

ZNA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 7, 2022; 5:30 p.m. Umlauf Sculpture Garden

DRAFT

Attending: Dave Piper, Bill Neale, Bill Bunch, Cat Cooke, David Borden, Tanya Payne, Gary Hamilton, Bobby Rigney

Guests:

Old Business:

1. Approval of minutes for ExCom meeting on 2-7-22 and General Membership Meeting on 2-28-22. Dave Piper moved, Bill Bunch 2nd, Unanimous vote with Tanya Payne absent.
2. Treasurer and Membership report (David Borden)
3. Parks & Environment report (Bill Bunch) and discussion about policies and current comment/survey period on Zilker Park Vision Plan; Butler Landfill parking options, sidewalks action by PARD staff.
4. ANC business update (Bobby Rigney) ANC was given a presentation by the city on tree protection changes. ANC discussed the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan and the ZNA's rewilding plan for Zilker Park.
5. Zoning Committee update -- (Bill Neale) Report on a house under construction at 1713 Baurele. Report on the Board of Adjustment case for new construction at 1003 Kinney on a lot that is smaller than the required minimum lot size.

New Business:

1. Social Comm update/discussion (Cat Cooke) - Will arrange a happy hour at a neighborhood establishment TBD.
2. Communications update/discussion (Tanya Payne)
3. Discussion about when action on issues are voted upon by the General Membership or by the Executive Committee based on timelines and criticality.
4. Discussion of the proposed jet fuel storage tank facility at Hwy 183/Montopolis Road and the request for Austin neighborhood Associations and others to oppose it. Bobby moved that the ZNA supports the letter from the Austin Environmental and Justice Community Organizers (below). Dave 2nd, motion passed 7-1 with Bill Neale opposing.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

An Open Letter to the City of Austin from Austin Environmental & Justice Community Organizers

The undersigned stand in solidarity with our fellow neighbors in strong objection to the fuel tank farm proposed for construction adjacent to the neighborhoods between Metropolis Drive, McCall Lane, and McKinney Falls Parkway. But in case it isn't obvious, let's review why we shouldn't put a tank farm near a neighborhood, especially a predominantly Hispanic community.

#1. The community doesn't want this. If we were truly committed to equity, we would just stop here. A community should be able to say no to the placement of a toxic facility right next door.

This [community](#) has made it [very clear](#) that they have only one ask:
They want Council to direct the Airport to pick [another location](#).

Pushback from the community prompted City Council to order public meetings with residents and requested an analysis of whether the facility could leak toxic fumes. But the process has not been transparent, and residents are extremely concerned. The public should be able to see the results of the environmental assessment, and regardless of the location, the City of Austin should commission an independent environmental assessment and make that report accessible to the public. The reasons the community has cited include:

- **6 million gallons of fuel** will be stored in this tank farm.
- **64 fuel trucks per day** will enter and exit the storage facility at 183 and Metropolis Drive (80-100 trucks per day during peak travel season).
- Residents are concerned for their health and safety.
- Property values may be decreased if tank farm is built on this site so close to neighborhoods (*McCall & Seeling Drive neighborhood/ Colorado Crossing Subdivision and adjacent neighborhoods*).

In the words of resident Amanda Garcia, “We deserve a right to a healthy living environment within our own homes. We deserve a right to a healthy living environment without worry.”

#2. The community has not been included or heard. And the City of Austin has many times over said this is important. In their final report, the 2016 [Task Force on Community Engagement](#), which included Mayor Adler and several current members of the City Council, recommended making information more accessible, making it easier to give input, and ensuring that community input has an impact on decisions. But the Aviation Department did anything but that. Community representatives report that not only were residents not properly informed, included, or listened to, but meetings were scheduled at unfamiliar locations and/or deemed inaccessible to neighborhood residents. Flyers were distributed only to some of the neighbors. Meeting locations were not included on flyers. (You had to call or email to find out where to go.) Despite the resulting low attendance, the process barreled forward anyway. Then, when residents finally objected loudly enough for the City Council to pass a [resolution](#) that the Aviation Department do more work on community engagement, The department offered only one online session, presentation-only-style, with no opportunity for community input. What’s more, the Aviation department has yet to demonstrate to the community their claim that there is no other location possible for the tank. The only explanation given is that they have other plans for the remaining locations. The engagement has not been equitable. And it’s important to note that, according to the Equity Action Team [Dashboard](#), The Aviation Department is among the last departments to do equity training.

#3. This neighborhood is already at a higher risk. Studies have linked living near an airport with higher rates of [cardiovascular disease](#), as well as higher levels of [asthma and heart problems](#) from exposure to carbon monoxide. This is in addition to the fact that over 75% of the people in this neighborhood are Hispanic/Latinx. Hispanic/Latinx communities, along with Black communities, [have borne the brunt](#) of COVID-19’s impact in [Texas](#). This is in addition to preexisting [health and social impacts](#) of systemic racism.

#4. Jet fuel is [toxic](#), and tank farms can and do emit toxic fumes. According to a recent article in Inside Climate News, the EPA has been aware for over a decade that companies have been [underreporting emissions](#) from tank farms using formulas that are often wrong.

#5. Fuel tank farms also can and do leak, emit harmful gasses, catch fire, and even explode. The Aviation Department has argued in meetings that regulations have changed in recent years, and the risk is now low. But recent accidents tell another story:

- In November of 2021, the U.S. Navy announced that Red Hill tank farm in Hawaii had released [14,000 gallons](#) of jet fuel into the surrounding environment. This was not the first time, either. Another spill occurred in 2014, releasing 27,000 gallons of jet fuel.
- In September of 2017, a tank farm [caught fire](#) in Brighton, Colorado.
- A [2005 Study of Storage Tank Accidents](#) evaluated 242 accidents between 1960 and 2003. Between 2000 and 2003 alone, there were 31 accidents involving storage tanks. The types of

accidents included fire, explosion, spillage, and toxic gas release. In every decade, the most common causes of accidents were lighting and human error.

The risk is real. In 1997, an impact and remediation [study](#) was conducted after leakage from a jet fuel tank farm was discovered. The primary contaminants were highly-toxic BTEX compounds (benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylene).

#6. We should know better by now. East Austin is no exception to the statistic that race is the number one factor in the [placement of toxic facilities](#). From the Holly Power Plant to the Pure Castings industrial metal foundry, to the Tank Farm, East Austin advocates like PODER have been fighting these industrial facilities for [many years](#). As with airport tank farm today, the community was not heard in their objections to the [East Austin Tank Farm](#). After being dismissed for decades, evidence was finally discovered that not only were the tanks leaking, illnesses among residents were higher in the area surrounding the tanks. According to a report from the Austin Watershed Department, “For decades, residents who lived near the tank farms experienced acute and chronic health issues including headaches, nosebleeds, rashes, stomach illnesses, asthma, skin lesions, lung disease, cancer, and other ailments that were thought to be linked to air, water, and soil contamination originating from the tank farm.”

A threat to health in any neighborhood is a threat to every neighborhood. The neighbors adjacent to the planned toxic facility do not consent, and we echo their voices in saying “No.” to the placement of this facility.

Signed,

[Add your org or name below. Thank you!!!!]

Gilbert Rivera, La Raza RoundTable

Jane Rivera, La Raza RoundTable

PODER

El Concilio Mexican American Land Owners of East Austin

LULAC District 12

Earth Day Austin