

Dawson Neighborhood News

Newsletter of the Dawson Neighborhood Association
and Dawson Neighborhood Plan Contact Team
www.dawsonneighborhoodassociation.org

May/June 2020

June Meeting Cancelled

— Julie Woods, DNA President

After discussion about the current (and ongoing) need for social distancing, the DNA officers decided to cancel the June meeting. We also decided not to distribute the June newsletter for similar reasons: many of our members are members of vulnerable groups (or have such people in their households) and face-to-face contact remains risky.

Also, Dawson Elementary, our usual meeting place, is in use as a food distribution location for AISD students and their families. The South Austin Neighborhood Center, our former meeting place, has been closed. Rather than require that a meeting space be cleaned and sanitized after our meeting, we chose to cancel the meeting. If the city (or other organization) approaches us with urgent business, we can look into arranging an online meeting. In the meantime, we can share information with our neighbors on social media and elsewhere.

Austin Pools Reopen

The city of Austin has reopened some swimming pools on a limited basis and following CDC guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19. With a city-wide hiring freeze and limited staff available, not all pools will be opening and splash pads will remain closed. Sadly, the Gillis Park pool will remain closed for the foreseeable future. Some pools will require an appointment for a two-hour block for lap swimming; Big Stacy, the pool nearest the Dawson neighborhood, will not require appointments but will close every two hours for cleaning.

More information is can be found here: <https://austintexas.gov/page/pools-splash-pads>

Here's a FAQ about which pools will be opening when and how to schedule an appointment for swimming.

https://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Parks/Aquatics/FY20_FAQ_COVID.pdf

Social Justice

Many of us were horrified to see the videos of police violence directed at black people and demonstrators and aren't sure what we can do in our own communities. Given that many of us are staying at home in order to avoid the COVID-19 virus, we have to gather information and take action online. If you're interested in learning more about the Austin Police Department's record on these matters, Council Member Alison Alter has compiled a list of information resources:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1W93y2K0jyhUvNdj2I2QWw2Vsg7Se67naAGDuO8qv7Wc/edit>

If you're interested in learning about what you can do, here is a useful list:

<https://medium.com/equality-includes-you/what-white-people-can-do-for-racial-justice-f2d18b0e0234>

If you're considering participating in a protest in the wake of the violence we've seen, here are some guidelines for protesting safely:

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/life/article/protest-pandemic-coronavirus-george-floyd-doctor-15310472.php>



Next Meeting

June meeting is canceled.



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We (normally) meet on the 2nd Monday of February, April, June, August, October, and December.

Census 2020

If you have not already, please be sure to complete your census form! Census data is used to determine political representation and federal funding for schools and public services. Millions of dollars in Federal and state money are distributed according to census data. Individual information from the census is kept private for 70 years.

<https://my2020census.gov>

Covid Resources and Information

Need more information about help during the COVID-19 pandemic? Here's a list of some resources:

<https://communitynotcommodity.com/2020/03/27/more-than-75-resources-to-help-our-fellow-austinites-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

The city of Austin has FREE COVID testing! They are urging people who've attended protests to get tested and have a link to a self-assessment to help you decide whether to get tested. The city's page on their coronavirus response is here:

<http://www.austintexas.gov/covid19>

Here's the city's data page for the numbers of COVID cases. (This page sometimes fails to load, so if it doesn't work for you on the first try, wait awhile and try again later.)

<https://austin.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/43b91f7147934b0190119781f81aa896>

Interested in how the city's spending the mobility bond money? Here's their latest newsletter:

<https://mailchi.mp/austintexas/this-fall-is-full-of-2016-bond-funded-projects-and-outreach-417090?e=78840c9c07>

The city of Austin will be seeing a budget shortfall in the coming year:

<https://communityimpact.com/corporate/na/education/2020/04/28/austin-isd-preliminary-fy-2020-21-budget-shows-shortfall-of-493m/>

Austin ISD has information about what they plan to do for the fall semester; essentially, they're still figuring out the details but plan to resume classes on August 18. They also want to hear from students and their families about considerations for planning the coming year.

<https://www.austinisd.org/covid19>

Dawson Neighborhood Association Meeting Minutes, February 10, 2020

Julie Woods, President, called the meeting to order. Minutes approved.

New Business:

A. Presentation by Claudia of Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) and Katy of City of Austin Urban Trails Program on a collaboration to develop an abandoned railroad path into a trail/transit path (Bergstrom Spur Platinum Planning Study). The area is approximately 6 miles long, from Vinson Dr to 183 near the airport, 50 ft wide, and if developed, will include pavement for ADA accessibility. Planners are seeking input from the community through Spring 2020 on ideas such as trailheads/parking, greenspaces, types of transit (e.g. Julie's idea for monorail), businesses, etc.

B. Presentation by Meg, consultant for Capital Metro's Project Connect. The proposed Orange Line would be closest to Dawson. They are considering rapid bus transit and light rail in terms of numbers of people moved, affordability, construction logistics, etc. Project Connect needs community input to obtain federal funding. Cynthia & Jerome stated that a rapid bus line down Hwy 71 is needed now, prior to a Project Connect bond election.

Old/Continuing Business:

1. Gillis Park: It's My Park Day is March 7th.
2. Julie, President of DNA is developing a community survey as part of the neighborhood's Gillis Park adoption. The survey will determine community needs and help Dawson obtain the appropriate funding from PARD. Some proposed ideas will not be funded by PARD: evicting people who legally "camp" in the park during the day, building a fence around the restrooms, and tearing down the restrooms.
3. Wes Beckham, "Homeless response coordinator" with the COA, passionately spoke about updates, strategies, and collaborations to both help the people who camp in Gillis Park because they need housing and help cleaning up the park so that Dawson neighbors feel safe with their families in Gillis Park.

Meeting adjourned.

