

Dawson Neighborhood News

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

March/April 2021

Dawson—Where Anything Can Happen

— Diana Claitor

I was sitting at my rickety table under a rickety palm, sipping low grade Tequila and typing my latest detective novel. It was April 7th, just another muggy Wednesday on El Paso Street. Peaceful except for the pockety-pockety of nail guns and shouts and chortles of carpenters slapping together another enormous house. Then, came the dreadful shrieking—the sound of someone being attacked.

I jumped up, knocking over my tequila—dang—and ran out to the street. The Dawson neighborhood guineas were running away from a man in a red shirt who was leaping at them, clapping his hands and hooting. The carpenters had paused their work on the roof of the enormous house, laughing in a puzzled way.

I yelled, "Hey, stop, leave them alone."

The guineas took off, flying as high as I've ever seen them go, up El Paso toward Wilson Street, and for a moment, I thought it was all over. But Red Shirt chased after them and drove them back toward me, laughing. I was shouting "No, no," as he drove them towards South First as fast as he could. Laughing evilly.



Dawson Neighborhood Guineas

I stared in horror. South First. Notorious for street racers and maniacal speeders and people trying to park so they could pick up overpriced pizza. Where los tres guineas would be sitting ducks. Or maybe sitting guineas.

I yelled for David and we leapt into the Rav 4. I drove as fast as I could, hurtling over one of the El Paso speed bumps we all know so well. Whipping into a driveway in their path, we blocked him and the guineas and leapt out.

In the excitement, I lost control of my terribly minimal Spanish skills. "Pájaros. They vive aquí!" David said "Stop stop!" waving his hands and muttering, "Guineas, not pájaros."

Grinning, Red Shirt joined in with "gallinas de guineas," but he was still trying to get around us to get at them and still laughing. He wouldn't listen, and now we realized it was drunken laughter. I punched in 911 and incoherently described the scene at the same time a neighbor quizzed me about what the hell was going on.

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Thanks to Our Sponsor



Dawson Elementary serves children ages 3 to 12 years.

Please contact Dawson's principal, Tania Jedele, at 512-698-9151, to set up a time for a tour.



The Dawson PTA is raising money with a T-Shirt sale:

<https://dawsonpta.membershiptoolkit.com/onlinestore>



Bubbles the tortoise (Diana Claitor)

Next Meeting

Monday, April 12, 6:30
Online meeting

Agenda

Neighborhood Association

1. Election for the South Austin seat of the Community Development Commission
2. Dawson Neighborhood Association Meeting:
3. Old Business: Lessin Lane update, Lindsay's project, Brodie Oaks
4. New Business: election May 1, SANC mural
5. Announcements

Plan Contact Team

1. Old business
2. New business

New Dawson Neighborhood List Serve: Groups.io

<https://groups.io/g/dawsonneighborhoodassociation>

It's My Park Day Spring Is Now June 5-13!

This year's Spring It's My Park Day has a new date! Mark your calendars for **June 5th-13th**. Beginning on National Trails Day (June 5th) It's My Park Day will feature a week of virtual activities, culminating in a celebration of APF's 29th birthday on June 12th, when we'll host 29 in-person projects with limited availability.

Volunteer registration opens Monday, May 3rd! All volunteers will have the chance to earn a Spring IMPD shirt by completing at least 5 virtual activities, or participating in an in-person project. Stay tuned for project details, and sign up for our e-news list for updates. Thanks for all you do in service and love for our parks. We're looking forward to getting back out there with y'all!

Editor:

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

The guineas cleverly seized the moment to turn and flee east, away from the harassment. I turned back to see a now-nonchalant Red Shirt strolling away toward South First.

"Sorry, never mind," I told the police dispatcher. "It was a drunk man who moved on." But now there was a text from my neighbors Tobi and Jay.

"Do you know anyone who lost a giant tortoise? It's walking the creek and somebody is following it to protect it."

Eh?

We drove back to our corner where Carol and Devon had emerged from their respective houses to inquire about the mysterious guinea chaser and to update us on the giant tortoise. He been herded into a yard and stuck in a big box at the corner of La Mesa and Cumberland.

We all hiked over. Two police were standing there. Each of us, catching sight of the tortoise, said the same thing. "Damn, that is the biggest turtle I've ever seen." And the first cop, smiling gently, enjoyed correcting us all: "It's not a TURTLE. It's a tortoise."

Intel poured in from Next Door and the Dawson list serve. "It might be Mortimer, the giant tortoise that lives on the other side of South First."

But it wasn't and the cops said animal control was on the way. The tortoise, enraged, tried to get out of the box, scrabbling his giant nails against the clear plastic over and over, making us all feel terrible. Then it took an enormous dump, letting us know exactly what he thought of us.

I said, "You won't believe this, but just over on the next street, a man just tried to chase the three guineas into traffic."

The cop said, "Oh sure, over on El Paso Street, that's why we're here. We got the call and were looking for those birds and the drunk man when we saw this going on."

The second cop said, "Y'all sure have a lot of interesting animals around here."

The first cop got a call and looked at his partner.

"Forget it, Jake," he said. "We got a hostage emergency. That restaurant on Bee Caves. Chinatown."

They jumped in their squad car and roared away. We all went back to our humdrum lives. But we knew it wouldn't be long before something else happened. Because this is Dawson. Where anything can happen.

Epilogue (based on Nextdoor reports)

Bubbles the tortoise was picked up by their owner. Thanks to our Dawson neighbors for keeping Bubbles safe.

Dawson Neighborhood Association Meeting Minutes, February 8, 2021 (Virtual meeting via Zoom)

Julie Woods, President, called the meeting to order.

A. Gillis Park safety, accessibility, and attractiveness: Three APD officers—Nicholas D'Andre, Rosie Perez, & Chris _____—discussed interactions with unhoused people and criminals in the park. Officers reported that stealing catalytic converters is a widespread crime and not specific to Prius models. Officers reported that they are not able to read Next Door conversations. Officers related that stolen bikes are frequently unregistered so APD can't prove they are stolen. Neighbors asked about crime in Gillis over past year. Officers responded that they have been working and crimes should be noticeably reduced. Officers encouraged neighbors to report crimes in progress to 911 and previous crimes to 311. Jerry asked about having security cameras installed on playground. Officers encouraged us to reach out to PARD but had questions about who would monitor the cameras. Officer Perez pointed out that APD can only question someone if there is probable cause. She stated that it is not illegal to be homeless. Officers can give a citation for illegal camping but can't stop camping. She also informed us that earlier in the year Gillis Park was a service center for unhoused people during the pandemic. Julie pointed out that pre-pandemic, DNA had plans to acquire and install a needle disposal receptacle to help keep needles out of the park grounds. Neighbors discussed reasons for homelessness. Jerry asked if an undercover officer could help remove drug dealers from the park. APD officers informed us of their lack of resources. Neighbors should call 911 if they see a drug deal. Officer Perez advised neighbors to go to city representatives with a plan or vision. She asked neighbors to work towards specific goals and when a goal is achieved, consider it a "win". She asked how we are willing to help.

B. Julie shared an update on "Resolution in Support of a Moratorium on Substantial Residential Zoning Amendments During the Pandemic". ANC, other neighborhood associations, and Community not Commodity are supportive and adopting similar resolutions.

C. CDC election was postponed due to a need for specific notification.

D. Julie and Andrew discussed ways to share neighborhood knowledge and history via Google Docs.

E. December minutes were shown via screen sharing and approved at end of meeting.

Meeting adjourned.

Minutes of Dawson Neighborhood Plan Contact Team 8 February 2021

Mention made of new businesses and development in neighborhood and the number of new sells/teardown/builds in area. Continuing problems with camping transients in area.

As we did not vote in any new members for the CT Board we did so in the February meeting with contacts voting to add two people to the two year time period. Andrew McCann has joined the CT and Marty Harris agreed to continue another term.

The City sent a notice that there will be a residential development for 601 Cardinal Lane. (attached) We will get these notices even though they are not in our borders but are within the required 500 ft notice and to let us know what is being done on the corridors which connects us.