

Original Austin Neighborhood Association (OANA)
3 July 2012

The Board of Directors (BoD) of OANA came together on our regularly scheduled meeting day, at our normal time and place, the first Tuesday of the month at the Common Room of the Regency Apartments beginning at 4 PM. Members in attendance initially were Ted Siff, Albert Stowell, Bill Schnell and Blake Tollett. Members communicating their absence in advance were Paul Isham and Perry Lorenz. We did not yet have a quorum (5 members) but began the meeting at 4:10 PM with general discussion.

There were no guests present at the meeting.

Our Secretary had sent out the minutes several weeks back asking for comments, and with allowance for reflection and corrections by BoD members, the minutes from our June 5th meeting were assumed approved and were then posted on our public Internet site. This posting was noted. NOTE-This ongoing effort to in a timely and public manner post minutes of our meetings so as to ensure transparency of our deliberations and actions seems to be going well.

Our Treasurer Albert reports no monies either in or out.

Bill and Ted then led us in a general discussion of Membership/Marketing/Camaraderie. We initially had over 200 members but the current number is about half. We do have extensive data of property ownership within our neighborhood as well as old and new style contact information of interested parties. In an effort to increase membership, or to at least keep our name in front of folks, the idea of an electronic quarterly newsletter was discussed. Bill volunteered to investigate securing an electronic newsletter template with the understanding that committee chairs and other directors would when requested send him summaries of their work during the last quarter. There was enthusiasm for the idea and Bill hopes to have something by the end of summer. A possible thematic tie-in could be the opening of the Cirrus Logic building. A natural outlet beyond mailings (snail and electronic) for the newsletter, in addition to posting at our website, would be our Facebook page with a directional on our Twitter account.

Albert and Ted then began the Planning & Zoning presentation.

ACC Rio Grande Campus-From Albert's participation on the citizens' advisory committee, the question before the Trustees may now be whether they are confident in moving forward with their announced rezoning and rebuilding program. It seems they are continuing to evaluate the mission for the old Austin High campus in light of the current and projected enrollment in the community college system as a whole, especially in light of the multi-thousand units of residential use either up or in the pipeline downtown. The Rio Grande campus is intended to be a magnet school for the fields of arts and entertainments, and as registration in those fields increase combined with a envisioning of what could be accomplished on a campus site such as dedicated performance venues, maybe the Rio Grande campus needs to be remissioned. It was noted that ACC has acquired Highland Mall and its attendant parking lots.

The Cirrus Logic expansion plans outlined in last month's minutes are still unfinalized. Everyone knows that the affected neighbors need to be at least somewhat on board for this to work.

At 4:40 PM John Horton arrives and he brings with him the quorum. NOTE-John took the quorum with him last month when he left early to attend the Travis County Civil Courthouse Task Force (TCCCTF), so thank you John for returning with it.

Going right into his Governmental Relations update, John reports that the TCCCTF has ended its assignment and will be issuing a written report. The new courtrooms will be incorporated into a Public Private Partnership project at the West 3rd Street site. This will be a very complicated and time-consuming process, and on a scale this large, the undertaking will be unique for Austin.

We then went to status reports from Albert on zoning and planning matters currently underway or at least envisioned in the neighborhood:

Green Water Treatment Plant-The City Council has approved the Master Development Agreement (MDA) and construction should begin within the year.

Seaholm Power Plant-The City Council has approved the MDA and construction should begin relatively soon.

311 Bowie Street-There will be 358 apartment units plus 40,000 square feet of office space coming out of the ground with the lead office tenant being Endeavor Realty, the project's developer.

508 (510) West 8th Street-We had looked at a rezoning request for this property in late winter of last year, February to be exact. At that time OANA supported the rezoning from MF-4 to DMU-CO under the following conditions:

“The maximum height of a building or structure is not more than 90 feet from ground level.

By agreement between OANA and the applicant, and recognizing that the referenced property lies within the Criminal Justice Overlay, the following Uses are accepted as Prohibited rather than Conditional: bail bond services, a stand alone cocktail lounge use, pawn shop use and liquor/package store. In addition, an outdoor entertainment/amplified music use of the site is prohibited. A food service use and a cocktail lounge use would be a permissible Conditional Use if associated with an onsite club, hotel or bed & breakfast establishment.

By agreement between OANA and the applicant, if the proposed structure exceeds 60 feet in height then a minimum of 15% of the structure will be residential in use.”

Ted reports that the current owners intend to build a three-story office building.

7 Rio-The existing building has been razed and construction is under way.

700 Rio Grande-The owners apparently are still considering rezoning the property to CBD with the intention of building a residential point tower. It is fair to say that the neighbors to the property as well as OANA have reservations about this intense of a zoning district being established north of West 7th Street.

705 North Lamar-The structure has been razed and construction should occur soon.

We then turned to Parks & Open Spaces. On the Shoal Creek front, Bill and Ted have been meeting with the Austin Parks Foundation (APF) and the City's Parks & Recreation Department (PARD). Disconcertingly, PARD appears to be pushing back somewhat on Cirrus Logic's generous offer to light the creek trail between West 6th Street and West 12th Street due to concern over long term maintenance of the system. PARD has suggested the dedicated funds could be diverted to specific landscape improvements, but that is not really what folks had in mind. Coincidentally, Ted tells us that the City's Transportation Department is interested in taking some control over two urban creeks, Johnson and Shoal, with the goal of improving the connectivity along them tying neighborhoods adjacent to the creeks with the Town Lake Trail and thus downtown. Lighting, installation and maintenance, would be part of these improvements. All parties will continue to work on this.

Ted reports that there is movement to establish a Shoal Creek Conservancy as a stand-alone non-profit organization to gather the disparate friends groups and interested parties together under one umbrella.

The recent murder of a woman in Duncan Park was discussed.

There was nothing new to report on the rehabilitation of Wooldridge Park.

General discussion of quality of life issues in the neighborhood and all are reminded to report nonemergency concerns to 311.

Having set the first Tuesday of August the 7th, as our next meeting, we adjourned.

Blake Tollett, Secretary
OANA