

# Dawson Neighborhood News

The newsletter of the Dawson Neighborhood Association

June 2009

## Greening the Neighborhood

-- Peter Davis

At the Dawson Neighborhood Association (DNA) meeting on June 9th, we will have as a guest speaker the Water Quality Education Manager for the City of Austin, Kathy Shay, who will talk about the **Green Neighbor Challenge**.

There are lots of ways we can make our homes greener with programs supported by the city, including green gardening, tree planting, saving water and energy, pest control, greener chemicals, pet waste and wildlife habitat. We can become "Green Neighbors" as individual property owners, or help the 'hood as a community to become an official "Green Neighborhood," and there are prizes

for both.

You may have already received the Green Neighbor Challenge brochure at your door this week with information on ways to protect our local environment and reduce pollution going to our creek. Did you know all of the land in Dawson drains to our East Bouldin creek, which runs like a natural freeway from highway 71 all the way to Oltorf? It is our best feature and we all affect its health, so come out to hear Kathy explain the city programs and sources of information and you may be able to go "greener" even in a small way.

## Dawson Neighborhood Plan Team

Draft Meeting Minutes, April 13, 2009

-- Kam Magor, DNPT Secretary

**Neighbors discussed proposed restructuring of plan team bylaws, and increased traffic on South Congress from the soon-to-be-opened SoCo Lofts.**

Meeting called to order by Chair David Barker.

Minutes from meeting February 9 were printed in newsletter. Motion by Donna Knapp to approve February minutes as written, second by Sandy McMillan. Passed unanimously.

Minutes from meeting December 8, 2008, which had been unavailable at the February meeting, were read by Secretary Kam Magor. At the December meeting, the nominated officers-David Barker, Chair; Julie Woods, Vice-Chair; and Kam Magor, Secretary-were elected by acclamation, and then meeting was adjourned for holiday party/potluck. Motion by Sandy, second by Donna to approve December minutes. Passed unanimously.

David announced that minutes from meeting October 13, 2008 are missing. He suggested we send a letter to Rob Robbins, DNPT Secretary for 2008, asking for the minutes and if we don't have them by our next meeting on June 8, 2009, we will declare them officially lost.

Membership report was submitted by Kam. There are three new members who attended their first meeting on February 9, 2009: Jake Gilleland, Ansley Carruth, and David Carruth.

Membership report was not submitted in October, December, or February, so Kam submitted list of new members from those meetings. New members at August meeting were Mark Fisher, Alix Reissman, Lindsay Stafford, and Andrew Taylor. New members at October meeting were Jacob Daniel Apodaca and Ashley Womble. New members at December meeting were Laurie Ramos and Elliot Kimber. Myron Smith pointed out that Ashley Womble had been a member before October and that she has now moved to New York; and that Laurie Ramos had already been a member before December. Kam added that she still has to check on Andrew Taylor as he may no longer be a resident of the neighborhood.

David announced that we will be using the DNPT

Yahoo! group for DNPT business.

**Discussion of documents received from City and posted on DNPT yahoo group:**

There is an application from the **SoCo Lofts** (just north of the Post Office on S. Congress) to alter conditional overlay to increase the number of allowable traffic trips into and out of that property by approximately 700 trips per day.

Myron: Parking is parallel on Congress, so to have more traffic would be terrible.

Donna: They have no handicapped access on Congress. The entryway to the lofts parallels the entry into the PO. There's very little leased space now, so why do they want to increase number of trips? This is already a problematic area for pedestrians because of the PO, gas station, and McDonald's-all bad traffic situations.

Cole Alexander: There's not much use yet of the lofts.

Mark Herman: Why do they want more trips?

Cole: How many more trips? Two more trips per minute? We should get in touch w/South River City Citizens (SRCC) and see what they're doing-the lofts are in their neighborhood. We could invite the SoCo owners to our next meeting.

Cynthia Medlin: When is hearing?

David: Date has not yet been set. I will talk to the case manager from City Zoning.

Sandy: We can weigh in on it and send a letter as a plan team. We have discussed problems w/SoCo Lofts for years.

Mark: The issue is completely moot, as there's no way they're going to have that many trips per hour. Cynthia: Where is that traffic going to go? There's another street behind there that goes up to Woodward. Is some of it going onto Woodward or all onto Congress? Whom is it going to impact? SRCC stopped WalMart-they may have some issues about this.

David: On the application in a section about a traffic study, the owners say they would be willing to pay for a traffic light at Alpine & S. Congress. The

**DNPT Meeting Minutes**

*Continued on reverse*

DAWSON NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

**MONDAY  
June 8, 2009  
6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.**

**South Austin  
Multipurpose Center  
2508 Durwood**

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**Dawson Neighborhood  
Plan Team**

*Agenda*

1. Approval of Minutes (vote)
2. Report from membership committee (vote)
3. Old Business  
-- Discussion of revised bylaws
4. New Business
5. Adjourn

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**Dawson Neighborhood  
Association**

*Agenda*

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes
3. Old Business
4. New Business:
  - a) Peter Davis & Guest: Kathy Shay  
Re: Green Neighbor Challenge
  - b) Sandy McMillan: Neighborhood Watch Program;
  - c) Kam Magor: Stormwater Main Construction Project;
  - d) Myron Smith: ANC discussion & vote on proposal for Single-Member Districts
5. Current Issues
6. Adjourn Meeting

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**Next Meeting:  
August 10, 2009**

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## DNPT Meeting Minutes

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traffic study would also provide traffic counts for Willow Springs, the street that goes up to Woodward behind the lofts. David will get in touch w/SRCC and see if we can coordinate w/them. Myron: Why is the south (emergency) entrance being used so much, as opposed to Alpine?

The second notice from the City is a site plan submission to upgrade parking on Lessin at the big blue warehouse between Lessin & Krebs. No building is being torn down. David assumed they want to resurface existing parking. Myron wants to make sure they're not looking to have additional parking at the warehouse they back into. We need to find out exactly what they want to do and where. David already signed up as an interested party, so he will be notified of any developments. Myron will check out the site plan and also sign up as an interested party.

### Discussion on Restructuring Plan Team

David: Announced we have 45 minutes for this discussion. Commended committee members working on restructuring. They have met four times for two hours each time, in addition to work done outside the meetings. Review of why we are restructuring Plan Team: build knowledge, so that team will be able to maintain control over decision-making process, maximize neighborhood input. Draft by-laws are presented tonight. Revised version will be presented in June. In October the new bylaws will up for a vote. If they don't pass, we'll come under the old by-laws for nomination of officers. We're not trying to produce a perfect system, just something better than what we've had. Please consider the flaws of new system in light of the problems we've had with the current system.

Mark: We've tried to stay as close as we can to the City's template for Plan Team by-laws. Draft was written within template from City.

Sandy: Section 4F Membership: Wording: "No member shall purport to represent the DNPT [Dawson Neighborhood Plan Contact Team] unless authorized to do so." Suggest that should read "No officer or board member" rather than "no member." David: Suggest we add "authorized by the Board."

Sandy: Section 5E: Provision states that board members may serve two full consecutive terms and after that cannot serve for two years. Should we have something about what we would do if we can't find anyone to serve?

Sandy: Section 11A: States that "any elected officer may be removed from office for good cause" and then goes on to describe procedure for removing officer. Should we define good cause?

Mark: Good cause includes not declaring conflict of interest, not turning up to sufficient meetings.

Julie Woods: We wanted to have that clause be general so it could be applied to something unexpected that might come up.

David: This section applies to removing officers, not board members. The sections on removing a Board member (Sections 5F & 5G) list three reasons for which Board members can be removed. Also, Board members can be removed by a vote of membership without any reason (Section 5H). We don't need to spell out every instance, don't need a specific list of transgressions. Or, we could use

## Wanna get e-mail updates with neighborhood news?

Lost a dog? Having a yard sale? Or just want to know what's going on in our neighborhood?

Join the Dawson Neighborhood Association (DNA) message forum on *Yahoo! Groups*, and receive neighborhood news by e-mail.

Go online to:

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

or send an e-mail to

[DawsonNeighborhood-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:DawsonNeighborhood-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

NOTE: *When you submit your request for membership, you will receive an automatic message asking for your full name and address. Please reply with that information because your membership will not be approved until you complete that step.*

Once you're a member, you can receive any messages posted to the list, and you can post messages as well.

### Special Note: Dawson Neighborhood Plan Team Listserv

The DNPT (Dawson Neighborhood Plan Team) now has its own listserv separate from the DNA (Dawson Neighborhood Association) listserv. The DNPT listserv was started last year and hasn't been used very much, but the DNPT officers are going to begin using it now to post materials of interest to plan team members and minutes of DNPT meetings, and as a forum for discussion of plan team issues. Anyone can join the DNPT Yahoo! group listserv, but we ask that only members of DNPT post messages. Last year through some miscommunication, two Yahoo! groups were started for the DNPT. The one we are going to use is named simply DNPT. The one we are going to dissolve is named DNPT Team. Anyone who signed up to be on the DNPT Team listserv will be personally notified when we dissolve that group shortly after our next meeting. To join the DNPT listserv, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/DNPT/>

wording like "including but not limited to..."

Cynthia: Section 15B(5) Conflict of interest-Landlord/tenant: This clause was added because of this question: Can tenants have opinion on use of property?

Mark: No distinction between owning and renting. What we're trying to achieve is that people's decisions are as dispassionate as possible. Has to do with keeping minds clear. Strike the word NOT from last sentence.

Section 15F: States that Board member may not vote on question concerning property within 300 feet of property Board member owns. Suggest expanding that clause to include Board members who are renters and business owners, as well as property owners. Section 15C ("A direct pecuniary interest shall not include being a neighbor of a property or applicant") conflicts with Section 15F. Cynthia suggests delete 15C and reword the ones below it.

Myron: City recently changed notification to affected neighbors to 500 feet instead of 300 feet. Should we use 500 ft, too?

Cynthia: The reason it's 300 feet is that state law on valid petitions is 300 ft. People within 300 ft have that additional legal remedy.

Peter Davis: Section 15 Conflict of Interest: Should these provisions apply to regular members as well as Board members?

David: Board members will be voting, regular members will not. Regular members can vote to elect Board members but not on issues.

Mark: Decisions will be made by unemotional group. If Board is unable to make a decision, more work is needed. You have to trust your elected representatives. Checks and balances are in there. Everybody gets a say. We have to do something different from what we did before.

Peter: Concept of Board members is excellent-people who consider proposals, consider both sides, listen to neighborhood, make recommendations, present problems, pros, cons, present to neighborhood with recommendation, but then put it to total membership for vote.

David: Then the Board members would have a lot of work to do with no power. The idea of the Board is that they are trying to see issues in the context of the neighborhood plan. For example, there's no constraint on the Board to make decisions in line with what individual members of neighborhood want.

Julie: A lot of the time, an answer is demanded a lot sooner than the neighborhood can convene. Board could be empowered to tell City "I don't know." Then we'd have frantic scrambling, as before. People don't want more meetings. Bylaws we worked on last year went down in flames. Now we're trying to do something different. Mark: Could probably say Board would have power on some quick decisions and larger decisions could be handled as Peter suggests. Board would facilitate all process, documentation, communication, and then, at a certain point, the neighborhood could vote.

Peter: Every member of the neighborhood should at least be able to record their opinion and give it to the Plan Team Board.

David: For a Board to survive, it will have to do a good job of bringing in stakeholders (neighbors) and getting as much input as possible; this will be its most important task. Danger of not giving Board power is that there's no reason for the proponent (of a development) to talk to them.

Donna: Board would have to deal with all of Process (in illustration on back page of Drafts bylaws) and then neighborhood hears about it at public meeting?

Mark: Yes, unless you're a stakeholder.

Donna: It has promise, I favor this. It would be such a relief.

Mark: We could do a pilot study, try it out.

David called for motion to adjourn. Peter so moved, Sandy seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

## Dawson Neighborhood Association

Draft meeting minutes, April 13, 2009

Minutes from 2-9-09 were approved.

### Old Business:

1. Traffic calming update: Myron contacted the City of Austin to learn that the plans to repave streets in Dawson (which occurred this spring) were not known by the traffic calming staff at the time speed cushions were installed.

### New Business:

1. Peter Davis presented information on the Green City Challenge sponsored by the City of Austin and asked for volunteers to help Dawson participate in the

program. Peter, Sandy, Donna, Myron, and Becky volunteered.

2. Myron relayed a question from the City of Austin Parks Dept. What is the DNA's opinion on the Park Dept. using the sand volleyball courts at Gillis on Friday nights? Discussion points included the observation that neighbors appear to use the courts on Fri. nights. No vote was taken.

Meeting adjourned.

~ Rebecca Sheller, DNA Secretary