

Barton Hills News

BARTON HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Barton Springs Road Bridge Study *by Melissa Hawthorne*

The Barton Springs Road bridge over Barton Creek is a familiar sight most of us cross daily. The concrete bridge was assessed by the city and found to be in fair condition and in need of repair, with some deterioration in the deck and supporting columns. In August of 2017, the Austin City Council dedicated an additional \$692,387 to study the bridge project.



The contract amount now totals \$1.05 million. While the additional funds were approved in August 2017, the amendment to the contract was not executed until October 24th, 2017, and the amended contract is expected to be in place by the end of November and a schedule for the work in mid-December 2017.

Additional funding will support the second phase of engineering for the project, which includes evaluating the load capacity of the bridge, assessing roadway needs and options for repairing or replacing the bridge, and replacement design concepts. When scheduled, the work will focus on examining the bridge's ability to handle current loading requirements, roadway/intersection needs and potential improvement options, and an assessment of bridge rehabilitation feasibility. This phase of work is the follow-up to the Bridge Condition Inspection and a precursor to the completion of the Bridge Conceptual Engineering Report.

On December 6th, members of BHNA and ZNA met with city councilmember Ann Kitchen's office and Public Works for an update. The full report should be back in approximately nine months. The city is looking at five options - which could include repair, rehab, or replacement of the bridge after review of the technical report. They are also looking at options for the intersection of Barton Springs Road and Robert E. Lee, which could include some additional improvements like a new turn lane, sidewalk, and bike lane, but all of that is predicated on the results of the study and open for discussion. It must be noted that the project at this phase is just a study with no absolutes for design, construction or schedule.



The Barton Springs Road Bridge through Zilker Park was built in 1926 and reconstructed (widened) in 1946.



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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Barton Hills Community Park Update

By Roy O. Smithers, Chair, Park Executive Committee

Stairs on the East Side (Barton Hills Drive) of the Park:

Driving down Barton Hills Drive along the park, you probably noticed chain link fencing around some earthwork. Well, this is the beginning of the construction of stairs that will connect the sidewalk on Barton Hills Drive with the park at the top of the slope. This project is being funded by City of Austin Parks and Recreation with funds provided by developers of condos and apartments along South Lamar. The cost of this project is much less because of the donation of: (1) design and plans by architects John Mapes and Laura Brodersen of Gensler, (2) structural plans by Ruben Martinez and Hina Alam, structural engineers from Martinez Moore Engineers. Committee member Melissa Hawthorne has worked long and tirelessly with these folks, the contractor, and representatives of PARD to get this task accomplished. If you see Melissa or these BHE parents, please give them a big Barton Hills thanks for all their hard work.



Area in front of the portables & drainage area at the Northeast part of the Park:

The Committee is happy to announce that additional funds (\$32,000) were found and earmarked for our park at the Austin Parks Foundation. This money originated from Austin City Limits. These funds were spent beautifying the area in front of the Barton Hills Elementary School portables and to repair a drainage area located at the northeast part of the park. The latter area is where the drainage pipe carries runoff under the trail. You may have noticed old tires in this area had been used to attempt to slow the water. So, the old tires have been removed and these areas have been modified and beautified.

Moving the Top Running Trail and Irrigation: These projects will be done next summer when school is out. Moving the trail should enlarge the upper playing field for baseball, kickball, soccer and other group activities.

Mural: Some may have noticed that part of the mural on the south end (nearest the school) began peeling away from the wall. The Committee informed neighbors Rachel Noffke and Beatriz Mejia, who were two of the three designers/creators/builders of the mural. They examined the problem, removed the peeling portion of the mural and replaced the section with some new and old tiles. It now looks as good as new and is most certainly stronger than the original. If you see either Rachel or Beatriz, please give them a big Barton Hills thanks for their good work repairing the beautiful Barton Hills mural.

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Thanks-- As always, the Committee truly appreciates all of the support from Barton Hills Elementary School, City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department, the Barton Hills PTA, Barton Hills Neighborhood Assn. and every Barton Hills resident. If you are interested in keeping up with the latest Committee discussions, the minutes of Committee meetings can be obtained by emailing me at rorsmith@aol.com.

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David has been very active within the Barton Hills neighborhood, currently serving his second term as Neighborhood Association President, and serving on the executive committee for the past 7 years. This dedication to community is the type of service you can expect working with David on any real estate transaction.



Be in the know

with the last 3 months statistics of homes sold in the Barton Hills Neighborhood

	4th Quarter 2017	4th Quarter 2016	Percent Change
Homes Sold	13	19	-31.60%
Avg. List Price	\$889,692	\$822,100	8.20%
Avg. Sold Price	\$867,192	\$788,247	10.00%
Avg. Square Ft.	2,175	2,270	-4.20%
Avg. List Price - SqFt	\$442.01	\$363.22	21.70%
Avg. Sold Price - SqFt	\$412.98	\$349.42	18.20%
Avg. Days On Market	50	57	-12.30%

Search Criteria: Sold Properties from 10/1/17 to 12/31/17 - Barton Hills

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Mary Ann Neely, Barton Hills Democratic Precinct Chair *by Jo Clifton*

Mary Ann Neely moved to Barton Hills in 1977 and became the Democratic precinct chair for the neighborhood's precinct, 342, in 1980. She is currently getting ready for 2018. As precinct chair for this large and active neighborhood, Neely is responsible for organizing get out the vote efforts for the March primary and the November general election.



In order to do that, first she gets a list of all the households in the precinct and checks to see which ones have people not registered to vote. In order to find volunteers in the precinct to help her register those people, Neely said she would do a robo-call to every Democratic voter in the precinct letting them know that she is looking for volunteers. Those volunteers will come to her house in January where they will have brief training and then be sworn in as deputy voter registrars.

Volunteers then go to the houses and apartments of people not registered to vote and give them the opportunity to register. Then before the primary, some of the same volunteers will go back to the houses where they registered people to give them information on the fact that the primary is coming.

Neely noted that she does not become involved in Democratic campaigns before the primary, but she does help any Democrat on the ballot who wants to campaign in the precinct. Once the Democratic candidates have been selected, "then we have parties and open houses" where candidates can come and meet the people in the precinct. "And then I really prepare for the November election," she said.

Neely said she has been 342's precinct chair since 1980, when the previous precinct chair refused to support President Jimmy Carter. "And I decided if you don't support the Democratic choice for president," you should not be the chair of the precinct.

The area has become more heavily Democratic since 1980, she noted, "because our area is changing." In 2008, Precinct 342 had the largest number of Democratic voters in the state. "Other precincts have a higher percentage, but we have a higher number of voters, so candidates want to work our precinct," for example, Neely said. Zilker has a higher percentage of Democratic voters, Neely said, but Barton Hills makes up for that in size. "And we vote," she added.

Pollster Mark Littlefield said Precinct 342 always ranks among the highest in the state.

In addition to her work as precinct chair, Neely is a member of the city's Environmental Commission and just stepped down after eight years as president of Tree Folks. She is the treasurer of Austin Environmental Democrats and serves as first vice president of the Barton Hills Garden Club. She is also on the board of directors of both the Barton Springs Conservancy and the Zilker Botanical Garden Conservancy as well as the save Barton Creek Association. When not doing her volunteer work, Neely enjoys gardening.

(This reporter attempted to find a Republican precinct chair for this precinct but was unsuccessful.)

Austin Parks Foundation Awards \$7500 for Riparian Restoration in Zilker Park

by Gail Rothe

Austin Parks Foundation awarded the Friends of South Zilker Park a 2017 Fall Community Grant of \$7500 through their Austin City Limits Music Festival Park Grants Program. The Friends group—a volunteer group open to all—will use these funds to continue restoration of two small channels: Robert E Lee Tributary and Old Little Zilker Channel. These waterways channel stormwater from Zilker and Barton Hills to Barton Creek in the area of the park bounded by Robert E Lee Road, Barton Hills Drive, and Barton Creek, including the parking areas for the south gate entrance to Barton Springs Pool. Although Zilker is a metropolitan park, this part of the park also serves as a neighborhood park for residents of Zilker and Barton Hills.

Since 2014 the Friends group has contributed over 750 volunteer hours removing non-native, invasive species; planting well over 1000 native grasses, shrubs and trees; and removing countless bags of trash. The most recent effort was to mulch two heritage pecan trees near the baseball field and small log cabin as part of Austin Parks Foundation's "It's My Park Day."

This grant recognizes and builds on the work already accomplished by volunteers in our neighborhoods and allows for bigger jobs, such as the removal of non-native, invasive chinaberry and tallow trees by a professional arborist.

The funds have also been used to protect a heritage pecan tree by aerating and mulching the compacted soils under the tree. To prevent future parking on the vulnerable root zone the Parks and Recreation Department extended the nearby split-rail fence.



Invasive chinaberry and tallow trees removed by volunteers.



Split-rail fence extended to protect pecan tree root zone.

In 2018 more native grasses, shrubs, and trees will be planted to diversify the riparian vegetation, improve stormwater infiltration and treatment, and increase bank stability. The Friends group will continue to improve the area in and around the detention pond and along the sidewalk.

For more information contact Gail Rothe at grothe@austin.rr.com or 512-659-7955.

ABOUT THE FRIENDS OF SOUTH ZILKER PARK:

Organized in 2014 with the adoption of Robert E Lee Tributary, the group consists of volunteers, primarily from the Zilker and Barton Hills neighborhoods. The group continues the work that began in 2012 when the City designated the tributary as a Grow Zone. Prior to that the tributary was a mowed, trash-filled channel that moved stormwater from our neighborhoods into Barton Creek but provided no real ecological or aesthetic benefits. In 2012 mowing was discontinued and in 2013 native trees were planted. In 2015 the group also adopted Old Little Zilker channel. The Friends group focuses on removing invasive species that may create an unhealthy monoculture, planting native species, controlling erosion, and improving the look of the detention pond.

Volunteer workdays are held on Saturdays and weekday mornings throughout the year. Tools and gloves are provided. Children 13 and under must be accompanied by an adult at all times. To be notified of upcoming events, contact Gail Rothe (grothe@austin.rr.com) or visit <http://zilkerneighborhood.org/friends-of-south-zilker-park.shtml>.

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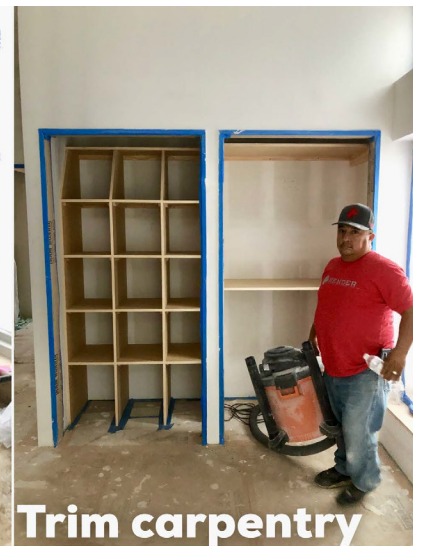
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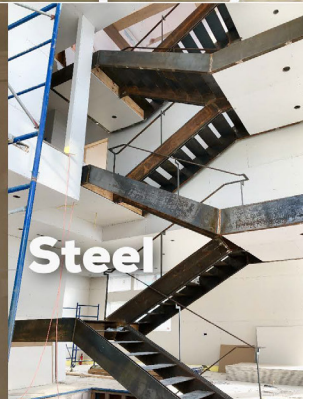
Tile/wood



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Dogs



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What is Oak Wilt? *by Melissa Hawthorne*

Oak wilt is an infectious tree disease caused by the fungus *Ceratocystis fagacearum*, which disables the water conducting system in susceptible oak trees. Red oaks (Spanish oak, Shumard oak, and Blackjack oak) are the most susceptible, and play a unique role in the establishment of new oak wilt infection areas. Live oaks are less susceptible than red oaks, but are the most seriously infected species due to grafted root systems that allow the fungus to spread among adjacent trees.

How Can I Identify Oak Wilt?

Oak wilt is generally identified in live oaks by patterns of tree mortality and the presence of foliar symptoms (veinal necrosis). Foliar symptoms in red oaks are less distinct, and oak wilt is generally identified by the “flashing” of autumn colors during summer months and/or the presence of fungal mats. Fungal mats are spore-producing structures that generally form during spring months on red oaks that became infected the previous late-summer or fall. Red oaks that become infected during the spring and early summer will generally die due to the extreme heat of Central Texas summers, and will not maintain sufficient moisture to form fungal mats the following spring.



Veinal necrosis is an important symptom of the disease in Live Oaks.

How Do Trees Become Infected?

Red oaks play a key role in the second method of oak wilt infection. Only red oaks form fungal mats, and the spores from fungal mats can be transmitted by insect vectors that are attracted to fresh wounds on nearby trees. It is important to recognize that for any given area of oak wilt mortality, the first tree was infected by spores transmitted by an insect vector (generally the nitidulid beetle). Open cuts on an oak attract the Nitidulid Beetle, allowing them to infect new trees. In excess of 95% of the infected trees (generally live oaks) become infected from grafted root connections, resulting in aforementioned patterns of oak wilt mortality. It is estimated that oak wilt mortality centers can expand 100-150 feet per year as spores are transmitted through inter-connected roots.

- **Avoid wounding oak trees, including pruning, from February through June.** Wounds include any damage caused by wind, hail, vehicles, construction, squirrels, birds or pruning.
- Sterilize/sanitize all pruning equipment between trees and paint all wounds and fresh stumps regardless of season.
- Handle oak firewood cautiously, burn all firewood before spring, and never store unseasoned oak wood from infected trees near healthy oaks.
- Cut and dispose of diseased red oaks immediately.
- Plant trees that are resistant to oak wilt and adapted to Central Texas.
- Plant a diverse array of tree species.

For more information visit <http://texasoakwilt.org/>

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Who Are The Greenbelt Guardians?

We are a group of Barton Hills neighbors and community outdoor enthusiasts who work together to preserve and protect one of our most beautiful and precious natural resources - Barton Creek and the Greenbelt that surrounds it. We act as caretakers and stewards for the Greenbelt, organizing quarterly volunteer workdays to build and repair trails, remove invasive plant species, pick up trash, and enjoy the pleasure of working side by side with our friends and neighbors who share our love for this unique slice of urban wilderness.

THE BARTON CREEK GREENBELT IS ...

- A city treasure
- One of the most widely used parks in Austin
- Used by a highly diverse group of citizens who come to enjoy this publicly available, urban wild space
- Our city's antidote to "nature deficit disorder"
- Helping to keep this rapidly growing urban area healthy and visionary

THE GREENBELT GUARDIAN PROGRAM IS ...

- An expression of the priority that the Barton Hills Neighborhood Association (BHNA) places on the protection, health and well-being of the Barton Creek Greenbelt
- Designed to "preserve and protect the greenbelt", as written into the BHNA's bylaws
- Supported by a long-term "adopt-a-park" agreement between the City Parks Department and the BHNA
- Used by our neighborhood and local schools as an educational tool for students

THE GREENBELT GUARDIANS ...

- Maintain and improve trails, steps, retaining walls, and other infrastructure
- Engage in ecological restoration activities to protect creek water and wildlife diversity
- Remove invasive plants, restore native vegetation, and manage drainage and erosion problems
- Offer important inspiration and environmental stewardship lessons to members of our community

THE GREENBELT GUARDIAN PROGRAM HAS ...

- Organized quarterly volunteer work days since 2003, as well as many extra projects
- Received awards from the Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer Conservation District, the Austin Parks Foundation, the City of Austin Parks Department, and the Save Barton Creek Association
- Collaborated with numerous government agencies, user groups, and other non-profits
- Built community among Barton Hills neighbors, as well as other outdoor enthusiasts throughout the City

Look for our next scheduled work day at <https://greenbeltguardians.org/>



It's My Park Day – Fall, November 4, 2017 at Homedale

Greenbelt Guardians Update *by Stan Ostrum*

After a slow start in 2017, the Greenbelt Guardians had a busy fall. We only held one workday between January and September (It's My Park Day in March), but made up for it with three workdays at the end of the year. A fourth workday was cancelled due to bad weather.



Here's a brief summary of what we accomplished:

On Saturday Sept 30th, National Public Lands Day, 19 volunteers contributed a total of 66 hours of labor at the Gus Fruh access. Major tasks included invasives removal and the completion of the rock steps leading down to the creek on the east side.

On Saturday November 4th, the Austin Parks Foundation's fall "It's My Park Day", we had 50 volunteers who contributed a total of 142 hours of labor at the Homedale entrance. Major tasks were invasives removal, graffiti removal, and rock work in the gully by the bridge and where the trail ends at the flats.

On Friday December 8th, we were supposed to host a group of 20 volunteers from Apple for a service day at Gus Fruh, but the snow the night before caused it to be postponed. That workday was part of a larger Apple service project organized by the Hill Country Conservancy. It has been rescheduled for Thursday February 22nd, 2018.

On Saturday December 9th, we worked with Barton Hills neighbor and Austin High School senior Jude Sabo and a group of his classmates who organized a service project at Gus Fruh. 17 volunteers put in a total of 50 hours of labor and did a great job of refurbishing and extending the steps that exit the creek bed on the far (west) side.

Our next regular workday will be on Saturday March 3rd, APF's spring "It's My Park Day". No matter your age or physical ability, there's always something you can do to help, so please make plans to join us! We'll announce the location and how to sign up soon.

For more details, photos, information on upcoming events, or to sign up for our notices, please visit our website at www.greenbeltguardians.org.



On a sad note, we lost one of our long-time volunteers and a big part of our Greenbelt Guardian family, Ken Russell, on December 4th. Ken and his wife Rosalie started working with us in 2005, shortly after moving to Barton Hills, and they quickly became regulars and leaders. While Rosalie liked to pull out invasives, Ken seemed to prefer the engineering side of things, usually working on trail repair or on one of our many rock projects. He became our resident expert in the proper mixing of mortar, and either performed or oversaw that task almost every time we did any rock work. He was also good at working the registration table and greeting volunteers. Some photos of Ken over the years are on our website. We will miss not only his contributions to our work, but also the stories, jokes, knowledge, and enthusiasm that he shared so freely with everyone around him.

2018 Upcoming Events

AUSTIN MARATHON: Sunday, February 18
7 AM - 2 PM

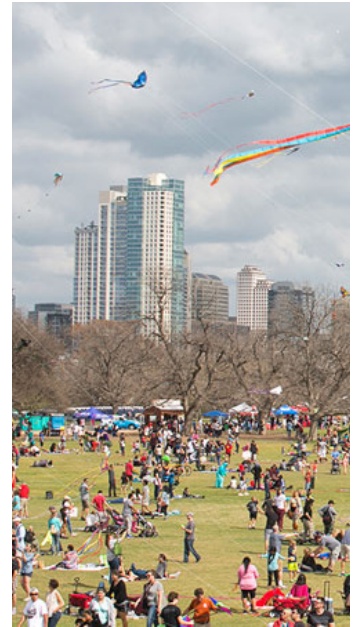
The 27th Anniversary of The Austin Marathon, Half Marathon, and 5K will fill Austin's streets with over 17,000 runners on Feb 18, 2018. Runners are treated to experience Austin at its best. They race along open roads that pass iconic landmarks such as UT Tower, The I Love You Mural and Austin Power Plant; enjoy miles of Austin unique neighborhoods such as SOCO district and Hyde Park; and are greeted by cheering crowds as they close in on the finish line in front of the Texas State Capitol on historic Congress Ave.

www.youraustinmarathon.com



ZILKER PARK KITE FESTIVAL: Sunday, March 4th
(backup rain day March 11th)

Each year the Kite Festival is held the first Sunday in March, the air and trees of Zilker fill with kites of all shapes and colors at this fun-filled annual fest. Zilker Kite Festival was founded in 1929 and has become one of Austin's best-known annual events. There are numerous contests held, such as Most Unusual Kite, Largest Kite, Smallest Kite, and Strongest Pulling Kite. Multiple food vendors are present as well as other activities for family fun. Everyone is welcome to attend (pets too!). There is no admission to attend or to participate in the contest.



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Roofs
should be sloped to handle heavy Central Texas rains, and oriented to maximize for solar energy collection

Roof Overhangs
optimized for solar cycle and building orientation can reduce energy costs, and gutters help to control erosion and harvest rainwater

Durable Materials
reduce long-term maintenance costs and increase overall sustainability

Windows
the use of energy efficient windows sized and oriented properly can provide natural light and ventilation to interior spaces and greatly reduce monthly utility bills

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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.

2018 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.)