

Agenda Items

1. Communications

a. Newsletter

Distribution in your neighborhood we need folks, so please sign up. Marie Pierce re-offered her assistance with this to Matt.

2. Content, contributions of articles is needed.

Production help needed with the newsletter as well b. Web site assistance needed PLEASE HELP OUT BCNA with any of these tasks and contact us

2. Von Brock and Kenny Grigar with Armadillo Solar, explained the new City of Austin (COA) program to provide rebates on solar installation for \$15,000 per house. Thanks to NASA these are improved panels that can produce enough energy to cut you off the grid or cut your bills in half (165 watts/hour). There is two million dollars available this first year, and we need to help the COA use it all up. The COA has a commitment to have 20% of energy be from renewable resources.

Questions: money covers 80 % of total costs (will cover everything), the installers have to be registered with the city. You will be credited for time where you spin the meter backwards and provide energy to the city and get credited on your bill. Contact the COA or Von Brock, 689-9092, von_brock@hotmail.com for more information.

3. The Bouldin Creek Cleanup was the biggest turnout we've ever had, Matt Coldwell reported with well over 200 bags on East and West creeks. Great cooperation with the COA for pickup within 48 hours, lots of volunteers and lots of food eaten. Some BCNA money used for food, great weather, and so many people turned out. Great neighborhood activity and the creek was very clean looking. Matt mentioned cleanest he's seen since 1976. Many thanks to Inger Weigand and Matt Coldwell!

4. Traffic circle update: Matt showed a picture of the Boys and Girls Club/local artist Snyder who created a traffic circle art project on Annie and S. Second to support the BCNA mission and the community involvement of a local artist and kids. This project also provided the kids an opportunity to contribute to their community. The BCNA paid \$300 for the installation and materials.

b. Also go down to the artistic creation of a trash bin by James Talbot on James and 3rd st. Very beautiful and tailored after a 1920s traffic light. BCNA paid last invoice of \$200. Austin Parks Foundation grant to

fund this project. It's almost done and the next few weeks the scaffolding will be removed and some flowers added and we can work on other areas.

4. Front yard parking issue via emails: There is an optional ordinance the neighborhood can invoke and in the past we have not invoked it but some residents are writing and calling about it. If the BCNA wants to invoke this it has to be turned in by March 26th. Cory does not think we can make it by that date given the potential change required in the neighborhood plan amendment process. So, if anyone is interested in working on this please contact Cory Walton.

Twin Oaks Library moving to current post office building.

Margaret Henkels with the Austin Public Library Foundation (ALF) sole staff person ([HYPERLINK "mailto:margaret.henkels@ci.austin.tx.us"](mailto:margaret.henkels@ci.austin.tx.us) margaret.henkels@ci.austin.tx.us 974-7353) is a nonprofit 501(c)3 and we want to talk to you about the organization and the Twin Oaks Library moving to the current post office on Dawson/5th Street. And how there is a lot of potential with that facility given the large amount of space. Another speaker is the chair of the library commission appointed by the city council. We have dreams about a greater library

Renee Creft with ALF thanks for having us. I learn a lot about the city going to the neighborhood association meetings. I am here to tell you about the Library Foundation. We were founded in 1995 to strengthen and support the libraries, because we are not funding our libraries properly and it is up to us to support them. Why are they important? They are the basis for democracy to her, by providing free access to free and open information accessible to all people of Austin. She started as a funder and then decided to be on the board to help support the libraries (slide of numbers cannot see). Austin's library holdings are pretty sad. Waco has a better library system than we do. Our library does not reflect our city's intelligence level and size. Slide of a library off Riverside that shows a new building and is truly a part of the community and offers many programs. The downtown central building was built in 1977 and is too small, we are out of space and have to remove a book each time we get a new book in. We are trying to get community input on what to do about this. If you want to support us, go to [Austin library foundation.org](http://AustinLibraryFoundation.org) and pledge your support. The foundation supports all libraries system-wide and lobbies to city council for funding.

2. We want to finish the three libraries that were not completed in the 90s (including the Twin Oaks library).

3. We want to build a world-class selection that can support the Austin community. (Pictures of the Vancouver library and the new Nashville libraries. Our libraries do not reflect our community).

Vision - We envision a new central library that we all are proud of; civic

pride , cultural interest and a resource to the community civic pride ??

-In NY times there was a section on visiting Austin and the library was not listed as a place to visit. They go to the city council all the time. We will be doing a capitol campaign and there will be a bond election about library projects coming up.

What can you do?

Be really nice to all the librarians.

Make a contribution to Austinlibrary.org and buy something for the library you can choose exactly what you want to buy.

Volunteer for the library

Make your voice heard at the city council meetings

Question were asked and answered about the fiscal situation of the libraries. Big cuts in staff and hours. Fundraising is focused on businesses and people in local community are ideal. Money has been raised in a variety of ways. We have not decided on the size of the campaign for this library. For the bond election, we have not decided on the total amount.

-David Mintz from the Library Commission. They are city appointed and act as advisors to the city council and the city now owns the land for the new twin oaks library and the post office is renting that space. Because of the budget situation almost all capitol city projects have been delayed for two years. all the rent dollars from the post office will go the capitol improvement fund for that specific branch. The city council must decide on the branch priority in getting worked on and at that time the neighborhood will be involved in the planning process. You are invited to come to the meetings of the library commission on the 4th Monday of the month at the Austin history center, come to the meetings and we will keep you informed. Contact David Mintz if you have more questions. [HYPERLINK "mailto:dmintz@yahoo.com"](mailto:dmintz@yahoo.com) dmintz@yahoo.com

-A question was asked when the community would be involved with the design process. We know there is a two year delay, we can use that time to our advantage is there a way we can push that schedule forward so we can start that design process now to quicken the pace of the design process. No we have to pay for the architect to start the design process and do not have the funds to do that.

**There is a precinct meeting being held at this time in the cafeteria and you can go and sign in and work on resolutions you want focused on; you can become a delegate for your community to the county, state and national levels and be a part of the political process (if you have voted already today).

PARD (Parks and Recreation Department) and BMX bicycle issue : Cory discussed that you may have seen the newspaper articles about this issue on Bouldin creek greenbelt. One day the BMX ramps were destroyed by PARD and one BMX biker was arrested. Members of the BCNA met with the city to discuss recreating this BMX recreation area. We want residents to have more reasons to use this park and get involved with the design process.

Chuck discussed that there have been two meetings with PARD and the bikers to discuss the issues. We have heard environmental and parking concerns that we want to address. There were also issues with the woodlands and floodplain preventing us from putting the course back where it was. I want to open up dialogue to hear people's concerns. These tracks have been there for about 3 years. I put out a flyer on 6th street to explain the details of what happened and invited people to come tonight and to contact me with their concerns. I talked to the neighbor across the street and he said he never had any concerns about this. It looks like there have not been any neighbor complaints about the bike ramps.

Jay Stone with PARD , they felt this site was not safe for the park users, trees taken out and root systems, holes were 15 feet wide and 10 feet deep. It was a safety issue and so we leveled out the course and filled in the holes. The newspapers took hold of this issue. We wanted to do something that would not destroy the trees and environment. The kids didn't do anything malicious and did not want to harm the trees. Now we are trying to work with the community and the BMXers to create a sanctioned track and make sure we can rebuild this with the support of the local community to make sure we put this back properly. They had not gotten your input originally when they built these tracks so we want to do it properly this time. We have asked the BMXers what they need within the parameters of the city requirements and do not harm the resource (floodplain) and won't cause any flooding in the area.

Dick Finnegan from PARD showed the GIS map and explained they will get a permit to get a setback from the trees and be out of the floodplain and follow the slope requirements and create a design created by the BMXers. PARD will submit the permit for them. PARD will set the ground rules for where they can and cannot build and then everyone will follow this process. Timetable: later this week to deliver the criteria and setbacks to the BMXers. Once we get a rough idea of the design, then we can submit the plan. We have already talked to the permitting office to forewarn them of this being a bit different type of permit. We will help bring in all the proper materials for the BMXers to rebuild their track. Matt brought up a concern that before they were hidden and not obtrusive, now it sounds like they will be in a very obvious place and will look more like a theme park. But we will not be able to get a permit to put them back

where they were. Yes, it will be more in the open, but we cannot get a permit otherwise. A discussion of the floodplain concerns ensued. Other issues discussed here.

Cory explained that this is a very fast response from the City and PARD and that we will continue this process and Chuck is heading up a committee to work with the city on this issue represent the BCNA.

A member of the BMX/PARD committee said please contact them with your concerns and come work with them on this issue and thank you to PARD for coming to this meeting. Her request in this process is if there are big issues that come up with the bikers please let us know about it.

Dick Finnegan said they did not follow great procedure in this case with the bikers and this will likely never happen again. Cory asked about dropping the charges. This is a criminal issue and not civil. Chuck if you can provide a contact with the county for us to have that would be helpful to state our opinion about this civil court case.

More issues discussed.

7. Neighborhood Planning bylaws and amendment process. Our planning guru is not here so we will move on.

8. Cory explained - Executive Committee got a presentation last week from the owner of Gueros ?? Rob Lippincott and Tom Seeley And they are proposing for Saturday of Labor Day weekend a South Congress Avenue Festival. They plan to block off Congress from Academy to Elizabeth for a street music festival; a Keep Austin Weird South Austin Festival with a stage setup with vendors on both sides of the streets and arts, crafts and food. They contacted us to discuss this festival and they want to include us by having a free booth for us to be a part of it. This will be a for-profit event. They would disseminate the profits for local groups (boys and girls club, twin oaks library or community wildlife habitat).

It's in September so it's still hot and their profits would depend on alcohol sales primarily. Given some of the problems neighbors have had on Eva and Newton Streets with neighbors and first Thursdays, maybe this could give us some leverage for first Thursdays. For example, maybe Eva street folks would request that Rob and his partner pay for those neighbors affected, or a neighbor's friend, to prevent parking in front of their driveways. They may do this every year and we could make this an impetus to form a committee that works on events like this and first Thursdays.

Marya Fowler with Community Wildlife Habitat program with the National Wildlife Federation (NWF). She works with their education programs. Part of their backyard wildlife habitat program started in 1973 to help homeowners to create refuges for wildlife in their yards. NWF also has a schoolyard habitat program and Becker School just got certified this year as a schoolyard habitat. The teachers are networked on a national web site and

receive a sign and curriculum. When she spoke with a community member about this program, they talked about the entire community being able to get certified as a community wildlife habitat. That means that a certain percentage of your community members would have to be certified. It is up to you to decide what the numbers need to be for your community to certify you.

a. Intro to Backyard Wildlife Habitat program:

-NWF is to educate and inspire individuals and organizations from diverse groups to provide wildlife with a sustainable future

-Habitat is Food, water, cover, and a place to raise young for wildlife.

This will benefit the entire community through wildlife and people using native plants to sustain the community. Natives are more sustainable by requiring less input of energy and chemicals and water. Examples of local wildlife givenÖ..

-Number one threat to wildlife is loss of habitat

-700 acres of land around Austin is being developed each year. With land being divided, there are no corridors for wildlife to migrate through and find food source. We can provide food sources and maintain biodiversity and connect people especially children with natural places. We can emulate nature by curbing effects of development.

-Provide a home for wildlife: what is necessary for them to survive?

-Food, water, cover, and a place to raise young.

-Provide layers of plants (height diversity)

-Color diversity (food sources)

-Variety of species

Restoring habitat

Ecoregions of Texas

Blackland prairie and Edwards plateau around Austin

Food: plants are better than feeders and native plants (plants that have been here prior to settlement 500 years ago) are best and year round food providers. Native are adapted to our local geology and climate and require less water and fertilizers. They have a higher food value for our native wildlife. For example, crape myrtle had very little nectar for wildlife it was bred out of them. Natives are less likely to be invasive. Examples of invasives: Nandina, ligustrum, Chinese privet, Japanese honeysuckle, chinaberry

Good examples: Mexican plum: early nectar source for migrating butterflies and fruit. Aster, beautyberry.

Water: what types of critters do you want to attract? Amphibians and Dragonflies: have a pond.

Cover: layers of vegetation, canopy later mid story layer with ornamental trees, shrub layer and then ground layer: with grasses and wildflowers or brush piles, rock piles.

Places to raise young: dead or drying tree: nest boxes

Community wildlife habitat how to do it?

<http://www.nwf.org> - backyard habitat program

then to community habitat program

Develop a community habitat team 4-7 people. BCNA, gardening club, school, place of worship, business owners, etc.

Benefit: healthier for people and environment, landscape are less resource dependent and helps us connect with nature

Resources: NWF web site

Enature.com type in zip code and will tell you what is migrating through your area

TX Wildscapes

TPWD

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Why?

Message to others and your community

Other Resources

Backyard Baby

Ranger Rick

National Wildlife adult pub.

NWF and TPWD certification program is a little more involved

Questions: how to connect with the greenbelt from your own backyard