

Barton Hills News

Goings-on in our neighborhood

P.O. Box 2042 • Austin, Texas • 78768-2042

Presidents Message

When I moved to the neighborhood late in 2002, the BHNA was busy discussing traffic calming devices, the yahoo listserve, the chemical benzo(a)pyrene, and some lesser issues. Along the way, this organization managed to build some sidewalks, form the Greenbelt Guardians, solve some parking issues caused by the City charging an entrance fee by Barton Springs pool, and distribute some money to Barton Hills Elementary and Greenbelt Guardians. Not bad. Today, we can all thank the volunteers who dedicated some time to this organization and to this wonderful part of the city. I really thing things are getting better and better all the time. I make it a habit to get outside. Whether I run through the neighborhood, take Mitchell to the parks, or just landscape outside, I enjoy watching my neighbors go about their day and I enjoy and wonder at the changes going on around us.

From South Lamar and Barton Springs Road to South Lamar and Highway 71, things are changing. Right now two condos are being built near Barton Springs Rd. and more are expected. And, don't forget during the last bond election voters approved funds for some arts-related construction. Zachary-Scott will get some of that funding to expand the theatre. Indeed the area is changing. Construction should begin soon on a mixed-use project near Maudie's. And, further south the triangle property where South Austin Auto Supply and South Austin Machine Shop are located has been purchased. So has the Broken Spoke. Even the guys at our respected Barton Hills Mobil are wondering if they are staying. They won't know if their lease will be renewed until mid January. I hope they stay. They do nearly all my auto repairs and I really enjoy talking to those guys.

Other things have caught my attention. This is a big election year. Presidential candidates have been working since last year and the next few months should narrow the field to viable contenders. State officials are starting to make the news and that means the primaries will get pretty nasty before candidates fight for the independent voters in November's election. And this May, Lee Leffingwell and Jennifer Kim are up for reelection and Betty Dunkerly's seat has to be vacated because of term limits. I think we can expect some lively discussion, indeed some entertainment, from candidates seeking office. And, since March, May, and November are big election months, I expect the executive committee

will put some effort into hearing from candidates at general meetings in January, April, and October. Maybe we should consider a post-election neighborhood party. I'm sure we'll be as happy as the candidates are that the whole thing is over.

As for Association business, I have set January 22, April 22, July 15, and October 14 for general meeting dates. I have informed the executive committee that I think elections years are important and I wish to give candidates some time during our general meetings. Also, we are in the process of moving the website to a different hosting service. Glenn Chase will be taking care of this and I want to publicly thank him for his time and dedication. Other functioning entities include the Greenbelt Guardians, the Zoning Group, and Committee on Development and Environment. I have asked these groups to submit articles for each newsletter in order to be placed on the agenda. I made this request so that members could have some information before discussion in the general meeting. Also important to me is Neighborhood Watch. John Luther has invested a considerable amount of time reactivating Neighborhood Watch and has agreed to maintain it. However, it is important that others become involved in its maintenance. I encourage everyone to have an interest in our neighborhood's safety. Contact John and ask how you can help. Finally, there are groups within the neighborhood that would like to grow. Let me know if you want your group in the newsletter. One such group is the Garden Club. I think it's appropriate for the Association to encourage these gatherings, so get outside and meet you neighbors.

Personally, I look forward to doing more outside stuff with my son, Mitchell. He'll be 6 in June. I plan on taking him camping at least once this spring and more often during summer. Maybe we'll find some white bass and have a cook-out. Maybe we'll rediscover Zilker Park and the greenbelt. It's wonderful being a parent. I get to see the world all over again.

I hope each of you will be able to say this year is the best ever.

Eddie Torres
2008 BHNA President
matterhorneddie@yahoo.com

Executive Committee Bios

Ken Russell is a retired college teacher, who lived most of his life in Houston. He moved to Barton Hills upon retirement 4 years ago in order to live near his grandchildren. His professional expertise is computerized mapping, which he is contributing to the efforts of the Greenbelt Guardians.

Kimberly White Erlinger moved to Barton Hills in early 2006 but has lived off and on in Austin since the mid-80s and swears she'll never live anywhere else again. She is a 4th generation Austinite and a 3rd generation UT grad whose favorite baby photo is of her one-year-old self wearing a "Baby Longhorn" shirt. Kimber currently works in real estate but spent more than 15 years as a documentary researcher for The Discovery and National Geographic Channels. Kimber enjoys this terrific neighborhood with her husband Tate, son Henry and dog Edgar.

Clay Boulware was born in Flint, Michigan, but grew up in Wichita Falls, Texas. Clay came to Austin in 1989 and attended the University of Texas. Upon graduation, Clay attended the University of Texas Law School and graduated in 1997. Clay has worked for 10 years as a personal injury attorney in the Law Office of Larry Laden. Clay, his wife (Guadalupe) and two daughters (Josephine and Isabella) moved into the neighborhood in 2002. Clay began serving as the BHNA Austin Neighborhood Council Representative in 2007.

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BHNA Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

(Corner of Barton Hills Dr. and Barton Skyway)

- Welcome
- Introduction of Executive Committee
- Approval of Minutes
- Treasurer's Report
- Greenbelt Guardians
- Park Patrol
- Candidates for office
- 2008 Parade Coordinator
- Open forum
- Motion to adjourn

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Dinner/Social Hour

We extend a warm invitation for all in Barton Hills to join us on January 22 at 6:00 pm for our Social/Dinner hour. We can promise plenty of good food and a terrific opportunity to catch up with your neighbors.

Please remember: we order food based on attendance expectations so once the food is gone, it's gone, so try to arrive as close to 6:00 pm as possible. Dinner is only \$6.00 per person, which covers hot pizza, pasta or green salad, dessert and a drink. This menu is subject to change if our friends at Rockin' Tomato have something new they would like to share, but it will always be fantastic.

The Barton Hills Neighborhood Association social hour is a wonderful time to enjoy great food, meet new neighbors and catch up on the local buzz. We look forward to seeing you on January 22 at 6:00 pm!

Kimberly White Erlinger, BHNA Secretary

Barton Hills Neighborhood Association 2007 Membership Form

Join or renew your membership. Annual dues are \$10.00 per family. Make checks payable to BHNA.
Mail your membership check to:

BHNA
P.O. Box 2042
Austin, TX 78768-2042

**Your name, address and members of your
household 18 years or older
(Please Print)**

1. _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Household Members 18 years or older

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Join Us

The heart and soul of any organization is the enthusiasm and creativity of its active members. The Barton Hills Neighborhood Association invites you to join. Dues are \$10 per household. Privileges include voting during the general meetings and responsible use of the Barton Hills Yahoo Groups listserv.

www.bhna.net



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Greenbelt Guardian Report

Stones Funds at Work

We are very excited about the \$20,000 funding grant that BHNA awarded to the Greenbelt Guardians, using proceeds from the Stones Concert. The funds have been placed in our fiduciary umbrella account at the Austin Parks Foundation. The Stones music will live on in our beloved greenbelt.

The funds are already at work in service of the greenbelt. We purchased special hand tools we needed (hand pick mat-toxes, trash pick-up tools, pruning loppers, hand saws, hand pruners, tamper tools, trenching shovels, gloves and flagging tape) plus some volunteer protection supplies (wasp spray, mosquito & bug repellent, first aide supplies, hand gloves).

We also were able to hire the E-Corps crew from American Youth Works to further expand an ambitious Ligustrum clearing project that we started last spring. Their crew removed 55 large Ligustrum trees, and applied the herbicide necessary to "keep them down". Erosion windrows were created with the remains, protecting the creek banks. We also purchased 55-one gallon native plants and installed them strategically in the newly cleared area, to give a jump start to the revegetation process. The goal is to nurture a vibrant and diverse grass, forbes, and shrub understory plant community, to capture silt and run-off, so that the creek can flow clear and clean.

We also purchased a Garmin GPS unit at wholesale price, thanks to our neighbor Art Stone. We are in the process of getting training in its use and planning how to set up a database component and a process for printing maps. It will be

extremely helpful in planning and tracking progress in our invasives management program.

Report on October 10 Work Day

We worked at the Homedale Trail, vigorously removing more Ligustrum, planting native replacements, weeding and trimming back overgrowth on the trail, and regrading portions of the trail to improve drainage flow. A convivial and resourceful group also improved a slick, steep trail section of the trail by installing some large boulder steps and a cedar handrail. It is significantly safer and more aesthetically pleasing now.

We had 28 volunteers come out, with a contribution of more than 100 labor hours. It was a good and sunny day.

Upcoming Work Days

We are planning our first quarterly work day of 2008 on February 9, at the Gus Fruh Trail. It is going to be a big one, and we are getting some extra help both the week-end before and on this planned work day.

There are sections of both entry trails that are so steep, the switchbacks so tight, and the traffic so heavy, that they quickly erode and degrade after our repair efforts. These are the sections where we plan to apply the polymer materials, for a much longer fix.

On February 2, the Austin Ridgeriders volunteer group will be doing finish grading and applying and packing a road base foundation. On February 9, the Central Texas Trail Tamers will be joining our group to lay down the top coat of granite with the polymer spray that will solidify and stabilize the granite. The trail will have to be closed for 24 hours in order for it to set.



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The Austin Parks Foundation has arranged the help from the Central Texas Trail Tamers and will also be helping us recruit additional volunteers for this work day, as a part of their new monthly "Adopt A Park" program. They "adopted" us for February, and the timing is perfect, since we can now purchase the necessary polymer materials with our grant funds.

Greenbelt Security Update

Our concerns about the abusive and threatening conditions that developed on the Homedale/Spyglass trail this past "high water" year were heard by Council Member Martinez. He directed the City Manager's office to organize a meeting with members of the Austin Parks Police, the Austin Parks Department, and an ad hoc group from our neighborhood. BHNA was represented by two executive board members (John Luther and Dave Kemptner) and by three Greenbelt Guardians (Glee Ingram, Johnny Barnett and Stan Ostrum).

We had three meetings in which to air our concerns, to hear their perceptions and protocol and constraints, and to brainstorm potential solutions. The one direct action taken as a result of the meetings was to conduct an organized "sting" to remove the rather large encampment community nearby. Enough homestead material and trash was hauled out to fill at 2.5 ton truck. Plus the "sting" resulted in some 30 citations for alcohol, minors in possession, glass containers and dogs off leash. But, as we all know, this is a persistent problem, and a few days later, some sleepy-headed campers were walking about with their blankets around their shoulders.

We wrote a summary report of the meetings and the findings, plus our ongoing concerns and requests for action. The report was shared with Council Member Martinez' aide, who has arranged for follow-up meetings with the Austin Parks Police, to be also attended by Martinez's aide, and staff from the Assistant City Manager's office. Hopefully, this will eventually lead to some real changes in protocol and policy. We will also be sending a copy of our report to all of the other City Council Members.

Greenbelt Guardian Workdays Scheduled for 2008

Saturday, February 7
Gus Fruh Trail; 9:00 – 1:00

Saturday, April 13
It's My Park Day!
Gus Fruh and Homedale Trail; 9:00 – 1:00

Saturday, July 19
Trail to be Announced; 9:00 – 1:00

Saturday, October 18
Trail to be Announced; 9:00 – 1:00

Barton Hills Homes

Homes on the market:

18 Active or Active Contingent

Average Size:

3b, 2 1/2 b

Average Year Built:

1967

Average Square Footage:

1961

Average List Price:

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\$224.15 per sq/ft

Average Days on Market:

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Neighborhood Planning

Some of you may have noticed there has been little news about neighborhood planning. Indeed planning for our area, which includes the Barton Hills, Galindo, South Lamar, and Zilker neighborhood planning areas, has stalled. Our planning area, the Combined South Lamar Neighborhood Planning Area, and other neighborhood planning areas feel the city is giving little standing to neighborhood plans when they are completed. The general consensus is the plans will be ineffective and unenforceable after the process is over. It has become so serious that the Govalle Neighborhood Association has brought a lawsuit to the City of Austin. The lawsuit seeks answers to the following questions: 1. Do the neighborhood plans and the planning teams have legitimate legal standing in the planning process? 2. Can the city council violate their own ordinance and the city charter? 3. Does the citizenry have legal standing to force the city to adhere to the law?



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We live in Barton Hills and love it!

BOXTOPS for Education

Ever wonder what to do with all of little 10¢ BoxTops on General Mills cereals, Kleenex boxes, Hefty and Ziploc products, and a whole lot more of things you use everyday? Wonder no more. Bring them to the Barton Hills Neighborhood Association general meetings, and we will bundle them all and get them to the Barton Hills Elementary. All the donated BoxTops help the school library. Last year, the school earned \$558 dollars through this program, and with the help of the neighborhood, we could double that this year. So get out those scissors and save those BoxTops!



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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cliff Dunn".

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Barton Hills News

The newsletter of the Barton Hills Neighborhood Association is published quarterly and is supported by the advertisements of our generous sponsors. It is distributed in print to homes in Barton Hills in January, April, July and October.