

# Barton Hills News

BARTON HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

## The Parking on Parkland Paradox -

**There is No Letting Go** *By Mark Gentle, President, BHNA*

It is common knowledge that Austin loves its parks. We want more parks, more parkland, and more trails that are open and clean and friendly to all. And yet, the Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) is currently allowing approximately 20 acres of its signature regional park, Zilker Park, to be used as parking lots and junkyards. It seems unbelievable, but it's a fact.

The position of the Barton Hills Neighborhood Association is that these precious acres of Zilker Park are invaluable public assets that should be returned to functional parkland on a deliberate and expeditious timeline. I have made every effort to make the case for this position in all of the 20 or more meetings of the Zilker Park Working Group and sub-group meetings I have attended during the past 7 months. After each of these meetings I am left with the same perplexing question, why does a small neighborhood association like ours have to try and drag PARC toward the goal of protecting the parkland? Let me tell you, there is plenty of opposition to our simple and straightforward position.

In those Work Group meetings, I continue to voice opposition to the current PARC plan to "pave" more than 7 acres of Zilker Park with crushed rock and some paverstone pavers. The area is referred to as the Butler Landfill Tract that runs along Stratford Drive, starting east of MoPac (see photo-area marked in red stripes).

Despite unanimous rejection of the Butler "paving" plan by the City's Environmental Commission and unambiguous opposition from our Association, Zilker Neighborhood Association and several environmental groups, the original sponsors of the plan, including C3 Presents, the promoters of ACL Festival, and the Austin Parks Foundation, have so far indicated ZERO willingness to offer a compromise solution. I have been hoping for some sign of progress for the past 7 months, but with the Work Group's deadline to prepare and present a final report with recommendations approaching, there is little reason to be optimistic that a workable compromise will be reached. The Butler "paving" plan will almost certainly go to Council as an unresolved issue. I am currently working with Zilker Neighborhood Association to come up with a temporary solution that will allow parking near MoPac for the Botanical Gardens and Nature Center.

Another assignment given to the Zilker Park Working Group by City Council was to formulate a plan to permanently remove parking from the Polo Fields, which is the area shown on the map with green stripes. This is approximately 7 acres of land and is used for overflow parking for every-day park use and special event parking. The sub-group

*continued on page 3*



### NEXT MEETING

**APRIL 23, 2019**  
• 6 - 9 pm •

Please join us at

**St. Mark's Church**

(Corner of Barton Hills Dr. & Barton Skyway)

**Dinner 6 pm**  
**Torchy's Tacos \$10**

**NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING**  
• 7 - 9 pm •



## Barton Hills News

The Barton Hills Neighborhood Association newsletter is published quarterly and supported by sponsorships. 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.

### 2019 Executive Committee

#### President

Mark Gentle  
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#### Vice President

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#### Treasurer

Position Open

#### Secretary (Recording)

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#### Community Partnership Coordinator

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#### Corresponding Secretary

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Position Open

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Position Open

[www.bartonhills.org](http://www.bartonhills.org)

Newsletter printed on 100% recycled paper.

## President's Message *by Mark Gentle, BHNA President*

Dear Neighbors,

In case you have not seen the excellent work of the Greenbelt Guardians at Gus Fruh Greenbelt Entrance, please check it out soon. Really great improvement to that trail by those hard-working folks.

We are very excited to announce the Picnic in the Park at our neighborhood park on the campus of Barton Hills Elementary School on **April 14th from 3-5 p.m.** This is an informal gathering for all of the neighborhood. Super kid friendly and hoping for excellent weather, we will hear the Barton Hills School Choir, see old friends and meet new ones.

We are particularly interested in seeing kids and parents who would typically be at the July 4th parade attend our Party in the Park because we want to do a little planning for the parade while we are all mingling. But do not fret, there will be no formal announcements, no loud speakers or amps, just folks from the 'hood enjoying springtime. I look forward to seeing you there.

A lot is going on in and around the neighborhood. Trying to keep current on events, here is the schedule for our **April 23rd membership meeting:**

1. 6 p.m. Dinner
2. 7 p.m. Business Meeting Begins
  - a. Announcements
  - b. Minutes of Prior Adopted
  - c. Treasurer's Report
  - d. Committee Updates
3. Safety Presentation and CPR Demonstration by Ms. Michaela McClain
4. Presentation by Officer Aaron Townsend, Austin Police Department
5. Oak Wilt Presentation
6. Update on Zilker Park Working Group by Mark Gentle

I hope to see you soon. Until then, Happy Trails!

Mark Gentle, President



# PICNIC IN THE PARK

## APRIL 14, 2019 3-5PM

*Rumor has it we may even have special guest stars of the Barton Hills Elementary Choir.  
So bring yourselves and come on down and meet your neighbors!*

## The Parking on Parkland Paradox - There is No Letting Go, *continued from page 1*

created to address this issue has voted to both phase out parking by everyday users in increments by the end of 2026, and to continue to allow parking for special events until after the Zilker Park Master Plan process is complete and implemented, which is an unknowable period of time. BHNA does not support these proposals because they are tantamount to doing nothing. Our proposal is to phase-out all parking on the Polo Fields in increments starting in 2020 so that by May 2023 the entire area can be irrigated, vegetated and returned to parkland.

The key to getting parking off of the Polo Fields is to provide alternative transportation options and remote parking solutions. The Work Group will recommend that the city begin a free shuttle service in May of this year.

Since the city collects nearly \$3 million in parking and admission fees in Zilker Park and Barton Springs Pool, there should be resources available to accomplish this without additional cost to the park patrons.

And finally, the 6-acre portion of Zilker Park west of MoPac is a stunningly beautiful lakeside property except for the collection of dumpsters, park rubbish, dead PARD equipment, tractors, and most recently mounds of disposed concrete. It is truly an eyesore created by PARD and an example of utter mismanagement. We are advocating that this area be cleaned up immediately to allow public access.

Our neighborhood must remain committed, vigilant and vocal if we

want to have any impact on these developments that are on our doorstep. While many park visitors may see Zilker Park as an occasional destination, we need to remind all city officials that this is our backyard, our neighborhood park that is being used in unsustainable ways. Some of us have visited the park 200 days a year for over 35 years. We sort of get it.

The question is whether our voices will be heard. At this time Council Member Kitchen's office has shown interest in our positions, but has not yet endorsed them. It is time to let her office know what you are thinking.

Please attend our next membership meeting on April 23rd so we can discuss this in greater detail.

Respectfully, Mark Gentle

## GREENBELT GUARDIANS – SPRING 2019 UPDATE

The Greenbelt Guardians celebrated our 16th anniversary on Saturday March 02 by participating in the Austin Parks Foundation's annual spring "It's My Park Day" event. 62 volunteers worked at the Gus Fruh entrance from 9AM – 1PM and put in a total of almost 200 hours of labor!

We resurfaced 500 feet of the switchback entry trail, from the main trail along the creek up to the first, level switchback at the top. We used 12 tons (about 10 cubic yards) of decomposed granite mixed with StaLok stabilizer and a couple of yards of road base. The materials were moved down the trail one wheelbarrow at a time, spread and raked out by hand, and then compacted with plate packers and hand tampers. It was quite an undertaking, but we had a great group of volunteers, good

weather, and we had the materials delivered ahead of time to avoid the problem we had back in November, when 45 volunteers were ready to spread granite that didn't show up!

Things went smoothly this time, the trail work turned out well, and we were also able to do some work on the lower trail and steps along the creek. Please check out the photos on our website at [www.greenbeltguardians.org](http://www.greenbeltguardians.org). We hope to schedule another smaller workday in late April to finish resurfacing the trail all the way out to the street.

In addition to our regular volunteer workdays, the Greenbelt Guardians also raise funds to contract for the removal of invasive plants on the greenbelt with organizations that are authorized to use tools (chainsaws

and herbicide) that volunteers are no longer allowed to use on city park land. We spent \$24,000 in February and kept a crew from the Texas Conservation Corps busy for 4 weeks removing large amounts



## Oak Wilt *from Texas A&M Forest Service*

Oak Wilt is one of the most destructive tree diseases in the United States, and it is killing oak trees in central Texas at epidemic proportions. Oak wilt is an infectious disease caused by the fungus *Ceratocystis fagacearum*, which invades and disables the water-conducting system in susceptible trees.



Oak wilt has been found in over 76 counties and in almost every city in Central Texas, as well as Abilene, Midland, Lubbock, Dallas, Ft. Worth, College Station, Houston, and San Antonio. It can be a problem wherever live oaks tend to be the predominant tree. It does not matter whether they are transplanted or naturally grown. An individual tree's age, size or previous health status does not make it more or less likely to contract or die from oak wilt.

### How Can Oak Wilt Spread so Quickly?

Because live oaks tend to grow from root spouts and can form root grafts very readily, all or most of the live oaks within a given area share a common root system. If one tree in a group of live oak trees becomes infected with oak wilt, the pathogen can spread through the common root system at an average rate of about 75 feet per year. An aerial photograph (below) shows how oak wilt has spread through live oak trees around the house on this ranch. Trees killed by oak wilt are gray. The dark green trees

are juniper (cedar) and are not impacted by oak wilt.

### How Can I Tell if My Trees Have Oak Wilt?

The most reliable characteristic for diagnosing oak wilt in the field is what is called "veinal necrosis" of the live oak leaves. Apparently veinal necrosis only occurs on live oak. Symptoms on other infected oak trees are less distinct. Laboratory culture of the fungus is another way to confirm the presence of oak wilt. Veinal necrosis is characterized by chlorotic (yellow) veins that eventually turn brown. The leaves will fall from the tree and dead leaves with brown veins can be found on the ground under the tree.

Live oak trees infected with oak wilt usually die within two to four months. Adjacent trees begin to drop their leaves and die a few months later as the disease progresses from tree to tree through the interconnected root system.

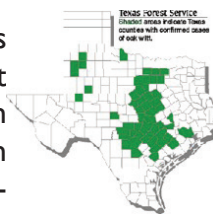


Infected red oak trees don't exhibit distinct symptoms. Leaves often turn pale green then brown and usually remain attached to the tree for a period of time. This can begin on one branch and quickly engulf the entire tree. Trees generally die within two to four weeks.

Prevention plays an important role in the management of oak wilt.

### How Can I Prevent My Trees From Getting Oak Wilt?

- Avoid pruning or wounding oaks between February 1 and July 1. This is the time of year when oak wilt fungal mats are most likely to form and nitidulid beetles are active. If a nitidulid beetle carries oak wilt spores from a fungal mat to a fresh wound on an uninfected oak tree, the fungus could become established in the disease-free tree. The least hazardous periods for pruning are during the coldest days of midwinter or extended periods of hot weather in mid- to late summer.
- Sterilize/Sanitize all pruning equipment between trees using denatured methyl alcohol (shellac thinner), isopropyl alcohol, or a general purpose household disinfectant such as Lysol, Listerine, Pine-Sol or related products. Using household bleach is NOT recommended as it can be corrosive to pruning tools as well as people.
- Immediately paint all wounds on oaks to prevent contact with contaminated beetles. Wounds should be painted, regardless of the time of year they were made, with commercial tree wound dressing or latex paint (color doesn't matter!). Wounds can be either man made or natural and include freshly-cut stumps and damaged surface roots.



## Oak Wilt, *continued from page 4*

- Do not transport or buy unseasoned firewood. Fungal mats may form on unseasoned red oak firewood infected with oak wilt making it possible to spread oak wilt to uninfected areas. Seasoned firewood (dried for at least one year) should not present a threat of spreading oak wilt. Also, burning infected wood cannot transmit oak wilt.
- Promptly remove and either burn or bury all red oaks that are dying or have been recently killed by oak wilt. Generally, this would be oak wilt-infected red oaks that die in the late summer or fall. This will prevent nitidulid beetles from spreading spores from fungal mats that may

form on the trees in the fall or the following spring.

### When Is the Best Time to Prune My Trees?

New oak wilt centers are started when a contaminated beetle finds a fresh wound on a healthy oak tree.

Insect populations in general increase during mild spring like weather and mild spring like weather is when fungal mats are most likely to form. So the most likely time a contaminated beetle will find your tree is when the weather is mild.

The best time to prune is when a contaminated beetle is least likely to find your tree. The heat of summer

and the cold of winter are when the beetle populations are the lowest and fungal mats are least likely to form. Therefore that is the best time to prune to prevent against an oak wilt infection.

When an oak tree is cut in the spring the cut will ooze sap, attracting the beetles and thereby infecting the tree. Generally, the worst time to prune trees in Texas is between February to June.

City of Austin information on Oak Wilt <https://www.austintexas.gov/page/oak-wilt-suppression>

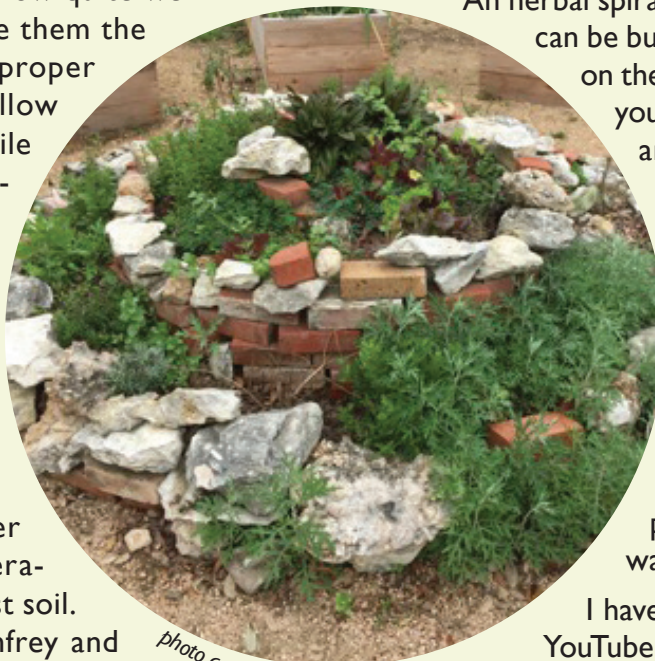
Contact is April Rose [april.rose@austintexas.gov](mailto:april.rose@austintexas.gov)

## Herbal Spirals - A Great Addition To Sustainable Gardens *by LaDonna Peebles*

I'm always looking for unique do-it-yourself projects for the yard. About a year ago, I learned about herbal spirals. Most herbs grow quite well in this area, as long as you give them the right amount of sun and proper drainage. Herbal spirals allow you to maximize space while creating different micro climates which make extra heat or shade for different herb preferences. Many herbs of Mediterranean origin prefer dry conditions and sandy soil. Some of the herbs included in this group are rosemary, sage, thyme and oregano. Other herbs prefer cooler temperatures, a little shade and moist soil. These include cilantro, comfrey and mints. Herbal spirals make this possible in a rather compact space.

The herbal spiral is designed to accommodate the needs of many different herbs. The top is a warm, dry area that gets plenty of sun. The bottom is cool, shady and moist. Herbs that need drier soil and need the

most drainage are planted at the top. Herbs that desire moist conditions receive water that flows from above.



*photo courtesy Texas Keeper Cider*

An herbal spiral is quite easy to construct and can be built in about a day. Before taking on the project, you should make sure you have the right conditions. Find an area that gets at least five hours of sunlight a day. Ideally, you would want the location to be near the kitchen. There should be space for a six-and-a-half foot spiral. Materials that work well for the structural part of the spiral include brick or stone, or a combination. Use soil appropriate for the herbs that you want to grow.

I have found several good videos on YouTube that explain how to build herbal spirals. There are also step-by-step instructions. Simply google "herbal spirals".

I hope, as I walk the neighborhood, that I will see herbals spirals popping up everywhere. They are a wonderful way to provide all of the organic medicinal and culinary herbs you will need in a very sustainable way.

# AUSTIN PARKS FOUNDATION AWARDS OVER \$42,865 TO BARTON HILLS COMMUNITY PARK IN 2018 FALL COMMUNITY GRANT

*- Funding will be used for the area around the new stairs -*

AUSTIN, TX (January 2019) – We are thrilled to announce we are a recipient of the 2018 Fall Community Grant of \$42,865 provided by the Austin Parks Foundation through their Austin City Limits Music Festival Park Grants Program. The grant funding along with our generous neighbor contributions will go toward improvements projects around the new stair - including additional terracing, landscaping and rework of trail for clear connectivity to track. Creating a true entry point/feature to avoid further erosion issues. Also plants rain garden infrastructure on the hillside below the Music Room. This is one of several grants we have received from the Austin Parks Foundation for improvements at Barton Hills Community Park.

“Over the past 13 years, APF has provided nearly \$3 million in community-initiated grants to park adopters and park champions across the city,” said Ladye Anne Wofford, APF’s Chief Mission Officer. “We’re excited so many local groups like Barton Hills are working hard to improve their neighborhood, and we’re happy to provide financial support so their visions can become reality.”

As the anchor of the ACL Music Festival Grants Program, Community Grants are intended for large, community-initiated park improvement projects that fall between \$5,000 to \$50,000. These grants are offered twice a year with a grant period of 12 months and are awarded through a competitive process. To learn more about the Austin Parks Foundation’s ACL Music Festival Grants Program and to apply, please visit <https://austinparks.org/community-grants/#>

## About Austin Parks Foundation

Austin Parks Foundation (APF) is dedicated to partnering with our community to enhance people’s lives by making our public parks, trails, and green spaces better through volunteerism, innovative programming, advocacy, and financial support. A non-profit established in 1992, APF fills the city’s funding and resource gap in order to develop, maintain, and enhance the area’s 300+ parks, trails, and green spaces. APF fosters innovative public/private partnerships and since 2006, has given over \$3 million in community-initiated grants in service to the greater Austin community. APF is known for its annual flagship volunteer event, It’s My Park Day, and is a presenting partner and beneficiary of the popular Austin City Limits Music Festival at Zilker Metropolitan Park. For more information, please visit [www.austinparks.org](http://www.austinparks.org).



## GREENBELT GUARDIANS – SPRING 2019 UPDATE, *continued from page 3*

of ligustrum, nandina, and other invasives along the creek between the Spyglass and Gus Fruh entries. As always, we've stopped our invasives work for the spring and summer due to federal restrictions on the removal of vegetation in protected areas where the endangered golden-cheeked warbler might be nesting. We'll resume

this work in the fall and are planning to spend another \$25K then on more TxCC contract labor.

The creek is about dry, but everything is blooming and the greenbelt is really beautiful right now, so please get out and enjoy it soon if you can. See you on the trail!



### Upcoming Events

#### APRIL

- 11 - 14 Old Settlers Music Festival
- 12 - 14 Lonestar Hotrod Round Up
- 13 Might Texas Dog Walk
- 14 Picnic in the Park
- 19 - 21 Reggae Festival
- 23 BHNA Meeting 6 pm - 9 pm
- 24 - 27 Moontower Comedy Festival
- 26 - 28 Art City Austin
- 28 Eeyores Birthday Party

#### MAY

- 4 Violet Crown Festival
- 4 - 5 Pecan Street Festival
- 8 - 26 Shakespeare in the Park
- 23 - 26 Hot Luck Food Festival
- 29 Blues On The Green
- 31 Ballet Under the Stars

#### JUNE

- 1 Ballet Under the Stars
- 1 National Trails Day
- 1 - 2 Austin Pond Tour
- 6 Nature Night at the Wildflower Center
- 7 - 8 Zilker Pops Concert
- 13 - 16 Republic of Texas Biker Rally
- 13 Nature Night at the Wildflower Center
- 20 Third Thursday at the Blanton Museum
- 20 Nature Night at the Wildflower Center
- 26 Blues On The Green
- 27 Nature Night at the Wildflower Center



### Barton Hills Neighborhood Association Needs Volunteers

**Treasurer** - The Treasurer is a part of the Executive Committee and is responsible for the collection and disbursement of Association monies, keeps an accurate record of all receipts and expenditures, and approves all payments drawn on the accounts of the Association. Also preparing quarterly financial reports for each general meeting and responsible for the filing of all tax returns and periodic reports required by the IRS. This position is our backbone and once membership dues are collected at the beginning of the year, the workload is relatively light.

**Neighborhood Watch Coordinator** - Neighborhood Watch is in need of a coordinator. There are several folks that are willing to participate, but we have yet to find a King or Queen of the Watch. Get to know more of your neighbors and help organize our eyes on the streets. Neighbors looking after neighbors.

**Newsletter Graphic Designer** - We also are in need of a Newsletter Graphic Design person. As our template is in Indesign we are hoping for a person that can make the content beautiful and coordinate getting it to the printer and getting it to your doors.

**Interested in any of the volunteer positions  
please email [officers@bartonhills.org](mailto:officers@bartonhills.org)**

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

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Once you're a BHNA member, you can join the Barton Hills listserv.  
Visit [groups.yahoo.com/group/barton\\_hills/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/barton_hills/) for more information about how to sign up.

## 2019 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.)