

# Dawson Neighborhood News

Newsletter of the Dawson Neighborhood Association  
www.dawsonneighborhoodassociation.org

May/June 2015

## East Bouldin Creek: A Beautiful Feature by David Haun

East Bouldin Creek is the most prominent landmark in the Dawson Neighborhood. It runs south to north, the entire length of the hood, from Ben White Blvd or Hwy 71, until it disappears under Oltorf and into the Bouldin Creek neighborhood.



Back in the early 90's, cleaning up East Bouldin Creek was one of the original organizing issues for the Dawson Neighborhood Association. The neighborhood sponsored annual clean ups and hauled tons of trash and discarded junk out of the creek bed. It was during the creek cleanups that neighbors became aware of the new ten-foot drainage tunnel from the (then) under construction 10 lane Hwy 71 freeway, replacing Ben White Blvd. TxDot had built an underground water conduit feeding directly from a tunnel at the bottom of the Congress Avenue overpass to flow into East Bouldin Creek.

### Cumberland bridge during recent rain

and feeds directly into the creek. The DNA protested this additional burden on the creek erosion and quality and so, working with the city, got the Alpine Detention Pond built to help improve water quality and flood control. We also have the St. Edwards Pond as part of our watershed system. It is a beautiful pond and does help with flood and water quality control. There is a water quality control pond at the northwest end of Gillis Park that helps the creek downstream on the other side of Oltorf. It is a more of an "engineered" construction with vertical sides inside a chain link fence.

Overall, the environment and water quality of East Bouldin Creek that makes its way down to Lady Bird Lake is better because of the work of the Dawson neighborhood volunteers. Further afield, the city persuaded TxDot to put a filtration area at the end of the IH 35/Ben White Drainage tunnel that empties into Williamson Creek above McKinney Falls State Park.

East Bouldin Creek often lays dormant, with small ponds remaining in the hottest of summer days. Other times, for Dawson, a river runs through it. The creek was a palette for Stefanie's Art Bridge at El Paso Street, her mosaic masterpiece. The natural landscaping of the beautiful community gardens on Cumberland Road is a serene place to view the creek.

Help to keep East Bouldin Creek clean and help protect our prominent landmark, deep in the heart of South Austin.

## A Proposed Hotel for South Congress

The June meeting will welcome Mike McHone, Agent for owners who are proposing to build a boutique hotel at 2510 South Congress. It has had a Chinese restaurant there until recently. The hotel will be subject to city requirements for Vertical Mixed Use and other standards for the S. Congress corridor.

## GILLIS POOL WILL BE OPEN THIS SUMMER!

Gillis Pool is our neighborhood pool located at 2504 South Durwood Avenue. It will be open for recreational swim **from June 15 to August 16, 2015**, from 1 pm to 8 pm every day except Wednesdays.

Last year an aquatic needs assessment was completed by the City of Austin. Below are the results of the Aquatic Facilities Needs Assessment pertaining to Gillis pool. The pool is 60 years old. It was built in 1954 and renovated in 1979. The primary recommendation for this pool is replacement. However, to keep this pool operating at a minimum level for 10 years without consideration to long term costs or problems, some of the recommendations to renovate this facility are as follows:

1. Pool:- a. Reline pool with a flexible coating., b. Replace gutters/filtration with continuous overflow system., c. Add tile depth and warning markers.
2. Replace the deck
3. Replace guard and storage building.

For a complete list of recommendations, see: <https://www.austintexas.gov/swimming>

### Please Join Us!

#### Dawson Neighborhood Meetings

Monday, June 8, 2015

6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

South Austin

Multipurpose Center  
2508 Durwood

#### Neighborhood Association

Guest presentations:

A. Matt Lewis, Dept of Planning and Development.

B. Officer Barbosa, APD

Approval of Minutes

Old Business

New Business

Admin Items

Adjourn 7:30 p.m.

#### Planning Contact Team

Guest presentations:

Mike McHone, 2510 S Congress. Crux Climbing, Infinitive Monkey

Approval of Minutes

Membership Report

Old Business- Priority Survey

2510 S. Congress

New Business - Pickle Road

Admin Items

Adjourn 8:30 p.m.

We meet on the 2nd Monday of Feb, Apr, June, Aug, Oct & Dec.

#### DNPCT Membership Report

Members who do not attend one meeting within a 12 month period are moved from Active/Pending to Suspended status, and those who do not attend for three years are removed from membership.

## In Memoriam

Our friend and neighbor Myron Smith passed from this world on the morning of April 9, 2015 after a courageous and unwavering battle against a formidable and rare form of sarcoma. Myron was an enthusiastic community advocate and served on several platforms, including as President of the Dawson Neighborhood Association, Board Member of the Dawson Neighborhood Planning Contact Team and Commissioner on both the City of Austin's Community Development Commission and on the Planning Commission. Myron was a "connector" who brought people together with her zealous spirit to help improve lives, and her spirit will live on in the many lives she has touched.

# The results from the city's Neighborhood Plan Prioritization Survey are in!

We'd like to thank the folks who completed the survey at the April Planning Contact Team meeting. It's important that we do this every three years so that the City of Austin knows what's important to the Dawson neighborhood.

The first question is about sidewalks, trails, bike lanes and Americans with Disabilities Compliance: neighbors said that the most important concern is that the city should modify the sidewalks along South Congress and South 1<sup>st</sup> to bring them in compliance with the ADA. The second most important concern is constructing sidewalks: along Brinwood from El Paso to Havana and along Cumberland from South 1<sup>st</sup> to Wilson.

The second question is about traffic recommendations: neighbors are most interested in pedestrian-signalized crosswalks at or near all the bus stops and improved visibility at the North and South intersections of Alpine at South Congress.

The third question is about community services and neighborhood action recommendations: we overwhelmingly want to see safer school boundaries, which will help avoid situations where children have to cross busy arterial streets. Other priorities recommend

that the DNA should work with landowners to improve the footpath between El Paso and Wilson and also share information with creek-side residents interested in native landscaping with City of Austin staff working with the new "Grow With the Flow" program.

The fourth question was about parks, trees and beautification: the first priority for neighbors is to keep working closely with Keep Austin Beautiful to reduce litter in the neighborhood. The second most important goal is to improve the landscaping at Alpine pond to make it more usable as a public green space. Neighbors also want to see more youth sports opportunities.

The fifth question was about public safety and utility services: neighbors want to see continued police visibility throughout the neighborhood and increased enforcement of air quality. Neighbors also want to increase police patrols in Gillis Park and increase speed limit enforcement along Lightsey, Alpine and Cumberland.

Thanks again for helping us put together our neighborhood wish list for the city! Let's all hope we'll see many of these improvements soon.

## Gillis Park Playscape Style Decision

Option 2 (Climbing Nets) was the clear favorite, with 23 votes to 2 votes for Option 1.

When then new playscape will be finished has not been decided yet. "Regarding the timeline, I am not sure yet," says Gary Gregson, Project Coordinator for the Parks and Recreation Department. "I received a request from a neighbor to consider waiting to remove the old equipment until AISD is back in session (August 24). That make sense for a couple of reasons. First, although the current equipment doesn't have quite the play value that the new equipment will have, it would still leave a lot of kids a little something to do this summer while school is out (the playground will be closed for 6 to 8 weeks for the replacement). Second, playground installers are usually quite busy during the summer because school districts want their playgrounds replaced while the kids are out." Gary is waiting to hear from

Parks Department management as to whether or not they are okay with delaying the work. He also said that they have removed the out-of-code and unsafe components from the existing playscape. He will notify us as soon as the schedule is finalized.



## Take the Parks and Recreation Survey

The Austin Parks and Recreation Department is asking for the community's input in planning future park development by completing a short park user survey. Individual specific park survey results will be collected from **May 20<sup>th</sup> – July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015**. This short 7 question survey asks park users what they use in the park and what amenities they want to see in the park in the future. Signs will be posted in select parks with a QR code (a bar-code used to store a URL) and the URL will link to an online survey that park users can quickly complete on their smart phone or tablet while sitting on the bench in the park. This short survey is one of several opportunities that park users will have to give their input.

**BE SAFE.** A woman was attacked with a knife in the HEB parking lot late at night two weeks ago. She was severely hurt. Fortunately the HEB security guard saw the women and helped. Please be very aware of your surroundings at night especially. You are vulnerable when you have groceries so park under a light and close to the entrance. Thank you HEB security.

## Pickle Road Developments

The area surrounding Pickle Road is being re energized. The body shop business has moved out (the subject of many concerns). The area is zoned industrial but the new uses of the existing metal warehouse buildings will be more urban. There may be some general concerns about the area but the new businesses will hopefully be an improvement.

A winery called "Inifinite Monkey Theorem" has already spoken to DNPCT and plans are in for city permitting. Grapes used in wine making will come from Texas. There will also be a wine tasting room. We hope the owners will be at our June Meeting to talk about the business.

Matt Twyman of Crux Climbing Center is also invited to the meeting to tell us about that business. The gym is in construction but it will take the rest of this year to complete.

The South Congress beer Drive-through is also part of this group and after it was earmarked as the new Ruta Maya, it is now unclear as to its future.

## DNA 4-13 -15 Draft Minutes:

Steve Gee opened the meeting at 6:35. Remembrance of Myron Smith. Introduced guest speaker Pio Renteria. Next speaker: Angel Flores from CERT program. Motion to adopt the minutes as written. Chad V called a point of order re. whether the agenda needs to be approved before the approval of the minutes. DRAFT admin items accepted from Chad V. Kam moved to adopt the agenda as written in the newsletter; Marisa seconded. Agenda adopted. Marisa moved to adopt the minutes as written in the newsletter. Minutes adopted as written. Old business: Havana Street resurfacing should happen in April or May. Motion to adjourn.

## DNPCT 4-13-15 Draft Minutes:

Meeting called to order. Peter Davis presiding. Introduction of guests: Infinite Monkey Theorem winery apparently left before the meeting started. Marty Quander introduced himself: planning on building a hotel on the current location of the Taste of China. Jackie Chuter introduced to describe the neighborhood Priorities Survey: top 5 capital improvements and top 5 non-capital improvements. Surveys completed. Ms Chuter described how the surveys will be tabulated and will share with the contact team, update the database and share with city departments as appropriate. Motion to adopt the agenda; amendment proposed by Chad V. Agenda accepted. Approval of minutes moved by Kam, seconded by Jerome and accepted. New members Martin Quander, Al Prewitt, Ryan McDermott and Aris Roberts-Kelly. Chad Cospere elected as a board member to the DNPCT board. New business: demolition proposal for 2502 Wilson Street but house listed as historic (being over 40 years old). Demolition approved by the city. Outdoor music permits: applications usually handled around SXSW: 2 applications in the neighborhood: Lucy's Fried Chicken (approval granted) and Opal Divines (application approved but sound levels have been ongoing and annoying; will be meeting with city staff to remedy the situation). Chad V introduced admin. items for the DNPCT for discussion at the June meeting. Meeting adjourned.