

Dawson Neighborhood News

Sept/Oct 2016 Newsletter of the Dawson Neighborhood

Next Meeting Monday, October 10 at 6:30pm
at So. Austin Multipurpose Center, 2508 Durwood

Useful Apps For The Neighborhood -- Eliot Kimber

For those of us concerned about the preservation of trees in our neighborhood, especially with all the new construction these days, the TreeFolks Austin Tree Map mobile phone application makes it easy to document trees on a shared map. The City of Austin "Austin 311" app makes it easy to submit and track 311 requests.

The TreeFolks Austin Tree Map app lets you identify trees, place them on a shared map, and provide information about the tree, such as its diameter, species, and so on. As of 12 September there are very few trees mapped in the Dawson neighborhood. The main TreeFolks Web site is "<http://www.treefolks.org/treemap/>". The app is the Open Tree Map app, available for iOS and Android phones. Once you have the app installed you set up a free profile and search the map for your address. The app should automatically find the TreeFolks map. From there you can search for trees or add new trees.

The City of Austin 311 app makes it easy to submit 311 requests, such as code violations, street repair, or anything else you might call 311 for. The app is "Austin 311", available for iOS and Android phones. From the app you can make new requests and track requests you've made in the past. You can include a photograph with your request. For code violations the app will ask for details about the site where the violation is found, such as dangers to the Code Enforcement officer. Note that response to some requests may take several days or even a week or two as Code Enforcement, in particular, is understaffed and very busy. Also, when you get a notice that your 311 request has been closed, this only means that it has been forwarded to the appropriate city department by 311, not that the issue has been completely resolved. You will need to contact the specific city department responsible for your request to get full status. Issues can be submitted anonymously or you can provide contact information if you choose. The main Austin 311 Web page is "<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/311>".

DNA Meeting August 2016

Meeting called to order. Minutes approved.

Talked about the Wadford Street group home, update: keeping APD informed. Not much help yet from Code Enforcement.

Introduced Patricia Sprinkle from the ANC.

Roger Colvin from FAN.

Great Outdoors is working out their difficulties with the city.

Long Center events update: no problems reported, will post schedule on social media.

Question from Donna about banning truck traffic on LaVista: is it possible to restrict truck traffic on that block? There are 4 kids, no sidewalks, safety problem.

Motion to adjourn.

DNPCT Meeting August 2016

Minutes approved.

As there was only one DNPCT Board Member present we did not conduct any business. Julia Woods volunteered to take the minutes.

Marty reported about the Planning Commission meeting on the GuestHouse Hotel on 2510 S. Congress: the PC approved both variances. PC heard from neighbors on Euclid and the church next door.

Also reported about the transportation meeting at El Gallo: discussed intersection of 71 and I-35 and the use of Dawson streets as a cut through because of work to begin on IH35 and Oltorf.

Marty mentioned that Greg Anderson (not here) is interested in planning a neighborhood walking tour—will discuss that more at the October meeting.

Tree Folks is working on a city wide tree map, with trees all over the city getting mapped and measured, and documented. There will now be a record of the actual tree: its location, type, size, and age. Also you can look up the tree on-line to see its benefits and needs. The city will also have a record when they get are marked for removal, or are just removed. A document to help us protected our trees and the ever shrinking green space.

Also, another It's My Park day scheduled for November 5. And the Parks Foundation is trying to persuade the Parks Dept to take more care about cutting the grass too low, watching for native plants and managing our green areas better.

Kam brought up a problem with the path between Fontana and El Paso that passes along the creek. Mr. Emerson owns the property on the W side of the bridge; he had problems with people cutting down tree branches and with the erosion, so he blocked public access to the path that is on his property. Kam wants to get neighbors to work with the city and Mr. Emerson to shore up the bank and make the pathway accessible for neighbors. Discussed talking to Watershed Protection; Peter nominated to offer expertise on the issue.

Other developments: vet office property on S. Congress likely to be sold; have until the end of 2017; building may be historical. Starbucks about to open any day. The barbershop and day care center on S. 1st have moved; (not sure what's going in there.) Ms. P's Chicken on Oltorf about to open. Condos next to the Crow Bar being marketed. Poke-Poke opened where Amy's used to be.

Meeting adjourned.

Volunteers needed for Green Space improvement in Dawson

There is a second **It's My Park Day** coming up November 5th. While that date is still about a month away, we can discuss at the meeting if we want to participate in this and possible projects we want to tackle. This is for projects on public land.

There are also several projects around the neighborhood that are developing.

There is the possibility of a small space owned by AT&T that we can turn into a green space. It resides on the west side of the AT&T building on Cumberland and next to private houses. These next-door neighbors and those nearby need to be properly notified also if this moves forward. At this time there is only a mention that AT&T is reaching out to the neighborhood. Hopefully more will be known about this by meeting time.

Also the shortcut entrance to the creek path at the El Paso Bridge needs some neighborhood help to keep the path, which is on private land, open for us to use.



Neighbors! REGISTER TO VOTE!

The deadline to register to vote in the upcoming presidential election is October 11th.

Even if you are already registered, be sure to check your voter registration card to make sure your name and address are both correct. Travis County residents can text to register by October 1: text "Register" to this number: 48683. Also, 17-year-olds can register to vote if they will be 18 by November 9, so pick up a application card for any young people you know. Volunteer registrars will be at our next neighborhood meeting to get you registered and will be able to answer your questions, including checking the county database to confirm your registration if you're not sure.

COYOTES IN CENTRAL TEXAS

As our community grows, there is increased opportunity for interactions with all kinds of wildlife – including coyotes. Coyotes are found in all 48 continental states in the United States and are firmly established in most major metropolitan areas including Austin and Travis County.

Their adaptability and opportunistic diet make them well suited to urban and suburban landscapes where food sources are plentiful. Coyotes primarily hunt small animals such as mice, rats and rabbits; scavenge for human and pet food left outdoors, garbage and carrion; and eat fruits, berries and other plants. Coyotes may also prey upon other small mammals such as house pets if they are easy to access. If food sources are plentiful, a coyote's home territory may be less than one square mile in an urban setting. In the wild, territories are many times larger.

Coyotes are typically most active at dawn and dusk, though may be seen hunting or traveling during daytime hours, and use a variety of vocalizations to communicate. Coyotes range in size from about 25 – 40 pounds, though they may be mistaken as larger because of their thick coat. Coyotes are naturally wary of humans, but living and finding easy food sources in close proximity to humans with few negative consequences can cause coyotes to become bolder and create potentially unsafe situations.

With a little knowledge of coyote biology and best practices in managing interactions with coyotes, we can keep communities safe for people, pets and wildlife. These best practices include reducing or removing possible food and water sources, maintaining properties to reduce places to shelter and hazing coyotes when appropriate, which helps reshape their behavior and discourage them from frequenting the area.

What to Do Around Your Home and Neighborhood

Keep wildlife wild – don't feed them! Do not feed pets outside or leave pet food outside; Check your property for and eliminate potential sources of food and water; Clean up bird seed on the ground; Keep barbecue grills clean; Tightly cover and secure garbage cans and compost bins; Clean up under fruit and nut trees; Eliminate artificial water sources; Trim brush and shrubbery near ground level; Make sure fences are secure and close off crawl spaces under porches, decks and sheds; Keep small pets inside if possible and monitor them when outside; Provide secure shelters for poultry or other animals living outside; Always follow leash laws and walk dogs on leashes 6' or less in length

Be aware of possible coyote den sites when in parks or other natural areas. Coyotes are protective of pups and may view people or dogs (even larger dogs) as interlopers. Coyotes den, mate and birth pups generally from January to June and are most territorial then.; Install motion activated sprinklers or outdoor lighting around your property

Hazing: How to Scare a Coyote Away to Minimize Future Interactions

Hazing, also sometimes called vexing, is a process that helps reshape coyote behavior and encourages coyotes to avoid contact with people and pets. It reinforces coyotes' natural wariness without harming them. The more an individual coyote is hazed using a variety of tools and techniques by a variety of people, the more effective it will be for the entire community. Hazing should be exaggerated, assertive and consistent. It is a common technique used in communities around the country.

Make eye contact, yell and wave your arms. You want the coyote to know the behavior is directed at it. Waving your arms will make you seem bigger.

Use noisemakers such as whistles, air horns, a "shaker" can full of small rocks (or something similar), or bang something like pots and pans together.

If the coyote does not leave immediately, throw non-edible objects near it. You can use something like small rocks, sticks or tennis balls. Remember, the goal is not to hurt the coyote, you're trying to get it to leave and associate humans with unpredictable, "scary" behavior.

Spray the coyote with a water hose, water guns or spray bottles. You can also use a mixture of water and vinegar, pepper spray or bear repellent.

If the coyote does not leave after escalating hazing efforts, maintain eye contact and back away slowly. Notify 311 immediately. Don't haze if a coyote appears sick or injured, is cornered or displaying acceptable coyote behavior. Please call 311 to report sick or injured animals.

If you would like complementary, city informational brochures about coyotes or a free, one-hour presentation for your neighborhood association, informal group of neighbors or any other civic group, please contact 512-978-0514.

Nominations for Officers

Every October we take nominations for the officers in the DNA and board members in the DNPCT. Voting for both take place at the December meeting.

In the DNA, there are four positions: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Newsletter Editor. The DNPCT elects Board members to serve in staggered two-year appointments with voting for Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary as officers presented in February.

Be aware that there are different requirements for both groups to become nominees or voting members as defined in the separate bylaws.

Available on the DNA website:

<http://www.dawsonneighborhoodassociation.org/bylaws/>

Twin Oaks Library - Announcements

10/18, 6:30PM: Web Development (Google Fiber)

<http://library.austintexas.gov/event/web-development-lets-break-it-down-362733>

10/27, 7PM: 50 Shades of Green: A Graywater Overview

<http://library.austintexas.gov/event/graywater-overview-348252>

Twin Oaks Library celebrated 60 years serving south Austin on September 27, 2016. They offered light refreshments for neighbors. The Twin Oaks Branch was built to replace the former Twin Oaks Branch, which was located in a lease space since its inception in 1956. Since 1992, the branch had been in a storefront space in the Twin Oaks Shopping Center located near the intersection of South Congress Avenue and Oltorf Street. In the 1998 voters approved the funding to build a permanent branch to serve this area of the City. The new Twin Oaks Branch opened in August of 2010.

A display featuring photos from the 1950s onward along with various materials on Austin's history is now available for checkout.