plants, and Keep Austin Wild! Austin is one of the largest metropolitan areas in the country to receive the designation of Community Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation. This is only possible because people like you have made an effort to create native wild-scapes at their homes and in public spaces, and to help others learn how to do the same.

This year's workshop series will run from Sept. 12 to Oct. 17. The last session of the Stewards series will be about advocacy and "What do I do now?" concluding with the planting of 50 to 100 native trees. To find out more about the series, visit treefolks.org.

An Invitation to the Friends of Little Zilker Neighborhood Park

by *Ladye Anne Wofford, Programs Director, Austin Parks Foundation*

Hello Park Adopters,

Trees are a vital part of our city, and we know how especially important the trees in our parks are to you. This year, Austin Parks Foundation is proud to offer partial scholarships exclusively to our Adopt-a-Park groups to attend the Urban Forest Steward training coming up in September.

Visit the TreeFolks Web site for full details of the workshop series. The cost for this program is normally \$99, but Adopt-a-Park scholarship recipients can take the full course for only \$25. The scholarship application deadline is Monday, September 7, 2015, at noon; be sure to get your application in before then, as only 20 scholarships are available.

Thank you for all you do for Austin's parks!



If you would like to represent Friends of Little Zilker Park in the Stewards program and apply for an APF scholarship, please contact the FLZP steering committee at littlezilker@gmail.com.

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Transformation on Treadwell

by David King, ZNA president

THE STRETCH OF TREADWELL Street between South Lamar and Kinney has undergone a big transformation during the past few months. It has evolved from a quiet vehicle-oriented neighborhood street to a bustling crowded multi-modal connection to South Lamar and Lamar Union.

The section of Treadwell immediately adjacent to Lamar Union was narrowed to one lane in each direction to make room for separate bicycle and pedestrian lanes as well as a greenspace buffer. The goal is to encourage pedestrian and bicycle access to South Lamar, Lamar Union, and the Zilker neighborhood.

Treadwell's transformation has created serious traffic congestion, parking issues, and safety concerns for pedestrians and bicyclists. To address these issues, the ZNA initiated a meeting in May with affected residents, Council Member Ann Kitchen, representatives from Lamar Union, and representatives from the City of Austin Public Works, Transportation, and Police departments.

The meeting produced a list of 25 issues and strategies to resolve them. The ZNA will monitor the status of the issues and work with residents, Council Member Kitchen, the City, and Lamar Union to get them resolved over the next few months.

Some progress was evident when the City recently established no-parking zones along both sides of Treadwell between South Lamar and Ethel to help reduce traffic congestion *(Continued on page 7)*

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Little Zilker Park Brings Neighbors Together

SINCE THE FRIENDS OF LITTLE ZILKER Neighborhood Park (FLZP) was first organized in 2007, ZNA and the Zilker Elementary School PTA have worked together to improve the city park and school campus at 1900 Bluebonnet Lane.

Projects have included the quarter-mile track, an irrigation system, numerous workdays to plant and care for more than 100 trees, exercise equipment, a playing field with soccer goals, a new playscape for older kids near Ann Arbor, the rehabilitation of the old playscape near Bluebonnet, lights for the tennis courts and playing field, a new drinking fountain, art and gardens, picnic tables, benches, trash cans, chimney swift habitat, and a rainwater collection system.

Over the last year, Zilker neighbors Gina Diehl and Bobby Rigney have been refining a longstanding proposal to redesign the concrete ramp and add a new seating area adjacent to the Bluebonnet playscape. Last month, FLZP submitted a formal application for that project to the Austin parks department (PARC). At the same time, Heather Way has been guiding a proposal to resurface the tennis courts. PARC has included Little Zilker in a citywide program to upgrade courts, and we expect that project to be completed this year. Those two projects, along with the Ann Arbor sidewalk, bikeway on Blue-

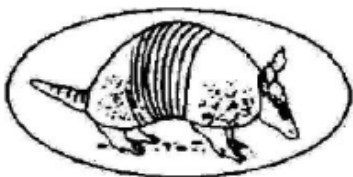
bonnet, and sustainability projects on the school campus, will substantially complete the improvements envisioned in the first Little Zilker Park Master Plan.

This summer, the FLZP will be looking for neighbors to help us complete these projects and to establish maintenance routines for Little Zilker Park's trees and gardens. (See "Austin's Urban Forest Needs You" on page 4.) It has also been suggested that this is a good time to review the master plan and present an updated plan to the community for another workshop or charette in the fall. A major feature of Little Zilker that still needs to be addressed is the turf, erosion, and maintenance of the open playing field, which has suffered greatly during the drought. The goal will be to produce a master plan that can be formally adopted by PARC and the Parks Board to guide our community's investments in Little Zilker for another decade.

All this will require the support of past FLZP volunteers and new park users. Join FLZP to help keep our neighborhood park green and healthy.

Contact the Friends of Little Zilker Park at littlezilker@gmail.com to find out how to participate in future volunteer projects. Subscribe to FLZP@yahoogroups.com to keep up with planning, meetings, and events.

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(Continued from page 5) and improve traffic flow.

As construction at Lamar Union begins to wind down over the next few months and a new parking garage comes online, parking and traffic congestion on Treadwell, Dexter, and other adjacent neighborhood streets should diminish.

Other improvements to the Lamar Union parking garage exits and the bicycle and pedestrian lanes along Treadwell will increase safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. At long last, Zilker residents will be able to safely walk and bike to and from the new businesses in Lamar Union.

South Lamar Corridor Planning Update

The comment period for the South Lamar Corridor Improvement Program has been extended to Sunday, July 19. The survey and all materials from the open house in May are available on the City of Austin Web site for public review and comment.

The ZNA Executive Committee urges you to review the materials and submit any questions or comments to the project team. The draft proposals from the open house are being refined based on community feedback, and recommendations should be available later this summer.

For more information and to view materials, please visit AustinTexas.gov/SouthLamar.

If the draft proposals are revised before the end of the month, your ZNA officers will try to make them available at the ZNA Watermelon Social on July 27, 7-8:30 pm, at Zilker Elementary School.



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(Continued from page 1) ence that Zilker neighbors have made and continue to make to Austin's quality of life, from the ZNA and PTA leaders who organized the Friends of Little Zilker Park (page 6) to the first-time volunteer who helps pick up trash alongside Robert E. Lee (page 2). There are too many to mention by name, but the ZNA executive committee wants to thank all the former ZNA officers and volunteers for all that they have done for our neighborhood. You are all invited to the ZNA Watermelon Social on July 27 to help us celebrate the best of Zilker. Thanks for making Zilker a better place!

July to September is traditionally the time to recruit new volunteers for ZNA. If you're looking to make a difference, ZNA needs you now. For example, this newsletter is hand-delivered by dozens of neighbors, who each volunteer to spend about an hour walking a few blocks every quarter. They are quite literally following in the footsteps of the handful of volunteers who first published and distributed the newsletter in the 1980s.

In much the same way, every sidewalk gap filled or park improvement completed in Zilker today began years ago when a few concerned neighbors got together to try and make things better. There are always meetings about sidewalks, bike routes, traffic flow, construction projects, and trees, just to name a few, and ZNA is looking for ways to bring neighbors together and get the most out of our volunteer efforts.

Please think about what you would like to do to make Zilker better, and then call David

ZNA Frequently Asked Questions

How many members does ZNA have? At least 296 paid members are currently eligible to vote at ZNA meetings.

How does the ZNA Executive Committee arrive at a position on an issue? The committee considers several factors in determining a position that is consistent with the sentiment of the neighborhood, beginning with the bylaws and previous decisions of the association and including, depending on the issue, the ZNA neighborhood planning survey conducted in 2004, the City of Austin neighborhood planning survey in 2005, the voting history of our neighborhood precincts, discussions and resolutions adopted at our quarterly meetings, direct discussions with affected neighbors, and consultation with city staff, board and commission members, and City Council members.

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 does not support variances unless the property has a unique physical feature that qualifies as a hardship under city code. Under state law, personal or financial circumstances do not qualify.

King or any of the other executive members listed on the back of this newsletter. You can also e-mail ZilkerNA@austin.rr.com, or come to the Watermelon Social on July 29, to volunteer.

BECOME A ZNA MEMBER TODAY

Membership is open to Zilker residents (renters or homeowners) 18 years old or older. (See map on page 9.) Nonresident property owners are not eligible for membership.

Annual dues are \$7 per person. Please list each member's 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 information, visit zilkerneighborhood.org.

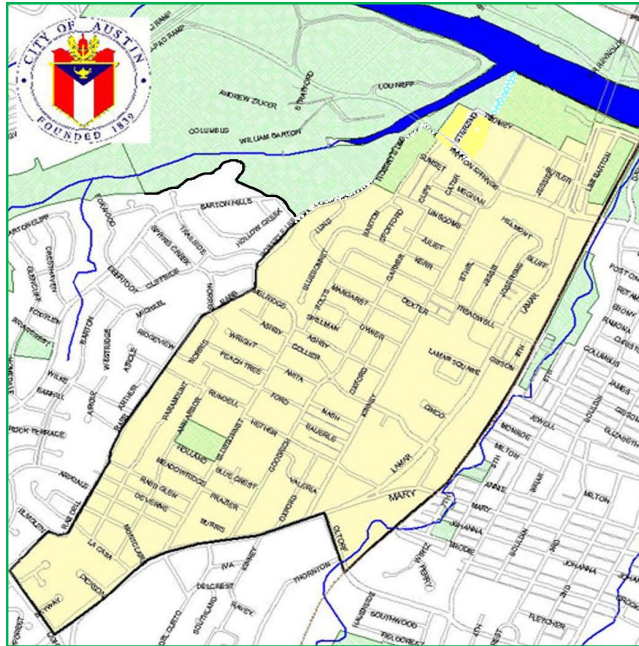
Oxford Permit Parking, Part Two

NEIGHBORS ON OXFORD between Valeria and Hether have applied for residential permit parking, similar to the permit parking on the blocks surrounding the Black Sheep Lodge. One of the neighbors, Cindy Cook, says the parking situation has improved since the Black Sheep rented parking at the old gas station at Kinney and the businesses at 2110 S. Lamar rented the vacant lot at Oxford, but most of the employees still park on Valeria and some on Oxford, and the residents still have to contend with bar traffic in the evenings.

Signs announcing the parking survey should be installed by the time you read this, and the City is supposed to complete the traffic study this month.

If the survey study meets the requirements, parking on the street will be prohibited without a residential permit. Residents will need to purchase permits from the City.

Thanks to Cindy and Jeff Cook for stepping up and moving the application through the City process.



ZNA includes Zilker Park and Rabb Road on the west and extends 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 may join ZNA. ZNA is within City Council District 5.

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- 2112 Airole Way
- 1507 Oxford Ave.
- 2200 Dickson #209
- 2209 Trailside
- 1307 Kinney #152
- 3815 Manchaca Rd. #30

(Continued from page 1) are reviewed: (1) Emergency Response, (2) Parks and Libraries, (3) Health and Housing, (4) Planning and Economic Development, (5) Energy, (6) Water, (7) Clean Community, and (8) Streets and Infrastructure. Each respondent is asked to vote on whether the current amount paid to the category should remain the same, pay 5% more, or pay 5% less.

Six Budget in a Box meetings were hosted by a combination of our office, the city, and neighbors in District 5. Responses indicate one category suggested for a reduction in fees (Planning and Economic Development) and three categories suggested for increased funding (Parks and Libraries, Health and Housing, and Streets and Infrastructure).

In addition, the city received comments online and at the meetings which gave respondents the opportunity to describe their ideas in more detail. The largest number of District 5 comments related to watershed-flood prevention, increasing street infrastructure maintenance and repair, and ceasing funding of for-profit special events and fee waivers.

My office has already initiated two actions to address community concerns regarding watershed-flood prevention and infrastructure repair and maintenance. I sponsored Resolution 20150618-093 to use the Capitol Metro quarter-cent funds (estimated at \$21.8 million) to pay for infrastructure to improve mobility and 20150604-044 creating the Flood Mitigation

New to Zilker? Turning 18?
October 5 is the last day
to register to vote for the
November 3, 2015, election.
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www.votetravis.com

Task Force.

The next District 5 Town Hall meeting is being scheduled for a date in October. I am looking forward to introducing all our Board and Commission appointees as well as Task Force appointees, having a brief discussion on accomplishments, and a party to celebrate the good work and our community. Highest regards to my neighbors in Zilker!

Call or send us an e-mail if you would like to be notified of future meeting opportunities!

ANN KITCHEN, District 5 Council-member;
 ann.kitchen@austintexas.gov

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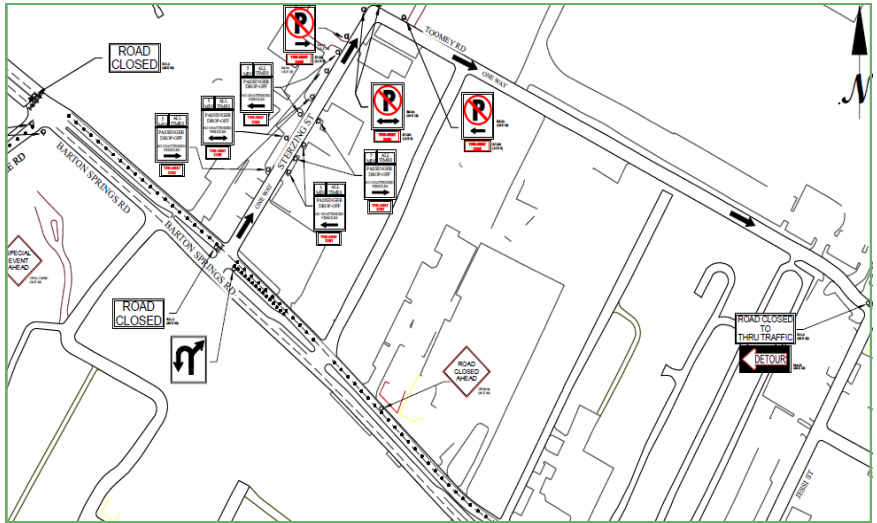
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Austin City Limits Music Festival
2015 Schedule and Traffic Plan

THE AUSTIN CITY LIMITS Music Festival will be the first two weekends in October. As this newsletter goes to press, festival planners are working out details of fencing, parking, a possible pedicab staging area, and vehicle detours. At a planning meeting with neighborhood representatives on July 9, a new concept regarding Barton Springs vehicular traffic reduction was presented for discussion. The goal is to detour inbound traffic at Sterzing (see the map on the right) and keep it out of the neighborhood at Barton Boulevard and Robert E. Lee all together. If the concept is implemented, there would be no left turn allowed onto Robert E. Lee.

Another planning meeting will be scheduled toward the end of July; look for updates at the ZNA Watermelon Social on July 27.



Proposed detour for ACL Fest traffic: Westbound vehicles on Barton Springs Road would turn right on Sterzing to Toomey or U-turn east.

The schedule for ACL Music Fest road and park closures should be:
 Installation (called "load in") starts September 29
 The first weekend of concerts is October 2-4 (11 AM-10 PM daily)
 Roads and most of the park should be open between weekends
 Second weekend of concerts is October 9-11 (11 AM-10 PM daily)
 Load out ends Friday, October 16
 There should be a period of park maintenance October 19-23
 Check "Neighborhood FAQs" on the event Web site, ACLfestival.com, for updates in September.

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**Newsletter of the
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**2015 Executive Committee of
the Zilker Neighborhood
Association**

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Delegate: Elizabeth Yevich

Newsletter Editor:

Lorraine Atherton

Other executive members:

Parks and Environment Chair:

Gardner Sumner, 512-468-6200

Zoning and Code Chair:

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

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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 the Umlauf Museum, 605 Robert E. Lee Road, 7 PM the first Monday of most months. 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.

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