

Old Austin Neighborhood Association (OANA)
8 December 2015

The OANA Board of Directors (BoD) came together on Tuesday 8 December 2015 just after 4 PM at the Common Room of the Regency Apartments. BoD members in attendance were Bill Schnell, John Horton, Ted Siff, Michael Portman, Charles Peveto, Paul Isham, Diana Zuniga and Blake Tollett. Clara M. Haynes, OANA member and good friend, was again visiting with us.

The November 2015 minutes, as amended, on motion by Michael with Bill seconding, were unanimously accepted and Bill will post them online.

We then turned to Old Business, Current News and Action Items.

Under Action Items:

We continued discussion and preparation for our Annual Meeting on Tuesday 26 January 2016 from 5:30 to 7:30 PM at the Shoal Creek Saloon. We anticipate the meeting will follow the format of previous Annuals in that the emphasis will be on socializing and networking with a brief business meeting to discuss the State of the Neighborhood and then to introduce candidates for board seats up for election and then the elections themselves. Of the BoD positions up for election this cycle, Ted, Charles and Michael confirmed that they would desire to be reelected to the OANA BoD, and it is assumed that both Ray and Albert will also ask to be reelected. John has decided not to seek reelection and informed the BoD that his son, Perry, is interested in seeking his position. These are of course open elections, and alternative candidates may come forth. To be eligible to vote in the elections, membership dues must be paid 24 hours in advance of the meeting and the qualified voter must either be present in person or represented by proxy.

The defeat of the Travis County Civil Courthouse (TCCC) bonds was again noted along with an Austin American Statesman (AAS) editorial from Sunday last that spoke to where the County goes now to accommodate the need for more courtrooms. County Judge Eckhardt stated that the city block the County owns just to the south of Republic Square will not be used for this project but instead the County will look at their property just to the east of the current civil courthouse. As has been noted before one drawback of this site is its limitations due to the Capitol View Corridor (CVC). It will be problematic for Travis County to obtain a waiver to the CVC limitations from the Texas State Legislature, but there is an opportunity for underground parking at this site. Underground parking is expensive, and when associated with a judicial use structure there are additional security issues to deal with, but as was emphasized by the County when promoting the West 4th Street site, parking structures in central Austin can generate revenue. This is something we need to keep current on and be ready to assist the County in a constructive manner.

The initial design work for the Austin Community College-Rio Grande Campus rehabilitation project continues going forward under guidance of our neighbor, Studio 8, along with Overland Partners from San Antonio. Albert currently chairs the facility's Campus Advisory Commission and will keep us apprised of developments.

Under Current News:

The Flood Mitigation Task Force (FMTF) dealing with Shoal Creek issues continues their monthly meetings. More current updates can be found on the City of Austin website.

The request by the owners of the historic Gilfillan House to rezone their property from General Office-Historic (GO-H) to Downtown Mixed Use-Historic (DMU-H) continues on an indefinite postponement. Ted reported that the Drenner Group no longer represents the property's owner in this matter.

Blake reported that the rezoning request by the Texas Association of Counties covering 1205 Nueces Street and 1204 San Antonio Street is probably going to change from Central Business District (CBD) to Downtown Mixed Use (DMU) with a height entitlement of 120 feet and a Floor to Area Ratio (FAR) of 5:1. As noted previously, the Downtown Austin Plan/Northwest District calls for a rezoning of those two properties to DMU with a height entitlement of 60 feet and a FAR of 1:1. Ted reported that he did file a letter from OANA opposing the noticed rezoning request to CBD and that we would revisit the issue as needed.

Under Committee Reports and Action Items:

Although Albert was not available, there probably hasn't been much change in our bank balance.

There was a December 5th AAS article detailing downtown development, and while some of it is occurring in the CBD proper, the overwhelming majority is occurring in the lower Shoal Creek area. This development pattern has been encouraged by OANA and this makes the findings and recommendations of the Shoal Creek FMTF even more imperative to the stabilization of this area of the creek.

Ted and Michael and Clara have visited with the Home Owners Associations (HOAs) at the 360 and the Nokonah trying to advance our OANA brand (the Guardians of the Neighborhood) and to encourage memberships. The Nokonah meeting was apparently lively in the discussions but decorum was maintained. Down the road perhaps there is a need for some form of an advisory board to the OANA BoD composed of representatives from HOAs within our boundaries so that we can liaison better with our constituents.

John had nothing new for us concerning Government Relations/Social Order.

Charles spoke to us of the goings on at Wooldridge Square. The selected design firm, dwg.-urban landscape architects, has begun sponsoring stakeholder meetings. They are approaching their work with the idea that the "park" is not confined solely to the square itself but in a functional sense extends for several blocks surrounding the square. This is especially true in a programming sense so the design folks are actively reaching out to affected neighbors to Wooldridge. In addition, Charles announced that Preservation Texas would host an event at the square on 18 February 2016.

We then returned to the proposed Bowie Street Underpass project. There seems to be no real forward movement here so the question becomes to whether the monies already collected through this Tax Increment Financing (TIF) vehicle can, or should, be allocated to other projects within the defined TIF boundaries.

[NOTE-Normally in a TIF project scenario, a developer puts in infrastructure improvements benefiting a defined geographic area, and these improvements in theory either cause the value of the real estate being “benefitted” to increase or there is an incremental increase in the generation of sales taxes within the TIF boundaries attributable to the improvements. The developer is then compensated through a share of either the increase in ad valorem taxes collected as property taxes within the TIF boundaries after the improvements are implemented or through a sharing of sales taxes generated within those boundaries as reflected in increased taxes generated because of the improvements. Sometimes the compensation is a share of both of these new revenue streams. In this case, a 1/4-cent of new sales taxes generated within the TIF boundaries has been set aside to finance the underpass project, a fund that is now approaching \$6.8 million, and the TIF governing board is the sitting City Council.]

This is something we will continue to monitor.

As our allotted time had passed, we adjourned. Our next regularly scheduled monthly meeting will be on Tuesday 12 January 2016 at the Common Room of the Regency Apartments beginning at 4 PM.

Blake Tollett-Secretary
OANA