

Barton Hills News

BARTON HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

How Do We Spend Our Neighborhood Funds?

By Rebecca Gallogly

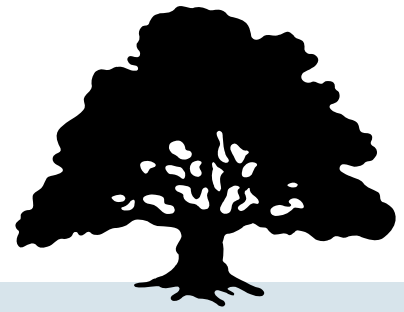
Vice President, Barton Hills Neighborhood Association



Thanks to all of our wonderful neighbors in Barton Hills, we now have approximately \$30,000.00 in our budget! This is a great opportunity to collectively decide on neighborhood improvements. Ideally, funded projects will positively affect the lives of as many people as possible, including those of our residents. Turn to page 11 for a list of suggestions. Others are mentioned separately in this newsletter as well. Even more options may be available for your consideration during upcoming meetings. Later in the year, we will vote. So, over the following months, please get input from your family and participate!

This is a great way to get your children involved in thinking about the nature of their impact on local community efforts. If there isn't a person associated with an action item you find interesting, please consider volunteering to spearhead it! We can help you get started if you're not sure how to proceed. We also welcome and need supportive participation. If you are unable to attend meetings, you may contact me about how you wish to get involved. Keep in mind: we are still in the process of deciding how much we can disperse.

See a current list of suggestions on page 11



NEXT MEETING

July 22nd • 6 - 9pm

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

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



Neighborhood Meeting: 7pm-9pm

Agenda items will include:

- Discussion of proposals for traffic calming for the streets of Barton Hills
- Discussion of proposals for spending BHNA funds.

Final agenda will be posted on the listserve.



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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.

2014 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
mwh@austin.rr.com
(512) 560-0044

Community Partnership Coordinator

Angel Rodenbeck
angel@spyglassrealty.com

Newsletter design

Scott Stricker
scott@shoehorndesign.com

Austin Neighborhoods Council Representative

Jerilyn Green

Committee Chairs

Committee on Area Development

Peter Hess
phess@mail.utexas.edu

Greenbelt Guardians

Glee Ingram
gleeful@earthlink.net

Neighborhood Watch

John Luther
jluther@austin.rr.com

Emergency Preparedness

Susan Donaldson
skdon@mindspring.com

Neighborhood Outreach

Carol Mann

Barton Hills Community Park

Roy Smithers
rorsmith@yahoo.com

<http://bartonhills.org>

Newsletter printed on 100% recycled paper.

President's Message

By Tom Nuckols

BHNA President

Neighbors,

In my family's 13 years in Barton Hills, the house two doors down from ours burned down and a city construction worker lost his life just around the corner. Also, several people lost their lives in the Barton Creek greenbelt near our neighbors' homes.

In any neighborhood, village, census block, etc., tragedies are as certain as taxes. A community can't do anything about some of these. For others, the community can change the future by agreeing on the best, if not the perfect, way to respond.

In my family's time here, the most painful neighborhood tragedy has been the May 2nd loss of Alyssa Hefley and Andrew Newton and the injuries to Clifford Kinkade.

Since then, yet another driver has lost control of a vehicle on Barton Hills Drive and gone across the sidewalk near the school, where your neighbors and their kids walk.

This shows there's a serious problem with the design of Barton Hills Drive. It should function as a neighborhood street. But, because of obsolete street design principles, it's as wide as a highway, which encourages folks to drive at highway speeds. These folks will soon include denizens of the new apartments on Lamar, who will speed down Barton Hills Drive as a cut-through to avoid congestion on Lamar.

Barton Hills, as a community, can get the City to fix Barton Hills Drive.

The 20 mph school zone near the school is not enough. Alyssa's, Andrew's, and Clifford's accident was outside the school zone. Kids from the school had just walked past that spot on a field trip to Umlauf Sculpture Garden. That bullet was dodged. A second was dodged when word of the accident reached the teachers still at Umlauf. They took the rest of the kids back to school on a detour out of sight of the crash.

How many more bullets do we want to dodge? We need a street designed to ensure that all drivers, both the inexperienced and the unfamiliar to Barton Hills, drive safely.

I honestly don't know what the best alternative is. However, I'm willing to risk suffering some slings and arrows by saying that the only unacceptable alternative, no matter what, is to do nothing.

Regards,

Tom



Neighborhood Watch

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Update

Barton Hills Community Park

by Roy O. Smithers
Executive Committee Chair

We are moving forward with the additions to the Barton Hills playscape. Play equipment has been selected and priced. The current playscape area contains gravel, which is no longer acceptable as a base under the play equipment. It will have to be removed and replaced with engineered wood chips. You probably have seen this material at other playgrounds, Zilker School playground, for instance. The City of Austin at some point in the future will have to do the replacement, but unfortunately for us, we can't wait for this to happen. It must be done when the new playscape equipment is installed. AISD has agreed to remove the pea gravel and replace it with engineered wood chips after the equipment is installed. This amounts to a \$40,000 donation by AISD to the project which saves a generous amount of our precious park funds. It will be tight, but we hope to have the playscape equipment installed during the summer before the new school year starts. Committee member Melanie Gantt deserves super accolades for all the hard work she has put in on this project.

Beatriz Mejia, Mina Kumar and Rachel Noffke have been working diligently on the mural slated to be installed on the concrete wall on the hillside of the Barton Hills playground. Mina made a very professional presentation to the Barton Hills Neighborhood Association at the last meeting. They

have submitted an application to obtain funding from the Barton Hills Neighborhood Association (\$5,500) to pay for professional artistic design of the mosaic, tapping into local neighborhood talent. A second application for \$25,563 is to the City of Austin, Neighborhood Partnering Program (NPP), which will probably involve "Art in Public Places." These funds will be spent for materials and grout, also estimating a large number of volunteer hours on the installation and maintenance of the mosaic. As one of the requirements, they had to solicit neighborhood folks to sign a petition in favor of the project. They obtained signatures of approval of 18 of the 30 residents who reside directly around the Park, which satisfied the 60% "stakeholder" requirement. They obtained 42 signatures from other neighborhood residents. They also obtained a letter of support from Kati Achtermann, principal of Barton Hills Elementary. Everyone is excited about their progress in bringing this wonderful project to fruition.

As always, the Committee truly appreciates all of the support of Barton Hills residents and it needs your continued support in the future. If you are interested in keeping up with the latest Committee discussions, the minutes of Committee meetings can be obtained by sending me an email at rorsmith@aol.com.

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Greenbelt Guardians

By Glee Ingram

Our Greenbelt Guardians celebrated National Trails Day on June 7 by working on the Gus Fruh entry trail. We had a group of 36 motivated volunteers working together, contributing a total of 136.5 hours of labor.

When you visit or drive by the trail entry, you will see a brand new post and rail cedar fence, built by volunteers. The switchback trail that was rutted and eroded by the recent heavy rain storms was smoothed out with packed granite. The tree and shrub branches that had grown into the trail were pruned back, and Poison Ivy along the edges was cut back. The natural stone and packed soil steps that lead to the main trail across from the swimming hole were repaired. And a hardy crew revisited an area across the creek where a major invasives removal project was done through Greenbelt Guardian grant funds. They tromped through thick growth stimulated by the recent rains, targeting new *Ligustrum* growth and digging out remaining *Nandina* plants.

Many of the volunteers attended a post event picnic at Zilker Park, hosted by the Hill Country Conservancy, for all of the volunteers working on projects along the greenbelt, plus Austin Parks Foundation staff who helped organize the event, and Texas Conservation Corps staff who donated their time. It was a large collaborative event that resulted in substantive improvements along the greenbelt, as well as along other trail sites in the city.

We are still in the process of working with various City Departments to establish protocols which will allow us to proceed with the targeted removal of large invasive plant populations, using the grant funds that we have acquired. On June 13, a trail meeting was arranged by John Clement of the Watershed Protection Department, to allow a management level discussion involving several different City Departments that have work mandates involving the Barton Creek Greenbelt. Present at the walk and discussion were:

myself representing the Greenbelt Guardians and our work mission and funding resources; the Assistant Director of the PARD District that is responsible for the greenbelt and John Cook, our PARD partner who heads up the maintenance and improvements along the entire greenbelt; two City Park Rangers; the Director of the Fire Department that serves the Wildlands Conservation lands; and the Director and a staff member of the Texas Conservation Corps, who we hire to do the actual removal of the large invasive plants.

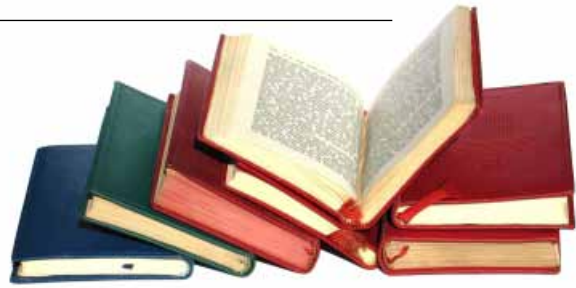
It was very productive for everyone to see the actual conditions along the trail and discuss the needs and obstacles and policy-level criteria that need to be codified and approved by each of the Departments. Our next step is to provide a policy and protocol document that is signed off by each of these departments. We hope to have that completed by September 1.



Heard it on the listserv

Mark your calendars for Saturday August 9th for the 2nd Annual Barton Springs Fest

"Barton Springs Fest is a full day of fun, music, refreshments, and outdoor education at Barton Springs. Last year the Austin City Council passed a resolution establishing the second Saturday of every August as Barton Springs Fest day in commemoration of the August 8, 1992 voter approval of Austin's Save Our Springs citizen-initiative ordinance."



"The Little Free Library at 2403 Spring Creek Dr. has been in the "business" of providing free books for the neighborhood for a year now, and there's been a 100% turn over today. Come see what's new in the box and bring something that you think your neighbors would enjoy to add to the mix."

Hello Barton Hills—

My name is Dave Whitney and I'm the owner of the new aRoma Italian Kitchen & Bar next to The Spoke. If you haven't already, we'd love it if you stopped by and said hello. Chef Jason Garcia has put together a menu that we think you're really going to enjoy, which includes authentic Neapolitan Pizzas, handmade pastas, several meat dishes, some fresh salads and an extensive wine list.

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Austin Real Estate

by Ryan Rodenbeck
Broker/owner of Spyglass Realty



Austin, the Shining Star on the National Stage

You'd have to live under a rock to not know that the housing market in Austin is hotter than ever. Don't be fooled into thinking that the rest of the country is faring as well as we are. Yes, they are doing well, but with the latest unemployment numbers hitting 4.4% in Austin, we are the shining star on the real estate national stage.

So it brings us to the question that I get on an almost daily basis: If I sell my home, where am I going to go? That's a great question. I've been fortunate enough, these past couple of years, to be in a position where I work 60% to 70% listings compared to buyers. Many of my sellers, for one reason or another, are moving out of Austin. That's great for them, in the sense that they don't have to try to fight this market, but if you are selling a home in 78704 and trying to downsize, that's where you get into the madness of multiple offers. It boils down to this: the cheaper the home (for the most part), the harder it is to acquire. Special consideration to where you are going to go needs to be made before you even list your home. If you're downsizing, you need to be prepared for the possibility that you are going to have to fight for that home.

As an avid Dave Ramsey follower, I have, in past years, been extremely reluctant to advise my clients to buy BEFORE they sell their home. That's not the case anymore. With current market conditions, I now believe you would be in a better situation by buying first. Obviously, there are risks and we do our best to put a plan into place to mitigate those risks. But now more than ever are those risks tolerable.

If you are upsizing your home, things get better. The higher the price point, the smaller the pool of buyers. It's still no cake walk, but we see less multiple offers the higher the price range a buyer is looking in.

The Future of the Market

We do expect the market to cool after this summer and stability to take effect as interest rates rise and more inventory comes online via new homes coming on market in outlying areas and rising property taxes motivating empty nesters to downsize. Don't fret too much; we believe that this "category 4 hurricane" will downgrade to a strong "tropical storm", meaning the outlook in the foreseeable future will be tolerable. We need stabilization. In real estate, what rises fast, falls fast and we look forward to 6% appreciation to take the place of 10-12%. The trick for real estate professionals will be to educate sellers in what is currently happening in the market. As time passes, you will see multiple offers die down to some extent and sellers are going to need to know when that happens.

May 2014 Sold Data

Currently, the average sold price in area 7 for May (areas west of Lamar in 78704) is \$708,396. The average square footage is 1,821 and the average sold price per square foot is \$399.85.

In Barton Hills, the average sold price was \$535,000 for May, the average square footage of those sold was 1,795 and the average price per square foot was \$312.76. Be careful using this information to determine value on your property. There were only two sold units in Barton Hills for the month of May and the two properties varied greatly.



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BHNA funds could be spent to fight oak wilt

by Jorjanna Price

BHNA has fallen down on the job of oak wilt patrol. There are no longer signs posted warning neighbors that ***the WORST time to trim live oaks is February 1 to July 1.***

Think of all the newcomers who know absolutely nothing about this fungal disease, which is deadly to oaks. We need to pay for educational materials and programs to inform and remind everyone in Barton Hills about oak wilt prevention.

We need to purchase at least a dozen signs that are posted widely so every resident sees them. It's cheap but effective. I also think BHNA should have a committee focused solely on oak wilt problems and solutions.

For more information on oak wilt prevention, see page 12.

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A black and white photograph of a modern home's interior. The view is from a dining area looking into a kitchen. The dining area has a table with patterned chairs. The kitchen has dark cabinets and a white countertop. A staircase with a metal railing is on the left. Large windows on the right provide a view of the outdoors.

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How Do We Spend Our Neighborhood Funds?

Suggested neighborhood improvements, continued from page 1

- **Rename Robert E. Lee Road.** Rename Robert E. Lee Road, to Zenobia Way. Barton Springs historically generated major conservation efforts. The name of a road in such a high profile area, serving as a worldwide destination, ought to reflect this spirit. Zenobia Spring is the only one of the three springs on the grounds freely accessible from this road. I would be happy to volunteer to take on the legwork associated with this effort, as long as I have help from people to ensure project continuity. **Cost estimate:** less than \$500.00, with Council Member sponsorship.
- **Support Greenbelt Guardians.** The greenbelt is a most natural playground for all residents in our neighborhood. Glee Ingram and Stan Ostrum continually spearhead work for trail improvements and ecological restoration. Some areas in major need of repair include: the lower portion of the Homedale entrance and its associated northerly footbridge; and, creation of a permeable concrete switchback trail and bridge just upstream of Barton Springs Pool, allowing neighborhood residents to quickly and safely cross to the northern side of the pool grounds by foot or bicycle. Glee and Stan need project leaders to help with these areas. **Cost estimate:** ongoing.
- **Create a Community Park mosaic.** Beatriz Mejia made substantial community gathering efforts to garner approval for the creation of a wall mural in Barton Hills Community Park. Because it appears Park funds are unavailable for the mosaic, Beatriz requests neighborhood funds to contribute toward the making of the mural. **Amount requested:** \$5,500.00.
- **Create other mosaics.** Three areas are important for maximal visibility and the need to curb unsightliness: the concrete wall on the southwest corner of Barton Skyway and South Lamar; the downstream spillover wall of Barton Springs Pool; and the walls underneath the Barton Springs Road bridge. Jerilyn Green, our new Austin Neighborhoods Council Representative, is considering taking on the Barton Skyway wall project. Ongoing volunteer efforts to design and mosaic these and other areas with trained professionals, using reclaimed materials, would be a wonderful community gathering effort. The use of reclaimed materials is a positive teaching opportunity for neighborhood children and lowers costs substantially. Mosaics also help deter graffiti. A successful proof of concept is the mosaic wall in front of Phoenix House in Bouldin Creek (see photo). Kerry Price, our Past Treasurer, smartly pointed to Habitat for Humanity as a great conduit for reclaimed materials. **Cost estimate:** unknown.
- **Host Movies in the Park.** A free mobile outdoor theatre service is available through Austin Parks Foundation. We can bring the community together and play a couple of movies during the Spring and / or Fall. We can use the Barton Springs park space on Robert E. Lee Road, attracting many attendees and raising money at each event to make it self-sustaining. The only funds needed are The City's required port-a-potty rentals and park rental fee. **Cost estimate:** under \$500.00 per showing.
- **Rename Barton Skyway.** As a conservation effort, our neighborhood fought mightily in the past to prevent connectivity of Barton Skyway between the northwest and south sides of the road, over the greenbelt. Renaming our south side section of Barton Skyway would likely deter any similar future attempts. Melissa Hawthorne, Past President and Current Secretary, wisely proposes the renaming of Barton Skyway after a conservationist. It would be great to have someone spearhead this project. **Cost estimate:** less than \$500.00, with Council Member sponsorship.
- **Buy new car magnet signs for the neighborhood watch patrol.** Thanks to John Luther, the neighborhood watch patrol makes ours one of the safest neighborhoods in Austin. **Cost estimate:** under \$1,000.00.
- **Lead a traffic planning committee.** As Tom indicated in his President's Message, traffic is a growing concern in our neighborhood. Although most desired road enhancements may far exceed our budget, bringing in money by hosting movie nights and the like could give us something to work with. Also, some projects may be less financially intensive than others. Having a committee for traffic planning in place would provide us a conduit for having our ears to the ground, and a voice with The City in these processes. It would also allow us to survey the landscape, informing us whether smaller public-private traffic installations are plausible, either in the near or distant future. For more information, check out the recently updated guidelines and procedures for traffic management in Austin:

<http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Transportation/latm-guidelines-procedures.pdf>

See you at the next meeting!!

Pruning Guidelines for Prevention of Oak Wilt in Texas

Oak wilt fungus clogs the water-conducting tissues of infected trees, causing them to wilt and die. Oak wilt attacks live oak and red oak trees. It is a serious disease, having killed more than one million trees in central Texas. The disease spreads by sap feeding beetles attracted to fresh wounds (pruning cuts, broken limbs, weedeater cuts, etc.) and through neighboring diseased root systems.

Oak wilt, caused by the fungus *Ceratocystis fagacearum*, is the most destructive disease affecting live oaks and red oaks in Central Texas. Most of the tree mortality results from tree-to-tree spread of the pathogen through interconnected or grafted root systems, once an oak wilt center becomes established. New infection centers begin when beetles carry oak wilt fungal spores from infected red oaks to fresh, open wounds on healthy oaks. Wounds include any damage caused by wind, hail, vehicles, construction, squirrels, birds or pruning. Research has shown that both oak wilt fungal mats on infected red oaks and insects that carry oak wilt spores are most prevalent in the spring.

Below is a brief description of how you can reduce the risk of fungal spread when pruning:

- Always paint fresh wounds on oaks, including pruning cuts and stumps, with wound dressing or latex paint immediately after pruning or live tree removal at all times of the year.
- Clean all pruning tools with 10% bleach solution or Lysol™ between sites and/or trees.
- If possible avoid pruning or wounding of oaks during the spring (currently defined as February 1 through June 30). Reasons to prune in the spring include:
 - 1.To accommodate public safety concerns such as hazardous limbs, traffic visibility or emergency utility line clearance.
 - 2.To repair damaged limbs (from storms or other anomalies)
 - 3.To remove limbs rubbing on a building or rubbing on other branches, and to raise low limbs over a street.
 - 4.On sites where construction schedules take precedence, pruning any live tissue should only be done to accommodate required clearance.
 - 5.Dead branch removal where live tissue is not exposed.
- Pruning for other reasons (general tree health, non-safety related clearance or thinning, etc.) should be conducted before February 1 or after June 30.
- Debris from diseased red oaks should be immediately chipped, burned or buried.

Regardless of the reasons or time of year, proper pruning techniques should be used. These techniques include making proper pruning cuts and avoiding injurious practices such as topping or excessive crown thinning. If you are uncertain about any of this information, you should consult with a Texas Oak Wilt Certified arborist, ISA Certified Arborist, or an oak wilt specialist from the City of Austin's Arborists Office.

For more information <https://austin.texas.gov/page/oak-wilt-suppression>



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How to register your cell phone to the Local Area Emergency Notification System by CAPCOG.

This system uses a “reverse dialing” telephone method to notify members of the public of critical emergency information in situations where property or human life is in danger and of events that may affect them.

Regional notification messages are initiated by local public safety agencies as one of several methods of relaying vital information to their citizens.

In addition to the warning messages sent by participating local public safety agencies for many types of incidents, the system can send automatic notifications of certain weather related emergencies such as severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, and flash floods.

You can register your cell phone—and your land-line telephone—to receive these warnings by using the following link:

http://alertregistration.com/capcog/CitizenRegistration_Reg.cfm

You may link your cellular telephone number to one or more locations within the 10-county CAPCOG region, including your homes, businesses and the homes of relatives.

This notification system works within the Bastrop, Blanco, Burnet, Caldwell, Fayette, Hays, Lee, Llano, Travis and Williamson counties.







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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: _____

Other 18+ members of your household: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please send this form along with your annual dues to:

Barton Hills Neighborhood Association P.O. Box 41206 Austin, TX 78704

Make checks payable to BHNA. You can pay dues online through PayPal at <http://bartonhills.org/about/membership/>.
(PayPal service fee of \$1 will be added to your total.)