

April Meeting

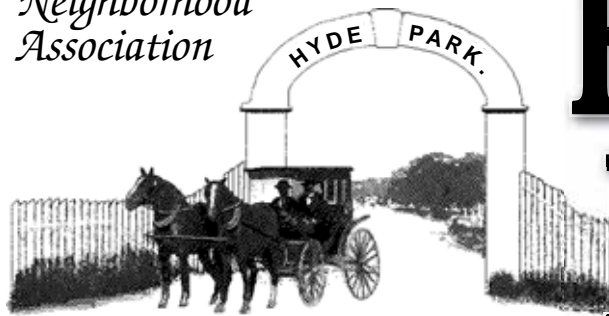
When: 7:00 p.m.
Monday, April 1, 2013

Where: Trinity United Methodist Church
4001 Speedway

Note: HPNA general meetings usually take place on the first Monday of each month.

See You There!

The Hyde Park
Neighborhood
Association



Pecan Press

April 2013 • National Register District Neighborhood • Vol. 39, No. 4

Why School Bonds Deserve Your Consideration

Election Date: Sat., May 11, 2013

Early Voting: April 29-May 7, 2013

If you're the parent of an Austin Independent School District student, you already know why the May 11th bond election is so important. Public schools all across Austin—including three serving our own neighborhood—face critical facility needs that directly affect the health, safety and academic success of students. The proposed bonds will improve shamefully poor conditions for special education students at McCallum High School, replace failing HVAC systems and sanitary sewer lines at Ridgetop Elementary, improve ADA compliance and provide major roof repair at Kealing Middle School, and expand facilities to accommodate academic programs and student growth across the city. For a complete list of bond projects for each campus, see <www.austinisd.org/bond/bond-program/by-school>.

The bond package will appear as four separate propositions on the May ballot. All four contain critical fixes for campuses districtwide, and all four propositions deserve your consideration.

In the nearly ten years since AISD's last major bond election, the district's student population

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HPNA, ANC Unite to Fight 'Tree Tax'

Stately pecan and elm trees have emerged as the latest flash point in the ongoing struggle between suburban and inner city interests. At question is a proposal by Austin Energy to increase electric utility fees for property owners whose elm or pecan trees lie within 22 feet of electric power lines. The fees have been labeled a 'tree tax' by many inner city residents.

Gary van Hardeveld, spokesman for Austin Energy, recently made a courtesy visit to the neighborhood planning committee to explain the agency's action. "Those two trees account for more than 85 percent of the downed wires we have to deal with," he said. Hackberry trees make up about half of the rest.

It was not only the expense of sending crews to cut up the branches and restring the wires that prompted the unexpected move. "We had several cases of elderly and disabled persons on electric life support systems being rushed to the hospital by EMS last year. As the Austin population ages, the number of such cases will only increase," he said, adding that it was only a matter of time until someone died from summer heat or disruption of a life support sys-



Pretty tree ...but it's gonna cost you. A mature pecan tree awaits its new foliage. Due to its proximity to power lines, property owners will pay for its shade under a proposed regulation. Photo by Rollo Treadway.

tem.

Jane Gossett, attorney and chair of the Austin Neighborhood Council's Austin Energy Oversight Committee, has stated publicly that the regulation is arbitrary and discriminatory. She explained that the development is "purely political" and reflects the population shift from the inner city to the suburbs. "It's not a tree tax, it's an

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From the Co-Presidents



The month of March started off with another wonderful It's My Park Day at Shipe Park, and we were glad to see the Ney Museum grounds added in the cleanup effort this year.

We're always amazed to see how many neighbors come out to volunteer their time to help make Shipe Park look amazing for the springtime. We are also very fortunate to have so many neighbors that have donated money over the years for the irrigation system that helps keep the Shipe grounds in good shape year round. Finally, the mosaic mural on the pump house wall looks amazing! Thanks again to the Friends of Shipe Park for all their hard work and dedication to our neighborhood park. We can't wait for

swim season to start back up in a few months!

We are very pleased to announce that Carolyn Grimes has agreed to be the new 2013 Chairperson for the Hyde Park Homes Tour! Now all the fun can begin with looking for houses to be on the tour, rounding up volunteers, and planning this wonderful neighborhood event. The 2012 tour was a big success, and we will continue the trend of having the tour in the fall again in 2013. The Homes Tour is one of the biggest fundraisers for the HPNA and involves thousands of hours of volunteer time spent making sure the tour runs smoothly, and we know 2013 will produce another fabulous celebration of some of the great houses in Hyde Park. If you're interested in having your home on this year's tour or you would like to participate as a house captain, docent, or any of the other important volunteer positions, please contact Carolyn Grimes at <cgrimes@cbunited.com> or 512-426-3559, or contact the HPNA Co-President's John Williams <jawilli@grandecom.net> or Ashley Schweickart <amschweickart@gmail.com>. Thanks to Carolyn Grimes for stepping up this year to lead the effort!

We now have an official date for the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Huffstickler Green at the northeast corner of 38th Street and Duval. The date will be on Saturday, May 4th at 10:30 am. Thank you to Kathy Lawrence, John Paul Moore, and Mark Fishman for coordinating the Hyde Park efforts and working with our Hancock neighbors to plan this event. We are looking forward to this event

to officially open this new green space, and to celebrate the life of Albert Huffstickler, The Bard of Hyde Park.

We hope everyone that came out to Shipe Park had a great time at the Hyde Park Egg Scramble at the end of March! Hopefully this year's event will start back up this fun Hyde Park springtime tradition for our neighborhood children.

— John Williams
<jawilli@grandecom.net>
& Ashley Schweickart
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HPNA Co-Presidents

Pecan Press

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• Kevin Heyburn • Kathy Lawrence • Paul Kamprath
• Annette Lucksinger • Lisa Harris

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Transportation • VOLUNTEER NEEDED

Tree Preservation • VOLUNTEER NEEDED

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Zoning • Dorothy Richter, 3901 Ave. G 452-5117



School Bonds Matter... ...cont'd from page 1

has continued to grow (over six percent in the last five years alone) and its facilities have continued to decline with age. The 2008 interim bond provided a stop-gap measure for some campuses, but as with older homes, deferred work often mean greater expense down the road. Many critical items in the proposed bond have already been put off for years. We can no longer postpone these major investments in facilities that must serve nearly 87,000 children every day.

The good news is that our school bond investments will stay in Austin to benefit our community and its students. Unlike other education funding, bonds are not subject to "recapture" under Texas' school finance system, which currently sees the state skimming off 45% of our local school taxes for redistribution to other districts. These bonds will be a permanent investment in Austin's future. NOTE: Bond proceeds may only be used to fund capital improvement projects, major repairs, new construction, technology and transportation. They may not be used to fund routine maintenance and operating costs such as salaries, supplies, utilities, insurance or other daily costs.

What will this cost? For the average homeowner, the proposed bond package would run about \$70 per year, or about \$5.83 per month, less than the price of a six-pack of beer or a couple of small coffee drinks. Homeowners over the age of 65 who have an existing approved tax ceiling certification would not see any impact on their property tax bill.

To meet tomorrow's challenges, Austin kids need safe, healthy, sufficient school facilities now. Please consider their future when deciding how to vote in the May 11th bond election.

— Susan Moffat

But I Don't Have Kids — Why Should I Care About School Bonds?

Parents know school bonds are a sound investment. But let's say you don't have a child in school. What's in it for you?

- **Your property values.** Academic studies have found that what common sense already tells us: good public schools are a key factor in maintaining strong property values. A 2009 report by the National Association of Realtors found that school quality was important factor for many prospective homebuyers. Your home is likely your biggest investment – isn't it worth protecting?
- **Your community.** Some impacts can't be measured in dollars and cents, but may be just as important. Studies have shown that if a school closes for any reason (poor maintenance, budget cuts, etc.), civic participation in the area also declines and residents are more likely to move away. Neighborhood schools are the heart of our community – we all have a stake in maintaining them.
- **Your future.** The gerontologist who will care for you in your old age is likely enrolled in kindergarten right now. The financial analyst who will help you plan for a secure retirement may be in fourth grade. The mechanic who will keep your car safe, the engineer who will design your new computer, the teacher who will educate your grandkids, the software genius with the next big idea...tomorrow's workers, professionals and business leaders are in school today. We need to do right by them so they can do right by us.

Remember, the real question is not whether we can afford to invest in our schools. It's whether we can afford not to.

— Susan Moffat

Hyde Park Neighborhood Association Enrollment	2012-13 Membership	HPNA Membership Info
<p>Name _____ Phone _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I wish to be notified via email of HPNA meetings and events.</p> <p>Email _____</p> <p>Dues (per person)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Standard - \$5/year <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Citizen- \$1/year</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> New Member <input type="checkbox"/> Renewing Member</p> <p>Payment: <input type="checkbox"/> Check <input type="checkbox"/> Cash Date _____</p> <p><i>All memberships expire on September 30th of each year.</i></p>	<p>Bring to an HPNA meeting, or send to:</p> <p>HPNA Membership P.O. Box 49427 Austin, Texas 78765</p> <p>Make checks payable to HPNA.</p>	<p>All memberships expire on September 30th of each year.</p> <p>✦</p> <p>Membership in HPNA is open to all residents aged 18 years or older who reside within the boundaries of Hyde Park or within 300 feet of the designated boundaries.</p> <p>✦</p> <p>New members, and members who lapse in dues for over six months, are eligible to vote at HPNA meetings 30 days after receipt of dues.</p>

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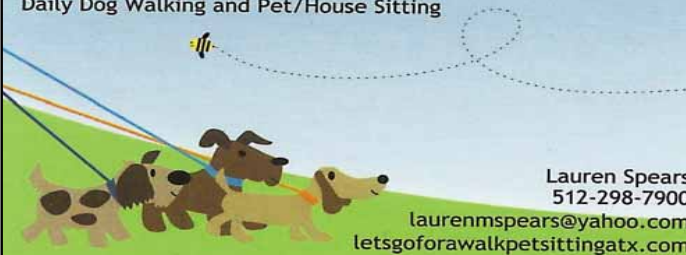
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<pecaneditor@gmail.com>

*Send your poems to:

Charlotte Herzele
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Note: The Pecan Press will not publish unsigned/unattributed poetry. All poems (even if written under a pen name) must carry a name and address or phone number for identification and verification purposes.

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HPNA Meeting Minutes March 4, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 pm by Co-President Ashley Schweickart. The assemblage introduced themselves to one another.

Announcements were made. First, Oliver Franklin, Ney Museum Coordinator, thanked neighbors for the work completed during It's My Park Day last Saturday. He noted in particular that creek clean-up, fence repairs and bridge painting were done with outstanding leadership from Hyde Parkers.

John Cooper and David Perkins introduced the New Resident Welcome Packets for Hyde Park residents created by HPNA's Outreach Committee. The packet's contents are presented in reusable bags from Fresh Plus and include a welcome letter, renovation process explanation, HPNA contact information, and a complimentary one-year membership to HPNA. The future plan for the packets includes coupons from Hyde Park businesses. Much of the neighborhood information in the packet can also be found on the HPNA website. Members are encouraged to send the addresses of new residents to the Outreach Committee. Lisa Harris suggested that voter registration cards could also be included in the packets.

Dorothy Richter pointed out that having contact information for neighbors can be very helpful in emergency situations. It was suggested that neighbors may find it beneficial to exchange contact information, perhaps on a per-block basis, for potentially emergency scenarios.

Ashley Schweickart announced that the Neighborhood Outreach Survey is now available online for residents to provide input on neighborhood activities, engagement, and HPNA. The questionnaire will be used to help with future activities and the direction the neighborhood takes. Ashley also announced that Kevin Heyburn was chosen by the HPNA Steering Committee to serve as the HPNA Representative to the Neighborhood Contact Team.

The last announcement was regarding the HPNA Egg Scramble, an event styled after a traditional Easter egg hunt, which will be held the morning of March 30th. Volunteers are needed for the set-up and clean-up. Please contact co-President John Williams at jawilli@grandecom.net for further information.

The first order of business was a presentation by Leslie Sweet, Director of Public Affairs, representing HEB/Central Market grocery stores. A new City ordinance bans single use plastic bags. She encouraged customers to bring reusable bags and outlined ways that HEB will try to remind customers to use them. She announced how HEB demonstrates its commit-

Continued on following page

ment to the program by using all fees collected for non-reusable bags to a program to promote reusable bags.

Next Alexis Patterson of Austin Community College talked about the ACC campus at Highland Mall. There will be a major renovation and ground breaking March 24, 2013 involving Phase 1 at the site of the former JC Penney store. This building will be for ACC instruction, library, union and math emporium. Matt Whelan of Red Leaf Properties continued the overview of the redevelopment project. Red Leaf will be coordinating the development in conjunction with ACC and will provide opportunities for other developers with a more defined purpose. Questions were asked by neighbors regarding landscaping, traffic flow on the main corridors of ingress and egress, dedicated parking for commuter train riders, alternative modes of transportation to and from the Highland Mall site, retaining the current farmers' market, and possible redevelopment of nearby Lincoln Village. A concern was raised about the decrease in tax revenue through the conversion from taxable property to public ACC property.

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned at 8:07 pm.

— *Mike Pikulski &
Claire de Young,
HPNA Co-Secretaries*

Fighting the 'Tree Tax'... ...cont'd from page 1

inner city tax," she said, adding that the council might file suit if it is adopted. Bruce Raborn of HPNA's long-range planning committee said that if the case goes to court, the neighborhood association would file a supporting brief as an amicus curiae and possibly join the suit.

Gossett said the legal doctrine of disparate impact was clear in this case. "The soil in the north and west suburbs is simply too thin to support big trees like pecans and elms. This burden will fall completely on central, south, and east Austin," she said. Van Hardeveld had no comment on Gossett's remarks. "I'm not a politician," he said. "I'm a forester."

But Charles Rostoff, legal counsel for Austin Energy disputed Gossett's charge. "Alleging disparate impact for charging special fees on heavy users of services would be like saying toll roads were unfair because they bear more heavily on drivers, or a graduated income tax is unfair because it bears more heavily on the wealthy. This will not hold up in court."

A fee schedule is still being developed by Ergonomics, a Dallas-based contractor. Reportedly, fees would likely range from about three to 6 dollars per tree per month. Even this would not completely cover

Continued on page 6

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Fighting the 'Tree Tax'...

...cont'd from page 5

the cost of dealing with downed limbs and trees.

Van Hardeveld said there is an alternative. Austin Energy will, without cost, remove pecan and elm trees and replace them with a new tree developed at Texas A&M, the Brazosberry. No fees would be charged for the fast growing hybrid.

The Brazosberry, named for the river whose water nourished it as it was being developed at A&M, is a densely leaved, fast-growing fruit tree with short, sturdy limbs. It can grow to heights in excess of 35 feet, but its deep taproot makes it very stable in heavy wind even if the soil is saturated with water. It provides effective shade when planted on the south and west sides of residences.

The tree's bright purple berry, about twice the size of a cherry, has been compared to a ripe plum in taste. Van Hardeveld said that Brazosberry orchards are springing up all over East Texas as the fruit gains popularity. He reported that Brazosberry took second place in the preserved fruit category at last year's state fair, and sixth place in the fruit pie competition. If not picked, Brazosberries harden into something like a nut, with the consistency of a chestnut and a taste remarkably similar to a hazel nut. "It's really an amazing tree," he said. "The Aggies outdid themselves on this one."

A neighbor, who asked to remain anonymous, suggested that if our pecans are replaced by Brazosberry trees we might have to change the name of our newsletter from the Pecan Press to the Brazosberry Bulletin.

The tree's only downside, according to van Hardeveld, are the blossoms, which, like a variety of carrion flowers, give off the odor of rotting flesh. This endures for about two weeks, until the fruit 'sets.' But he urged neighbors to consider the upside: the malodorous blossoms strongly attract some of the most beautiful birds in Central Texas, including the indigo bunting, painted bunting, Eastern bluebird, summer tanager, and the ubiquitous monk parakeet.

Van Hardeveld said the fee schedule and regulation are expected to be promulgated by mid-June. Since it is an administrative fee, public hearings are not planned, although an announcement of the fee will be sent with the July utility bills.

As disheartening as the new fees are, something just as bad is on the horizon. Pushed by native plant enthusiasts, Austin's Parks and Recreation Department is considering fees on shrubs that are considered invasive, such as nandina and ligustrum. Fees would be rolled into property taxes. This is still in the preliminary stages of study and discussion.

 Rollo Treadway

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Hyde Park Neighborhood Plan Contact Team

I was surprised to learn recently that Hyde Park has two separate groups that are "authorized" to speak on behalf of neighbors in matters regarding city policies and plans for the neighborhood.

For most of its nearly 40 year history, the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association (HPNA) has been the voice of the neighborhood on City issues. The concept is embodied in the by-laws, , , all positions of the association to be communicated to any governmental body only takes place after a recorded vote of the membership. HPNA has identifiable officers and a steering committee elected by dues paying members that provide transparency and accountability for actions taken by the association. It has long been recognized by the City of Austin as representing the interest of neighbors residing within its borders.

However, in the interest of more diverse inputs on neighborhood plans, city officials instituted Neighborhood Plan Contact Teams (NPCT), designated to be the stewards or advocates of their adopted neighborhood plan. Contact teams are envisioned to work with city staff towards the implementation of their recommendations, review and initiate plan amendments, serve as community points of contact, and work on behalf of other neighborhood stakeholders. The ordinance creating contact teams states The neighborhood plan contact team is a separate body apart from any other existing or future neighborhood organization. NPCTs are asked to convey opinions on neighborhood plans or plan amendments directly to city staff and boards and commissions, rather than through the traditional HPNA channel.

It seems to me that the City got it backward - that HPNA should officially provide direction to the Contact Team on issues that affect the Hyde Park Plan. HPNA has the leadership, structure and institutional memory to formally respond to the city on planning issues that affect Hyde Park Plan implementation and amendments, zoning, code enforcement and other vital concerns of neighbors.

Given the momentum behind neighborhood plans and contact teams as currently instituted, it is extremely unlikely that the city will change its stance re contact team requirements; so it is imperative that the HPNA Steering Committee provide detailed guidance to the Contact Team regarding how and who will address vital interests in the neighborhood. I am encouraged that the Steering Committee selected Kevin Heyburn to be the HPNA-Contact Team liaison at their meeting last month. I expect that members of both groups will support Kevin in striking a balance among the groups who are authorized to speak for the neighborhood. We are fortunate to live in a neighborhood where the built environment supports neighborliness - both HPNA and the Contact Team serve the neighborhood best when that concept informs decisions.

— Larry Gilg



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An Invitation to Join the Hyde Park Homes Tour

This is Your Neighborhood • Welcome • Get Involved

Within two months of my moving to Hyde Park in the late 1990s, I read an article in the Pecan Press that invited me to join in and help with the Hyde Park Homes Tour. I thought, "that sounds like a nice way to get my feet wet, meet some new neighbors, and learn about my new community."

Little did I know how important that decision would be for my becoming a real part of this neighborhood. Through that experience, I learned why so many people love Hyde Park and why it is so different from any other place in Austin. I learned that there are people who give back to their community for no other reason than they love older homes and they appreciate their wonderful, quirky neighbors and neighborhood.

I met more of my neighbors that first year than I had in over fifteen years in Dallas and San Antonio. So, I am asking you to do the same. I have agreed to Chair the 37th Hyde Park Homes Tour on November 10, and I can use your help.

Do you have or know of a home in the neighborhood that you think should be put on our tour? Are you a new home owner that has a wonderful new, old home, or have you been spending time transforming your home into something that you are proud to show others.

The Hyde Park Homes Tour is all about showing how older homes can be saved, transformed, and revitalized. It is about how we can celebrate that special character and architecture of older homes yet adapt them to contemporary lifestyles with new interiors, additions, conveniences, and technologies. Let me know, if you want to join in.

Be a part of this new, old neighborhood. I can use your help in any way you have time or talents. Welcome. Get involved in YOUR neighborhood! Contact me at <cgrimes@cbunited.com> or 512-426-3559.

— Carolyn Grimes
Chair, 2013 Hyde Park Homes Tour



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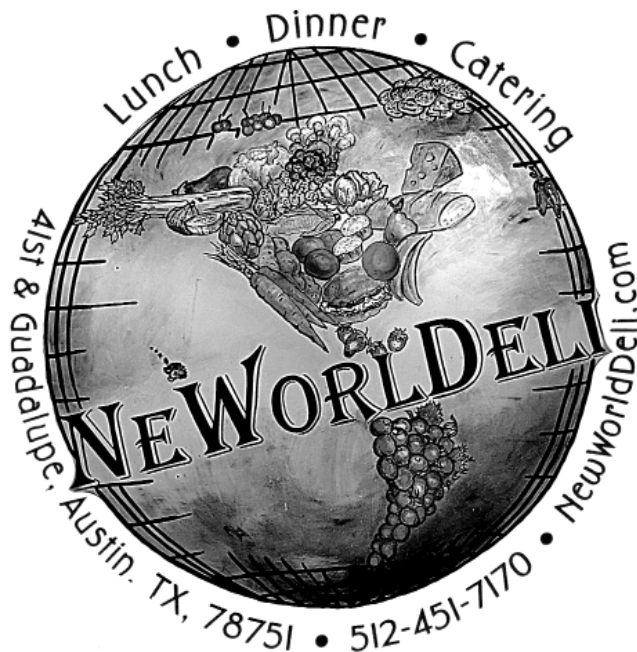


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A Rewarding MLK Weekend

Led by Trinity United Methodist Church

Trinity United Methodist Church's 2nd Annual **America's Sunday Supper and Peace Through Pie Social** brought together many neighbors and community partners, sharing conversation and "Peace Pie" together.

This year's topic focused on the hopes, obstacles, and opportunities facing families starting a new life in our community and challenges our country faces by not fully addressing the issue of immigration. Three short videos sparked the conversation: Founder Meg Erskine showcased the work of Austin's Multicultural Refugee Coalition with the film *"This Austin Life"*; "Illegal" highlighted the perils of high school and college students pursuing their academic dreams as undocumented residents; and Elaine Cohen of Texans United for Families showed a clip from the feature film, *"Punishment and Profits"*, highlighting the controversy of the profitable economy surrounding immigration detention centers. Links to these films can be found at <www.tumc.org/SundaySupper>.

Pastor Sid Hall invited State Rep. Elliott Naishtat to give closing remarks before the conversation was opened to everyone at the table.

The event was sponsored by Trinity United Methodist Church in partnership with Peace Through Pie, Amigos de las Américas - Austin Chapter, Texans United For Families, Multicultural Refugee Coalition, Southwest Texas Methodist Federation for Social Action, and the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association.

Martin Luther King Day Of Service was a rewarding Monday spent doing a host of light construction, painting, and gardening projects at Posada Esperanza, a full service transitional housing program for immigrant mothers and children run by Casa Marianella <www.casamarianella.org/posada-esperanza>.

Very special thanks to TUMC's Youth Director, Matt Moon, for his leadership in making the day a success. The gathering of over 20 individuals from *TUMC, Honda Campus All-Star Challenge/Huston-Tillotson University, Amigos de las Américas, and Food is Free* <<http://foodisfreeproject.org/>>, painted the living area of one home, rebuilt fences, tidied up yards, installed garden beds, new curtains, built new screens, and raked pathways, all with the helpful enthusiasm of the small children who lived at Posada.

Very special thanks to TUMC's Pastor Sid Hall, Administrator Amy Duncan, and Youth Director Matt Moon, and all who participated in these weekend events, for their collective inspiration and generous spirit - bringing us together as a community to make a positive difference in the lives of those needing a little extra support.

We can all look forward to next year's MLK weekend events and future opportunities to create positive social change...working together.



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Requirement Proposed for a Funded Position to Represent Public Interests in the Nascent Land Development Code Rewrite Process

It is fairly universally accepted that Austin's Land Development Code, aka LDC (Title 25), which governs and regulates development within the City's planning and zoning jurisdiction has evolved to be convoluted and complex, such that it has become almost impossible to comprehend and is open to multiple conflicting interpretations. The last revision of the LDC occurred in 1984. Since as recent as 2005, there have been more than 180 proposed amendments to the code. As you can imagine, this rewrite will be a massive and complex undertaking, with no shortage of outside influences jockeying to have the code written to positively impact their interests.

For historical perspective, the extensive LDC rewrite was part of a recommendation of the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan, (the 247 pages of which can be read at <[ftp://ftp.ci.austin.tx.us/GIS-Data/planning/comp-plan/iacp-TFDRAFT_3-1-12-web.pdf](http://ftp.ci.austin.tx.us/GIS-Data/planning/comp-plan/iacp-TFDRAFT_3-1-12-web.pdf)>.

This Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan was unanimously approved by City Council on June 15, 2012 and supported by the Real Estate Council of Austin, aka RECA. An excellent, but lengthy summary of the background and components of the "Imagine Austin Plan" and the ancillary offspring—the LDC rewrite—can be read at the RECA website at: <www.recaonline.com/index.php/advocacy/current-issues/city-issues/64-advocacy/current-issues/city-issues/103-imagine-austin-comprehensive-plan.html>.

For an excellent but—spoiler alert—possibly real estate-biased background on the LDC rewrite—and certainly more information than this observer has time to offer, you may read LDC Revision background and updates at the RECA webpage: <www.recaonline.com/index.php/advocacy/current-issues/city-issues/64-advocacy/current-issues/city-issues/760-land-development-code-revision.html>.

The net-net of the representational controversy for the LDC rewrite situation seems to be as follows:

Council will pay \$2 million to hire municipal code consultants to totally rewrite the entire LDC. It will be a complex and labor-intensive endeavor, expected to take years to complete. Imagine, if you will, which outside-interest parties will have personnel dedicated full-time to influencing the outcome of this LDC rewrite. It is because of concerns about outside commercial influences that Austin Neighborhood Council (ANC), has drafted and adopted a resolution requesting that City Council allocate \$200,000 or 1/10th of the amount ultimately spent on hired outside consultants (whichever amount is greater), to hire a full-time knowledgeable individual to represent public interests for the neighborhoods and environment

Continued on page 16



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Funded Position... ...cont'd from page 14

in the LDC rewrite process. Similar public representation, for example, was ultimately funded by Council for the Austin Energy rate setting process. Be aware that an Advisory Committee was also formed, whose members were recently appointed by Council and Staff. It is comprised of alleged diverse stakeholders to give their opinions to the hired consultants who will be writing the revised code.

Those Advisory Committee members have been recently selected. They are listed below, along with the Council member (in parentheses) who appointed them:

- Chris Bradford- (Mayor Pro Tem Sheryl Cole)
- Jim Duncan – (Council Member Laura Morrison)
- Will Herring (Mayor Lee Leffingwell)
- Jeff Jack (Council Member Kathie Tovo)
- Stephen Oliver (Council Member Chris Riley)
- Brian Reis (Council Member Mike Martinez)
- Melissa Neslund (Council Member Bill Spelman)

Staff has selected four additional Staff members to sit on the Advisory Committee.

To get an idea of the political aspects surfacing regarding this LDC rewrite, it may be interesting to view a 7 minute verbal justification given by Council member, Bill Spelman, at the January 31, 2013 City Council meeting as to why he, Councilmember Sheryl Cole, and Mayor Lee Leffingwell, sponsored a bill advocating paid lobbyists to be included as stakeholders on the LDC rewrite Advisory Committee. See the video at www.austintx.swagit.com/play/01312013-501, Select Item # 29. However, at the end of the verbal rationale for including lobbyists, Mr. Spelman withdrew the tri-sponsored item to amend the ordinance to allow lobbyists on the Committee, evidently due to other political pressures?

If the HPNA membership is interested in also offering a resolution, similar to ANC's, to persuade City Council members to fund a position to represent the public interests beyond the Advisory Committee, then time is of the essence, since the consultants hired to manage the LDC rewrite are slated to be interviewed and selected during March 2013. By the time the April *Pecan Press* goes to press, it may be too late to obtain such a resolution for Council's approval for a public representative for the LDC rewrite. The ANC resolution was presented to our HPNA Steering Committee to consider drafting a similar resolution on behalf of HPNA members, if deemed appropriate to do so. A copy of the adopted ANC resolution can be read at: www.ancweb.org/docs/resolutions/ANCResolution_PublicIntConsult_Draft_27Feb2013.pdf.

As with all political items of passion in Austin, (are there any that are not?) we'll observe how this saga and politically charged endeavor will unfold.

— Ellen Williams





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Clean Sweep 2013

This year Keep Austin Beautiful's Clean Sweep event will take place on April 13th from 9 A.M. to 11 A.M.

I registered a clean up of the stretch of Waller Creek that is close to Intramural Fields but if you want to do a graffiti cleanup in the neighborhood instead still register on the Keep Austin Beautiful website: <www.KeepAustinBeautiful.org/clean-sweep/volunteer>, but let me know in advance that you want to abate graffiti instead so I can make sure to have supplies for you. It wasn't possible to register the event as both a creek cleanup and a graffiti cleanup on the Keep Austin Beautiful website but there are enough slots to have some people working on graffiti instead of in the creek.

Volunteers get wristbands that get them admission to the volunteer appreciation party at Fiesta Gardens right after the cleanup. The party will include live music, free food, an environmental education fair and a most unique object contest.

If you try to register shortly before the event and the Keep Austin Beautiful website says there are no more volunteer slots open please left let me know and I will add you.

— Lisa Harris
<ljharrisus@yahoo.com>

Pharaoh Ants

Pharaoh ants, also known as sugar ants or piss ants, are tiny (~1/16 inch), orangish-colored ants that may become a nuisance in homes. In Central Texas, these ants are only found indoors because it is too cold for them outside. Colonies like to be located in warm areas near food and water, so are usually found in kitchen or bathroom areas and may be found in wall voids. Workers may travel along pipes or wires within wall voids to travel through the home looking for a wide variety of foods.

Pharaoh ants do not have mating swarms like many other ants. Mating takes place within the colony and the colony spreads by "budding." "Budding" is when a queen and many worker ants leave the parent colony to create a new colony. The ants can also "bud" and create a new queen from brood (eggs, larvae, pupae) if they are separated from the parent colony.

Due to budding, it is best to use ant baits to manage pharaoh ants. If pesticide sprays are used, it stimulates budding of the colony and creates more colonies than were originally being managed. Baits should be placed where ants are trailing to food and water sources. It is best to reduce other available food so that the ants will more readily take the bait product. If ants are trailing, do not wipe away the trail. Instead, place bait on the trail for the ants to find quickly.

— Wizzie Brown



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