

Z NEWS

Newsletter of the
Zilker Neighborhood
Association

OCTOBER 2022

Established 1981 in
Austin, Texas

ZNA General Meeting Monday, October 24

Sign-in 6:30-7, Agenda 7-8 PM
Zilker Elementary School
1900 Bluebonnet Lane

❖ ❖ ❖

Election of Officers (p. 2)

Holiday Families Kick-Off (p. 3)

Affordable Housing Bonds, with
Council Member Ann Kitchen

Zilker Park Vision Plan Updates (p. 3)

Austin City Limits Fest Feedback

❖ ❖ **All Welcome** ❖ ❖

Newcomers, homeowners, renters,
business neighbors

A Message from ZNA President Bill Bunch

Statesman PUD Threatens All of Us

THE SO-CALLED STATESMAN PUD zoning case covers 18 acres on the south shore of Lady Bird Lake, containing the old Austin American-Statesman site and bat viewing area. As currently proposed, it would gut Austin's ordinances protecting Lady Bird Lake by shrinking the required shoreline setback for construction from 150 feet to less than 90 feet, and it would more than double the impervious cover allowed within 200 feet of the shore. It would leave us with less than half of the lakefront parkland called for in the 2016 South Central Waterfront Plan—and let the developer control much of this so-called “public park” for private drainage controls and private events and concessions. And it would provide tens of millions of dollars in taxpayer subsidies to the billionaire property owners in the form of fee credits and waivers, tax rebates, and the giveaway of massive entitlement increases without requiring standard affordable housing dedications.

Zilker's two City Council representatives, Ann Kitchen (ann.kitchen@austintexas.gov) and Kathie Tovo (kathie.tovo@austintexas.gov), and all of Austin's City Council need to hear from Zilker residents urging them to vote “NO” on the proposed PUD unless all subsidies are removed, all lake protections are restored, and at

Zilker Fall Event Calendar October 19

ZNA and Zilker PTA Combined
Happy Hour at the Golden Goose,
2034 S. Lamar, 5:30-7:30 pm.
Adults only, 10% of sales go to
Zilker Elementary PTA.

October 23

Strawfest 2022, fall crafts festival at
Umlauf Sculpture Garden,
605 Azie Morton, 11 am-4 pm.

October 24

First day of early voting
(see ZNews election insert)
and ZNA quarterly meeting

October 29

Zamboree Fall Festival at
Zilker Elementary School, 3-6 pm.

November 8

Election Day and student holiday

THE NEIGHBORHOOD LIST SERVE Richard Gravois created in 1999 survives today as zilkerneighbors@groups.io.

Richard's rules still apply. Membership is limited to residents within ZNA's boundaries, and open communication is encouraged in a friendly South Austin spirit. There are no topic restrictions, but personal attacks, harassment, threats, vulgar language, behavior intended to discourage participation in the group, commercial advertisements or other forms of spam are not welcome. ZNA does not control the group. You do not have to be a member of ZNA to join and joining the group does not make you a member of ZNA.

To subscribe to the Zilker Neighbors group, send an email to zilkerneighbors+subscribe@groups.io.

least 8 acres of land on the shore-front is dedicated to actual public park use, subject to standard city management and oversight by the Parks Board and City Council.

If approved, the Statesman PUD would set a dangerous precedent for removing lake-shore protections all the way around Lady Bird Lake, for giving up irreplaceable public parkland to private control and abuse, and for making all of us taxpayers pay the project's costs for parking, streets, utility and street impact fees, and water quality and drainage controls.

Right now our City Council is being intimidated by the billionaire Statesman PUD owners and their lawyer-lobbyists, who contribute tens of thousands of dollars to council campaigns. The council members need to know voters are watching and expect that this "Mistake on the Lake" is voted down.

See the SOSAlliance.org website for more details and updates on this critical case in the heart of our city.

On Oct. 24 ZNA will elect officers for 2023, and we will kick off our holiday fund drive (see page 3).

We hope to see you at Zilker Elementary Oct. 24, and please invite your neighbors. All Zilker residents are welcome (and encouraged to join or renew your membership in ZNA). Stay tuned and stay active! And please, don't forget to vote.

Your neighbor, Bill Bunch, ZNA President

Scary Skylines and PUD Duds

THE LAST STRAW WAS THE PUBLIC SUBSIDY demanded for the Statesman PUD.

For decades, abuses of Austin's Planned Unit Development (PUD) Ordinance have created a Bermuda Triangle of sorts, where promising redevelopment projects disappear into a fog of zoning review and reinterpretation, emerging years later as high-rise monsters from an uglier time and place. These PUDs undermine the environmental protections and improved standards for redevelopment negotiated over the last fifty years in three areas:

- Austin's waterfront and urban watersheds,
- the Barton Creek watershed and the Barton Springs Zone, and
- housing downtown and along major corridors in Austin's central neighborhoods.

Those three areas intersect right here in the Zilker Neighborhood.

ZNA Officer Nominations, 2023

These persons have been nominated to serve as officers beginning January 1, 2023:

President: Gary Hamilton

Executive Vice President: Bill Bunch

Secretary: Open

Treasurer: J. D. Leonard

VP Communications: Tanya Payne

VP Parks & Environment: Robin Rather

VP Social: Patti Amaya

VP Zoning: Lydia Zaidman

ANC Delegate: Jeff Jack

Under ZNA's bylaws, nominations closed Sept. 26. The search for a secretary will resume after the election at the Oct. 24 quarterly meeting.

If you are interested in serving, please email excom@zilkerneighborhood.org.

ZNA's Executive Committee, pulling together protests and analyses from other neighborhoods and the SOS Alliance, has passed a resolution calling for reform of the PUD ordinance and process. Specifically, the resolution asks that the Austin City Council deny

(1) the Statesman PUD for failure to meet requirements of the Waterfront Overlay Ordinance and the South Central Waterfront Vision Framework Plan,

(2) any current PUD applications within the Barton Springs Zone that do not fully comply with the SOS ordinance, and

(3) the PUD application at 517 S. Lamar for failure to meet the 10-acre size limit. ZNA is already on record as opposed to this 102-foot high-rise on the 1.87-acre Bicycle Sport Shop site (*ZNews* July 2022, p. 2).

The resolution also calls on the City Council to prohibit new PUDs within the Waterfront Overlay and the Barton Springs Zone, to prohibit applications for projects under 10 acres, and to require new PUDs to match or exceed the affordable housing standards approved in the June 2022 Vertical Mixed Use ordinance.

The Austin Neighborhoods Council has created a task force to review the history of Austin PUDs and their economic effect. The complete resolution can be seen at <https://www.atxanc.org/post/anc-draft-pud-resolution>.

*Lorraine Atherton,
ZNA Zoning Committee member*



Zilker Park Vision Plan Takes a Break, ACL Fest Returns

ANOTHER FALL, another Austin City Limits Festival, and another year without a serious plan for the future of Zilker Park. The City's **Zilker Park Vision Plan** has been on indefinite hold since early June, with no public meetings anticipated until December.

The ZNA parks committee is not sure what the paid consultants are up to, but after they received a ton of negative feedback on their "3 Concepts" draft, issued last spring, we remain hopeful they will bring a more coherent and forward-looking plan for the community to consider soon. You can review the 3 Concepts and ZNA's point-by-point response on our website at <https://zilkerneighborhood.org/zpvp.shtml> or contact us directly at parks-env@zilkerneighborhood.org.

Meanwhile, we continue to refine our ideas weekly for rewilding, for protecting Barton Springs, for more shade, for eliminating the need to build expensive new parking garages, for more bike and pedestrian alternatives, for greater public safety, and for more alignment with the City's excellent climate and equity plan. Join us if you are interested!

Speaking of climate plans, according to airnow.gov, Austin's **air quality index** was in the "good" range for only 7 days between September 1 and October 10. For about half that period, the index was 100 or more, in the "unhealthy" range. Want to help improve air quality at street level in the neighborhood? Join us!

In the aftermath of the **ACL Fest**, we ask that you provide feedback on what worked this year and what didn't work. Take a look at the festival's impact on the natural areas of the park and also notice how many people bike, walk, or take the bus to the park while Barton Springs Road is closed. Send your comments to parks-env@zilkerneighborhood.org or attend the ZNA meeting on Oct. 24. Keep visualizing how we can make Zilker even more natural in the future.

At our last quarterly ZNA meeting, the issue of **off-leash dogs** came up. Our neighborhood has many dog lovers and many folks who are afraid of dogs and prefer not to interact. We also

ZNA Holiday Families Program

Harmony Grogan, Coordinator

FOR A QUARTER CENTURY the ZNA Holiday Families Program has provided gifts to families nominated by the Zilker Elementary School counselor. ZNA members have been so generous that we are hoping to expand our giving this season. Zilker elves will once again deliver gifts to at least ten Zilker school families, and additional cash donations will be delivered to Meals on Wheels. See zilkerneighborhood.org/holiday-families-program.shtml for details. If you feel you and your family have been blessed, please think about sharing your blessings through the ZNA Holiday Families Program.

Donate via Paypal at the zilkerneighborhood.org web site, or 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.

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

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.

are in communication with the principal at Zilker Elementary regarding dog concerns for the children there.

The ZNA executive committee has adopted a policy of strict compliance with Austin's leash laws wherever posted. For example, leash-only signs are posted throughout Little Zilker Park next to Zilker Elementary. For the safety of your dog and others using the park, please respect these laws. If you are looking for an off-leash location for your pups, try the south lawn next to Kinney Avenue Christian Fellowship at 1801 Kinney. Thank you for understanding and respecting Austin's leash laws. If you have questions about this, please contact our "Dog Squad" leader Garret Nick at parks-env@zilkerneighborhood.org.

*Robin Rather,
ZNA VP, Parks and Environment*

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

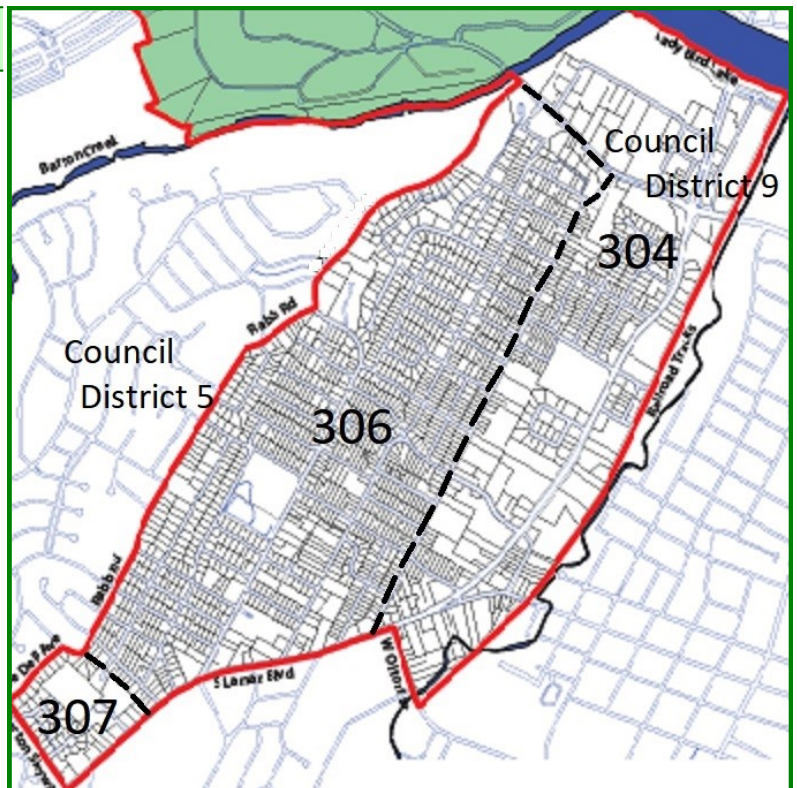
ANC Delegate: Bobby Rigney

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



Published quarterly by ZNA

Editor: Lorraine Atherton

512-447-7681

2009 Arpdale St.

Austin, TX 78704

ZilkerNeighborhood@gmail.com