

Dawson Neighborhood News

Jan/Feb 2016 Newsletter of the Dawson Neighborhood

**NEXT MEETING FEBRUARY 8 — 6:30PM TO 8:30PM
AT SO. AUSTIN MULTIPURPOSE CENTER, 2508 DURWOOD**

Tree Huggers Unite!

Trees bring beauty to our landscapes, give us shade from an often unrelenting Texas summer sun, provide food and shelter for urban wildlife and add many other ecological and social benefits for the city as a whole and individual properties in particular. Due to their great value to our urban environment, the City of Austin protects many trees in order to make us a more sustainable, liveable and walkable city. Once the trunk of a tree within the city limits reaches 8 inches in diameter (19 inches for single family properties), measured 4 ½ inches from the ground, it becomes a Protected Tree, and any action that may cause that tree to die (uprooting, severing the main trunk, excessive pruning and damaging the root system) requires an approved permit, which can only be considered after filling out a Tree Ordinance Review Application and a subsequent inspection by city staff. In addition, Heritage Trees (all Oaks, Pecan, American Elm, Cedar Elm, Texas Ash, Arizona Black Walnut, Eastern Black Walnut, Bald Cypress, Bigtooth Maple and Texas Madrone) with a trunk diameter of 24 inches, measured 4 ½ feet from the ground, require a variance to remove, prune more than 25% of the canopy or encroach on the critical root zone or dripline. Trees are valuable to us in so many ways, and ordinances to protect them are in no way meant to inhibit development.

Instead, their protection reflects an effort to preserve for the common good an urban forest that gives to us physical, social and psychological benefits.

Protected trees take many years to reach the point they provide maximum benefits, and Heritage trees take upwards of 100 years to reach maturity. When healthy trees are removed and replaced with saplings, we must start at zero and wait many decades for new Heritage trees to again become a part of the physical and social landscape. Multiple generations then lose the benefit of the Heritage trees that were removed thus we must continue to protect healthy trees so that we all share these wonderful beauties of nature.

If you think a healthy protected or heritage tree is under threat of removal or damage, try to determine if an approved permit (www.austintexas.gov/devreview/a_queryfolder_permits.jsp) has been granted for the work. If you cannot find a permit, remind the person they need a permit and ask them to stop the work until they have gone through the appropriate process. If they refuse or you are unable to talk to the person or do a permit search and you believe an immediate threat to the tree exists, call 911 and ask for the Police Department. Tell the person who answers the APD line that you believe someone is in violation of the Protected Tree Ordinance 25-8-621 or Heritage Tree Ordinance 25-8-641, and ask that a patrol car be sent to stop this violation. In addition to this step or if you do not think the threat to the tree is imminent, be sure to email the city arborist at cityarborist@austintexas.gov.

While the office of the City Arborist monitors email on weekends and evenings, it may take some time for staff to read then respond to your email. In order to ensure the health and longevity of our urban forest, we must all do our part to protect and preserve our tree canopy.

For more information, visit www.austintexas.gov/department/city-arborist and www.austinheritagetreefoundation.com/

Alpine Wet (Detention) Pond

Marisa and I are putting together a proposal to present to the Neighborhood Partnering Program in October to turn the Alpine Wet (Detention) Pond area into a pollinator/wildlife habitat. The plan is to eventually landscape the Alpine Wet (Detention) Pond (fed by East Bouldin Creek) and another city-owned related area to the west of the ponds into a native plants area, wet marsh, and turn it into a habitat area that fits into the following city initiatives:

2009 Community Wildlife Habitat Certification and 2015 Wildlife Austin's Pollinator Challenge

This is an expansion of an agreement we (Dawson Neighborhood Association) originally had for the pond area with the City Wastewater Protection Department, which started to oversee the area when the pond was

built over a natural spring. Part of the pond area gets overrun by Johnson grass and bastard mustard that has to be pulled out or cut down as we did during our spring Dawson Neighborhood pond/park clean ups last year. These invasive plants will eventually crowd out the native plants and become a fire source. The city only cuts the whole pond area, and then only three times a year. The city many times we plants if allowed to continue to grow. These weeds can grow tall, take over the area from the native plants, and cuts down the native plants before they deadhead and seed. Nearby neighbors and I have been cutting the other field area related to the pond site, as the city does not. The project would bring the pond area back to a living habitat by preserving and adding more native plants around the ponds, the wet marsh area, related berms, and also introduce a wildflower meadow area to the field west of the ponds as defined by the two above city initiatives.

The objective is to turn this area into an education/information place to observe, and provide witness to what is happening in a naturalized habitat and also what a floodplain brings to the equation and our neighborhood. This might be a two step project depending on the work needed, the commitment by the neighborhood and the blessing and cooperation from the City Watershed Protection Department. First focus is on the field to prepare it and also control the weeds around the pond, And second to landscape the area to fulfill the objective. And third to oversee the project till it becomes a living habitat.

There will be more information on the DNA website and updated as we move through the process.

by Marisa Fushille & Marty Harris

Thanks to our newsletter sponsor!

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Community
Acupuncture**



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Short Term Rentals (STRs)

Some of you may be interested in using your property as an STR; however, please keep in mind that all properties (including rooms and guest houses) rented for less than 30 consecutive days are required to obtain an operating license from the City of Austin. While there is no limit to the number of owner occupied STRs

(Type 1) within each census tract, the number of non-owner occupied STRs (Types 2 and 3) is limited.

To determine if an STR is licensed, use the city's permit search website to search by address. If a property is operating without a license, you can call 311 or visit the 311 website to report illegal activity. If an STR is creating a nuisance in your area (noise, trash, etc.), whether licensed or not, call 911 for more immediate attention. If you are interested in operating an STR or want more information about STRs, visit

www.austintexas.gov/str

A Message from DNA President, Eliot Kimber

Ten years ago this April we moved into the Dawson neighborhood and immediately fell in love with it: the friendliness of our neighbors, the diversity, the embarrassment of riches provided by the many restaurants within easy walking distance, an excellent school for our young daughter, the proximity to downtown and the South Austin entertainment and shopping districts, the feral guineas that make our dog walks that much more interesting, the artists who add that unique South Austin flare to our humble streets. We've been involved with the neighborhood in one way or another since we arrived, whether through the Dawson Neighborhood Association or supporting Molly Dawson Elementary as our daughter started her school career. This is a special neighborhood, a gem, a neighborhood experiencing the same stresses and transitions all of Austin is feeling as it continues to grow at an astounding, and sometimes alarming pace.

I'm excited to be President of the Dawson Neighborhood Association. This coming year will no doubt see many changes and challenges: new development, changes in how the City of Austin interacts with neighborhood associations, etc. I look forward to working with the other DNA officers and members as we try to address these challenges as best we can. We saw a lot of new faces at the December meeting and I'm hopeful we can maintain and grow that level of engagement with the Neighborhood Association.

Alpine Pond Transformation

Be a part of the Dawson Alpine Pond Transformation Project VOLUNTEER on It's My Park Day, March 5 from 9 am to 1 pm.

The neighborhood plan is to eventually landscape the Alpine Detention Pond (fed by East Bouldin Creek) and an adjacent city-owned area to the west of the ponds into a native plants area, wet marsh, and a habitat area.

The first step to turning the Dawson Pond at Alpine area into a pollinator/wildlife habitat is to pick up trash and remove weeds and invasive species. Bring your gloves and weeding tools! Sign up on the It's My Park website www.AustinParks.org or contact Marisa at mfushille@gmail.com by Marisa Fushille

Restricted Front Yard Parking Application Process

This year is the same as previous in that we have received this message from the City of Austin: The issue has been voted against in every year it has been considered. The past two years have been more contested because of neighbors experiencing problems regarding the issue and also the misinformation spread about to create confusion over the intent. Here are the responses to that misinformation:

1. It actually protects the value of property.
2. It does not mean that you will be told to put concrete down on your existing parking places.
3. It is not a conspiracy for concreting companies to obtain work.
4. It is not a "ban on parking on unpaved surfaces" and only applies to new expansion of parking areas.
5. Like all rules, it is intended to help resolve situations that are already causing "ill-will between neighbors".
6. There will not be APD swat teams sweeping through the neighborhood in the morning to make arrests.
7. Like all new development, expansion of new parking areas should go through the permitting process to comply with city code.
8. Unless making changes to your property, no one is going to be required to "register" or submit a site plan for approval.
9. The official neighborhood organization (DNPCT) receives a notice from the city every year to consider adopting the ordinance.
10. The DNPCT duty is serving our community by sharing the opportunity concluding with a vote if necessary at meeting (February 2015). This is not another conspiracy.
11. Historically, the vote has hardly been contested, but bringing it to a vote, after the contact from the city, allows for change should it be deemed necessary.
12. This ordinance is intended to help with a situation of crowded and unruly parking of multiple vehicles all over a front yard and is not about normal parking on your property.

STAY IN TOUCH

Yahoo Forum =

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/DawsonNeighborhood>

Website =

www.dawsonneighborhoodassociation.com

Neighborhood Association

1. Approval of Minutes
2. Old Business
3. New Business

Planning Contact Team

1. Approval of Minutes
2. Membership report
3. New Business
 - a) New officers announcements.
 - b) Discussion on front yard parking and vote
 - c) 2510 South Congress Hotel - discussion/vote

DNPCT Meeting Minutes December 2015

Peter Davis opened the meeting, explained the duties of the plan team and introduced the board members.

Approval of the minutes: amendment proposed by Chad V: "Seven seats will be open for election" should be clarified by attaching the following language: "There are 8 interested nominees and DNPCT bylaws do not stipulate a limit to seats on the Board." Amendment passed unanimously by show of hands.

Chad V. moved to nominate Jovita Pardo to serve on the board. Sandy and Chad C. observed that the bylaws require that nominees be active members at the time of their nomination; since she was not yet an active member, she was ineligible. Discussion ensued. Bylaw language read aloud. Motion to move on passed with one vote in opposition. Introduction of candidates.

Motion to vote by acclamation by Chad V. Seconded. Discussion ensued. Motion failed. Motion to adjourn for dinner, with elections to be announced after.

Election results: Greg Anderson, Peter Davis, Donna Knapp, Marty Harris, Julie Woods, Omar Rivera

DNA Meeting Minutes December 2015

Sandy called the meeting to order. Asked for a vote on the issue of whether the membership wishes to have the meeting videotaped and uploaded to YouTube. Vote in the negative and the camera was turned off.

Approval of the minutes: Chad V. made a motion to amend the minutes: 1. Chad Cosper was elected "chair pro tem" not "presidentprotem." [Chad C. seconded] 2. [2nd paragraph under New Business] Motion that the Newsletter Editor (Sandy McMillan) "Accepts statements from each of the candidates prior to election, with length of statement being up to the discretion of the newsletter editor." [No second, item dropped] 3. "Chad v. Also presented information about the coming opening of the Habitat Restore coming soon to the neighborhood." Changed to "Chad Vanderlinden gave his account of an exclusive tour which AHFH provided to him on September 24." Kam suggested we move forward so we can eat. Amendments accepted to the minutes.

Announcement re. election: RR requires that one person should not hold multiple offices; procedure for duplicated offices is that the officer select which office they wish to hold and the runner-up is elected to the office not chosen. Discussion recommended by Chad V. to the effect that the bylaws permit such multiple office-holding. Motion to discuss seconded by Cole A. Discussion of the details of RR undertaken in some detail. Greg A. moved to move on to the election. Motion passed. Introduction of candidates. Motion to temporarily adjourn the DNA meeting in order to hold the Plan team meeting. Passed.

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Election results: President: Eliot Kimber, Vice President: Chad Cosper, Secretary: Julie Woods, Newsletter Editor: David Haun