

NEWS

OCTOBER 2009

Newsletter of the
Zilker
Neighborhood
Association

Austin, Texas
Established 1981

Waterfront Overlay Ordinance Threatened! Council Members Spelman and Riley Break Campaign Promises to Honor the Waterfront Overlay Ordinance *by Lorraine Atherton, ZNA co-president*

IT SEEMS LIKE just a few weeks ago that the City Council reinstated the Waterfront Overlay Ordinance that Austinites have worked so hard to preserve for decades, but a majority of the council members have already voted to approve a South Austin project that violates the development limits of the overlay. For the members of Save Town Lake, the Austin Neighborhoods Council, and others who care deeply about the beauty of Austin's lakefront, the biggest shock was the vote of our two new council members, Chris Riley and Bill Spelman, who had pledged unequivocally in their election campaigns to support and protect the Waterfront Overlay.

Adherence to the ordinance has been crucial to ZNA's ability to work with developers along Restaurant Row to achieve superior projects with real community benefits, without destroying the vistas and green space that we all value on Lady Bird Lake. That's why ZNA must ask you, once again, to write to the City Council and urge them to honor the overlay and demand more from this project when it comes *(Continued on page 7)*

**Next
ZNA Meeting
October 26
Monday 6:30-8:45 PM**
Zilker Elementary School
1900 Bluebonnet
❖ ❖ ❖
Meet and Greet Social
Election of Officers for 2010
Holiday Fund Kickoff
Name Our Park
Oxford Parking Permits
Austin City Limits
Festival Feedback
❖
Newcomers, old-timers,
homeowners, renters,
business neighbors
All Welcome
❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

◆ Texas Votes November 3 ◆

TEXANS WILL VOTE on 11 constitutional amendments in the upcoming general election on Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2009. Early voting begins Monday, Oct. 19, and ends Friday, Oct. 30. On Election Day,

- ✓ Precinct **332** votes at Zilker Elementary School, on Bluebonnet at Hether.
- ✓ Precinct **462** votes at the MHMR office at 1700 South Lamar, Suite 101, off Collier.
- ✓ Precinct **342** votes at Barton Hills Elementary School, at 2108 Barton Hills Drive.

The League of Women Voters and the Public Affairs Forum of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin are hosting a forum on the amendments, with Senator Kirk Watson as the featured speaker, on Oct. 18 at 11:30 AM at the church (4700 Grover). The League's voter guide to the election is available at www.lwvtexas.org.

Propositions 2, 3, 5, and 11 address some property appraisal and tax issues that have been hot topics in Austin. Although the Travis Central Appraisal District has *(Continued on page 11)*

TreeWheelin' Bicycle Tour Celebrates Zilker Oaks

by Shannon Halley, Associate Director, TreeFolks

IN 1976, more than 200 of Austin's oldest, largest, and most notable trees were inducted into the City of Austin Bicentennial Tree Registry and featured in a car tour of Austin trees. Now, thirty years later, the TreeWheelin' Bicycle Tour aims to honor these trees—they are our oldest citizens and most efficient city workers—and to recognize the valuable role of the urban forest in providing clean air and water, absorbing storm runoff, saving millions of dollars annually in energy costs, and beautifying our city.

On October 24, from 9 AM to noon, fifty trees across the city will be included on pedal, bus, and walking tours, with volunteers stationed at each stop to provide information about the trees, maps, and refreshments.

In the Zilker neighborhood, you will be able

to visit with Gardner Sumner about the magnificent live oaks at 1001, 1004, and 1206 Garner. The tour also includes live oaks at 903 Jessie and Matt's El Rancho, a cottonwood near Lou Neff Point, and cypress trees on Lady Bird Lake at Barton Creek and in Zilker Park.

Guided bike rides will start at Pease Park, and cyclists can choose from advanced, intermediate, and beginner routes. The event will end with a celebration of TreeFolks' twentieth birthday. Register online at www.treefolks.org or in person on October 17 (10-noon) at Bicycle Sport Shop on South Lamar.

To learn more about TreeFolks and heritage trees, visit the Web site at TreeFolks.org. To include your favorite trees in Austin's urban forest inventory, contact Zilker resident Shannon Halley through TreeFolks or phone 443-5323.

Fall Work Day Brings Out the Best in the Park

by Gina Diehl, Friends of Zilker Neighborhood Park

THE FALL WORK DAY for Zilker Neighborhood Park is already here, on Saturday, October 17.

At least twice a year, in the the fall and the spring, your help is needed for maintenance, upkeep, and new projects on the grounds of our neighborhood park. This season we will be mulching many mature trees around the school. It has been a hard summer, and these trees could use some care. We will be building a butterfly garden near the early years playscape and whipping the existing Library Garden into shape. Gardner, Kate, and Polly will be our team leaders, and we need your help to get this work done.

Come see how the trees planted at last year's Fall Work Day are thriving and the tremendous impact of the new transplants from the Green Water Treatment Plant. Adults and kids are welcome! Invite your neighbors! We will be starting at 9 AM next to the Library. If you would like to help out, please contact littlezilker@gmail.com and provide your name, how many adults, how many kids, and any available tools you can bring.

This will be a fun effort to improve our park by caring for our trees and gardens. Even if you need to come late, please join in; the second shift is always a nice boost for the early birds.



Jenny Melendez and friends plant a tree at the Little Zilker Fall Work Day in October 2008. Photo by Kate Walker

Name Our Park

THIS YEAR a committee of neighbors has been working to come up with a new name for our neighborhood park, next door to Zilker Elementary School. Its official name is Zilker Neighborhood Park, but we have been calling it Little Zilker. Through newsletter and list serve announcements, the committee has received dozens of suggested names. The members now hope to present a report to the ZNA general meeting on Oct. 26, including three or four top choices for the park name plus a list of special neighbors who might be recognized by some other means.

The committee is inviting other groups who may have an interest to participate, and it will take into consideration any feedback received from the community. In keeping with the city's procedures for naming parks, our plan is to present the neighborhood's top choices to the Parks Board, which will make recommendations to the City Council. Members of the community will have an opportunity to support a name that they like or suggest new names directly to the Parks Board. *Kim McKnight*

For more info, e-mail Kim at kimmcknight@austin.rr.com, or phone 663-6422.

To volunteer for upcoming workdays or other park projects, contact littlezilker@gmail.com.

Donate toward Little Zilker park improvements by sending your contribution made out to the Austin Parks Foundation (write "Zilker Neighborhood Park" in the memo line) at 816 Congress Ave, Ste. 1680, Austin TX 78701.

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Special Events

Oct 17 Little Zilker Work Day

Oct 19 Student Holiday /
Parent Conferences

Oct 24 Zilker PTA Zamboree
Carnival

Nov 12 PTA Potluck Supper
and Zilker Book Launch

Nov 20 PTA Zilker Backyard
Concert

Time for Zilker Elementary's fabulous fall carnival...

ZILKER ZAMBOREE



~ Saturday, October 24, 12 - 4 pm ~



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Zilker Elementary
1900 Bluebonnet Lane

So How Muddy Was It?

AFTER EVERY Austin City Limits Festival, the city Parks Department holds what has come to be known as the wrap meeting. It provides a chance for the nearby neighborhoods to get together with the promoter and city staff to share notes and thoughts on the logistics of that year's festival, and to document them as a team, before preparations begin for the next festival. The promoter of the festival, C3, has put a big effort into working with the neighborhoods, but they need to hear from us. These postevent meetings also help us apply lessons learned from ACL to other events, and vice versa, so that everyone can enjoy the park more with less wear and tear.

To participate effectively, however, ZNA needs to hear from you. ZNA has several ways for you to let us know what worked and what didn't this year. You can post your comments on the Zilker Yahoo group (Zilker@YahooGroups.com) or through the ZNA Web site (www.zilkerneighborhood.org), or you can e-mail us directly at ZilkerNA@austin.rr.com. Or you can come to the ZNA general meeting on Monday, Oct. 26, at 7 pm at Zilker Elementary.

At the general meeting, we hope to have reports from this year's two volunteer traffic monitors.

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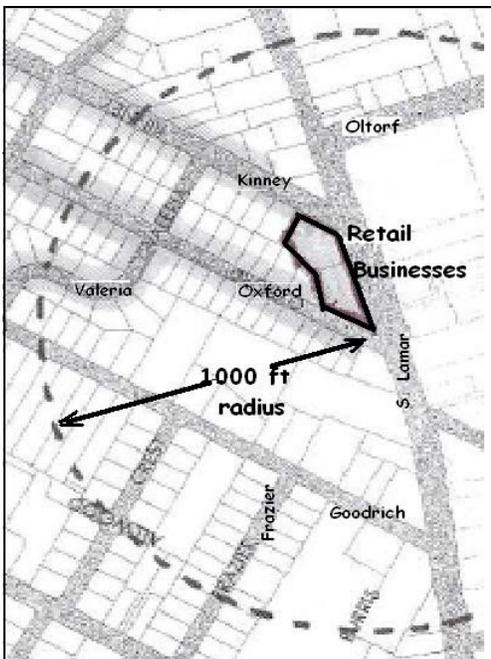
www.bartonhillsal.com

Many thanks to Robert Walls and Jon Narum for stepping up on short notice to help ZNA get an overview of the traffic and parking situation and to assist neighbors with individual problems. As this newsletter goes to press, it is still raining, but we should have more news on the condition of the Great Lawn in time for the general meeting.

Parking Pinch

Speaking of parking monitoring: Day in and day out, the worst parking pinch in the neighborhood is on the south end of Oxford. Robert Guillory is spearheading an application for a Residential Parking Permit (RPP) program for residents of these streets. We hope to have an update on that application at the Oct. 26 ZNA meeting.

Peggy Pfaff



Target Residential Parking Permit area, within 1000 feet of the retail strip at Oxford and South Lamar Boulevard, includes Oxford and parts of Kinney, Goodrich, and Valeria.

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ZNA Election

THE ZILKER NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION will elect its officers for 2010 at the October 26 meeting. Our bylaws allow the executive committee to accept nominations up to a week before the fall meeting, so you have until Monday, October 19, to volunteer to serve (or to nominate someone else). Call any of the executive committee members listed on the back of this newsletter, or e-mail ZilkerNA@austin.rr.com.

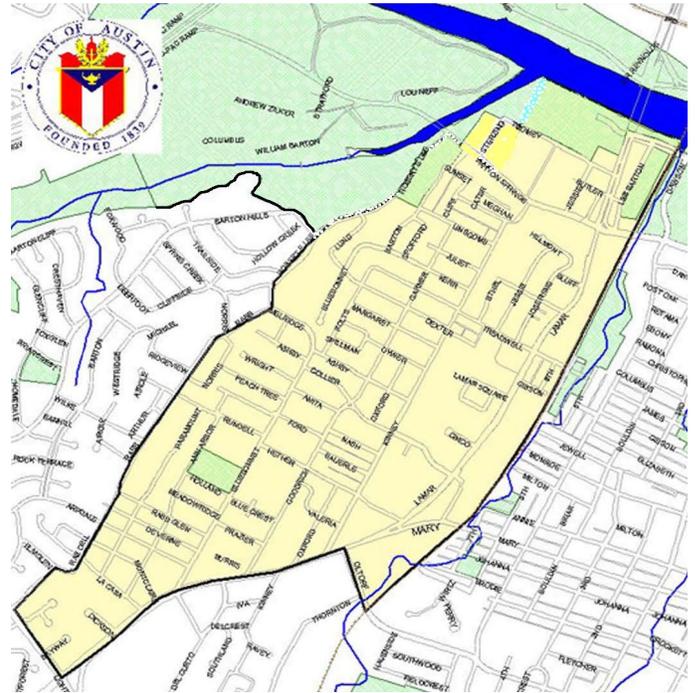
The ZNA executive committee has nominated these neighbors to serve as officers in 2010:

- President:* Richard Gravois
- First Vice President:* Bobby Rigney
- Second Vice President:* Steven Jennings
- Secretary:* Ryan Stryker
- Treasurer:* Andy Elder
- ANC Delegate:* Kurt Koegler
- Z-News Editor:* Lorraine Atherton
- Social Chair:* Greg Shotwell

The following neighbors have agreed to serve on the executive committee in unelected positions:

- Holiday Family Program:* Barbara Cossie
- Z-News advertising coordinator:* Dave Piper
- Parks and Environment:* Gardner Sumner

We still need neighbors to serve as the membership committee chair and the zoning committee chair.



The boundaries of ZNA include Zilker Park on the west and extend to the railroad tracks on the east. The southern boundary is Barton Skyway. The northern boundary is the lake.

How does the ZNA Executive Committee arrive at a position on an issue? The committee considers several factors, beginning with the association's by-laws. Depending on the issue, the committee may consider the ZNA neighborhood planning survey conducted in 2004, the City of Austin

neighborhood planning survey conducted in 2005, specific *ZNews* surveys, input gathered from discussions and resolutions adopted at our quarterly meetings, discussion on the list serve and e-mail input from neighbors, and political consultation with board and commission and City Council members.

For more information, including the association's bylaws, please visit the new ZNA Web site at zilkerneighborhood.org.



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Climate Controlled Play Areas

(Continued from page 1) before them on October 22 for second reading. Here's some background from Jeff Jack, a former president of ZNA and a founder of Save Town Lake.

The Grayco PUD and a Dangerous Precedent on the South Shore of Lady Bird Lake

by Jeff Jack

The Waterfront Overlay (WO) Ordinance was crafted to ensure that Austin maintains the scenic vistas and spaciousness of the Colorado River Corridor, now known as Lady Bird Lake. It defined what was reasonable development around our lakefront by setting limits on such things as the height of buildings, impervious cover, and set backs from the lake and the adjacent parkland. During the recent City Council election campaigns, candidates Bill Spelman and Chris Riley both said, in written responses to the Austin Neighborhoods Council and Better Austin Today PAC questionnaires, that they would not vote for projects that violated the WO. Now that they have been elected, however, they both voted to support a developer's request for additional height above the limits set in the WO.

That project, known as the South Shore Planned Unit Development (PUD), by Houston developer Grayco, currently has MF-3 zoning that would allow 40 feet of height. The WO for that area would allow them to go to 60 feet, an increase of entitlements of 50%, if they provide significant community benefits. But Grayco is asking to go to 90 feet, an increase of 30 feet or a 50% increase over the 60 feet that the WO would allow. While the developer has proposed many community benefits that may justify going from 40 feet to 60 feet, it in no way should be used to support violating the WO limit of 60 feet. Not only will this then allow for buildings on the edge of our town lake parkland to tower over the existing tree line, forever hemming in this urban oasis with tall buildings, but it will also set a precedent for all future development along our shoreline. If the City Council gives final approval for the South Shore PUD, then every developer will be encouraged to file for PUD zoning and will in effect render the Waterfront Overlay ordinance irrelevant. Unless the project is made to conform to the WO, then every piece of land in the Waterfront Overlay around Lady Bird Lake will be open to the highest bidder. If violating height limits is approved now, we can expect that other safeguards of the WO, (Continued on page 10)

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Help ZNA Make Santa's Job a Little Easier

IT'S THAT TIME of year again, when the nights grow longer, the weather gets cooler, and the holidays all begin to run together, from Halloween through New Year's Day. Throw in a birthday or anniversary or two, and no wonder we need a calendar to keep them all straight!

But for some of our families in the Zilker neighborhood and school community, holidays can hit hard. Purchasing toys for the children, clothes for growing teenagers, and food can bring a heavy burden on a single mom raising her family alone on one income and food stamps. Think about the struggle of a parent with a disabled child trying to meet daily medical costs. How about that dad who has just been laid off from his job and is trying to keep his head above water with the rising cost of food and utilities. The holidays can look really gloomy from their perspective.

Over the last 11 years, the Zilker Neighborhood Association has made Santa's job a little easier by providing help to 63 families in our community. That's quite a record for a small neighborhood like ours, and the tradition will continue this year. With your help, ZNA will provide a happy holiday for eight Zilker families in need. Selected by the counselor at Zilker Elementary School, these families will be asked to make out wish lists. From their lists, toys, household items, clothes,

ZNA Holiday Families Program Volunteer Sign Up 2009

Yes, I want to help make the holidays happier for eight Zilker families.

Name: _____

E-mail: _____ Address: _____

Phone: _____

- I would like to purchase a gift from a family's gift list. Please contact me when the lists arrive.
- I would like to donate money to the ZNA Holiday Families Program.
- I have enclosed a check for \$_____

Please make checks payable to Zilker Neighborhood Association and mail with this form to:
ZNA Holiday Families Program, 1818 Treadwell, Austin, TX 78704

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: _____

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Dues: _____ Contribution for ZNA general fund: _____

Please make checks payable to Zilker Neighborhood Association and mail with this form to:
ZNA Memberships, 1818 Treadwell St., Austin, TX 78704

and food will be purchased, wrapped, and delivered to each family by the ZNA holiday elves.

Before the presents find their way to *their* doors, you need to find your way to *our* door! Please consider sharing your blessings with those families in need. Sign up to help using the form in this newsletter, or volunteer in person at the ZNA general meeting on October 26. You can give a financial donation in any amount, or purchase items from a family's wish list. All money collected will go toward the ZNA Holiday Families Program. Gift cards in any amount from HEB, Target, Walgreens, and other nearby businesses and food donations are most welcome.

Help make your neighbors' holiday season a lot brighter this year. Write out your check today (payable to ZNA) and mail it to 1818 Treadwell St., Austin, TX 78704. (Don't forget to put "Holiday Families Program" on the memo line.) If you would like to purchase gifts from a wish list or donate an item, call Barbara at 326-1222 (daytime only).

Barbara Cossie



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(Continued from page 7) such as impervious cover limits and setbacks, will be next on the chopping block.

Mayor Lee Leffingwell and Council Member Laura Morrison have voted against the South Shore PUD on first reading. We thank them for their vote to protect Lady Bird Lake. Now the project is going for a final vote on October 22, and if Council Members Spelman and Riley are convinced to honor their campaign promise not to vote for any project that violates the WO, then this project will not pass as currently proposed. The developer can develop a reasonable project at 60 feet, making a good return on their investment, that warrants the

community benefits being proposed. But we do not have to give up our lake front just for added private gain.

If you want to preserve the scenic vistas and feeling of open space around Lady Bird Lake, If you want to make sure that now and in the future projects conform to the Waterfront Overlay and do not use the PUD zoning to circumvent the community's desire to protect our lakefront, then please contact Council members Spelman and Riley before Oct. 22 and ask them to change their vote and honor their campaign promise to respect the WO and protect Lady Bird Lake.

Contact the City Council:

Mayor Lee Leffingwell, 974-2250
lee.leffingwell@ci.austin.tx.us

Mayor Pro Tem Mike Martinez, 974-2264
mike.martinez@ci.austin.tx.us

Council Member Chris Riley, 974-2260
chris.riley@ci.austin.tx.us

Council Member Randi Shade, 974-2255
randi.shade@ci.austin.tx.us

Council Member Laura Morrison, 974-2258
laura.morrison@ci.austin.tx.us

Council Member Bill Spelman, 974-2256
bill.spelman@ci.austin.tx.us

Council Member Sheryl Cole, 974-2266
sheryl.cole@ci.austin.tx.us

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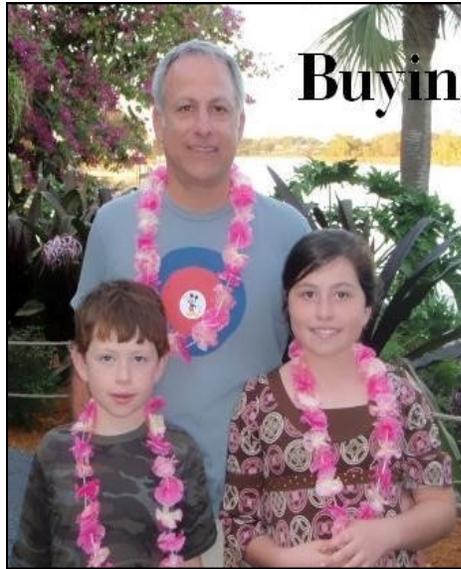
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(Continued from page 1) received a huge number of protests and the fairness of residential and commercial appraisals has been questioned this summer, there has been little discussion of these propositions.

Proposition 2 concerns taxation of a homestead "solely on the basis of the property's value as a residence." Prop. 3 would set "uniform standards and procedures" for property tax appraisals. Prop. 5 would allow the consolidation of boards to hear appeals of property appraisals. Prop. 11 prohibits the use of eminent domain "for certain economic development or enhancement of tax revenue purposes." Another proposition that may be of special interest in Austin is Prop. 4, to transfer the higher education fund to a "national research university fund," which would not be available to the University of Texas at Austin or Texas A&M.

For more information on these propositions and the upcoming general election, visit the League of Women Voters Web site at www.lwvtexas.org.



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Z Newsletter of the Zilker Neighborhood **NEWS** Association

www.zilkerneighborhood.org
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E-mail: ZilkerNA@austin.rr.com
Editor: Lorraine Atherton, 447-7681
Ad Sales: Dave Piper, 916-9636
Distribution: Fontaine Maverick, 443-3290

2009 Executive Committee of ZNA

Elected Officers:

Co-Presidents: Richard Gravois, 441-3430, and
Lorraine Atherton
1st VP: Bobby Rigney, 471-3758
2nd VP: Steven Jennings, 382-5805
Secretary: Ryan Stryker, 431-4245
Treasurer: Andy Elder, 428-9180
Social Chair: Greg Shotwell, 797-4376
ANC Delegate: Kurt Koegler, 288-0676
ZNews Editor: Lorraine Atherton, 447-7681

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.

Committee Chairs:

Holiday Family Program: Barbara Cossie, 447-4437
ZNews Advertising: Dave Piper, 916-9636
Parks and Environment: Gardner Sumner, 468-6200
Zoning: Peggy Pfaff, 466-5043

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