



Newsletter of the
Zilker
Neighborhood
Association

APRIL 2008

Austin, Texas
Established 1981

School Bond Props. 1 and 2 make the grade

The Austin Independent School District Board of Trustees has submitted a \$343.7 million bond initiative to AISD voters, on the May 10 ballot. The bond package is divided into three propositions. According to the AISD Web site, the first two propositions will

- Meet immediate and critical needs, such as failing air-conditioning systems, which, if left unattended, could lead to expensive remediation.
- Meet new legislative mandates that increase graduation requirements to four years of science and math, which will require additional science classroom laboratories and upgrades in all district high schools.
- Address overcrowding and provide more permanent classrooms for schools that have large numbers of portable buildings.
- Meet most Health Department code requirements for school kitchens.
- Upgrade aging classroom and business technology.

Proposition 1 includes about \$188 million for "Relief for overcrowding

ANC Endorses in Two City Council Races

The Austin Neighborhoods Council (ANC) set a high bar for its 2008 City Council endorsements, requiring that a candidate earn at least two-thirds of the membership's vote at the endorsement meeting. The endorsement meeting followed ANC's City Council Candidate Forum on March 26.

Nine candidates completed ANC's lengthy questionnaire and attended the forum: Allen Demling, Lee Leffingwell, and Jason Meeker in Place 1; Jennifer Kim, Randi Shade, and Ken Weiss in Place 3; Robin Cravey, Cid Galindo, and Laura Morrison in Place 4. Their responses to the questionnaire are posted on ANC's Web site, www.ANCWeb.org, along with videos of the forum.

ANC's endorsements in the three City Council races are as follows:

PLACE 4: Laura Morrison

Laura Morrison garnered a unanimous endorsement from ANC. She demonstrates a vast knowledge and grasp of the intricacies of city government. Her record of bringing together disparate stakeholders and building consensus-based solutions will serve Austin well throughout the broad range of challenges that face the community.

PLACE 3: Jennifer Kim

ANC was initially divided between Jennifer Kim and Randi Shade. Although concerns remain about Kim's accessibility and consistency, ANC recognizes her voting record and behind-the-scenes problem-solving in support of individual neighborhoods. ANC is optimistic that Kim will continue to evolve as an advocate for neighborhood issues.

(Continued on page 3)

Vote May 10

- ✓ **Precinct 332**,
Zilker Elementary,
Bluebonnet at Hether.
- ✓ **Precinct 462**, MHMR
office, 1700 South Lamar,
Suite 101, off Collier.



Next ZNA Meeting

Monday, April 28

Zilker Elementary School

1900 Bluebonnet

6:30-8:45 PM



Meet and Greet Social
Park Planning, in the Hood
and Citywide

Clean Water Projects
Sidewalk and Traffic Update
Vertical Mixed Use Progress
Neighborhood Planning



Newcomers, old-timers,
homeowners, renters, and
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/growth and support for academic achievement."

Proposition 2 includes about \$74 million for "Health, safety, environment, critical renovations, and other district needs."

The box on the right highlights the proposed bond projects at our Zilker-area schools. Clearly, all these projects need to be done, but some critics have questioned the use of bonds to fund ongoing maintenance and renovations. The AISD Web site notes: "Unfortunately, AISD's status as a Chapter 41 district severely limits the amount that the maintenance and operations budget may be increased. Recently, the District has budgeted \$9.1 million per year for routine renovation and maintenance needs. However, this allocation is inadequate and cannot meet the District's annual renovation and maintenance needs." The inadequacy of school funding in Texas is certainly an issue to be taken up with our state legislators as the November elections approach. Meanwhile, propositions 1 and 2 should keep the plumbing working at our schools.

Proposition 3, however, does not have the urgency of the first two propositions. Titled "Special programs and expansion," it includes only three projects, for a total cost of \$82 million, \$32 million of which goes to land acquisition for a new high school to

Props. 1 and 2: Critical Renovations for Zilker-area schools

At Zilker Elementary, critical renovations are:

Renovate group student restrooms for ADA compliance, install wheelchair lift at stage, and modify student pick up area; renovate kitchen; replace library HVAC equipment.

Barton Hills and Fulmore are also on the list for restroom work, and Fulmore is slated for sewer work.

Ann Richards, Dawson, and Travis Heights are on the list for air-conditioning replacements.

Barton Hills and Austin High are in line for new roofing.

Barton Hills also needs drainage work and gym repairs.

Austin and Travis High both need bleachers replaced, and Travis High needs new windows.

O. Henry is slated for student technology, energy-efficient building technology, and other districtwide upgrades.

the south. Yes, this is the perennial attempt to build another suburban school over the aquifer. When the bond package was first presented to the Austin Neighborhoods Council, the neighborhood reps noticed immediately that the estimated land cost for this school is more than ten times the cost of land for the new elementary school in Prop. 1, well beyond the difference in acreage. In the context of an emergency bond package to address critical needs, that expense is difficult to justify. Neighbors who have been following this issue for almost 20 years now are very disappointed that the school board chose to combine the south school, classroom needs at Anderson High, and a districtwide performing arts center into one proposition, forcing us to vote for all or none. The choice of a location for the performing arts center has also become controversial, and your neighborhood representatives cannot support Prop. 3. *Lorraine Atherton*

For more on AISD bonds, see www.austinisd.org.

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PLACE 1: No Endorsement

The membership was split between incumbent Lee Leffingwell and newcomer Jason Meeker. The incumbent's disappointing performance on neighborhood and planning issues led to the conclusion that he has not lived up to ANC's 2005 endorsement. ANC is not confident that his challenger has an adequate grasp of city government and neighborhood issues.

from an ANC press release, March 27, 2008

Early voting for local elections will be

April 28 to May 6.

Election day is **May 10.**

For information on all elections, see the Voter's Guide of the League of Women Voters, lwvaustin.org.

The BAT-PAC Web site, www.betteraustintoday.org, also has useful Austin City Council candidate questionnaires.



zilker
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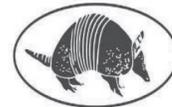
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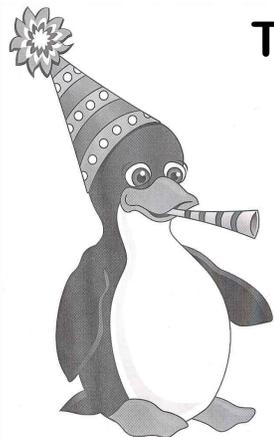
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Greetings from the Austin Police Department District Representative Unit

When the Goodrich area experienced a series of thefts and some vandalism to the historic Barton Springs Baptist Church early this year, one of the longtime neighbors, Theresa Dringenberg, knew who to call: the Zilker area's DR. DR stands for "District Representative," a police officer who serves as our community liaison with the Austin Police Department.

Sgt. Cathy Haggerty, supervisor of the Southwest Area Command DR Unit, explained it this way: "The concept involves an officer assigned to an area as a liaison between the community and the police department to assist the community in solving neighborhood problems. The District Representative is called upon to do a myriad of activities which include, but are not limited to:

1. Community involvement, such as Neighborhood Watch programs, Neighborhood Associations, Business Associations, Schools, PTAs, and civic groups
2. Urban decay prevention, including abandoned and junk vehicles, graffiti, abandoned residences and buildings
3. Crime Prevention

4. Problem Solving, including habitual and high-demand complainants, city representative complaints, assist the community in solving nonemergency problems and helping the community become self-reliant.

"We are here for you to help in any way with issues that may affect your quality of life in your neighborhoods. I know that this encompasses many different things, some of which are not police related. In any case, give us a chance to help you. And always remember, in case of an emergency when you need an officer, call 911 FIRST!"

But back to Goodrich and the historic church. Our DR at the time, Josh Visi, worked with the small nonprofit foundation that protects the church and cemetery, and with our new DR, Dwayne Kinley, to gather the materials and equipment needed to board up the building. On February 27, the DRs documented the graffiti and vandalism to the church building and completed the repairs, with some go-fer assistance from Theresa and ZNA volunteer Mike Meier. Pictured here are Officer Robert Barbosa, another Southwest DR, and Cecil White, a volunteer with the church association. Earl Clark (who happens to be related to a church board member) provided the materials. The DRs did a great job of coordinating the efforts of a varied

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group of people to keep a small problem from getting worse, and they actually seemed to enjoy the work and working together.

If you have any of the problems noted by Sgt. Haggerty, give the DRs a chance to help. Zilker's DR is Dwayne Kinley, and he can be reached at 974-4281 or Dwayne.Kinley@ci.austin.tx.us. If you have experienced a theft or car break-in recently, please report it to him or the Southwest DR office, even if you have already reported it to the police. *Lorraine Atherton*



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Historic Voter Turnout in Zilker *by Richard Gravois, Democratic precinct chair, Precinct 332*

The voter turnout on March 4 was called "Seismic" for two reasons. First, the size: 1567 voters turned out in Precinct 332 (55% of registered voters), more than twice the number that voted in 2004. Precinct 462 saw a similar jump in turnout, from 246 in 2004 to 583 this year (that's 39% of 1358 registered voters). The record-shattering numbers were in the Democratic caucuses that night. At 332, which usually has fewer than 30 Democrats at the precinct caucus, about 600 people crowded into the Zilker cafeteria. The line was out to Bluebonnet. Children and pets (and television crews) were there to see what was going to happen. The increase in turnout was caused by the importance of the race and the press coverage, which was hard to ignore.

Second, the number of Democratic delegates from Precinct 332 jumped to 72 from the usual 38. The Democrats allocate precinct delegates based on how many people in that precinct voted for the previous Democratic candidate for governor. In this case, we benefited from a shift of

Voter turnout, March 4, 2008, Primary election

Precinct 332
Registered voters: 2840
Total ballots cast,
Democrats and Republicans: 1567 (55%)
2004 primary turnout: 806 (29%)

Precinct 462
Registered voters: 1358
Total ballots cast,
Democrats and Republicans: 583 (43%)
2004 primary turnout: 246 (18%)

voters to Kinky Friedman in 2006. The shift was in other precincts; 332 went solidly for Chris Bell, the Democrat. The precincts with a large percentage of Kinky voters and other independents lost delegates and 332 gained delegates. In 2006, Precinct 332 cast 1082 votes for Bell, and in 2002, it cast 981 votes for Tony Sanchez. It's not much of a trend, but the numbers illustrate how important voting is. The 981 votes of 2002 yielded 38 delegates in 2004, but the 1081 votes in 2006 yielded 72 delegates in 2008. Those who voted for

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Precinct 332 Democrats make good use of the cafeteria extension at Zilker Elementary on caucus night, March 4, 2008. *Photo by Bratten Thomason*

Kinky and asked "Why not?" now have their answer. Your vote really does count, and it is foolish to throw it away or not use it. Remember, "the rules are made by those who show up."

It is an honor to be associated with this precinct. Now get out there and vote in the local election on May 10, too.



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Zilker Neighborhood Park Gateway and Safety Survey

The Zilker Neighborhood Park Committee is considering constructing a fence or landscape barrier along Bluebonnet Lane, separating the sidewalk from areas where children might play, between the playscape and street and between the tennis courts and street.

Please take a minute to answer Yes or No to these 10 questions and mail the completed survey to 1818 Treadwell, or bring it with you to the ZNA meeting on April 28. You may also e-mail any comments to ZilkerNA@austin.rr.com. **THANK YOU FOR YOUR INPUT!**

- 1) Do you use the area between the tennis courts and Bluebonnet Lane?
- 2) Do you use the playscape? If so, do you usually approach it from the ramp?
Or from the faculty parking lot?
- 3) Do you pick up or drop off a child on the sidewalk along Bluebonnet?
If so, do you need to be able to see across the playscape or tennis courts?
- 4) Do you chase down balls (or Frisbees, or dogs) in the area between the tennis courts and Bluebonnet?
Do you walk and play with a dog in that area?
- 5) Have you ever had difficulty using the ramp to the playscape?
Have you ever felt the need for a gate at the top of the ramp?
- 6) Do you feel that a barrier or fence is needed along Bluebonnet or Ann Arbor?

Are you concerned that visibility of the park could be blocked by the proposed barrier?

Have you ever experienced or witnessed

- 7) Encounters with aggressive dogs?
- 8) Children playing dangerously close to Bluebonnet Lane?
Children running into Bluebonnet from the playscape area?
Children running into Bluebonnet from the area in front of the tennis courts?
Children running into Bluebonnet from the ramp/sidewalk next to the playscape?
- 9) From the playscape, a lack of visibility of children playing near Bluebonnet?
- 10) Falling off the wall along Bluebonnet?
Falling from the railing along the ramp next to the playscape?
Falling from the wall around the playscape?

Please describe any other situations that you think are unsafe along Bluebonnet Lane.

BECOME A ZNA MEMBER TODAY

Membership is open to Zilker residents (renters or homeowners) 18 years old or older. Annual dues are \$7 per person. Additional contributions are welcome. (Many couples pay \$25.)

Name: _____ **E-mail:** _____

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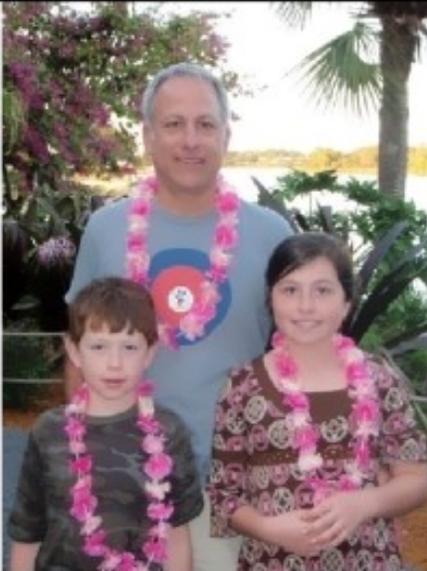
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Water-Wastewater Improvements Begin on Hether-Bluebonnet

by Crispin Ruiz, Austin Clean Water Project, and Peggy Pfaff, Zilker resident

Thanks to all of you who attended the Meet the Contractor meeting March 31 for the Lamar/Bluebonnet/ Manchaca wastewater project. The \$7.5 million project includes the installation of 12,324 linear feet of 8, 12, and 16-inch water pipes and 10,000 linear feet of 8 and 12-inch wastewater pipe. The water line project will improve water pressure and fire flows. The wastewater portion is an Austin Clean Water Program (ACWP) project to prevent sewer overflow events.

Before street excavation begins in April, the contractor, McLean Construction, will be installing tree protection on Hether; residents may also notice survey crews, and photos and videos will be made to establish current conditions in the work zones. The staging area for storage of equipment and materials is on Goodrich. The contractor's plan is to start construction at the intersection of Hether and South Lamar and proceed on Hether to Bluebonnet. When the crews reach Bluebonnet, they will turn right and install a short segment of new wastewater line between Hether and Bauerle. Other construction areas will be described in future updates. The overall project is scheduled to be complete in April 2009. *CR*

Peggy Pfaff, a resident on Oxford, attended the April meeting and prepared this report. The staging area will be at 2105 Goodrich. The biggest concerns at the Meet the Contractor event came from businesses that were worried about being blocked by the work, disruption of street parking for employees and patrons, and damage

to irrigation systems. Those living near the staging site were concerned about noise, inconvenience, and water runoff. A South Lamar neighbor encouraged us all to watch for workers driving too fast and without lights on heavy equipment at night, a challenge at projects east of Lamar.

Hours of work are limited to 7 am to 7 pm, except for occasional water tie-ins. Tie-ins will be done at night to limit disruption of water services to homes and businesses.

Order of projects (generally April-August):

- 1, Hether (from Lamar to Bluebonnet)
 - 2, Bluebonnet (from Ford to Rundell)
 - 3, Kinney (Hether to Bauerle) and all of Bauerle
 - 4, Goodrich (Hether to Frazier) and all of Frazier
- La Casa and Montclair will be done June/July. ACWP is also meeting with reps from Zilker elementary to discuss safety concerns related to work on Hether and Bluebonnet near Rundell.

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Paving on Kinney

Laughlin-Thyssen work crews are finishing residential sewer service tie-ins to the new sewer line in Kinney Avenue from Barton Springs to Treadwell so that they can pave the areas impacted by construction (the paving will be Phase I of Kinney from Barton Springs to Treadwell). The workers are also beginning the tie-in of services in Phase 2 of Kinney, between Treadwell and Collier. The paving schedule for Phase 2 has not yet been determined. Also, on the weekend of April 12, workers will begin to connect all residential sewer services to the new line in Treadwell, and this will continue several weeks. The contractor also is working on water and sewer service line installations on Juliet between Lamar and Josephine and on Jesse from Juliet to Hillmont. The contractor anticipates moving to water service installation on Hillmont and sewer service installation on Jesse from Juliet to Treadwell. There is also repair work to be done on the line in Josephine prior to final acceptance of the sewer line. The project is scheduled to be complete in August 2008. *CR*

Questions? ACWP Hotline: 684-3204
www.ci.austin.tx.us/ca/

Antonio Lopez, Onsite City Construction
 (first contact for any issues): 974-8789 ph; 802-3348 pager; antonio.lopez@ci.austin.tx.us

Larry Mendez, Project Mgr (second contact):
 974-1581; larry.mendez@ci.austin.tx.us

Bob Schmidt, McLean Construction: 250-8310
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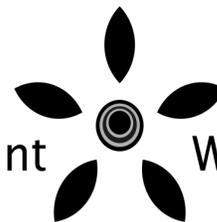
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Z Newsletter of the Zilker Neighborhood **NEWS** Association

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Town Lake Park Rep.: Kaye Trybus, 447-4437
Zoning: Peggy Pfaff, 383-1595

About the Zilker Neighborhood Association

ZNA holds general meetings the fourth or fifth Monday of February, April, July, and October, at Zilker Elementary School. The Executive Committee meets at 7 PM the first Monday of each month, usually at Artz Rib House.

Our Purpose: To improve the quality of life in the neighborhood in matters of land use, environmental protection, public services, consumer protection, preservation of the historic and unique character of the community; to provide support in other matters of neighborhood concern; and to promote and participate in the civic life of the city.

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