

Groups prepare for tough fight over boat races

2/15/82

By LINDA ANTHONY

American-Statesman Staff

Neighborhood groups opposed to a plan to resume boat races on Town Lake during the Aqua Festival are gearing up for what might be a bitter fight reminiscent of the battle that took the boats off the lake four years ago.

Calling the races a "personal assault," Josephine Huntley said the proposal shows "utter disrespect for neighborhoods and is completely obsolete in the thinking of environmentalists."

Huntley, treasurer of Concerned Citizens for the Development of West Austin, a neighborhood group whose boundaries run from Town Lake to Windsor Road and MoPac to Lamar Boulevard, said such races "only cater to those people who can afford motorboats."



Josephine Huntley

"They assault our ears, noses, lungs as well as the wildlife on the river," Huntley said. "All those lovely white ducks, coots and turtles, it's absolutely inhuman and unacceptable to interrupt that part of our ecology for the sake of a few hours of supposed excitement. They don't deserve such disrespect or ill treatment."

Rusty Tally, commodore of the 1982 Austin Aqua Festival who last week announced the plan to resurrect the races, said Sunday such opposition is hard to imagine because the races would only be held on one weekend instead of three as in the past.

According to the proposal, the boat races would be held on the west side of the lake, from the Lamar Bridge to the mouth of Barton Creek. Before drag boats were banned from the lake, the races were held off Festival Beach in East Austin. Residents there said the noise, traffic and litter generated by the races were intolerable.

"We've had a lot of interest from the community in bringing back the boat races if it can be done in a non-controversial manner," Tally said. "All we're asking for is two days out of the year."

Boat races on Town Lake ended in 1978 after years of protest by neighborhood groups.

Tally said he had contacted at least four neighborhood groups and had yet to encounter any substantial opposition to his plan, which will be presented Feb. 25 to the City Council.

"Well, he didn't contact me, and I'm fanatically opposed to those races," said Elizabeth Hamilton, president of the Castle Hills Conservation Committee. She said the Castle Hills neighborhood is bounded by Town Lake, 12th Street, West Lynn Street and Lamar Boulevard.

"It's not fair to bring back something that intrusive," Hamilton said. "May home is where I go to escape all this madness, and that's going to be impossible during that weekend of boat races."

FEB. '82

Duncan addresses concerns of

City Councilmember Roger Duncan met with about 40 members of the Zilker Neighborhood Association Feb. 15 at Kinney Avenue Baptist Church to hear their ideas on projects that should be included in the upcoming bond election (date not set yet).

The association reviewed plans for The Cloisters, a 59-unit apartment complex under construction on Kinney Avenue. The project is subject to a special permit hearing which will be held on March 9 (call the planning Department for the time and place). Neighborhood



Barton Creek

Pat Oakes

residents at the meeting expressed opposition to the development because of the increased traffic load on Kinney Avenue.

Many concerns were expressed about the proposed Aquafest boat races. Aquafest planners have suggested moving the race from

Festival Beach to the area on Town Lake between Barton Creek and the Lamar Street bridge. There will be further discussion of this issue at the next neighborhood meeting.

The association will meet again on Monday, March 15 at 7 p.m. at Kinney Avenue Baptist Church, 1801 Kinney Ave. Dues for the organization are \$3 person or \$1 for senior citizens.

Zilker Neighborhood Association

Spring cleaning time

If you would like to get a head start on spring cleaning and clear out your closets at the same time, here's your chance. Ortega Elementary School's PTA will sponsor a garage sale March 6 at the school. If you have items you would like to donate, Cherly Smithers, 1902 Barton Parkway, and Ovie Quinn, 2202 Four

Oaks Lane, have set up their garages as drop-off points. Books, toys, clothing (especially children's clothing) and used furniture are being collected.

Heritage Festival

The members of Faith United Methodist Church will enjoy an affirmation and a celebration of

their many heritages on Sunday afternoon, Feb. 28, beginning at 4 p.m. There will be tasting booths with a wide variety of ethnic foods and entertainment (German polka music, Scottish ballads and more).

The afternoon is designed as a free family activity.

To help Pat keep up with activities in the Barton Creek area, call her after 3 p.m. 2-0521.

Development carving out hillside

Bluff's stability is questioned

By PEGGY VLEREBOME

American-Statesman Staff

Two condominium projects near Barton Springs Road and Lamar Boulevard are bringing a dramatic change to a peaceful niche and raising questions about the stability of the limestone cliff they will be built on.

One of the projects is planned on the site of the Lost Canyon trailer park, which is aptly named because it is hidden from the view and noise of drivers on Barton Springs Road, behind a Sigmor gas station just east of Kinney Avenue.

Development of the other condominium project, Talisman, already has disturbed the tranquility of the trailer park.

Talisman has been less controversial than Lost Canyon. It did not displace renters because the bluff where Talisman will be built had not been inhabited. Talisman wasn't opposed by the neighborhood association — Lost Canyon was.

Talisman caught the public eye, however, because of the massive earthmoving that is changing the face of a limestone cliff. The bluff had been a local wonder because it always seemed to be a hairsbreadth away from crashing down on Barton Springs Road.

Besides being a landmark for Austinites, the cliff was an outdoor classroom for University of Texas geology students.

"I feel that we've lost another good geology stop because of progress," said UT geology professor Robert Boyer, who also is dean of the College of Natural Sciences.



Staff photos by Jim Dougherty

Heavy traffic clogs Barton Springs Road near where condominiums are planned.

never would have been a party to those reports" that were among the material presented to the

The cliff was notable geologically because it showed Buda limestone on top of Del Rio clay, which usually can't be viewed because that kind of combination ordinarily isn't cut into. But at this location it was, years ago.

What can happen when the clay is exposed to the elements is illustrated — using this cliff — in a sequence of drawings in a book titled "Environmental Geology in the Austin Area." When the clay gets wet, it slips forward toward Barton Springs Road to seek stability, shifting the load of limestone on top and causing it to crack and crumble.

As the big earthmovers began pushing and pulling the limestone from the face of the cliff to build a driveway to Talisman, Don Dodson was in his small silver trailer at Lost Canyon, doing his own pushing and pulling.

"We realize it's somebody else's property and they have a right to develop it," said Dodson.

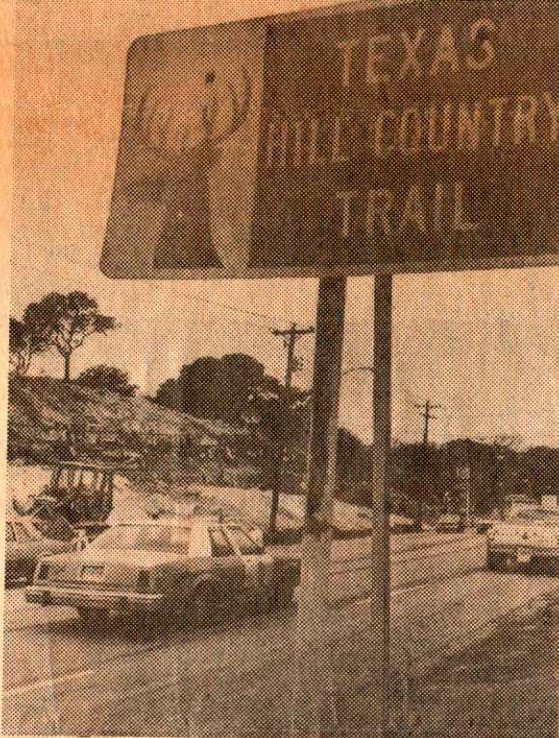
He's lived at Lost Canyon for about two years, moving there, he said, after a condominium was built almost outside the bedroom window of an apartment he rented on Sixth Street.

When Dodson learned that the trailer park's days were numbered, and that condominiums were planned that would hug the sides of the canyon, he studied the Lost Canyon material submitted to the city, and took his protest to the Planning Commission.

When the commission voted unanimously to allow 66 condominium units to be built in Lost Canyon, Dodson appealed the decision to the City Council, and used the interval to ask a lot of questions.

By the time the case went to the council, Dodson had more questions than Lost Canyon part-owner Bob Binder and his planners and engineers had answers, so he won a delay.

During the delay, the project design was scaled down to 60 units, and it no longer proposes buildings over a drainage easement or a condominium atop the knoll. A party room on the knoll will be set back as the engineer had advised.



Machinery gnaws away at hill to prepare the site for a condominium development.

For those changes, Dodson feels like he won a small victory, but he never will be convinced that Lost Canyon condominiums won't be crushed beneath a rockslide someday.

Brent Rauhut, whose Austin engineering firm is doing soil engineering for both Talisman and Lost Canyon, said that the geology of the two sites is a challenge, but not impossible to work around.

"We do our designs after we know a heck of a lot about it," he said. The Lost Canyon studies are still in preliminary stages and will include borings and laboratory tests, he said.

He said that Dodson's and nearby residents' fears that the limestone will slide down are unfounded. "If I had concerns about those things, I

never would have been a party to those reports that were among the material presented to the city, he said.

On the Talisman site, he said, the challenge is to build the driveway within space constraints. His report outlining what would be done explained that after the rock was cleared out, material that doesn't expand like clay would be placed beneath the road material to seal the clay from moisture.

In Lost Canyon, space isn't a problem, but there are slopes that will be made less steep.

"What we're trying to do in Lost Canyon is create a stable condition," he said. One column of limestone on the east side of the canyon, near the knoll, needs to be pulled down, but otherwise Rauhut anticipates that retaining walls will protect people and buildings if any rocks come loose.

For the Lost Canyon foundations, the holes for concrete-and-steel piers will be deep enough to be beyond the point that seasonal moisture has an effect, and then the bottoms of the holes will be widened so that the concrete in the bottom will bear the weight of the buildings.

"It's really not a difficult job at all," Rauhut said. "Those are very light structures. If they move at all, there would just be maybe a crack in a wall," as in houses elsewhere in the city.

Dodson is skeptical.

"This thing (a rockslide) isn't something that is going to happen today or tomorrow," Dodson said. "It's going to take 20 years."

An Austin native, Dodson supported Binder in the 1981 mayoral race. Six months before the election, Binder had become one of Dodson's landlords when he bought a share of the partnership owning the trailer park.

Binder's partners are Neil Riemer, his campaign manager and also his partner in Eata Fajita restaurants, and Sager Louis Hunsucker.

As soon as Dodson learned that condominiums were planned for Lost Canyon, he ripped the "Binder-for-mayor" sticker off his motorcycle.

"I felt betrayed," Dodson said.

Mayor Carole McClellan, who beat Binder, cast the only vote against the Lost Canyon condominiums when the issue was resolved at City Council.

Although he was labeled an anti-development candidate, Binder insists he favors development if it meets long-range planning goals.

Lost Canyon is in the city's Preferred Growth Corridor, where development is encouraged.

Binder bristles at suggestions that he is a developer. When the University of Texas' *Daily Texan* printed a story about Lost Canyon and referred to Binder as a developer, people in the development industry clipped it out and passed it around.

Development shifts into higher gear

Ghosts of tranquil past cruise

By PETE SZILAGYI

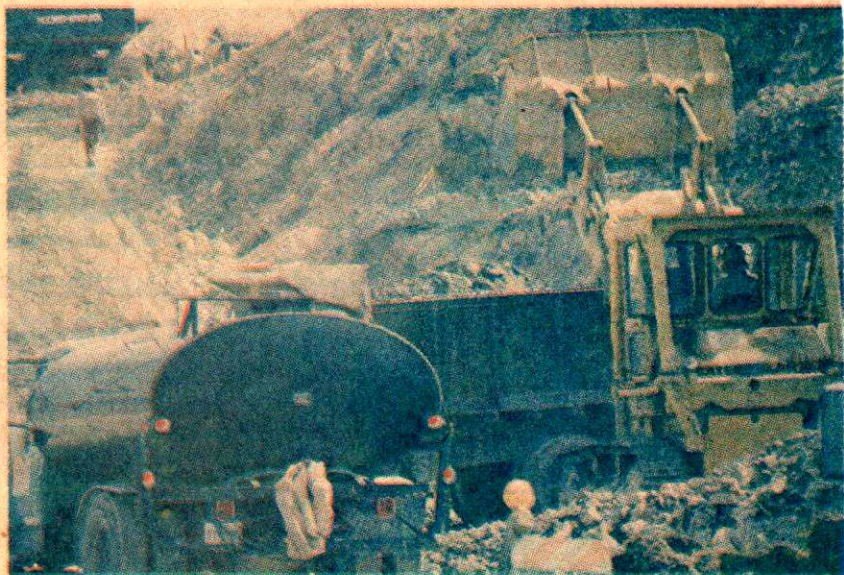
American-Statesman Staff

There are ghosts floating amidst the pecan trees, barbecue smoke and exhaust effluvia on Barton Springs Road.

Among the deceased are the Tiny Tot Kiddie Park with live pony rides, the Gulf service station where attendants actually checked your tire pressure and the fabled Armadillo World Headquarters.

Now standing on their former sites are, respectively, a Jack in the Box restaurant, a McDonald's restaurant, and, temporarily, nothing but weeds.

These memories are sure to be joined by others. Development along Barton Springs is shifting into a higher gear. As it proceeds, the street will change to a busy commercial and residential center, probably long on



Staff Photo by Jim Dougherty

Workers carve into the hillside off Barton Springs Road.

2/16/82

2/16/82

Barton Springs Road

glass and concrete. Likely victims will be the stands of old trees, small retail businesses and barbecue shacks that characterize the street now.

Several major developments have begun in the South Austin commercial center, and others will break ground soon:

- Renovation of the former Stelfox Body Works, 903 Barton Springs, into Birraporetti's, a 300-seat bar and restaurant.
- A 60-unit condominium complex at the site of Lost Canyon mobile home park, 1513 Barton Springs.
- A 60-unit condominium complex, the Talisman, on the bluff at the southwest corner of Barton Springs and Lamar Boulevard.
- A nine-story complex with hotel, offices and parking garage at Barton

Springs and South Congress Avenue.

- The 15-story, 453-room Hyatt hotel at Barton Springs and South Congress.

Plans for the 7.8-acre Armadillo site probably will be announced in three or four months, developer Bert Pence said. A high-rise is expected with offices, condominiums and possibly a hotel.

"We want to develop something tasteful, pleasing and economically sound. We're being very careful," Spence said.

Other large lots due for redevelopment during the next couple of years make up the south side of Barton Springs between Bouldin Avenue and McPhail's Florist, excluding the Filling Station Restaurant. Co-owner John Simmons said new structures — perhaps high-rise office buildings,

See Road, A4

condominiums or a hotel — will replace buildings now in the block.

Also owned by Simmons, in partnership with Canadian investors, is the seven-acre Pecan Grove Mobile Home Park, 1518 Barton Springs, which he said would be redeveloped within the next few years.

"I don't see the area remaining a travel-trailer and mobile-home park much longer," Simmons said.

Smaller tracts, either vacant or with older buildings, are for sale and could be developed soon.

Despite its proximity to downtown, the Barton Springs area has developed relatively slowly while builders focused the attention in such suburban areas as Research Boulevard and Anderson Lane.

One reason, said South Austin developer John Byram, is the "stigma of flooding" that the south side of the river has suffered since the 1930s, before dams were built on the Colorado.

"It was the wrong side of the river to be on," he said.

Simmons said a "psychological barrier" created by Town Lake existed for many years, "but it's diminished, and in a few years it won't be there."

The area has character, he said, and even though property values have doubled in the last few years, land is relatively inexpensive at \$15 a square foot.

"There's not another major city in Texas where land close in is available at those prices. Land is three times that in Houston near the Galleria," he said.

Birraporetti's general manager Steve Gladson said his company was so enthusiastic about the Barton Springs Road location that they spent eight months convincing the owner to agree to a 10-year lease. He sees the restaurant as a positive improvement to the neighborhood, in part because the vacant body shop building was being used as an encampment by vagrants.

The Houston chain is spending \$550,000 converting the structure to a restaurant, which is to open Wednesday, Gladson said.

Possibly adding to general activity in the area would be the city's new convention center. One lo-

cation being examined by the Downtown Revitalization Task Force is the present site of the City Coliseum; another is across Town Lake west of the Municipal Annex, a short distance from Barton Springs restaurants, shops and motels.

A notable failure along Barton Springs was Mackedrick's Treehouse restaurant. With backing from Panamanian investors, workers broke ground on a wooded site in 1976. A delayed opening and the cost of materials used in the unique structure consumed operating capital, forcing the restaurant out of business in 1980, said former manager Mack McCormack.

McCormack, who now is listing agent for the property, said the site for the Treehouse was bought for \$2 a square foot in 1976, but now the lot would sell for up to \$12 a square foot. The asking price for the property, including most restaurant furnishings, is \$950,000.

He said "best and highest use" of the structure is a restaurant because it probably would be prohibitively expensive to convert it to office space.

Development in the area will nearly double daily traffic counts along Barton Springs between Zilker Park and South First Street by 1995, said Pat Gregory of the city's Urban Transportation Department. Even greater increases are predicted for the road east from South First to South Congress.

Minor pavement widening is in the city's plans, but in three to five years, Barton Springs and Riverside will be connected to form a contiguous highway between MoPac Boulevard and Interstate 35, she said.

Continuing to constrict traffic will be the intersection of Barton Springs and South Lamar and the Lamar bridge over Town Lake, she said.

Gregory said widening the bridge was in the city's long-range plans, but little more can be done to accommodate the heavy traffic already using the intersection.

The Zilker Neighborhood Association, which fought to have plans for the Lost Canyon condominiums modified, is concerned about development in the Barton Springs area changing the nature of adjoining neighborhoods.

"We don't want too many apartments too close to the single family residential section. We're close in (to downtown) here, and we like it," said Richard Gravois, association president.

2/26/82

Aquafest
chief
Rusty
Tally
says the
west
Town
Lake site
is safe.

Boat races left hanging by council

By JANET WILSON
American-Statesman Staff

The City Council postponed a vote on bringing drag boat races back to town Lake after they were reminded of a previous rejection of the proposed site.

Council members set a public hearing on the issue for 5:30 p.m. March 10 and asked city departments that would be affected by the races to report back to the council.

Rusty Tally, commodore of the 1982 Austin Aqua Festival, asked the council for permission to hold the races between the Lamar Boulevard bridge and the mouth of Barton Springs.

Tally said the festival has lost money the last two years and that the boat races were money-makers before their cancellation four years ago. Without additional revenue, a price increase on festival events will be needed, Tally said.

Councilman John Trevino, who led the council to ban the races in 1978 when they were held in East Austin, asked Tally why the proposed site was not acceptable by race sponsors four years ago but is lauded now.

Trevino said the hydraulic currents caused when Barton Creek empties into Town Lake were a safety concern in 1978. He wants to know why race organizers are discounting that report now.

The councilman said he tried working with race sponsors when the races were canceled to find an alternate location, but said he was told the site now being proposed was not acceptable then. Race organizers then said the location was not safe, and there was not enough space for spectators or parking.

Tally said since the boats will be racing from east to west, the currents from Barton Creek will not be a safety problem. He also said there would be ample spectator and parking space.

The boat races were canceled because of East Austin residents' protests by East Austin residents against holding the races several weekends a year in Town Lake at a site along Festival Beach, east of the Interstate 35 bridge.

Tally, telling the council that Aquafest sponsors don't want the event to be controversial, said they expected some opposition to the new location "because we will be in a park area and (have) a noisy event."

Council members have been bombarded this past week with letters from neighborhood groups against resuming the races. Trevino said he has concerns about how the noise will affect the animals at the Humane Society, located across the street from the site.

Trevino said joggers who daily use the hike-and-bike trails will be against the Aquafest proposal to close the trails for two days to accommodate spectators. The traffic congestion created by the anticipated 6,000-15,000 people attending will burden West First Street, Trevino said.

"We're trying to compromise and give and take," Tally said. "We want to keep the entertainment affordable to all."

3/1/82 The boat races

The City Council has put off a decision on bringing back the drag boat races to Town Lake, a decision that ought not to be much delayed.

Council members want a public hearing March 10, and in the meantime want a report from city staff on the possible effects of the races on traffic and whatnot. Also, they want to know why the proposed new site is now acceptable when it was not acceptable to race sponsors four years ago.

Once the hearing is held and the reports are presented, the council should make a hard and fast decision for once and get it over with. And if anybody mentions the word referendum, he ought to be made to referee a debate between Royal Masset and Larry Deuser.

Council to deny drag boat races

By JANET WILSON

American-Statesman Staff

City Council members will vote today not to resume drag boat racing on Town Lake, despite a large turnout of race supporters at a Wednesday night public hearing, City Hall sources said.

Council members delayed their vote until 1:30 p.m. today because Councilman Roger Duncan was at home sick. Only Larry Deuser made any statements after the more than three hours of sometimes heated debate Wednesday, and he did not indicate publicly how he would vote.

After the hearing, sources said, "It will be (a) 4-3 (vote) or very possibly a 5-2" against permitting the races, which have been requested by officials of the Austin Aqua Festival.

Aquafest Commodore Rusty Tally asked the council last month to allow boat racing between the Lamar Boulevard bridge and the mouth of Barton Creek. They cited financial troubles the festival has had since the races were canceled in 1978.

Festival spokesmen say the drag racing event was their biggest money-raiser and could help offset the need to raise the price of other events to keep the festival in the black.

The races, which had been held three weekends a year at Festival Beach, were canceled in 1978 after protests from East Austin residents about the noise and traffic congestion in their neighborhood.

Residents of West Austin and the Zilker Park area who spoke against the drag boat races Wednesday night cited the "unimaginable" noise from the races, which festival spokesmen acknowledged was the only factor of the event they could not control.

One of the more colorful speakers during the hearing was Todd Geis, a senior at Anderson High School, who attended the meeting to earn extra credit at school.

Telling the council he hadn't meant to speak, Geis said he realized after listening to the debate that the noise would "no doubt affect the neighborhoods, but not all of Austin."

Geis told the council that they had been elected to "decide what's good for Austin as a whole," and that it appeared a majority of the city's residents wanted to attend the races.

Other speakers, jammed into the standing-room only council chambers, said the inconvenience area residents would have for only one weekend a year was not too much to ask, since they were inconvenienced 352 days a year living in the flight path of the municipal airport and along Interstate 35.

But Sarah Harris said she will be affected by the noise, and she urged the council to deny the request. Harris said even though she lived at least two miles from the site of the old races, she could not work in her garden because of the noise.

And Conrad Fath, a member of the city's advisory Parks and Recreation Board, urged the boat racing enthusiasts to move the event to Lake Walter E. Long, where they could build permanent grandstands and ramps and race every weekend if they wanted.

Another interesting turn of events found predominantly Mexican-American neighborhood groups from East Austin supporting the West Austin neighborhoods' efforts to block the noisy racing.

East Austin activist Paul Hernandez, one of the main race protesters in 1978, said even though they had not received support of some of the Anglo neighborhoods for some of their causes, "we don't believe the other neighborhoods should have to go through what we did."

Zilker group will eye design manuals

The Zilker Neighborhood Association will meet Monday, March 15, at 7 p.m. at Kinney Avenue Baptist Church, 1801 Kinney Ave. Tim Mahoney will discuss design manuals for neighborhoods. Mahoney is associated with the Austin Neighborhood Council and is working on a design manual for the Hyde Park neighborhood. All area residents are encouraged to attend.

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Barton Creek

Pat Oakes

closing ceremony.

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If you forgot to plant your tulip bulbs several months ago, you can



Barton Creek

Pat Oakes

4/29/82

be leaving at the end of the school year. Both Merrill and Ward have worked at the school for 13 years.

The children put on a play and the mothers arranged a surprise luncheon to honor them for their work. Both were delighted at the surprise and enjoyed their corsages which were presented to them by the children.

...

The members and friends of the Zilker Neighborhood Association will celebrate the first anniversary of the organization with a "bring your own basket" picnic at the Zilker School Playground (Bluebonnet at Hether) on Saturday from 5 to 7 p.m. Bring the whole family and your neighbors too — you don't need to be a member of the organization to enjoy the

chance to visit and meet your neighbors. If you don't feel like packing a picnic, call now and reserve your chicken dinners at St. Mark's — the very thing for a picnic.

For more information about the picnic or the association, call Richard or Paulette Gravois at 441-3430 or Glenna Balch at 442-0554.

...

Boy Scout Troop 441 spent the April 17-18 weekend at the Frontier District Camporee '82 at the Hill Country Boy Scout Reservation on the Pedernales River near Hamilton's Pool.

About 50 Frontier District scout, explorer and webelos patrols attended the annual event comprised of competitive events, a dutch-oven cookoff, campsite inspections and evening campfire skits and songs.

The Troop placed in the top 25 percentile and collected another blue ribbon to pin the blue ribbons taken at last fall's Capitol Area Council Camporee and at last month's Scoutorama.

To help Pat keep up with activities in the Barton Creek area, call her after 3 p.m. at 442-0521.

May 13, 1982



Barton Creek

Pat Oakes

Scouts sponsoring garage sale Saturday

Boy Scout Troop 11 is sponsoring a garage sale on Saturday at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in the parking area. Proceeds will be used to buy some badly needed equipment for the troop. Contributions for the garage sale will be appreciated and a receipt will be given for donated items.

Sale items may be brought to the church anytime this Saturday morning after 7 a.m. Scouts also will be available to come to your home and pick up donated items (it isn't too late to do some more spring cleaning). For more information on the garage sale or for pickup, call one of the following: David Sanders (garage sale chairman) at 442-3537, Alex Newsome at 445-2133, or John Boyd at 442-6425.

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The Zilker Neighborhood Association will meet Monday evening, May 17, at 7 at Kinney Avenue Baptist Church, 1801 Kinney Ave. Donna Kristaponis, assistant to Dick Lillie, the head of the Planning Department for the City of Austin, will explain and answer questions about the new zoning ordinance.

The program pertains directly to the neighborhood survey which was passed out on election day at the polls and at the picnic that evening. The survey asks neighborhood opinion about where there should be sidewalks, traffic flow, etc. The results of the survey are to be used to help build a neighborhood plan, which, in turn, can be used as a tool to benefit the whole neighborhood. If you missed getting one of the surveys, you can still pick one up from an envelope on Richard Gravius's porch (he is the president of the organization) at 1402 Kinney Ave. If you have received a survey, try to fill it out and return it before the meeting Monday evening.

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Housing reality: Wide-open spaces shrinking

It is a typical zoning hearing at the Austin bat cave. The applicant (a doctor) has one of the familiar lawyers to extol the beauty of his apartment complex (a tax shelter).

A stream of neighbors rail against traffic congestion and the inherent dangers to their children who walk to the school.

The City Council and staff weigh interpretations of the number of units that should be granted. The property can handle *this* many apartments under one roof, but *that* many in two buildings. And what happens if two buildings are connected with a covered walkway, does that make it one building?

Everybody talks a lot, saying exactly the same things said dozens of times before. If it comes to a vote (delay is more likely) the issue will be decided on mood, pre-meeting negotiations or the volume of the clamor in the cave.

The density war bumps on.

The established neighborhood prefers an unused lot, overgrown weeds, a few beer bottles and maybe a ramshackle old structure. Anything but the unknown complications of an apartment house full of . . . of . . . people.

WONG
VS
ZNA



Ray
Mariotti

Faced with this natural, understandable inclination of neighbors to make it difficult for apartment construction, many developers go out to empty spaces at the edge of town, build subdivisions or apartment complexes that contribute mightily to the ills of urban sprawl. Utility extensions are costly, or unavailable, and traffic is a snarl. Mass transit is impossible and fuel efficiency is out of sight, out of mind, until the next Mideast crisis.

The land use planners talk of in-fill. It is desirable to keep downtown vital by having people live there, and to eliminate a long, costly, inefficient commute.

But, alas, that means high-rises. The very term leaves a bad taste in an Austin mouth. The city is just beginning to nibble at the high-rise market. The big advertisements for one planned for the lakefront says,

"from \$200,000," and no one is certain whether we're ready for that either, on a major scale.

Nobody wants to live in a canyon of high-rises. What about the views of the Capitol and the hills we're struggling to protect? Our laws require setbacks. On-site parking is mandated. A new landscaping ordinance requires areas of vegetation. All commendable objectives.

The same people squeeze the builder in, push him up and tell him to reduce density. We demand everything, even conflicting goals.

Ron Mullen brought up the density question at the hearing on the doctor's tax shelter. Mullen cited two speakers at the recent growth conference whose views were 179 degrees apart.

Ron James is from San Jose, where sprawl has devoured the orange groves and commuting is a nightmare.

Frank Gray is from Boulder, where the tightest land planning has contained the city, but is driving up the cost of housing (now 16 percent more than Denver). As Mullen noted, both speakers agreed on one degree:

Land use planning requires higher density housing. A greater percentage of Americans are going to be sheltered in apartments because of building costs, interest rates, declining resources, utility reach, mass transit . . . etc.

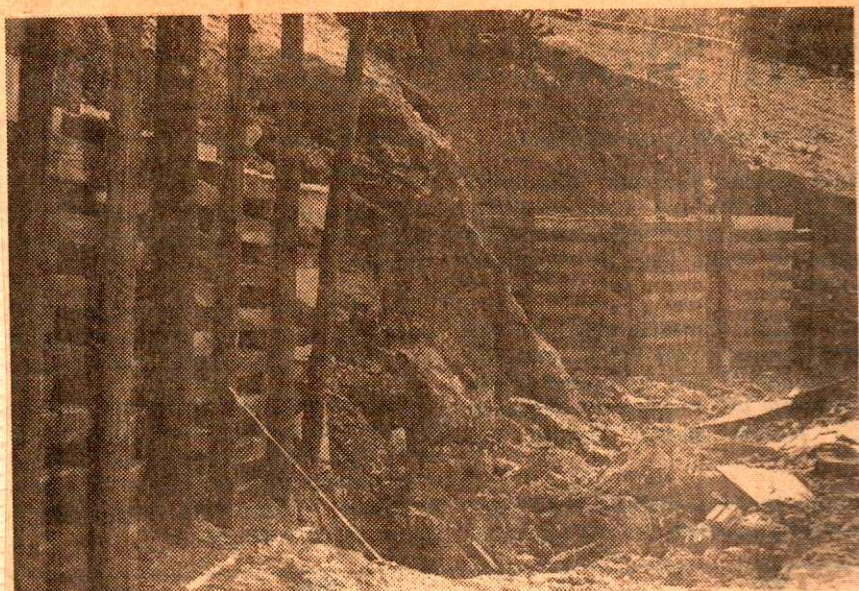
The split-level, suburban home with the two-car garage is going to be achieved at a lower ratio in Texas and everywhere. It is reality, even if it is a less than pleasant prospect in our wide-open spaces Texas mentality.

Robert Barnstone, a member of the downtown task force, and an investor in small housing projects, wonders if Austin's proposed new zoning ordinance can be made to mesh with higher density where needed. The overhaul is supposed to define precisely a property's best use, reducing divisive hearings and appeals.

The proposed ordinance tends to roll back zoning in many categories, mandating lower densities. It is an appealing notion, but one not totally in sync with what experts deem to be the future of wise land use planning.

The hearings get serious in June. Listen for the fallout over fill-in.

June 10, 1982



Staff Photo by Larry Kolvoord

A wooden wall couldn't stop the slide on Barton Springs Road.

Sliding clay breaks wall at Barton bluff

By PEGGY VLEREBOME

American-Statesman Staff

New plans are being drawn for a retaining wall at the foot of a bluff on Barton Springs Road where clay soil sloughed off and moved a temporary wooden wall Tuesday.

The retaining wall will be 12 feet closer to Barton Springs Road than originally planned to give the foot of the bluff room to slough, said developer Kenny Dryden, who is building Talisman condominiums atop the bluff.

The wall will be made of concrete with steel reinforcement, he said.

The permanent wall originally was to be built very close to the temporary wall, which is made of telephone poles, railroad ties and plywood. The wooden retaining wall was installed to hold in soil exposed during a vertical cut into the earth, Dryden said.

The trench for the concrete wall was 6 feet deep instead of 3 as planned because of a change in the design of an adjacent roadway, soils engineer Brent Rauhut wrote in a report to Dryden.

"This left only 4 feet of effective embedment for the telephone poles, and the slide occurred by simply rotating the wall out of its way," wrote

Rauhut, who described the slide as very substantial.

Redesign will take about a week, and after it is approved by the city engineer's office, Dryden said, construction of the wall will take about 30 days.

The slide has no effect on construction of the condominiums, which will begin next week, Dryden said.

Bob Liverman, assistant city engineer, said the revised plans for the wall sounded good when he met Wednesday with Dryden, Rauhut and others involved in the project.

Dryden said that part of the reason for the slide was that after previous minor sloughing of mostly clay soil, the fallen material was removed, exposing the underlying clay to rain and sun. Clay expands when it is wet and contracts when it is dry, often cracking and falling as a result.

"There are some minor cracks showing up along the face and a foot or two in from sheer faces along the remainder of the clay bluff, but no indication that it is planning to come on down in mass," Rauhut said.

What passers-by see now at the corner of Barton Springs Road and Lamar Boulevard is far different from what they will see in about four months, Dryden said.



Sunday
morning

Austin Am

August 15, 1982

☆☆ Vol. 112 - No. 21

Vote spells success for bingo

Record low turnout legalizes games in Travis precincts

By JERRY WHITE

American-Statesman Staff

In a record low turnout of 1.75 percent, voters in much of Travis County legalized bingo games for charity Saturday.

There are 133,063 registered voters in the three Justice of the Peace precincts where the issue was being decided. Only 2,323 of them voted as the games were approved by a 4-1 margin.

"We've never had this small of a turnout before," said Travis County Clerk Doris Shropshire.

The election cost Travis taxpayers \$40,000, Shropshire said. That is equivalent to \$17.22 for each vote.

The low turnout resulted in some loneliness for election judges.

"I waited till 4 o'clock to vote myself just so I'd have something to look forward to," said Sara Hilgers, election judge at precinct 322 in the Ullrich Water Treatment Plant. "I kept looking at the ballot to make sure it was the right day. I called Doris to make sure I was in the right place.

"This is my first election" as a precinct judge, she said. "I wanted to do this because I wanted to meet a lot of people. Instead, I was able to do a lot of reading."

At 4:30, things picked up. "One couple finally came in and voted," she said. By



Staff Photo by Dean Rutz

Election official Richard Gravois has time on his hands in Precinct 332.

the time polls closed at 7 p.m., two other had voted in Hilgers' precinct raising the daily total to five — 0.9 percent of the 532 people registered in that area.

Anita Atkison arrived at 6:15 a.m. to work at Precinct 332 in Zilker School at 1900 Bluebonnet Lane. She had 1,085 ballots but needed only 17 of them.

"This is the eighth election in Austin since the first of the year," she said. "The voters are just getting worn down. Also, there wasn't much publicity on this. A lot of people didn't know there was even an election today."

Last year, the Legislature authorized local option elections to legalize bingo games, which may be held by non-profit religious, fraternal or veterans groups li-

censed by the state comptroller's office. Proceeds must be reported and must be used for charity or public service.

Precinct 4 in Southeast Travis County legalized the games April 3. After Saturday's election, JP Precinct 5 (downtown Austin) was the only Travis County precinct not to have approved the game.

JP precinct totals Saturday were:

- Precinct 1, in Northeast Travis County, 497 for bingo and 96 against.
- Precinct 2, in Central and Northwest Travis County, 709 for bingo and 211 against.
- Precinct 3, in West and South Travis County, 666 for bingo and 135 against.

Sept. 9, 1982

Neighborhood group to eye bond election

The Zilker Neighborhood Association will meet tonight at 7:30 at Kinney Avenue Baptist Church, 1801 Kinney Ave. The meeting will help area residents to inform themselves about the upcoming bond election (Sept. 11), the new zoning ordinances and urban transportation. There will be two speakers — a representative from the Department of Urban Transportation and Sally Shipman, a former planning commissioner.

If you have questions about the meeting or want more information about the association, call Richard Gravois at 441-3430.

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Barton Creek

Pat Oakes

fanned out through the neighborhood in the 100-degree heat passing out brochures on the city bond election.

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St. Mark's Day School started its 19th year of operation this week with a total enrollment of 100 children, the largest group ever.

12/30/82

Group concerned about provision in new ordinance

By JULIE FERNANDEZ

American-Statesman Staff

A group of South Central Austin area residents are carefully watching the city of Austin's proposed new zoning ordinance.

Representatives of the Bouldin Creek, Travis Heights and Zilker Neighborhood Associations are concerned that a provision in the proposed ordinance outlining new parking requirements for the downtown business district will encourage commercial growth in residential areas.

The new parking requirements in the downtown business district set a formula of required parking for buildings that are from 10 to 20 stories tall. The amount of parking needed is determined by what the building is used for, such as hotel, retail or office space.

A map associated with the new parking provisions outlines an area bounded by Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard on the north, Interstate 35 on the east, Riverside Drive and Bouldin Creek on the south, and Lamar Boulevard on the west where the boundary turns east to 15th Street and West Avenue and back north to Martin Luther King.

The inclusion of the Riverside Drive-Bouldin Creek area in the new boundary is what concerns South Central Austin residents. They fear the boundary encroaches into a residential area south of Barton Springs Road.

"We support downtown revitalization, but the central business district should be confined to the downtown area. The existence of the boundary as outlined would expose our neighborhood to the kind of parking and traffic problems of those buildings along Barton Springs Road," said John Houghton, president of the Bouldin Creek Neighborhood Association.

City planner Robert Jackson said people have mistakenly assumed that the changes in the required parking for commercial buildings determine what is going to be the city's central business district.

The new central area parking boundary was determined by the urban transportation staff to control traffic flow and parking and not to realign the boundary of the central business district, Jackson said.

United South Austin, a recently organized umbrella group of South Austin area neighborhood associations, will meet Wednesday (Jan. 5) to discuss the proposed ordinance. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. in the South Austin Multi-Purpose Center, 2508 Durwood St.

Wednesday's meeting is open to other interested neighborhood associations. The Austin City Council will hold its third and final public hearing on the proposed ordinance Jan. 20.

**ZILKER
NEIGHBORHOOD
ASSOCIATION**

to: City Council
Austin, Texas

from: Executive Board
Zilker Neighborhood Association
Austin, Texas

subject: SLOW-GROWTH proposal
of Councilmember Duncan

In both the local and national news media, Austin is treated as a BOOM-town of the 80's.

This has generated concern from several different factions:

A) the INVESTMENT community which is always seeking a good return on investments;

B) the City governmental structure which must balance the resources to meet the growth;

C) the current residents of Austin who are still paying BOND issues from previous growth;

D) the other possible BOOM-towns in the nation who want to avoid any known catastrophes.

These many factions may seem to have conflicting interests that would lead to unknown difficulties. The major difficulty that each one has is for one of the others to dominate to the exclusion of the others. A VALVE to control the growth and keep it going at a digestible pace is definitely necessary to protect all factions.

Councilmembers Duncan's proposal - "SLOW-GROWTH" - is definitely a step in the right direction. The city needs a good barometer to measure the growth and to control it to keep Austin as the very liveable city that it is.

We, members of the Zilker Neighborhood Association, strongly endorse this concept.

Thank you very much;

Richard C. Gravois Glenna Balch Cicily Simms