

Z NEWS

DECEMBER 2020

Newsletter of the
**Zilker Neighborhood
 Association**
 Austin, Texas
 Established 1981

Zilker Changes: New Officers, a Rail Trail, and Mini PUDs *by ZNA President Dave Piper*

LIKE THE REST OF AUSTIN, the Zilker Neighborhood continues its breakneck pace of change and redevelopment, and the ZNA is riding the surge. Likely returning after the City Council runoff elections is the legally challenged Land Development Code, aka LDC or CodeNext. The stalled plan would eliminate parking requirements, ease regulation of alcohol sales, reduce tree protections near South Lamar, and create “transition zones” where up to ten dwelling units could be built on a typical residential lot near South Lamar. It's possible that the Council could agree on a plan in lieu of further court action (or not).

For the Zilker Neighborhood specifically, the march of mini PUDs (Planned Unit Developments) on the waterfront continues, with likely Council approval of the proposed Schlotzsky's office building. Zilker readers may remember my ongoing objections about that 1.26-acre PUD rezoning case (ZNews July 2020). It has zero residential units and dodges the 10-acre minimum requirement for PUDs by using the environmental protections of the Waterfront Overlay ordinance as a “special circumstance.”

Speaking of environmental protections and PUDs, a proposal to redevelop the 31-acre Brodie Oaks shopping center at South Lamar and Loop 360 has recently surfaced. The details haven't been released yet, but its location on the banks of Barton Creek and on top of the Airmens Cave system is sure to present challenges. The potential is there to benefit the area by reducing impervious cover, adding significant housing, and improving all types of traffic at a very difficult intersection, without disrupting existing neighborhoods.

But back to the waterfront. Besides the

ZNA Officer Nominations, 2021

THE DECEMBER 14 MEETING will begin with the election of ZNA officers. The Executive Committee has nominated these persons to serve in 2021:

- President:* James Russell
- Executive VP:* Gary Hamilton
- Secretary:* Dave Piper
- Treasurer:* Bruce Wiland
- VP Communications:* Megan Paul
- VP Parks and Environment:* Hanna Cofer
- VP Social:* Pat Cramer
- VP Zoning:* Bill Neale
- ANC Delegate:* Bobby Rigney

Under ZNA's bylaws, members have till Dec. 7 to volunteer or to nominate someone else to serve as an officer. Contact ZNA@zilkerneighborhood.org.

mini PUD proposed at Schlotzsky's, the Butler Shores area around Barton Springs Road and S. Lamar contains Restaurant Row, about 1400 apartments and condos, Pitch and Putt Golf, the Zach theater complex, Parks and Recreation offices, the future Dougherty Arts Center, and more. As the gateway to Zilker Park, the area needs comprehensive planning instead of one-off, uncoordinated smaller projects. With each mini PUD rezoning case, the City cedes away its authority and opportunity for effective planning. The Pecan Grove trailer park, Shady Grove, and other properties on Toomey Road and Barton Springs Road lie waiting.

Even though the ZNA opposes the use of mini PUDs to redevelop the waterfront, other new projects are sprouting on South Lamar and Barton Springs Road. We have supported (or at least not opposed) large multifamily and mixed-use projects built under current, non-PUD zoning all along South

ZNA General Meeting
Monday, December 14
 On Zoom (TBA)
6:30 PM TO 8:00 PM

Like most everything else, the ZNA schedule, including our ability to hold meetings at Zilker Elementary, has been disrupted by the pandemic. However, we are going to have a virtual meeting on Monday, Dec 14, in order to elect the Executive Committee for 2021 and also to update everybody about what's going on in the neighborhood. We are still working out the details to allow members to register in advance and vote at the meeting. Watch the ZNA web site, zilkerneighborhood.org, for further instructions. Meanwhile,

❖ ❖ **See you online** ❖ ❖

Lamar. That's why the number of registered voters in Precinct 340 (Butler Shores and the north part of S. Lamar) has climbed from 1,300 in 2005 to 4,700 today. ZNA engages with developers, sometimes for years, on these projects. We work for additional affordable housing, better access/egress for traffic (foot, bicycle, transit, and car), improved street-scapes, sufficient (but not excessive) parking, public open space and tree protection, trail easements, compatibility with nearby neighborhoods, and much more.

Probably the most frustrating aspect of these efforts is having to fix things that slip past the City. For example, it took us two years of cajoling the City to prevent the loading zone in the Schlotzsky's mini PUD from counting toward the project's required public open space. This double checking by ZNA volunteers takes a considerable amount of time, to generate boundary maps, calculate square footage of complex site plans, and pore through esoteric zoning language.

A project that really excites me is the possibility of a hike and bike trail along the Union Pacific tracks from the river to Ben White Blvd., incorporating the West

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School Board Runoff Election, Tuesday, Dec 15
 Early voting Thursday Dec 3-Friday Dec 11

Zilker turnout in the presidential election was over 78% in Precinct 332 and not quite 70% in Precinct 340, but the school board races dropped below 50% in 332 and 42% in 340. That's a bad omen for our public schools, which have been struggling for decades under a broken school financing system. All the runoff candidates are dedicated volunteers who deserve our attention and support. Please vote in the runoffs on Dec. 15, and let the state legislature know that we support our public schools. *L. Atherton*

In Single-member District 5: Lynn Boswell and Jennifer Littlefield
 (see lynnforaisd.com and jenniferforaisd.com)

In At-large Place 8: Noelita L. Lugo and Leticia Moreno Caballero
 (see noelitaforaisd.com and leticiaforaisd.com)

Find polling locations and voter info at votetravis.com or call 512-238-VOTE.

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Bouldin Creek Greenbelt. Several million dollars has already been allocated for a pedestrian crossing into that greenbelt, where Treadwell dead ends into the tracks. Over the last decade or so, the ZNA negotiated some easements on rezoned properties along the tracks, and lately the City has been securing additional easements as part of site plan approvals. For now, the trail has a Tier II priority in the City's Urban Trails Master Plan, which can be found at austintexas.gov/urbantrails; look for UPC/ASA Rail Trail.

On a bit of a nostalgic note, I am stepping down as ZNA President in order to free up time to finish another novel and do more oil painting. However, I will continue to be involved in ZNA. This newsletter has the slate of candidates for the 2021 Executive Committee, as of the print deadline. (We are happy to once again deliver a printed edition to more than 2000 homes in the neighborhood. Many thanks to Editor Lorraine Atherton, our advertisers, and the other neighbors who make that happen.) I also thank my fellow ZNA officers who continue to amaze me with creative ideas backed by expertise in different fields, which is then coupled with their volunteer time. In addition, Harmony Grogan steps up year after year to organize and execute the ZNA Holiday Families Program, certainly the most heart-warming activity we do. Many thanks to all the neighbors who support that effort with time and money. And, of course, the ZNA wouldn't even exist without the goodwill, involved interest, and financial support of our members. I hear so many sincere, good ideas from you all. See you in the 'hood!

Best wishes for 2021, from Dave Piper and the rest of the ZNA Executive Committee. Happy Holidays.

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 Advertisers: ZNA reserves this newsletter's limited advertising space for businesses within the boundaries of the association.
 E-mail: ZilkerNeighborhood@gmail.com

ZNA Holiday Families Program

This year has been stressful, challenging, and heart-breaking for so many. The holidays are upon us, and as a community, I ask that you help our neighbors in need with a donation to the ZNA Holiday Families Program. For more than 20 years, ZNA has sponsored families nominated by the Zilker Elementary School counselor (this year it's ten families). If you feel you and your family have been blessed, please think about paying your blessings forward by donating a gift card or cash to the ZNA Holiday Families Program. Our program currently needs monetary donations and/or donations of \$25 gift cards from CVS, Walgreens, Walmart, Target, and neighborhood restaurants (Austin Pizza, Kerbey Lane, for example).

Please make checks payable to Zilker Neighborhood Association and write "holiday program" on the memo line. Donations may be mailed or delivered to: 1608 Treadwell Street, Austin, TX 78704.

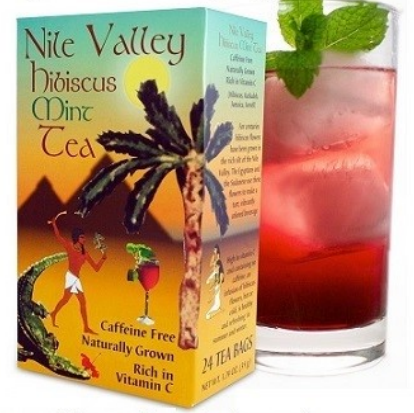
Or, you may make a donation via Paypal on the zilkerneighborhood.org web site.

Thank you to the numerous neighbors who volunteered and donated to make this program a success throughout the years!

*Harmony Grogan
 2020 Program Coordinator*

Please note, donations are not deductible for federal income tax purposes as charitable contributions because we are not organized as a 501(c)(3) non-profit.

Nile Valley Herbs, an Austin-based, independent tea company



A part of its profits is donated to Az-Zawrat, a village in northern Sudan. Visit the Mother Maryam Foundation at mothermaryam.org for more info.

www.nilevalleyherbs.com

ZNA is in District 5, represented by Council Member ANN KITCHEN, at district5@austintexas.gov or 512-978-2105.

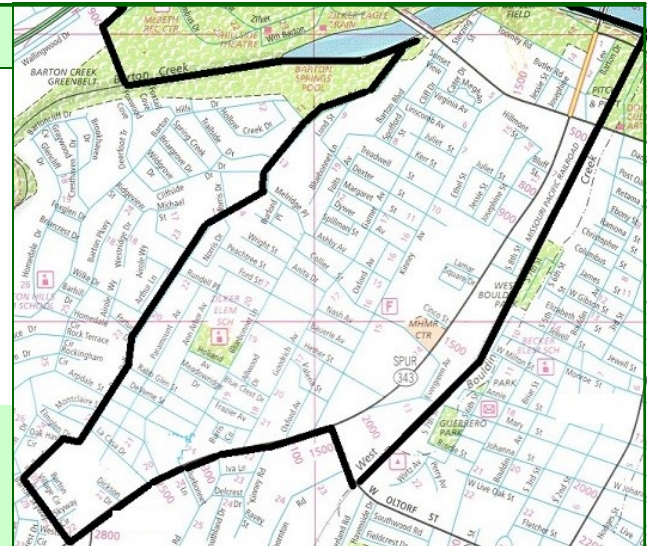
Our Austin Police District Rep is Officer Shawn Rougeou, at 512-974-5490 or Shawn.Rougeou@austintexas.gov

2020 ZNA Executive Committee

- President: Dave Piper
- Vice Presidents
- Executive: Gary Hamilton
- Communications: Open
- Parks and Environment: Gail Rothe
- Social: Pat Cramer
- Zoning: Bill Neale
- Secretary: James Russell
- Treasurer: Bruce Wiland
- ANC Delegate: Bobby Rigney

The Executive Committee meets the first Monday at 6:30 pm of most months, via Zoom until further notice.
 Email ZNA@zilkerneighborhood.org

For ZNA bylaws and to join online, visit www.zilkerneighborhood.org



ZNA boundaries include Zilker Park and Rabb Road on the west, from Lady Bird Lake to Barton Skyway, and the railroad on the east to Oltorf and then South Lamar.

From lost dogs to political organizing, now you can pick and choose your neighborhood communications

The Yahoo Groups platform is shutting down in December, and the Zilker Yahoo group started by Richard Gravois 20 years ago is moving to ZilkerNeighbors@groups.io. The new listserv is more convenient, with easy to use digest, summary, and "no email" features that allow subscribers to control what they see and don't see in their inboxes.

Membership is limited to residents within ZNA's boundaries, but ZNA does not control this list. You do not have to be a member of ZNA to join the group and joining the group does not make you a member of ZNA.

To subscribe, go to groups.io/g/zilkerneighbors and click the blue bar that says "Apply for membership in this group"

Richard's rules of neighborly discourse still apply:

Encouraged: Open communication between residents of the Zilker Neighborhood in a friendly South Austin spirit. There are no topic restrictions.

Unwelcome: Personal attacks, harassment, threats, vulgar language, behavior intended to discourage participation in this group, commercial advertisements or other forms of spam.

Join us for another 20 years of neighborly communications in the Gravois spirit.

Lorraine Atherton, Zilker Neighbors group owner

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. Annual dues are **\$7 per person**. Please list each member's name and e-mail address below.

Name _____ Email _____

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Dues amount: _____ Donation: _____ Total Enclosed: _____

Please make checks payable to Zilker Neighborhood Association and mail with this form to:
 ZNA Memberships, 1510 Oxford St, Austin, TX 78704
 or join online at zilkerneighborhood.org.