

Barton Hills News

BARTON HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

BHNA Fourth of July Parade Report

by Carol Mann
Neighborhood Outreach



The 21st annual Barton Hills Neighborhood Association Fourth of July Parade was a great success again this year! Yes, some planning elements had to be put in place, but it is sheer joy and enthusiasm that fuels this event. It's neighbors who gave their time and energy, all of us celebrating together, and kids with their pure excitement for the moment that make it a joy.

The day was mild (for the 4th in Austin) and there was even a breeze at the park. Watermelon donations multiplied overnight, and decorated vehicles, kids, dogs and bikes appeared miraculously!

Close to 400 watchers and participants converged at the park to celebrate our country's independence. With so many unsettling events seeming to inundate us and polarize us as a nation, this celebration can still be seen through the same eyes. We are neighbors and friends in the greatest place on earth.

Thanks again to all the neighbors and sponsors who participated this year! It takes lots of volunteers doing a million little tasks to pull it off each year.

Pictures are the best way to remember this wonderful day! Looking forward to Parade 2015! It's never too soon to get involved.

See more parade pictures on pages 10 and 11



NEXT MEETING

October 28th • 6 - 9 pm

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



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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.

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Newsletter printed on 100% recycled paper.

President's Message

By Tom Nuckols
BHNA President

Neighbors,

Turn out to vote on November 4th (or during early voting from October 20th to the 31st)! Why? I participated in the process whereby an Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (ICRC) drew the 10 districts that will now each elect a City Council member. It produced a flawed result, and Barton Hills needs to respond accordingly.

The luck of the draw basically determined who sat on the ICRC. Lady Luck shone her fortunes mightily on far south Austin, resulting in more far south Austinites being seated on the ICRC than folks from any other part of town. Their numbers on the ICRC led to the gerrymandering of District 5, which includes Barton Hills.

District 5 starts at Lady Bird Lake, goes south along a narrow strip of South Lamar Boulevard, and then blossoms into a broadening swath that includes huge numbers of voters extending as far south as Hays County.

Why is Barton Hills in a district with Hays County? U.S. House Speaker Tip O'Neill famously said that "All politics is local." My corollary is "Where you stand on an issue depends on where you live." The ICRC's far south Austin members drew boundaries for District 5 that include lots of voters living in far south Austin, but as few as possible voters living in northern neighborhoods like Barton Hills, Zilker, and South Lamar.

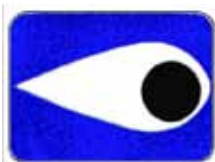
Coincidence? Possibly. But at least one District 5 candidate is publicly saying his overriding purpose for running for Council is solely to represent folks who live south of Ben White Boulevard, to the exclusion of the northern part of District 5. In contrast, other candidates say they'll represent everyone in District 5, regardless of whether you live north or south of Ben White.

Voter turnout will decide which type of candidate wins. Become informed about who the District 5 candidates are. Then turn out to vote!

Regards,

Tom Nuckols

BHNA President

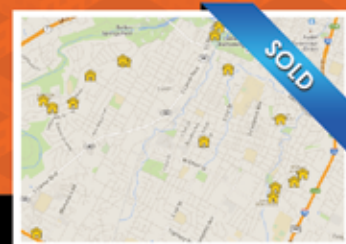


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Update

Barton Hills Community Park

by Roy O. Smithers and Melanie Gantt
Executive Committee Chair and Chair Playscape Committee

Eureka, most of the Barton Hills Park playscape is installed! As Max so aptly put it in *Where the Wild Things Are*: “*Let the wild rumpus (on the new equipment) start!*”

Although there was a real effort to install the equipment before school started, there were rather normal delays caused by having to sequence and schedule many tasks. Many different groups helped pull everything together, including an excellent outpouring of neighbor and school volunteers who gave a Saturday morning to spread gravel for a drainage base on the main playscape area. Over forty adults, plus many teens and kids came with shovels and wheelbarrows to help with that task.

Now the main section is complete. New to the playground are spinners! Orbs, seats and wheels ... a spinner for every taste! There are a climbing log and tree stumps, challenging balancing disks, rocking monkey bars, and turning bars for the gymnasts and gymnasts-at-heart. Austin PARD also spiffed-up the old playscape with spray paint and some fun new elements. A net climbing apparatus called “Space Net” is scheduled to arrive near the end of September and should be installed as part of the playscape by early October. This will complete the playscape phase of the Barton Hills Community Park improvement project.

The Executive Committee is so appreciative of the Austin Parks and Recreation Department; Austin Independent School District (removed the former pea gravel ground covering and provided the new mulch safety surface); Kati Achtermann, principal of Barton Hills Elementary; and Melanie Gantt, Chair of the Barton Hills Community Park Playground Committee. Melanie did an excellent job of overseeing the project. I really wouldn't be surprised if she had less hair on her head than before this project started. Coordinating this whole thing was challenging, but we are all gratified by the families out enjoying the playground after school and on weekends. In addition to Melanie and Kati, the playground committee who provided the initial vision for this project are Melissa

Atterberry, Nicole Austin, Tina Donahoo (chaired the Spring 2013 fundraiser for the playground), Susan Gaetz, Stacey Gardner, Beatriz Mejia, Eric Miller, Courtney Perry, Kathleen Schneeman, Kelly Tagle, Eileen Vickers, and Meredith Weiss.

The Mural Committee obtained the requisite signatures of neighbors living around the park and submitted the document to the City of Austin. We are still waiting for approval of our application to City of Austin, Neighborhood Partnering Program (NPP) for \$25,563 to be used to construct the mural. The Committee will soon meet with some UT art students to seek their assistance. A full scale drawing of the proposed mural is almost completed. A meeting is planned for early October in anticipation of beginning work on the project as soon as possible, contingent on the City's funding decision.

Now that the playscape is almost completed and the mural project is on its way, our next task will be to obtain a design and the cost of landscaping the slope just east of the playscape.

As always, the Committee truly appreciates all of the support of Barton Hills Elementary School folks and Barton Hills residents. Please continue to support this effort 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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The BHE PTA presents the 43rd annual Carnival groovily named PEACE.LOVE.CARNIVAL. on **Saturday, November 15 from 1-4 pm at Barton Hills Elementary.**

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Austin Real Estate

by Ryan Rodenbeck



The summer market stats are out from the Board of Realtors and it's a mixed bag all across the board. Overall, through the entire MLS, the median home price is up, year over year. This is because the under \$300,000 price range continues to flourish. It's the most sought after price range in the city.

If you look at the sales numbers throughout Austin, central Austin shows a substantial decrease in sales over last July. Some areas, including Westlake, the Southwest Parkway corridor and 78704 show an actual decrease in property values. Before you look too deep into these numbers, know that much of this is due to a small sampling of data. Area 6 is the part of 78704 east of Lamar. This is an interesting area because there is SO much of a difference in price ranges between the northern part and southern part, that if more properties are sold in the southern part, the data can be skewed. So much so, that I think this should be divided into two new MLS sections that I would label 6N and 6S, with the dividing boarder being Oltorf. The average sold price in this section decreased by .5% for properties that were in the same square footage range. I think if we narrowed this down, you would see that many more properties were sold in the southern part of area 6 than in the northern part, which led to a data report that is hard to interpret.

Looking at area 7 (the part of 78704 west of Lamar) you see a substantial decrease in value. The median home price shows to be down 22.8% over July of 2013. Now in this section, not only is the data sampling small (only 11 homes sold in July of 2014), but the size range of the homes is dramatically different. In 2013 the average square footage was 1,581. In 2014 it's 1,062, a staggering 32% reduction in the size of the homes sold. The average price per square foot is actually up 11% from \$323 in 2013 to \$359 a foot in 2014.

Still, it's a mixed bag of information. July showed to be the first month of increased inventory in years. So people keep asking "what's going on here?" The number of people moving to Austin does not seem to decrease and the headlines for companies moving to Austin and hiring hasn't slowed down. My theory is that people moving to Austin have heard about the crazy market we've had here in the 24 months preceding June and they are being very cautious

as to how they enter this market, if at all. Many would-be buyers are electing to rent instead of buy.

You see in the past 24 months, many sellers would look at a comparative market analysis and decide to price their property some 3 to 5, and in some cases even 10% above the highest comparable home that sold. And shockingly, it did sell. Buyers were willing to make up the difference between appraised price and contract price. Well with this recent slowdown, such tactics aren't going to be successful. Can you sell your home in 2014? Of course, but you have to be reasonable.

If you are buying or were in the process of buying, this gives you a unique opportunity (compared to the previous 24 months) to enter into a market without the insane competition that we saw in 2013 or the early half of 2014. I believe that we have seen most (if not all) of the appreciation we are going to see in 2014 already.

I recently evaluated some properties in 78704. A property there sold for \$449,000 in March in just 6 days. There are currently two actives on the same exact street and they are almost identical models. They have 51 and 73 days on the market, respectively. They are priced between \$440,000 and \$450,000 and sitting. But they were originally priced in the \$470,000 range. I personally believe that had these sellers priced their homes in the range between \$445,000 and \$449,000, they would have sold within the first two weeks at, or close to, list price. But now they have a stale listing, and a savvy buyer will take advantage of this to get a price some \$10,000 below what it should have been priced at originally.

I can tell you that I have lost out on a couple of listings recently to other agents that agreed to price listing at rates that were way too high. When I see them hit MLS, I breathe a sigh of relief that I did not get that listing. Slow and steady wins the race, folks.

The take-away: if you're a buyer, this is good time to get a decent deal compared to the 24 months preceding June. If you are seller, you can still sell, you just have to be reasonable with your list price. Don't let greed lure you into selling your home lower than you should ultimately be getting. The DIY pricing program is over.

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Emergency Preparedness

by Susan Donaldson

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For current flood information and emergency road closures in the City of Austin and Travis County, visit:

<http://www.atxfloods.com>

ATXfloods is maintained by the City of Austin Flood Early Warning System (FEWS) team. FEWS monitors weather and road conditions 24-7 on an on-call basis. ATXfloods keeps the map and closure information as up-to-date as possible based on the best information currently available, but drivers should pay attention to road conditions. If you see water on the road, save yourself!

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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: _____

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Please send this form along with your annual dues to:

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