

Z NEWS

Newsletter of the
Zilker Neighborhood
Association

JULY 2022

Established 1981 in
Austin, Texas



Bluebonnet near Arpdale. In case you missed it—The speed limit in the neighborhood, including Bluebonnet Lane, was reduced to 25 mph earlier this year.

Pathways at Goodrich Place

A Model for a Better Zilker

DESPITE THE PANDEMIC, the big freeze, and numerous other disruptions, the Housing Authority of the City of Austin (HACA) has completed and filled 120 new apartments at the Pathways at Goodrich Place, a landmark affordable housing project in the 2100 block of Bluebonnet. Because the previous Goodrich Place residents' council was committed to the planning and design of the new building, it promises to be a model for improving the quality of life for apartment dwellers throughout the neighborhood.

The new residents' council has been meeting regularly and carrying forward the community spirit of the previous residents. Sadly, only a few of the previous residents were able to return (such is the reality of "displacement" policies), and the Zilker Neighborhood Association is deeply appreciative of the sacrifices all of the previous residents have made. We hope to join HACA in recognizing their contribution to the neighborhood and to celebrate the new expanded Goodrich Place at a formal dedication ceremony later this year. *(Continued on page 2)*

ZNA General Meeting

Monday, July 25, 6:30-8 PM

Zilker Elementary School
1900 Bluebonnet Lane



Once upon a time, ZNA's summer meeting was an outdoor social event. Over the years, as July evenings got hotter, we moved indoors and somehow let the business agenda crowd out the socializing. And then there was, you know, the pandangit, which kept us from celebrating the completion of Pathways at Goodrich Place two years ago, among many other milestones. So this year, on July 25, ZNA is welcoming all our new neighbors, especially the 100+ residents at Goodrich Place, to an extended meet and greet inside the school, no agenda, no pressure.

Zilker Neighborhood Summer Social

Come meet your neighbors and learn more about what's going on in the Zilker neighborhood!

Wednesday, August 3

5:30-7:30 pm

The ABGB

(Austin Beer Garden Brewing Co.)

1305 W. Oltorf

We'll have a sign so you can find the group!

Some background: ZNA first formally supported the redevelopment of Goodrich Place in May 2017, in a letter to City Council, in which the ZNA Executive Committee looked forward "to working with HACA and the Goodrich Place residents' council to preserve and upgrade the existing residents' affordable housing while expanding the opportunity for more affordable housing units on this site." Thanks to ZNA past president David King, we already had a commitment that all of the existing affordability levels would be carried over to the new building and that all of the additional apartments would meet some level of affordability.

The proposal sailed through the rezoning process, and in a press release that August, HACA announced the award of "\$15 million in competitive low-income housing tax credits from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs for the redevelopment of 40 deeply affordable multifamily housing units and the construction of 80 additional affordable units at Goodrich Place in Austin's Zilker Neighborhood. This is the first time in HACA's 80-year history that the agency has applied for competitive tax credits. This project will also mark HACA's first redevelopment of one of its public housing properties." The press release went on to quote Goodrich resident Maria Leal: "I love the idea of central air conditioning

and a covered playground for the children to play on, . . . Mostly I am excited that I can afford to stay in the Zilker Neighborhood, and when my grandchildren come to visit, they can come spend time with me in a place that is safe."

A few months later, however, an error in the previous rezoning case was discovered, and the ZNA Zoning Committee had to remobilize our support to get the correct zoning in place. That zoning, with the mix of bedrooms and affordability levels confirmed, was approved in a few weeks, in June 2018.

The people make the place: Two years later, construction wrapped up and residents began to move in, during the pandemic. Today they face the same issues as the rest of the neighborhood—security, overflow parking from nearby businesses, inadequate loading zones, mail and package deliveries, trash and recycling pickup, rising utility bills, noise, power outages, and yes, dog poop. But with an active residents' council, they can be empowered to address those issues together and create the safe and welcoming community that Maria Leal wanted for her grandchildren.

*Lorraine Atherton
ZNews Editor*



SINCE REDISTRICTING, Zilker Neighborhood has three new precinct numbers and new Democratic Party precinct chairs. **Matt Holzgrafe** (Precinct 304, Barton Springs Road and east of Kinney), **Mariah Craven** (Precinct 306, Kinney to Rabb Road), and **David Weinberg** (Precinct 307, south of La Casa) are eager to help get out the vote in this fall's election and beyond! If you're interested in signing up for updates about when to vote and who's on the ballot, need to register to vote, or want to help get your neighbors out to vote, please contact your precinct chair at: P304@traviscountymocrats.org, P306@traviscountymocrats.org, or P307@traviscountymocrats.org. On the Republican side, contact **Trent Smith**, Precinct 306 chair, at trent@mlscommercialfinance.com. Not sure which precinct you're in anymore? Reach out to any precinct chair and they'll point you in the right direction! (See map on page 4.)

ZNA Opposes Another Tiny PUD

ZNA IS ALREADY ON RECORD as opposed to the 102-foot Planned Unit Development (PUD) proposed for the 1.87-acre Bicycle Sport Shop site at 517 South Lamar, another in a series of PUDs that are far less than the minimum required size of 10 acres. On June 8, ZNA stated our opposition to the PUD application in a letter to the City Council. The letter of opposition asks the Council to consider the PUD proposal "in light of state statutes regarding spot zoning and the recent CodeNext legal decisions. . . . We urge you to reject the PUD zoning application for this project, especially in light of the proposed VMU2 ordinance working its way through Council." The VMU2 ordinance would allow increased height on sites like 517 South Lamar if they provide more affordable housing.

*Dave Piper
ZNA Secretary*

Too Tall Walls: The Importance of the Public Right-of-Way

by Lorraine Atherton, ZNA Zoning Committee Member

WALLS AND FENCES exceeding the maximum height of 6 feet have been popping up in the neighborhood. A longtime neighbor with experience in construction put it this way: "The walling off of houses from their neighbors and from the street is one of the worst design trends to come along in a long time."

One of the worst examples in Zilker came up at a public hearing at the Board of Adjustment (BoA) in December. During the hearing a Board Member noted that the height limits for fences are based on health and safety factors, including the need for firefighters, police, and utility crews to see and access properties in emergencies. In the December case, the Board of Adjustment denied the request to exceed the height limit; yet, as this newsletter goes to press, the offending wall has not been lowered.

A neighbor first reported the massive wall while it was still under construction. The inspector did not approve the wall, but the architect went ahead and finished it anyway, with the excess height. The ZNA Zoning Committee followed up on additional code complaints and citations, trying to understand why construction of the wall had not been stopped. As the City continued to refuse to approve the wall, the owners decided to go to the BoA for a variance, creating many hours of unnecessary work for City staff, the volunteer members of the BoA, and ZNA volunteers. In the course of the hearing, the architect admitted that he knew the wall did not comply with code.

The BoA denied the variance, but when a property owner simply refuses to correct a problem, there is little that building officials can do to force compliance. The lesson here is that without a healthy respect for building and safety standards among the responsible professionals (architects, engineers, contractors, Realtors, lenders and insurance companies), municipal fire and building codes cannot be enforced.

The encroachment of fences and landscaping on the public right-of-way, impairing traffic visibility and utility access, is also an ongoing problem in Zilker, where our street infrastructure

(including sidewalks, storm sewers, and overhead utilities) is lagging far behind the increase in residential density. Dave Piper, a member of the ZNA Zoning Committee, notes that "the issue is much larger than fences. It's also about tree protection, erosion control, size of structures, noise pollution, etc."

Please, if you are planning or already building a fence that's taller than 6 feet, or if you aren't sure about the location of your property line, stop now and adjust the fence to comply with the code. Any work in the right-of-way, beyond routine landscape maintenance, requires a license from the city.

For more info, visit austintexas.gov/departments/right-way-row-permits.

Thank you for respecting Austin's building codes. They are there for a reason.

ZNA officer nominations deadline September 26

UNDER THE ZNA BYLAWS, Article VI, Section 2, members have until September 26 to nominate candidates for ZNA offices. Here's the section from the bylaws:

"The Executive Committee shall nominate officer candidates at the Executive Committee meeting immediately preceding the fall quarterly meeting of the General Membership. Nominations for officers may also come from the General Membership but must be received by the Executive Committee no later than one week prior to the aforementioned Executive Committee meeting. The Executive Committee will present the slate of nominees to the General Membership for election. A nominee must be a paid-up member as of September 30."

The bylaws were last amended in July 2021.

See the current bylaws at <http://zilkerneighborhood.org/organization.shtml>.

Contact the Executive Committee at ZNA@zilkerneighborhood.org

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, 1725 Toomey Road, Apt 310, Austin, TX 78704
 or join online at zilkerneighborhood.org.

ZNA Officers for 2022

President: Bill Bunch

Executive VP: Gary Hamilton

Secretary: Dave Piper

Treasurer: David Borden

VP Communications: Tanya Payne

VP Parks and Environment: Robin Rather

VP Social: Cat Cooke

VP Zoning: Bill Neale

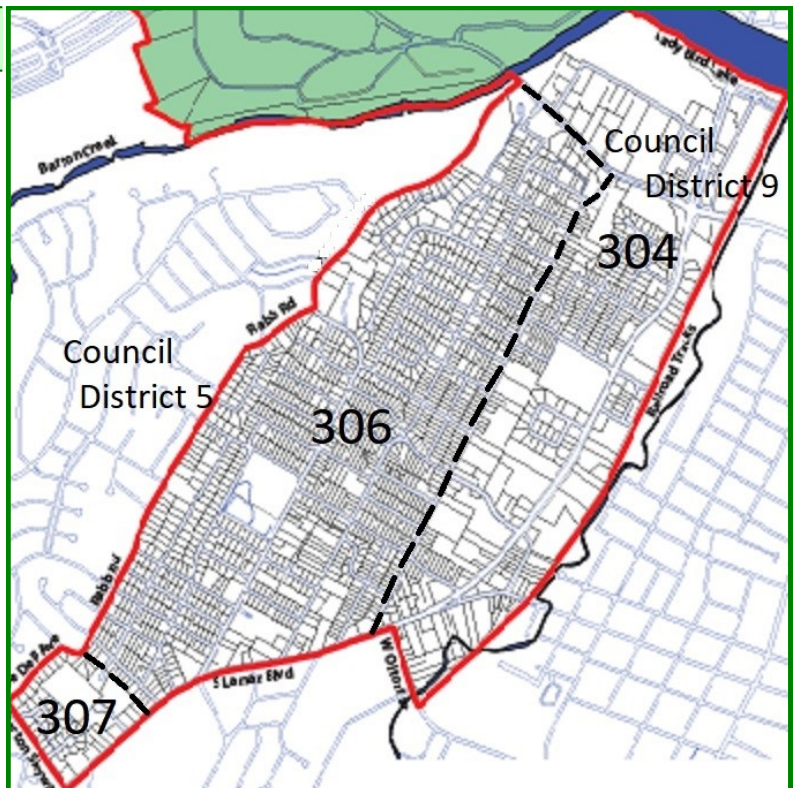
ANC Delegate: Bobby Rigney

The Executive Committee meets the first Monday of most months, at 5:30 pm, at the Umlauf Sculpture Garden, 605 Azie Morton.

Email ZNA@zilkerneighborhood.org

Instagram @Zilker_Neighborhood

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 tracks on the east to Oltorf and then south along South Lamar.

Zilker residents vote in Travis County precincts 304, 306, and the Skyway Circle portion of 307.

We are currently represented by **City Council Member ANN KITCHEN**

(district5@austintexas.gov or 512-978-2105).

In November, precincts 306 and 307 will vote in Council District 5 and 304 will vote in District 9.

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



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