

Barton Hills News

BARTON HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Barton Springs Construction: My Home and Hardhats

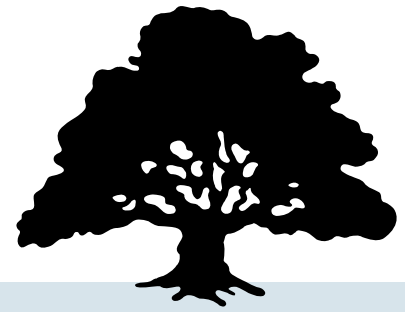
By Fred Coats



"Barton Springs is a sacred spot...We felt it would be wrongful for this beauty spot to be owned by any individual, and that it ought to belong to all the people of Austin." - Andrew Zilker

This is my Home. When I moved back to Austin recently, I had to choose a neighborhood. As I looked around this summer, it became evident that the Barton Springs area is special. I spent a day walking around Barton Hills/Zilker deciding if this is where I wanted to live. At the end of that day, I texted a picture from the banks of Barton Springs to a friend with the caption "this is my Home." The vibe of this place goes beyond words, but because you all live here, you know exactly what I am talking about.

When I arrived in Austin in October, I was surprised to find my Home invaded by hardhats. Construction crews had invaded the Springs, and made my Home look very different. Our Home is changing. The current Barton Springs grounds improvements are part of the Master Plan for Barton Springs adopted by City Council in 2009. I know some people disagree with any changes to the Springs, but the current changes are happening and should improve the Barton Springs experience. (*Barton Springs, continued on page 10*)



NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, January 28th 6 - 9pm

Join us at St. Mark's Church (corner of Barton Skyway and Barton Hills Drive). All are welcome!

Social Hour: 6pm. pizza, salad and pasta from Rockin' Tomato \$7.



Agenda

- 7:00** Call to Order/Brief Announcements
- 7:03** Approval of October 23, 2013 Meeting Minutes
- 7:05** Reports

OFFICERS

- **Treasurer** - David Poisson
- **Austin Neighborhoods Council Representative** - (*Position Open*)

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

- **Neighborhood Watch**
John Luther
- **Area Development**
Peter Hess
- **Emergency Preparedness**
Susan Donaldson
- **Greenbelt Guardians**
Glee Ingram
- **Membership Outreach**
(*position available*)

- 7:50** Improvements to Barton Hills Park: Presentation and Discussion - Roy Smithers
- 8:10** MOPAC South Environmental Study - Melissa Hurst, Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority
- 8:40** July 4th Parade - Tom Nuckols
- 8:50** New Business - Tom Nuckols
- 9:00** Adjourn

Barton Hills News

The Barton Hills Neighborhood Association newsletter is published quarterly and supported by advertisers. It's distributed to homes in the Barton Hills neighborhood of Austin, Texas. For more about membership and neighborhood affairs, contact the appropriate person below.

2013 Executive Committee

President

Tom Nuckols
tnuckols@austin.rr.com
(512) 462-2329

Vice President

Rebecca Gallogly
becca.gallogly@gmail.com

Treasurer

David Poisson
dpoisson@swbell.net

Secretary (Recording)

Melissa Hawthorne
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Community Partnership Coordinator

Angel Rodenbeck
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Newsletter

Scott Stricker
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Austin Neighborhoods Council Representative

Vacant

Committee Chairs

Committee on Area Development

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Greenbelt Guardians

Glee Ingram
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Neighborhood Watch

John Luther
jluther@austin.rr.com

Emergency Preparedness

Susan Donaldson
skdon@mindspring.com

Neighborhood Outreach

Position Available

Barton Hills Community Park

Roy Smithers
rormsmith@yahoo.com

<http://bartonhills.org>

Newsletter printed on 100% recycled paper.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A fond farewell!

By Melissa Hawthorne

BHNA outgoing President

Dear BHNA and wonderful neighbors,

It has been my delight and honor to serve as Association President these past two years, and before that as Vice President under Craig Smith.

What a joy it has been to stay the course and guide our neighborhood through regular events such as our quarterly meetings and who absolutely doesn't love our Independence Day Parade. We also updated the Yahoo Listserve, membership roster and increased BHNA membership through our collective efforts.

I was also proud of our new tradition, the Spring Fling in the Park, an annual event featuring our fabulous neighborhood talent, and offering a special opportunity to meet neighbors, and enjoy our beautiful neighborhood park.

I am proud to say we have accomplished quite a bit during this time. The pedestrian sidewalk along Robert E. Lee is the result of collaboration between Barton Hills NA and Zilker NA, and the City is amidst its process for a study of the Barton Springs Road/Robert E. Lee intersection.

We also found some funding internally, within the City of Austin, and got it allocated for the Barton Hills Community Park improvements Master Plan. Barton Hills took a more active role on the coordination team concerning the epic number of events that seem to occur in our park spaces, and affect our Barton Hills residents and environment.

I would like to take a moment to extend a special thank you to all the wonderful volunteers who have supported me and the BHNA during my tenure. Without your willingness to help, many ideas would never be implemented, many greenbelt trails would need repair, and many more break-ins would likely occur. Please continue serving and encourage others to volunteer as well!

It is with a touch of sadness that I turn over the gavel to our new president, Tom Nuckols, and I know you will show him the same level of support as he continues to move forward representing Barton Hills Neighborhood Association.

Sincerely yours,

Melissa



Neighborhood Watch

Home Safety Tip: Securing Outward Opening Doors

By John L. Luther

Director, Barton Hills Neighborhood Watch Program

Many homes in our neighborhood have garages with doors connecting to the living area. This door is a convenient passageway for residents, but also a potential point of entry into your home by an intruder. Homeowners can take easy and inexpensive steps to prevent unwanted entry through this door.

Examine the door going from the garage to the living area. Are the hinges installed so that the door swings outward from the living area into the garage? If yes, the door hinges are visible from inside the garage. If this is the case an intruder would simply need to remove the hinge pins with a screwdriver, slide the door out of the doorframe and enter the home. All locks and deadbolts are defeated when this is done.

Fixes to prevent this type of unwanted entry into a home are simple and inexpensive. All involve making the door impossible to slide out of the doorframe even when the hinge pins are removed.

The first option is to replace the old hinges with hinges that have an anti-removal feature built into them. This is simply a dimple on one hinge wing that lines up with a small protrusion on the other hinge wing. When the door is closed the protrusion is seated into the dimple. Now the door cannot slide out of the doorframe even when the hinge pins are removed. Cost is about \$3.00 per hinge and about 15 minutes of your time.

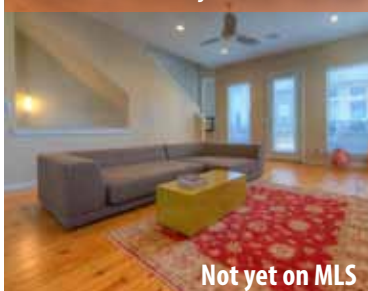
The second option for a door anti-removal feature can be achieved by driving a 4 inch standard finishing nail into the

(Neighborhood Watch, continued on page 11)

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Calling all Barton Hills residents

Barton Hills Neighborhood Association needs you!

by Kay Killen

As a volunteer organization, Barton Hills Neighborhood Association has continued to provide you, our valued members and residents, with talented leadership to meet the “challenges of the day.” We need to fill two positions with Association members who value the Barton Hills quality of life and will step up to help during 2014-2015.

Barton Hills has a strong voice, whether through the respected Austin Neighborhood Council, outreach to neighborhood funders and supporters, the annual parade tradition, developing special neighborhood events, executing long-range goals and improvements, protecting our people, property and ecosystem through award-winning Neighborhood Watch groups and patrols, and Greenbelt Guardians.

Strong leadership is essential, and the Neighborhood Association is a welcoming group where member-volunteers are encouraged to contribute to the stewardship of our neighborhood. Two Board vacancies need to be filled by the January 28th quarterly meeting at St. Mark’s Church. Please consider volunteering for one of the following positions.

ANC Delegate

“The Delegate to the Austin Neighborhood Council shall attend all meetings thereof or arrange for a substitute representative, and shall on a regular basis, either through the quarterly newsletter or at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Association, or both, report any significant activities or action taken by the Council.” By-Laws, BHNA.

The Austin Neighborhood Council (ANC) was created in 1973 as the city-wide umbrella organization to support neighborhood issues. The ANC’s motto, “Strength Through Unity,” reflects the successful collaboration between diverse Austin associations. ANC members have the opportunity to participate at all levels of government, and many ANC officers have served on the City Council and numerous Boards and Commissions.

The ANC delegate from Barton Hills will represent our well-respected neighborhood, By-Laws and goals in the inter-urban landscape of public policy and how it will affect the quality of life and our neighborhood interests. Monthly ANC



meetings offer an opportunity to meet City leadership, interface with other neighborhood representatives from all over Austin, and learn about new impacts upon Austin and Barton Hills. The BHNA ANC delegate then reports back to BHNA membership to keep them apprised of relevant topics. The BHNA membership Yahoo e-group has become a handy tool for distributing timely information between official meetings.

“With Austin as one of America’s greatest cities, and as we face the new challenges of the twenty first century, the ANC will continue to advocate for all of Austin neighborhoods, to work to make Austin the very best community for all of our citizens by supporting our over 200 individual neighborhood associations.” To learn more, go to: <http://www.ancweb.org/>. The next ANC meeting in January is open to the public. Wednesday, January 22, 2014, 7:00 PM — 9:00 PM, Austin Energy Building, 1st Floor, 721 Barton Springs Rd.

Membership Outreach Subcommittee Chair

The volunteer for “Membership Outreach” must enjoy meeting neighbors, area businesses, sponsors and most importantly, developing special events for the neighborhood! The Membership Outreach coordinator will continue the tradition of the annual Independence Day Parade, will execute the 3rd annual Spring Fling Picnic in the Park, will meet and greet BHNA members at quarterly meetings, and perhaps begin a new tradition for Barton Hills. In general, the Membership Outreach volunteer is the “social face” of Barton Hills, bringing together neighbors to meet neighbors!

If you would like to learn more, and volunteer for one of these positions contact president, Tom Nuckols



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Barton Hills Community Park

by Roy O. Smithers
Executive Committee Chair

The next phase of park development should take place in January. About \$21,000 will be spent to beautify the eastern portion of the Park that fronts on Barton Hills Drive. Limestone Blocks will be placed along the school frontage to provide opportunities for seating and gathering, as well as manage park vehicular access. Trees in this area will be mulched with native hardwood mulch and native grass and wildflower seeds will be spread about this area. The unsightly limestone rock chunks along the hillside at the edge of the fence on Barton Hills Dr. will be removed and used in other areas to help prevent erosion. A new trail for pedestrian access to the park will be laid by a local Boy Scout seeking his Eagle badge with the assistance of the contractor. The trail will extend from the sidewalk along Barton Hills Dr. and run along the face of the hill to the loop running track. There will also be new plantings and low limestone walls to prevent erosion caused by large rain events. The funds will come from our existing Austin Parks Foundation grant. The Neighborhood will be required to infuse about \$5,000 of our fundraised money as matching funds.

The Park Committee is really excited to hear that the Parkland Dedication Fee Funds (from the Broken Spoke Project which is \$221,000.00) are available and allotted towards the Barton Hills Community Park project. As well an additional \$50,000.00 through PARD that was agreed to in conjunction with additional weekend of ACL Festival. There are two other projects that the Parkland Dedication Fees have been allotted as well to BHCP which total an additional \$12,350.00. This is a grand total of \$283,350.00 allocated.

This along with other grant opportunities and fundraising brings the master plan vision moving towards fruition.

The Park Committee has decided to use \$100,000 of these funds for playground equipment enhancement. We hope to present our playground enhancement plans to the Barton Hills Neighborhood Association at its regular meeting on Tuesday, January 28, 2014 and the Barton Hills Elementary PTA in mid-January for community input. Watch for information on these community sessions soon, and please plan to join us to receive more specific information and to give us your feedback. There are many hurdles to obtain final approval by Austin Parks and Rec.; however, we are shooting for possible installation of some new equipment this summer. The remainder of the funds will be spent in future phases to improve the park even more.

The Barton Hills Neighborhood Park Executive Committee is not a committee under the Barton Hills Neighborhood Association and the funds that the Park Committee has raised do not belong to the Neighborhood Association; however, the Association has contributed \$2,500 to Park enhancement funds. The members of the Park Executive Committee are Roy Smithers (Chair), Melanie Gantt (Treasurer), April Alejandro (Secretary/Communications), Eric Miller (Operations), Stefan Pharis (Design), Kati Achtermann (Principal Barton Hills Elementary), Amy Moore (Barton Hills PTA) and Tom Nuckols, Barton Hills Neighborhood Assn. President.

The Park Committee truly appreciates all of the past support of Barton Hills residents and we will continue to need your support in the future.





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2013 Austin Real Estate

by Ryan Rodenbeck
Broker/owner of Spyglass Realty



Austin's real estate market saw a record breaking year in 2013. We saw the most units sold in recorded history in July with 3,135 units. This was the highest number of units since June of 2006. We also saw the lowest interest rates in 2013, with 30 year rates nearing 3.35% in May. At the time of this article, interest rates are up to 4.5%.

It was an unseasonably busy 4th quarter this year. Inventory remained low as buyers searched for homes, and with the government shutdown, the year ended with some ups and downs. Some consumers temporarily slowed down the buying of new homes until the new deal was struck and then sales picked up once again.

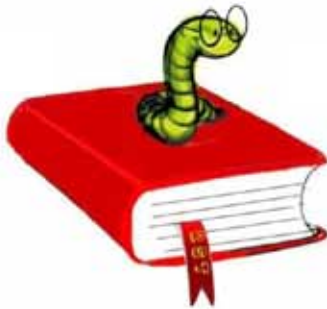
Still, the lack of inventory and low numbers showed a smaller than normal (for 2013) appreciation. The median list price in Barton Hills/Zilker was up 5.4% (to \$411,000) from November 2012 to November 2013, and the average for that same period was up 7.9% (to \$473,783). Keep in mind that these numbers include all the areas west of Lamar. In areas east of Lamar, which has a much larger reporting area, the median home price was up 20.3% (to \$350,000) and the average was up 17.4% (to \$398,861).

2014 promises to be a good year in real estate, mostly because of Austin's continued economic growth and role as the "darling" city of the US. The perfect storm that allowed the sales we saw in 2013, however, is gone so it would stand to reason that there would be some slow down in our real estate market compared to this last year. The Federal Reserve has been saying that they would begin tapering the buying of mortgage backed securities once the unemployment rate hits 7% and that number was reached in December. Just the announcement of this news made interest rates rise, and it's expected that the interest rate will hit 5% sometime in the first quarter of 2014.

As interest rates rise in the later part of 2014, sellers are going to have to be more realistic about their sales price expectations. Even in the record breaking year of 2013, people don't realize just how many homes didn't sell because of unrealistic list prices. To put it in perspective, in area 7 (the areas west of Lamar) there were a total of 25 expired or withdrawn listings compared to 115 sales. This creates a "probability of sales" at 94.4%, the highest number we have seen in recent years. As interest rates rise in 2014 and demand starts to taper, we should see that number drop to some extent. Still, look for 2014 to be a good year in the Austin market and certainly here in 78704.

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(Barton Springs, continued from front page)

Many of the current improvements are aesthetic, but some are safety and access related. Electrical upgrades include burying overhead lines. The overhead lines create a safety hazard if a tree limb were to fall and cause an electrical line to fall into the pool. The electrical service is also being upgraded in capacity to operate the cleaning equipment on both sides of the pool. New lighting will also be installed, which is more aesthetically pleasing and will increase safety and visibility for night swimmers.

A new, more powerful water pump is being installed which will allow more efficient cleaning of the pool. The new pump and associated piping will connect to the City of Austin water line on the north side, and will allow the use of multiple hoses for high pressure cleaning.

One of the most visually dramatic changes will be the perimeter fence. The chain link will be replaced with more visually appealing fencing. When the new fencing is installed, the south side will be expanded. The new south fence will move outward to the south and to the west. Part of the expanded south side will be an ADA compliant ramp running from the south entrance down to the pool deck. The south side will also get a new paved parking lot and expanded bike parking.

There will be significant landscaping work around the grounds. One of the goals of the landscape work is

to get away from the suburban “lawn and trees” look into something more appealing visually. Planting beds will be added in lawn areas that are underutilized, and more drought resistant native plants will be added in several areas. New seating will be added around the grounds, and aesthetic boulder work will be added on the north side around Eliza Spring and the North Overlook/Tree Court area. Some of the landscape work consists of saving the existing tree canopy while planting new trees. Years of foot traffic around the trees have taken a toll on their health, which will be aided by air-spading the compacted earth. The installation of suspended walkways will minimize compaction in the future.

All these changes are scheduled for completion by April 2014, and it should look incredible. In the thousands of years that people have been enjoying the Springs, there has been much change. One thing never changes though; this is a sacred place.

(Fred is Barton Hills neighbor, history buff, and a Securities Fraud attorney with Forman Law Firm)



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(Neighborhood Watch, continued from page 3)

doorframe just above each hinge and leaving about 1/8th of an inch of the nail protruding. Now drill a hole a little deeper than 1/8th inch deep in the actual door to match where the nail head is showing. When the door is closed the nail head is seated in the drilled hole and prevents the door from being removed from the doorframe when the hinge pins are removed. Cost: about \$1.00 for a package of 4 inch nails and about 15 minutes of your time.

I want to remind all the residents in Barton Hills that a small, but dedicated group of your neighbors are patrolling our neighborhood streets every day to discourage criminal activity and report suspicious behavior or vehicles to law enforcement. I ask that you continue to wave to the Neighborhood Watch Patrol volunteers to indicate your support of their efforts. **Happy New Year!**

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Once you're a BHNA member, you can join the Barton Hills listserv.
Visit groups.yahoo.com/group/barton_hills/ for more information about how to sign up.

2014 MEMBERSHIP FORM

Fill out this form to join or renew your membership in the Barton Hills Neighborhood Association. Annual dues are \$10 per household, payable when you join (for a new membership) or every January (for renewal).

Your Name: _____

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Please send this form along with your annual dues to:

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