



Newsletter of the Zilker Neighborhood Association

JULY 2017

Austin, Texas
Established 1981

The Next CodeNext Do Over

A message from ZNA President Jeff Jack

"If you don't have time now to get it right, when will you have time to do it over?"
—Scooter Cheatham

THE IMAGINE AUSTIN Comprehensive Plan was rolling down to the wire when Scooter Cheatham, a member of the citizens advisory committee appointed by the City Council to oversee the plan process, asked his question about getting it right. Many fundamental issues were still unresolved. For instance, how will our city handle the anticipated population growth, and what are the community's priorities with regard to all the recommendations in the draft plan? But the staff had set timelines for the delivery of the plan to Council, and the rush to meet their self-imposed deadlines prevented the thorough vetting of the plan. The result was a wish list of ideas, rather than an actual plan of action.

In the final days of the process, the staff and consultants developed eight priority programs, one of which was the rewrite of the Land Development Code (LDC). That rewrite became imperative when the city charter was changed to require that the LDC be consistent with our adopted comprehensive plan. Once the plan was adopted by Council, staff rushed to develop a new LDC, which became known as CodeNext.

Another of the priority programs was to make the city more "compact and connected." That's a good goal, but the other priorities of Imagine Austin were left by the roadside in the rush to develop CodeNext. Five years later, the process is still avoiding the tough questions about how to plan for our city's projected growth. CodeNext is continuing to focus on creating a wonderful new city for newcomers, while those of us living here now have been left behind.

The result of this singular focus of the staff and consultants has been a staff-driven, tightly controlled CodeNext process, with a lot of time devoted to community engagement but very little response to that input. The new code was supposed to be clearer and simpler to use, but going from the current 25 zoning designations to 39 new districts in Zilker is not simpler, and the complexity of the different site development rules (setbacks, building height, *(Continued on page 4)*

ZNA General Meeting July 31

Monday 6:30-8:30 PM

at Faith United Methodist Church

2701 South Lamar



AISD Bond Package

Event Parking Update (p. 4)

CodeNext Update (p. 1)

Carbon-Free Goals (p. 6)

**Welcome to Zilker Elementary's New
Principal, Alicia Hill (p. 2)**

Outstanding Volunteer Award



Newcomers, homeowners, renters,
business neighbors

❖ ❖ **All Welcome** ❖ ❖



Elda Garcia, 2017 Zilker Teacher of the Year, and Assistant Principal Patrick Aziz at a farewell party behind Zilker Elementary on July 16. See pages 2 and 3 for more school updates.

Schoolyard Updates: News from Zilker Elementary School

From the Principal's Desk

Dear Zilker Families,

This message I hope finds you in the midst of a fine summer vacation. Having spent the past few weeks in transition, I am excited to be sending out my first "From the Principal's Desk" letter.

First, let me begin by thanking you all for the warm welcome. It was a pleasure to meet some of you back in May, and I look forward to getting to know you all better as we begin the new school year in August. My official period of transition may be complete, but my resolve to learn all that I can about our school and our school community members remains stronger than ever. Zilker Elementary is an amazing school due much to the families and staff who want the very best for each other, and I am proud to be joining you all in that effort. I anticipate many fulfilling years ahead as we continue our mission to make Zilker Elementary "a GREAT place for kids."

Chimney Tower

Many of you have heard that the incinerator chimney at Zilker Elementary, which served as a nesting spot for migratory chimney swifts, was demolished. Evidently, several large cracks were noticed in the chimney tower last year, which raised concern about its structural integrity. After consultation with a struc-



Chimney swifts circle the school incinerator in 2010, after it was adapted as a roost. Photo by Kim McKnight

tural engineer, it was determined that the tower was a hazard and could not be safely repaired. Unfortunately, the construction crew was unaware that the tower was a nesting place for the chimney swifts.

Michael Mann, Project Manager for summer construction at Zilker, has been working with our school community to address concerns about the chimney swifts. This week he met with Paul and Georgean Kyle of the Chimney Swift Conservation Association to examine the remaining chimney structure. I am happy to report that the remaining structure can be adapted so that it will remain an ideal habitat for the chimney swifts. Although the unexpected demolition of the tower was unfortunate, it has been inspiring to see the swift response by so many to protect these amazing ani-



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mals and to educate others about their habitats.

Assistant Principal Position

As you probably all know by now, Patrick Aziz has been named Interim Principal at Joslin Elementary. Though I am happy for him, his experience and wisdom certainly will be missed on our campus. We have some big shoes to fill, and our hiring committee will be interviewing applicants this month. We will announce our new assistant principal as soon as a recommendation has been made and approved.

STAAR Results

Parents have asked about their children’s 2016-2017 STAAR test results. Later this month AISD will send you detailed, individual student score reports, but until then you can also find answers to many related questions at tea.texas.gov. Please note that the new rubric “Approaches Grade Level” is the equivalent of what used to be called “Satisfactory” (passing).

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me directly at alicia.hill@austinisd.org.

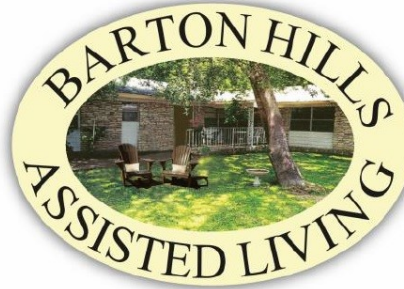
Thank you and enjoy your summer vacation.

*Alicia Hill, Principal,
Zilker Elementary School*



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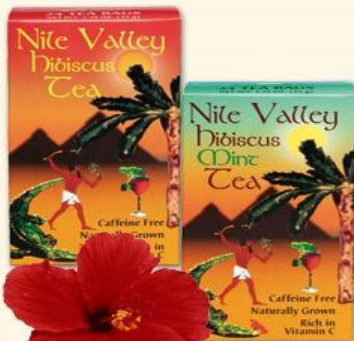
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(Continued from page 1) impervious cover, building placement) has made it hard to determine just what its impact will be on our neighborhood. It was supposed to reflect our existing neighborhood character, but for Zilker it means rezoning over 95% of the properties in our area to increase density to meet the “compact and connected” priority program, without any consideration of our existing infrastructure capacity, impact on property taxes, or quality of life issues such as the increased street parking and traffic congestion, reduction of our existing tree canopy, and potential to increase local area flooding.

Since January, the draft code has met with citywide opposition from the development community, environmental advocates, and a wide range of neighborhoods. In response to this overwhelming criticism, the city staff and consultants have now acknowledged the Mayor’s call to “get it right” and are making time “to do it over.” The staff is reshaping the text away

from the current three types of zoning designations to a more unified system and will provide more graphics to clarify what the proposed regulations actually mean. Staff will also provide another round of mapping for community review. All of this is supposed to be rolled out later this year with the anticipation that CodeNext will go to City Council in April 2018 for final approval.

So while the ZNA zoning committee has spent a lot of time working to understand the first draft of the text and mapping and providing the City with feedback, we hope the next draft will be more responsive to our concerns. Watch the ZNA website for updates on CodeNext V2 (version 2). We sincerely hope they get it right this time!

Austin City Limits and Event Parking

ROAD AND PARK CLOSURES should begin October 2 for this year’s Austin City Limits Music Festival in Zilker Park. There will be two weekends of concerts, October 6–8 and 13–15 (11 AM–10 PM daily). Details are not available as this newsletter goes to press, but the usual schedule is to close the Great Lawn in Zilker Park on the Monday before the first concert, and it remains closed for maintenance for about a week after the festival. Check “Directions & Transit” at ACLfestival.com/information, for the latest on road closures and neighborhood parking. Ride Austin (RideAustin.com) is the official ride-share partner of the ACL Festival.

It is too soon to say if a new neighborhood parking plan will be approved in time for the October

Visit the CodeNext page of zilkerneighborhood.org for: current and proposed ZNA zoning maps, zoning committee comments on the draft text and mapping, special CodeNext editions of ZNews. Also, links to documents by other groups, such as the Board of Adjustment, the Zoning and Platting Commission, the CodeNext Advisory Group, and Community Not Commodity.

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photo by alison narro

ACL Fest. At an open house on July 13, the Austin Transportation Department (ATD) gave neighbors a chance to comment on proposals for managing parking in residential areas during major events like the ACL Fest. The effort is based on City Council Resolution 20170202-046 related to implementation of the Parkland Events Task Force recommendations. The open house focused on neighborhoods near frequent, high-volume events, particularly Zilker, Barton Hills, and Bouldin Creek. Two options were featured: Temporary no-parking zones on one side of affected streets, or residential parking permits that would be effective only during certain events. Feedback will be used to finalize a plan and seek Council approval prior to implementing an initial roll-out. Look for a summary at the ZNA meeting on July 31.

Send questions and comments to EventParkingProgram@austintexas.gov
 You may also sign up for email updates directly from ATD.
 Visit austintexas.gov/page/event-parking-program for more information.

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Carbon-Free Austin Energy

The ZNA Executive Committee supports the Austin Energy goal of carbon-free energy production by 2030. Besides committing to the 100-percent carbon-free plan for Austin Energy, the working group urges the utility to develop programs to make solar technology accessible to underserved customers. “Both energy efficiency and local solar goals should be expanded to ensure that these clean energy programs are available to provide benefits to all customers.”

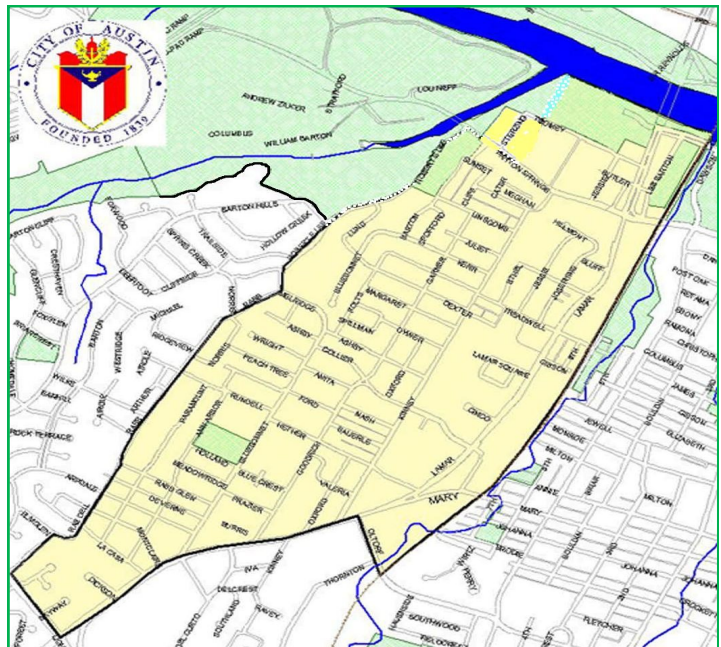
Read the entire position paper on the ZNA website at zilkerneighborhood.org.

ANC Moves to Close Petition Loophole

The ZNA Executive Committee has endorsed a resolution presented to the Austin Neighborhoods Council in June. To close a loophole in the Land Development Code related to valid petitions in rezoning cases, it seeks to define the petition boundary by “aligning the zoning boundary with the recorded tract or parcel of land.” It also would require three-fourths of the City Council to approve zoning variances or waivers that have not been approved by the Land Use Commission. See <http://ancweb.org/about-anc/anc-resolutions/> for the text of the entire resolution.

The Zilker neighborhood is in City Council District 5, represented by Council Member ANN KITCHEN
 Contact district5@austintexas.gov
Responsive Office
www.austintexas.gov/government,
 512-978-2105
 DORA ANGUIANO, Constituent liaison;
dora.anguiano@austintexas.gov

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 are eligible to join ZNA.



Greetings, Zilkerites!
 Join your neighbors at ZNA's First Tuesday get-togethers. We visit a different Zilker venue each month. Look for updates on the ZNA web site, zilkerneighborhood.org, and on the Yahoo group zilker@yahoogroups.com.

BECOME A ZNA MEMBER TODAY

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

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.

Join the Neighbors Who Keep Our Trees Growing

REMEMBER THE LAST DROUGHT? Early in the morning or toward sunset, Gardner Sumner, Carlene South, or Gina and Steve of the Friends of Little Zilker Park could be seen dragging hoses around the school to water newly planted trees. Thanks to them and other volunteers, dozens of young trees are thriving in Little Zilker and on the school campus.

The rains of the last year have been a lot easier on our trees and the watering crew. But as the summer heat continues, we could use a little help taking care of the trees and shrubs planted last spring in connection with the new Bluebonnet entryway to the park. If you would like to spend an hour or so watering, mulching, or weeding in Little Zilker Park,

please email littlezilker@gmail.com, and we'll add you to the team.

Now is a good time to get involved with the Friends of Little Zilker Park (FLZP), as we start the planning for a fall workday and look forward to new improvement projects for the park and the school.

Since 2007, ZNA and the PTA have been working together through the FLZP to improve the park and the school's outdoor campus.

Gardner Sumner explains the fine points of tree mulching at a workday in 2009. FLZP



Support the
Friends of Little Zilker Park
 Contact FLZP@yahoo.com
 or littlezilker@gmail.com
 to keep up with park projects,
 planning, and events.
 Or donate to the
 Friends of Little Zilker Park
 through the
 Austin Parks Foundation.
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**2017 Executive Committee of
the Zilker Neighborhood
Association**

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Secretary: Gary Hamilton
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Delegate:* Katy Fendrich
Newsletter Editor:
Lorraine Atherton

Other executive members:

Parks and Environment Chair:
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Zoning and Code Chair:
Bruce Wiland

The Executive Committee may be contacted by e-mail through zilkerneighborhood@gmail.com

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About the Zilker Neighborhood Association

ZNA holds quarterly meetings on the last Monday of January, April, 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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