

# OWANA

NEWSLETTER ◆ SEPTEMBER 2002

[www.main.org/owana](http://www.main.org/owana)

OWANA comprises the area from Town Lake to Enfield Road and from Lamar Boulevard to MoPac.

## Neighborhood Association Meeting Tuesday, September 3, 2002 7:00 PM Mathews Elementary School

### LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT:

One of the greatest assets of our neighborhood is its sense of community. It is imperative that we do whatever we can to maintain our community and not become polarized over issues.

The proposed six-month trial for a leash free area in West Austin Park is one such issue that is challenging our neighborhood. I remain hopeful that the process we have embarked upon will be successful. By success, I do not mean whether the proposed trial succeeds or fails. By success, I mean that we as a neighborhood work together toward a solution. I have come to appreciate that people on both sides of this issue want the same results! All want a park that is beautiful, accessible, healthy and safe; a park where all are welcome and many uses are possible. Be on the lookout for a ballot offering you the opportunity to vote for or against a six month trial of an off-leash defined area in the Park. The plan defines the area, hours and rules.

Our next meeting in September is very important. The agenda includes discussion and action on variance requests and proposed zoning changes that may have profound impact on the quality of life in our neighborhood. Because your steering committee represents our neighborhood before city administrators, your input is needed. Please attend and share with others how you feel about the proposed development within and on the perimeter of our neighborhood, then vote on the proposed changes. Only then can your steering committee clearly understand and effectively represent the neighborhood's wishes.

I have also come to appreciate more than ever the importance of involvement in the neighborhood association. If neighbors miss an opportunity to voice their opinions, there is a cost to us all. OWANA steering committee needs help. We need help recruiting more members that reflect the diversity of people and opinions in our neighborhood. OWANA needs active participation by all. Our committees - Zoning and Land Use, Historic Preservation, Traffic, Public Safety, Parks and Green Space - present opportunities for all to participate.

We are currently in need of two Steering Committee members as well as many committee members. If you are interested in serving, please let us know so that we may nominate or recruit you at the September General Membership Meeting.

We have a great website - [www.main.org/owana](http://www.main.org/owana) - thanks to Mike Whisehunt and Red Wassenich before him. Our current webmaster is Janet Sullivan and I encourage everyone to check it out. The website includes the minutes from meetings, the neighborhood plan, steering committee members, contact information and anything else we are asked to add.

Feel free to contact me if you have ideas, concerns, and questions etc. regarding OWANA. I cannot promise I have the answer, but I will certainly try to assist.

Margaret Bruch 474-6755.

### SEPTEMBER AGENDA

#### Committee Reports by Committee Chairs

- Zoning & Land Use
- Historic Preservation
- Treasurer's Report
- Transportation
- Public Safety
- Green Space
- Calendar
- Neighborhood Plan

#### Steering Committee Member Nomination and Election

#### Proposed OWANA Design Guidelines - Vote to Adopt

*(please see the website to review the document prior to the meeting)*

#### Support for the Neighborhood Plan - Formal Vote

*(please see the website to review the document prior to the meeting)*

#### Guidance to the Steering Committee on Decision Making Regarding Issues Outside of the Neighborhood - Discussion & Vote

New Business

## FOUND: \$20,000!

Previously we reported that the Neighborhood Plan (NP) Implementation Team had decided to use a portion of the \$20,000 allocated by the City to implement NP action items to install a sidewalk along the south side of 9<sup>th</sup> St. west of Blanco. Since then, the City has decided to use bond funds for the sidewalk project which means we are in the fortunate position of having to pick additional action items to fund. The Team is currently considering ideas for use of the \$20,000 with a focus on two particular priorities for the neighborhood: parks and pedestrian safety. Current ideas that are being investigated for use of the money: more stop signs on 12th St to slow and discourage cut through traffic, ground cover for the central field at West Austin Park, and shade trees at Mary Baylor Park.

Participating on the NP Implementation Team provides a great opportunity to get involved in projects and to meet your neighbors.

If you are interested in joining the effort, please contact Laura Morrison (494-8702, LCMorrison@prodigy.net).

## One Third of Twelfth Street Briefly Converted to Parking Lot!

Suddenly, without warning, a dotted yellow stripe appeared on Twelfth Street between Blanco and Lamar! This stripe wanted to be in the center of the street where stripes belong, but unfortunately was off to one side, leaving room for a row of parked cars, but little room for cars to drive down the street, and very little room for a car to pass a bike coming up the hill. It is a steep hill and the cars wanted to pass the slow-moving bicycles. This was scary for the bicycles and annoying for the cars.

An uproar was raised! Nancy Toelle led a group of rabble-rousers to attack city hall. The powers that be were afraid! The stripe went to the center of the street where it should have been all along. People shopping at businesses at Twelfth and Lamar will have to go back to parking in the parking lots.

**DID YOU KNOW** that properties zoned single-family provide protections to the property owner and the surrounding neighborhood? These protections can help safeguard the current pattern of single family use in Old West Austin. Goal 2 of our Neighborhood Plan is to "Protect the Character of the Neighborhood". Objective 2.2 under this goal provides for neighborhood support for those property owners with multi-family zoning in single-family use (approximately 340 parcels) to roll back their zoning to single-family.

A Neighborhood Plan Zoning Rollback Workshop is tentatively planned for late fall. If interested in rolling back your zoning or helping with the workshop, please contact Nancy Toelle, OWANA Zoning Committee Chair (phone 494-8658 or email nmt10@sbcglobal.net)

## CRIME CREEPS UP

1<sup>ST</sup> OF A 3-PART SERIES

Well known local landscaper, James Mitchell invited a down-on-his-luck acquaintance to share his small apartment on 12<sup>th</sup> Street for a few days in June until his luck improved. The guest, not only helped himself to Mitchell's hospitality, but while Mitchell was out clipping hedges in the hot, muggy Austin afternoon, the guest also clipped Mitchell by helping himself to a few checks from Mitchell's checkbook.

College professor, Daniel Traverso, taking a leisurely stroll late one evening earlier this year with his two children and Pete, their black sheep dog on the 1200<sup>th</sup> block of West Lynn, stumbled across a murder-in-progress at the Kwik Wash Coin Laundry. Instead of a relaxing constitutional, Traverso was dragged into a gruesome retelling of what he had just seen to the Austin Police Department.

Since the start of this year, over 164 crimes have been reported through June in the Old West Austin Neighborhood according to the City of Austin's web site, at [www.ci.austin.tx.us/police/neighbor](http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/police/neighbor). The web site also lists possession of drug paraphernalia, shoplifting, burglary, theft, assault, indecent exposure, DWI and public intoxication as some of the other crimes reported in the neighborhood in the same time period.

The site cautions the site visitor not to rely on the statistics alone because they can lead to "false impressions". To victims, like James Mitchell, however, the only false impression is the one neighbors have about how safe it is to live in Old West Austin. "Once you've been violated, you never feel the same," he said. As for the murder victim at the laundromat, well, he was unavailable for comment.

OWANA wishes to express our  
gratitude to everyone at

**FRESH PLUS**

and manager Joe Mezza for all they do  
to support the neighborhood. Thanks  
again to our good friends!

**ONE GIANT LEAP FOR NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING** - Especially for those new to the neighborhood or the neighborhood planning process, that five-page notice from the City of Austin Neighborhood Planning and Zoning Department in your mailbox in July really is a big deal. In a broad stroke, the zoning changes work to protect and encourage the residential core, expand residential possibilities in the commercial perimeter, and facilitate neighborhood-friendly commercial use where appropriate. The OWANA Zoning Committee, the West End Austin Alliance, residents, business owners, and City staffers Steve Barney and Tom Bolt have been working together for the better part of 2002 to implement the land use recommendations found in the Neighborhood Plan, which was signed into ordinance by City Council in 2000. We presume successful adoption at the August 14 Planning Commission meeting and the August City Council, so congratulations to the hundreds of folks involved over the last five years. Job well done!

**BIGBOX RETAIL THREATENS LOCAL BUSINESSES  
DOES AUSTIN WANT A DOWNTOWN/SUBURBAN MALL AT 6<sup>th</sup> AND LAMAR?**

By Nancy Toelle, OWANA Zoning Committee

A recent Statesman article featured information about incentives given to Schlosser Development for the 6<sup>th</sup> and Lamar project. \$2 million in incentives and \$3.5 million for a chilled water system by Austin Energy were given by the city to Schlosser Development for their Austin Marketplace project. Since then, substantial changes to the project have occurred. Whole Foods is planned as an anchor with Borders Books, and possibly Best Buy, Crate and Barrel, and other big box retail outlets to follow. Soon Schlosser Development will be required to re-apply for incentive funding for this new development plan.

As neighbors committed to safeguarding Old West Austin's unique mix of local businesses, two issues bear reflection: 1) with such tax subsidies supporting national chains, long-term local businesses such as Book People and Waterloo Records, will be forced to compete on an uneven playing field of the city's making, and 2) dollars spent supporting local businesses stay in Austin; money spent in chain stores is generally shipped out of state.

What can we do to support Book People, Waterloo and the other local businesses that make Old West Austin unique? Write or email the mayor, city council members, and the city manager opposing incentives, waivers and subsidies for Schlosser Development if they bring chain stores to our neighborhood. Their email: [www.ci.austin.tx.us/council/groupemail.htm](http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/council/groupemail.htm)

**Motion Passed (8/5/02):** The OWANA Steering Committee votes to support local businesses, Book People and Waterloo Music, by strongly opposing waivers, incentives, or subsidies to the Schlosser Development at 6<sup>th</sup> and Lamar. We oppose development that displaces long-term local businesses with chain stores. We feel this uses our tax dollars to degrade the unique quality of life downtown Austin and its contiguous neighborhoods seek to preserve and funnels local dollars out of state. We ask the mayor, council members, and city manager to support local downtown businesses by denying waivers, incentives, or subsidies to Schlosser Development to give national chains an unfair advantage.

Dear Merchants and Residents,

The West Lynn Street Reconstruction Project, from 6<sup>th</sup> St. to Palma Plaza, has started! During the project, the street will be reconstructed and some curb, gutter and sidewalk construction will occur. The project will be implemented in four phases.

**Phase I** will reconstruct the west side of West Lynn between 6<sup>th</sup> St. and W. 10<sup>th</sup> St. Northbound traffic will shift to the east side of the road in that area and southbound traffic will detour via MoPac or Lamar.

**Phase II** will reconstruct the east side of West Lynn in the same area between W. 6<sup>th</sup> and W. 10th. Northbound traffic will shift to the west side of the road in that area and southbound traffic will detour via MoPac or Lamar.

**Phase III** will reconstruct the west side of the road between W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street and Palma Plaza. Northbound traffic will shift to the east side of the road in that area and southbound traffic will detour via MoPac or Lamar.

**Phase IV** will reconstruct the east side of West Lynn between W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street and Palma Plaza. Northbound traffic will shift to the west side of the road in that area and southbound traffic will detour via MoPac or Lamar.

During Construction, all property owners will have access to their driveways at all times by use of temporary asphalt ramps. On-street parking along West Lynn will not be allowed during construction. School access will be provided at all times. Mail and other deliveries will not be affected. During construction, your principal contacts for this project will be:

Louis Cerda - City of Austin Construction Inspector - 974.1576 office, 802.3337 pager

Amie Egbert - City of Austin Construction Inspector Supervisor - 974.1564 office

Ruben Cantu - City of Austin Construction Inspector Engineer - 974.1588 office

Dennis Crabill - City of Austin Project Manager - 974.7232 office, 914.9427 mobile

**NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORY WORKERS RETURN FROM VACATION**

After a relatively slow summer (I said relatively - I'm consistently finding research dropped into my mailbox), the next meeting of the research group for National Register Historical District status is Monday, September 23 at 7:00 PM. As you can see from the newsletter, the folks working on the calendar to support the nomination haven't taken the summer off and we're looking forward to a financially rewarding Fall. We'll be able to fund a historical consultant before you know it, so let's get back to work! When we determine a location for the meeting, we will email those of you on the list and post it on the OWANA bulletin board at Fresh Plus. Everyone interested in the history of our neighborhood is welcome - the work is fascinating and we can catch you up on the process lickety-split. For additional info, please contact Katy O'Neill, phone 482-0666, or email [KEONEill@swbell.net](mailto:KEONEill@swbell.net)



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