

## ZNA Meeting Minutes

July 7, 2014-----7:00PM–9:00PM

Umlauf Sculpture Garden and Museum---605 Robert E. Lee Road

David Piper

Gardner Sumner

Lorraine Atherton

Mary Sledd

Tony Giustino

Bill Neale

David King

Richard Gravois

### **Old Business:**

**1. Watermelon Social** July 28th (Mary)—Discussed logistics of meeting at Zilker Elementary School (tables, watermelon, inviting election candidates)

**2. City Council Candidate Forum**---(Lorraine)—Discussion morphed into the ANC Platform and the short amount of time left to finalize it, let stakeholders read and digest it, and then vote to approve it or not. David is going to send it out to the ExComm for consideration as it progresses.

**3. Blues-On-The-Green** Event at Zilker Park --(David) David expressed his frustration at the recurring parking violations and traffic congestion in the neighborhood due to Blues on the Green concerts at Zilker Park

**4. Artz Rib House**---Update---(Lorraine) Owners submitted new site plan. Project is moving forward. No variances are anticipated.

**5. Funding for Sidewalk–Treadwell/LamarBlvd.**---(Dave) Suvi Aika, who lives on Treadwell adjacent to Lamar Union, engaged the folks the Neighborhood Partnering Program (NPP) of the City. Suvi enlisted Eileen Nehm of WABUCY and Dave Piper to help with the process. The head of the NPP program, Justin Golbabai, and a City sidewalk designer came out to the site and we reviewed options. Initially, Suvi, Eileen, and I proposed just putting up barricades instead of constructing a sidewalk to reduce costs.

The sidewalk engineer estimated the entire cost to be \$20K for the 415 feet. Mr. Golbabai recommended that we go for a regular sidewalk. The City would pay for 60% so we would have to contribute 40% or \$8K. We filled out the forms, engaged the immediate neighbors, made a drawing and submitted the paperwork. Katherine Gregor, a neighbor of Suvi's and also City employee is helping to shepherd the application through the process.

The first roadblock occurred when Mr. Golbabai informed us that we would have to deposit our \$8K into a verifiable bank account before the City could begin to process the paperwork. Suvi asked Greystar Construction, the general contractor for Lamar Union if they would contribute, and they gave us the \$8K. Not long afterward, Mr. Golbabai informed us that the cost of the sidewalk was calculated incorrectly and our share would be \$14K instead of \$8K. Suvi then deposited \$6K of her own money into the bank account.

Mr. Golbabai then informed Suvi that the cost of the sidewalk had risen again and that we need to pony up another \$5K. We are reconsidering our initial idea of erecting barricades instead of a sidewalk.

The NPP program has some fundamental flaws such as the inability to estimate costs. But the biggest problem for them and for anyone wanting to participate, is the requirement that the neighborhoods' contributions be collected in advance. It's a "catch 22." The City can't process an NPP application without 100% of the neighborhood's money in the bank, and a neighborhood is highly unlikely to be able to raise funds without some sort of project approval by the City. We were lucky to get Greystar's contribution, and how many private citizens are willing to park thousands of \$\$ of their own money in a bank account? (If this project goes through and the City uses Suvi's money, she would have to reimburse herself by soliciting donations from whomever might be willing to contribute.)

To summarize, Mr. Golbabai apologizes for the confusion. We are trying to set up a meeting with Mr. Golbabai and his boss. We discussed using some ZNA money and/or money that has been collected by the City for years as "fee in lieu" for sidewalk construction at residential and commercial properties.

### **New Business:**

**1. Health Box Austin---608B South Lamar Blvd.**—Mobile Food Vendor Variance – Representatives of Health Box Austin asked us to support a variance with the BOA that would allow them to stay at their current location. The problem for ZNA is that there is already a variance on the lot at 608 S. Lamar that prohibits mobile food vendors. Variances apply to the land, not the occupant of the land. While we sympathize with the efforts of Health Box to establish a business that sells healthy food, the owners' stated

goal is to grow into a brick and mortar establishment, which would require another location.

When Health Box moves off the lot the variances stay. The current variance that prohibits mobile food vendors was previously negotiated with the landowner because the lot is small and narrow, and can't park many vehicles. While Health Box may not draw lots of vehicles, another business in that location could. Already it is a congested location with 2 bus stops, a gas station, and a smoke shop. The area is also very close to the intersection of Barton Springs and S. Lamar. We advised Health Box not to pursue a variance. We also voted 7-0 with 1 abstention to oppose a variance should they formally request one from the BOA.

**2. Odd Duck---Late Hours Permit**---Jason James, Partner, and Sam Hellman-Mass asked for ZNA support. Lots of discussion about how to accommodate these types of businesses without turning South Lamar into an "entertainment district" such as 6th Street and Rainey Street. Recommended that Odd Duck talk with us further so we can be more specific on what they might and might not do. We have had good success with other neighborhood establishments in developing conditional use agreements.

**3. Improvements to Hike and Bike Trail Near Robert E. Lee Road**—Vanessa Puig-Williams presented her ideas to improve the trail. We told her we would support her efforts and work with her.

**4. Garage Door Variance—903 Ethel Street** —(Dave/Lorraine) —This case has expanded into a general problem with City site plan reviewers overlooking McMansion violations, especially with applying the 450 sqft exemption to the Floor-to-Area (FAR) ratio for carports. Builders have been constructing "carports" that violate the ordinance because they exceed the requirement to have 2 sides that are at least 80% open.

The RDCC denied the applicant's request 6-0. They and the City's rep at the hearing appeared dismayed at the scope of the problem and what to do about it. Not sure where this is going...

**5. Enchanted Forest Project—1412 West Oltorf** —(Lorraine) Scott Trainer has bought or is in the process of buying this large parcel of land. ZNA plans to work with him as he develops it.

**6. Demolition —1405 Rabb Road**— (David/Bill) Discussion of new owner's plans to demolish old stone house and construct 3 new ones on this large lot. ZNA will recommend to owner that he keep us informed. The land is in the Barton Springs Zone, which triggers special land use regs.

**7. Funding Strategies For Special Events** (David)---Briefly discussed concerns from the arts community about using the established hotel tax to help fund City services needed for special events.

**8. Accessory Dwelling Units Code Amendment---**(David) Still in process at the City Council.

**9. Property Tax Appraisals and Exemptions—**(David) Very brief discussion of level of citizenry discontent and some of the various initiatives around town to address it.