



June 2015

## Letter from the Chair

*Paul Seals, Chair*

Ellen and I moved into our house on Francis Avenue 28 years ago. From our corner of the neighborhood near 6th and MoPac, we have seen many changes, and at the same time we continue to experience much that has remained the same. Old West Austin continues to be a vibrant, diverse, and welcoming community with its unique character. As our recent tax appraisals indicate, our neighborhood is in demand. With this real estate market, we may need to revise that old neighborhood adage – “Old hippies never die, they move to Clarksville.” They may no longer be able to afford to move here.

Ellen and I have no intention of moving. We have loved this neighborhood from the day we moved in. As we have come to know more of our neighbors, both new and old residents and business owners, we hold dear to what we have. We also appreciate all of the investments that our neighbors have made to maintain and enhance the neighborhood. We must work together to make it even better.

At our meeting in June, we will discuss The Stonewall Project, which many of us remember as the Armstrong-Odom Property at 614 and 618 Blanco Street. The design and layout of the Project has not changed from our discussions with the developer last year, but the City staff has now determined that several variances are needed to construct the Project as designed.

We will also be updated on the Pressler Extension Project. This project, which will connect Pressler Street to Cesar Chavez near Austin High, will also provide a safe access to Lady Bird Lake and Austin High for pedestrians and cyclists.

Please come to the meeting and find out what else is going on in your neighborhood.

See you at the meeting!

Paul

# June 2015 Membership Meeting

Tuesday, June 2, 2015 - 6:45pm to 9:00pm

Mathews School Cafeteria (906 West Lynn at West 9th)

- I. Registration and Social Gathering (6:45 – 7:00)
- II. Call to Order - Paul Seals (7:00)
- III. Approval of Minutes (7:05)
- IV. Discussion of The Stonewall, 614 and 618 Blanco Street (7:05 – 7:25)
- V. Discussion of 1407 W. 5th Street (7:25 – 7:40)
- VI. Update of Pressler Extension Project (7:40 – 7:50)
- VII. Discussion of Nominations Process for 2016 Steering Committee (7:50 – 7:55)
- VIII. Committee Reports
  - A. Zoning Committee Report - Rosemary Merriam & Liz Fischer  
*Note: Only zoning case changes and updates of the OWL report are discussed*
  - B. Parks and Greenspaces - Joey Kazzoun
  - C. Historic Preservation - Daniel Armendariz
  - D. Public Safety and Transportation - Mike Sullivan
  - E. Affordable Housing - Scot Marks
  - F. Membership - George Warmingham
  - G. Community Events - Paula Hearn
- IX. Administrative and Organization Issues
  - A. Treasurer's Report - Joey Kazzoun
  - B. Other Administrative and Organizational Business
- X. Other Business and Announcements
- XI. Adjourn

*NOTE: Votes may be taken on any scheduled agenda items.*



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## Pressler Street Extension Update

*Text taken from City of Austin [Pressler Street Project](http://austintexas.gov/pressler) website (<http://austintexas.gov/pressler>).*

The City of Austin is proposing the Pressler Street Extension Project to help better connect Austin.

While designing this project, the City of Austin has heard from numerous groups that have questions about how the project will impact their commutes, the nearby high school and neighborhoods. The Transportation Department is “hitting the pause button” on this design so we can take a few months to have those conversations, answer questions and make sure we are moving forward with the best solution for the most people. Below is more information about the project, but if your question is not answered here send an email to

[AustinMobility@austintexas.gov](mailto:AustinMobility@austintexas.gov) (<mailto:AustinMobility@austintexas.gov>) and the Transportation Department will be happy to help.



## Project Benefits

**Safety:** the Pressler connection includes many safety enhancements. Those include sidewalks for students and users to access the ball fields and park, a roundabout that is safer than a four-way intersection and an at-grade railroad crossing with safety features approved by the Federal Railroad Administration. In addition to the safety features on the railroad crossing, we anticipate a impenetrable fence along the UPRR tracks guiding people to use the safer crossing.

**Local connections:** building the connection is estimated to save people, on average in the study area, 4 minutes during their evening commutes. Currently travelers between MoPac and Lamar Boulevard do not have north-south access between Cesar Chavez and 5th/6th Streets; this connection provides a more direct connection for travelers, students, teachers, emergency vehicles, and even transit vehicles. The alternate route will allow drivers to vary their route as traffic patterns/congestion forms throughout the system.

**Better access to MoPac Express Lanes:** the Express Lanes are coming, and as it stands travelers who want to use them to go northbound will have to use Cesar Chavez. To get to Cesar Chavez, people will either drive through the Lamar Boulevard/5th Street intersection, or from the west drivers will loop around the high school on Veterans Boulevard or go under the overpass on

Cesar Chavez to access the Express Lanes. Pressler would allow for drivers to use 5th or 6th Streets to access the Express Lanes, rather than adding congestion to the Lamar Boulevard/5th Street intersection or looping around the high school.

## **May 2015 Open House Materials**

The City of Austin hosted a public Open House on May 18, 2015 at Austin High School. The materials that were on display for comment and review at the Open House are available on the COA's Pressler Street website (<http://austintexas.gov/pressler>).

## **Traffic Study**

As part of the [Pressler Extension Project](http://austintexas.gov/pressler) (<http://austintexas.gov/pressler>), the City's consultant conducted a traffic study around the area. The following documents include the Traffic Study Executive Summary and the Traffic Study Full Report. Due to the large file size, the Traffic Study Appendices file is available on request; email [Samantha Alexander](mailto:Samantha.Alexander@austintexas.gov) ([mailto:Samantha.Alexander@austintexas.gov?subject=Request Pressler Appendices](mailto:Samantha.Alexander@austintexas.gov?subject=Request%20Pressler%20Appendices)) to request this file.

- [Traffic Study Executive Summary](http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Pressler%20Street%20Extension%20Traffic%20Study%20-%20FinalDraft%20Exec%20Sum_051515.pdf)  
([http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Pressler Street Extension Traffic Study - FinalDraft Exec Sum\\_051515.pdf](http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Pressler%20Street%20Extension%20Traffic%20Study%20-%20FinalDraft%20Exec%20Sum_051515.pdf))
- [Traffic Study - Full Report](http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Pressler%20Street%20Extension%20Traffic%20Study%20Report%20-%20FinalDraft_051515.pdf)  
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- Traffic Study Appendices - available on request, email [Samantha Alexander](mailto:Samantha.Alexander@austintexas.gov) ([mailto:Samantha.Alexander@austintexas.gov?subject=Request Pressler Appendices](mailto:Samantha.Alexander@austintexas.gov?subject=Request%20Pressler%20Appendices))

Additional reports and documents related to the Traffic Study are available on the [Pressler Street Project website](http://austintexas.gov/pressler) (<http://austintexas.gov/pressler>).





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## Zoning Report

May 2015

Updated Cases

**614 (700) Blanco St. - The Stonewall:** Case SP-2014-0116C. A Site Development Permit application has been submitted for a 12 unit condominium project. The proposal does meet design standards and was approved by the OWANA General Membership. Due to miscommunication from the city at the outset of the project, setback and height variances are now required for this project to continue. The variance request is scheduled to be heard at the Board of Adjustments meeting on June 8th – Steering committee will provide a letter of support and neighbor support is encouraged at this meeting. *Case is ongoing.*



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**1114 West 6th St:** Case #CI4-2015-0044. Owner will complete an interior remodel and location will be used as an interior-design studio. Requesting zoning change from LO-NP to LR-MU-CO-NP. Case will be heard by the Planning Commission on May 26th and Steering Committee will submit a letter of support. *Case is ongoing.*

### Ongoing Cases

**1305 Marshall Lane:** Case #2014-125787-PR. Owner is replacing a single-story detached garage and apartment with a proposed two-story structure, also for a garage and apartment space. Applications for Demo and Building permits were submitted in November 2014, the Demo permit was issued in December 2014, and the demolition work has been completed. The property is within the West Line LHD and the design guidelines have been considered. Zoning Committee met with architect on February 17, 2015, and does not oppose this project. Project was scheduled for presentation at the HLC meeting on February 23, 2015, which was postponed. *Case is ongoing.*

**1631 Palma Plaza OLD West Austin:** Historic Case NRD-2014-0078 Review Case # 2014-080027-PR. An application for Demo Permit on a property within a historic district. Case was scheduled to be heard by Historic Landmark Commission on August 25th but was postponed. OWANA, CCDC, and adjacent property owner have a RC that stipulates existing residential structure will remain. All parties continue to meet to review new plan. Owner proposes to construct a new house and will retain the original structure. Postponed at the applicant's request until the HLC January 26, 2015



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meeting, postponed again until the February 23, 2015 meeting. Meeting was postponed and held March 9, 2015, and case was approved upon consent. *Case is ongoing.*

**1210 Castle Hill:** Case #2015 0067 (old case number is 2014 110052). Owner requests a variance to the through-lot's 25-foot setback requirement from Windsor. Owner proposes to construct a guest-house at the rear of the property and seeks the variance in an effort to protect heritage oaks. Scheduled for Board of Adjustments meeting on March 9, 2015, and will present neighbor's letters of support. Following the Zoning Committee's proposal, the Steering Committee wrote a letter in support of this variance request. *Case is ongoing.*

**1401 W 6th St. Nightcap Dessert Restaurant:** Case C14-2013-0138. Case concerning offsite/shared parking. OWANA entered into a Restrictive Covenant with the applicant to assure that parking issues would not have a negative impact on nearby neighbors. *Case is ongoing.*

**912 Blanco St:** Historic Case NRD-2014-0019 Review Case # 2014-080302-PR. An application for Certificate of Appropriateness (HLC subcommittee) for a building permit on a property within the Castle Hill District. *Case is ongoing.*

**1115 W 11th St Castle Hill:** Case #LHD-2014-0020. Sept HLC agenda Proposal: Construct a new house on a vacant lot. Applicant: Dick Clark Architecture, Approve as proposed. *Case is ongoing.*

#### Closed Cases

**1102 West 9th St:** Case #2014-10465. Owner proposes to rehabilitate the existing structure and to build an addition. The property is within the Castle Hill LHD and design guidelines have been followed. Architect first met with Zoning Committee in September of 2013



and has been in communication with committee members. Project was scheduled for presentation at the HLC meeting on February 23, 2015, meeting was postponed, Certificate of Appropriateness was denied by the HLC at the rescheduled March 9th meeting, changes were made and plans were passed upon consent at the HLC meeting on March 23, 2015. *Case is closed.*

**1208 W 8th St:** Historic Case NRD-2014-0084 Review Case # 2014-081149-PR. Kris Owens is the owner.

Application for Demo Permit on a property within a historic district. Postponed at OWANA's request until the HLC January 26, 2015 meeting. Project falls under the 180-day demo delay process or release of the permit upon review of the plans for a new structure. Demo permit was granted at the HLC January 26, 2015 meeting. *Case is closed.*

**806 Patterson Ave:** Historic Case NRD-2014-0068 Review Case # 2014-069552-PR. An application for Demo Permit on a c. 1917 contributing property within a historic district. Applicant: Greenbelt Homes. Postponed until the HLC January 26, 2015 meeting at applicant's request. Owners agreed to a partial demo saving the front of the bungalow and it passed on consent. *Case is closed.*

**1403 Marshall Lane:** C14-2014-0076. Applicant requested a change of zoning from MF-3-NP to SF-5-NP to allow an additional living unit and keeping the existing contributing SF structure. Property owner is preparing a condominium agreement for the two structures. Plans will be prepared and submitted for demo of an existing garage and construction of the new structure. Property owner is working with OWANA on a Restrictive Covenant. *Case is closed.*

**1301 W. 5th St Southwestern Bell Tele Co:** Case # C14-2014-0134-PR. Applicant is requesting a Zoning Change from LI-CO-NP to LI-PDA. (Applicant has indicated use would be multi-family). Planning Commission recommended approval; project presented in its present form at the OWANA Dec GM meeting where two additional RC were added by membership and project was approved. City Council approved project at its December meeting. *Case is closed.*

## The Armstrong-Odom Property

*by Rosemary Merriam, OWANA Zoning Co-Chair*

Old West Austin Neighborhood lost one of its treasured historic houses in April 1995. The 100-year-old Victorian-era house at 614 Blanco was destroyed by fire. It had been empty and abandoned since the death of its former owners. The home's owner William Chuang of Los Altos, CA had allowed the beautiful home to disintegrate without any attempts to maintain or secure it -- even after numerous complaints by OWANA. Neighbors were grief stricken at the loss.

Chuang had purchased the property from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation in 1991. In 1992, he asked the city for a demolition permit in order to build 54 condominiums on the 1.3 acre site. The City Landmark Commission attempted to have Chuang restore the house, but he refused claiming he did not have the funds and was

unable to get bank financing. At the urging of OWANA, in 1992, the City Council changed the zoning to historic.

Twenty years went by before Chuang made another attempt to develop the property. He hired a firm who came up with a design of three separate buildings containing a total of 40+ condos. Faced with strong objections by OWANA and having to deal with design standards of the two local historic districts which border the property, Chuang accepted an offer from Arbollindo LLC. to buy the property in July, 2013.

The new owner, James Schoenbaum's approach was a different from previous developers. He hired the architectural firm of Clayton and Little, who have done a lot of restoration and design work in the neighborhood. After coming up with a preliminary plan, Schoenbaum reached out to OWANA members and all nearby neighbors for their input and support. The team also worked closely with the Historic Landmark Commission and the City of Austin's Preservation office to assure that the project was compatible with Historic Design Standards of both Castle Hill and Harthan Street.

The project was named Stonewall after the old stonewall that fronts the property on Blanco, and all that remains of the Victorian-area house. The project consists of 12 condo units, or six duplexes, 2-story structures with front porches, and to be



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constructed using materials that blend in with the historical façade of the neighborhood. The project also had to meet the Castle Hill and Harthan Local Historic Design Standards. Stonewall was approved by both OWANA's zoning and steering committees. On July 14, 2014, the Historic Landmark Commission approved the project unanimously.

Just before Stonewall received its HLC approval, a city staff member in the city's planning and development department discovered compatibility problems with the project. According to the City, the front setback on Blanco should be 25' not 15' and the south side setback should be 25' not the 5' as delineated in the project. There was also a height violation on the two structures facing Harthan Street by a few feet. The discrepancies resulted primarily from the fact that compatibility standards were added to the Castle Hill design standards, when most Historic Districts are exempted from them, and thereby creating these unfortunate conflicts.

Members of OWANA have urged Schoenbaum to go before the Board of Adjustment (BOA) and seek variances for these compatibility standards. Once again Schoenbaum went before the OWANA zoning and steering committees and got approvals for the variances. At the June 2 OWANA membership meeting,

Schoenbaum will come and ask the membership for our support for these variances.

The BOA bar for approval of these variances is very high and a two thirds vote is required to approve all variances. The project is scheduled to go before the Board of Adjustment on Monday, June 8, 2015. The meeting is in the City Council Chambers at City Hall and begins at 5:30.

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## June Membership Report

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Residential memberships	261	268	248	252	257	259
Business memberships	29	29	29	30	29	27
<b>Total memberships</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>286</b>

OWANA has **283 residential and business members** down a little from the March report. Keep reminding your neighbors and the local businesses you frequent to join OWANA. Send them to [www.owana.org/#join](http://www.owana.org/#join) (<http://www.owana.org/#join>) where residents can join online and business can download an application form.

Thanks for being an ambassador for OWANA.

George Warmingham  
Membership Chair



## Join OWANA Yahoo Discussion Group

Keep in touch with your neighbors by joining the Yahoo discussion group moderated by OWANA.

If you would like to join please go to [groups.yahoo.com/group/owana/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/owana/) (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/owana/>), click "Join This Group!" and follow the instructions.

If you have any difficulties, please contact George Warmingham at [oldwestaustin@gmail.com](mailto:oldwestaustin@gmail.com) (<mailto:oldwestaustin@gmail.com>).



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## Thank you to all of OWANA's Business Members

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