



Newsletter of the
Zilker Neighborhood
Association

FEBRUARY 2021

Established 1981 in
Austin, Texas

A Message from ZNA President Bill Bunch

ZNA Is 40: It's Time to Recommit to Neighborhood Environmental Action

Dear Zilker Neighbors:

On behalf of the 2021 ZNA Executive Committee, I invite all of our Zilker neighbors to join with us this year to think global and act local, as friends, neighbors, parents, voters, and stewards of our home here in Central Austin. If you are not yet a member of ZNA, please find the membership instructions on page 4 of this newsletter, pay your \$7, and join with us online at our meeting next Monday, February 22, at 6:30 pm. Visit zilkerneighborhood.org for the meeting's Zoom and YouTube instructions.

I have been blessed to live here in Zilker for 33 years. We have the best swimming hole in Texas on the west, some of the best live music and TexMex on Lamar to the east, and Lady Bird Lake and downtown to the north. It's hard to imagine a better place to call home. If you ask me, I'll tell you about it.

I regret not knowing more of my neighbors. The ones I do know, old-timers and newcomers alike, are all interesting, amazing people. I am committed to meeting and making friends of many more. Zilker is a great neighborhood; I'd like to see us become a great community.

I chose to run for ZNA office this year for a particular reason. The City is launching a comprehensive planning process for Zilker Park. I have strong opinions about what should come out of this process. However, the ZNA leadership needs to hear what you hope to see for Zilker Park.

I want Zilker Park and the soul of Austin, Barton Springs, protected and restored as the natural, cultural, and historic wonders that they are. I'd like to see more park and less parking, enhanced public transit and bicycle access, and safer, slower traffic through

ZNA General Meeting Monday, February 22

6:30-8:30 PM

As pandemic restrictions continue, ZNA meetings will be held via Zoom. Visit zilkerneighborhood.org for further instructions.



Featured on the meeting agenda:
Parks and Environment Committee report
Presentation on Zilker Park and Butler Shores by Heidi Anderson, Executive Director of The Trail Foundation (Q&A to follow)
Zoning Committee report on Barton Springs Zone and other cases



Newcomers, homeowners, renters, business neighbors

❖ ❖ **All Welcome** ❖ ❖

Editor's note: This newsletter was prepared just before the Valentine's Day freeze shut down power, making distribution impossible. See the ZNA web site for meeting updates.

The City Council has placed eight propositions on the May 1 general election ballot. See austintexas.gov for ballot language.

Be sure you are registered to vote by April 1. Early voting starts April 19.

To vote by mail, submit your application before April 20.

Visit votetravis.com or call 512-238-VOTE.

and around the park.

I'd like to see commercialization and privatization of Zilker and our other public parks limited, not expanded. We need the City to invest in our other City parks, and not try to cram more cars and attractions into Zilker Park.

There are powerful interests that have other ideas for the future of Zilker Park. If you have not seen Patagonia's documentary *Public Trust*, you can watch it for free at the website <https://www.patagonia.com/films/public-trust/>. This powerful film shows the relentless pressure to privatize our national public lands; we have the same dynamic with our local parks, right here in River City.

Thankfully, we have a strong ZNA Parks and Environment Committee, led by Robin Rather, to do the hard work of representing ZNA in the process. (See more on this from Robin in this newsletter.)

Zilker faces plenty of other threats and opportunities this year. We need your thoughts, ideas, and energy to shape a better future for our families. Dive in with us; the water is mighty fine. *Your neighbor, Bill Bunch*

A "Once in a Generation" Vision Plan Kicks Off for Zilker Park And ZNA wants you to be part of it!

By Robin Rather,

ZNA VP for Parks and the Environment

THE CITY OF AUSTIN has initiated a Vision Plan for Zilker Park (see the City website at www.austintexas.gov/ZilkerVision), which will define for the coming decades what happens to more than 350 acres of our beloved park.

Everyone who lives in the Zilker neighborhood has a stake in this important plan, whether you walk, swim, play, take your pets, or meet friends there regularly or not. It will affect our property values, our traffic, our taxes, and, most important, it will affect the very nature and "ecosystem" of our neighborhood. It also plays a key role in climate mitigation for all of us.

While Zilker Park attracts over 4 million visitors a year and is a natural jewel for the whole region, the Zilker neighborhood is most deeply affected as we experience it almost as an extension of our own back yards. We have a special

SOS Redevelopment Regulations Take Center Stage in Rezoning Cases

THE ZNA ZONING COMMITTEE is doing its best to keep up with the crush of land development cases within the neighborhood and along South Lamar. Three big projects have come to the fore in the last few weeks (look for updates at the ZNA virtual meeting on Feb. 22):

- **Brodie Oaks** shopping center redevelopment. Barton Hills NA, the SOS Alliance, and ZNA are sharing information on this large project as it becomes available. The site is more than 30 acres overlooking Barton Creek, at the intersection of South Lamar and Capitol of Texas highway. Key factors will be environmental protections, traffic planning, and residential potential.
- **2700 S. Lamar** multifamily rezoning (west side of S. Lamar at Menchaca). This site is less than 3 acres, awkwardly shaped, on the edge of the Barton Creek watershed, in an area designated for 15% impervious cover. As on the Brodie Oaks project, ZNA is sharing info with the SOS Alliance. Key factors will be impervious cover, SOS impacts/mitigation plan, traffic on Dickson and Menchaca, and impacts on surrounding multifamily housing (Akoya condos, Barton's Mill apartments, and Barton Skyway fourplexes).
- **1725 Toomey** (at Sterzing) multifamily rezoning. The site is less than one acre. Requested zoning will allow 90 feet maximum height to replace existing 40-unit apartment building across the street from Butler Shores parkland and softball fields. Key factors will be compatibility with the Butler Shores Waterfront Overlay and the ongoing demand for coordination of Butler Shores development with Zilker Park planning.

Detailed information on the Toomey and the 2700 S. Lamar rezoning cases is available on the ZNA web page for "ongoing developments" (<https://zilkerneighborhood.org/projects.shtml>). We will try to make links available to the Brodie Oaks case; stay tuned.

responsibility to each other and to the whole Austin community to make this Vision Plan the best it can possibly be for all concerned.

As you may know, ZNA has been closely involved in the pre-planning stages. Members of ZNA have participated in the Zilker Park Working Group for many months already. (See zilkerneighborhood.org/zpwg.shtml.)

How can more of us get involved now that the Vision Plan is starting?

- First, we encourage everyone to take the City's survey at <https://publicinput.com/ZilkerVision>.
- Also, ZNA's 2021 Parks and Environment Committee is up and rolling, and we invite you to email parks-env@zilkerneighborhood.org if you are interested in joining us.
- The plan calls for a citywide community engagement process, and ZNA intends to be an active participant. The ZNA Parks Committee will keep you posted as details about that are unveiled. Watch the home page of the ZNA website at zilkerneighborhood.org.

The City has selected the Design Workshop, a renowned consulting firm, to work on the plan. David Baker, a longtime friend of ZNA and the executive director of the Wimberley Valley Watershed Association, gives Design Workshop very high marks for its work at Blue Hole Regional Park a few years back. We are grateful for the chance to work with Design Workshop and hopeful that this process can be a very positive one.

To understand more specifically what this Vision Plan will include, the following list outlines some of the outcomes listed in the Plan's RFP (Request For Proposal) scope:

- Enhanced facilities and programs, including a proposed new Visitor Center, restrooms, and picnic tables.
- Plans for the historic cultural and environmental features, wayfinding, and accessibility
- Balancing the recreational needs with regulations for key watersheds
- A major focus on transportation planning,

ZNA Holiday Families Program Comes Through, Despite Pandemic

Every year a couple dozen kids wake up to a brighter Christmas morning, thanks to the dedication and generosity of more than 100 Zilker neighbors. Again in 2020, despite the pandemic, ZNA's Holiday Family Program was a resounding success! Each year our team of Zilker Elves organizes donations, shopping, wrapping, and delivery for several families nominated by the school counselor at Zilker Elementary. For Christmas 2020, we donated \$5,299.68 worth of gifts to ten families. Our program coordinator, Harmony Grogan, pulls together a fantastic effort to get everything under the tree early on Christmas week. Most of all, thank you to the numerous neighbors who volunteer time and donate money to help make this possible. They are listed on the ZNA website at zilkerneighborhood.org/holiday-families-program.shtml, where neighbors may donate to the program throughout the year. Thank you to everyone who has supported this program over the last 20 years!

Please note, donations are not deductible for federal income tax purposes as charitable contributions because ZNA is not organized as a 501(c)(3) non-profit.

including the potential expansion of MoPac (which, by the way, ZNA has firmly opposed for years)

- Bike routes and multimodal elements
- New trails
- Redesign and phase out of existing parking
- Funding and business management of the park to find new sources of revenue and partnering.

What is not listed in the scope is any real mention of climate mitigation, which is of course of keen interest to many ZNA members.

ZNA wants to hear from you about this new plan. What else are you interested in? What is your vision of how the park can evolve in the near future for your family, your kids, and your friends? Contact parks-env@zilkerneighborhood.org with ideas, questions, and comments.

BECOME A ZNA MEMBER TODAY

Membership is open to Zilker residents (renters or homeowners) 18 years old or older.
 Nonresident property owners are not eligible for membership.
 Annual dues are **\$7 per person**. Please list each member's name and e-mail address below.

Name _____ Email _____

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Dues amount: _____ Donation: _____ Total Enclosed: _____

Please make checks payable to Zilker Neighborhood Association and mail with this form to:
 ZNA Memberships, 1510 Oxford St, Austin, TX 78704
 or join online at zilkerneighborhood.org.

Meet the ZNA Officers for 2021

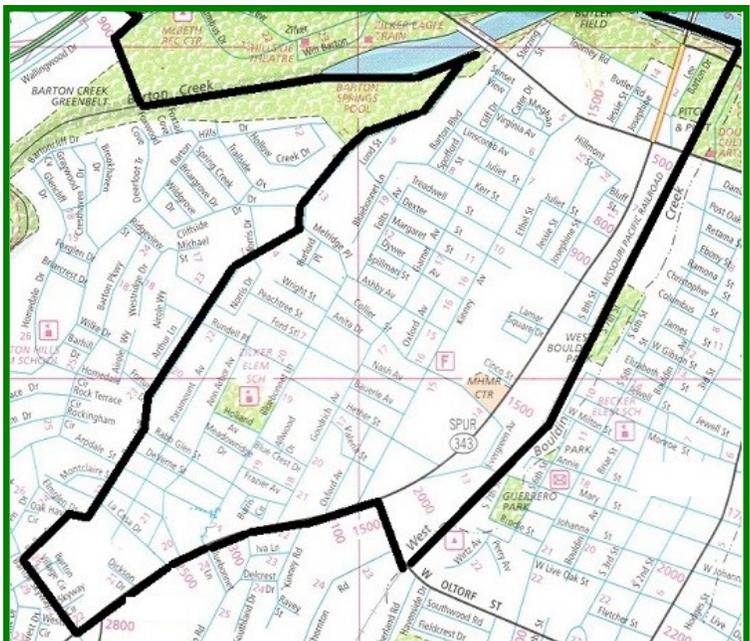
In December, the ZNA membership elected these officers to serve in 2021:

- President:* Bill Bunch
- Executive VP:* Gary Hamilton
- Secretary:* Dave Piper
- Treasurer:* Bruce Wiland
- VP Communications:* Megan Paul
- VP Parks and Environment:* Robin Rather
- VP Social:* Pat Cramer
- VP Zoning:* Bill Neale
- ANC Delegate:* Bobby Rigney

The Executive Committee meets the first Monday of most months, at 6:30 pm, via Zoom until further notice.

Email ZNA@zilkerneighborhood.org

For ZNA bylaws and to join online, visit www.zilkerneighborhood.org



ZNA boundaries include Zilker Park and Rabb Road on the west, from Lady Bird Lake to Barton Skyway, and the railroad tracks on the east to Oltorf and then south along South Lamar.



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Advertisers: ZNA reserves this newsletter's limited advertising space for businesses within the boundaries of the association.

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ZNA is in **City Council District 5**, represented by Council Member ANN KITCHEN, at district5@austintexas.gov or 512-978-2105

Our **Austin Police District Rep** is Officer Shawn Rougeou, at 512-974-5490 or Shawn.Rougeou@austintexas.gov

Zilker residents vote in Travis County precincts 340 (Butler Shores and east of Kinney), 332 (west of Kinney), and the Skyway Circle portion of 342