



A Message from the NWACA President

Joyce Statz

The rains we are getting are really a blessing! They also provided a bit of a challenge to our household recycling event last month, as a hardy crew of volunteers made it happen. Though the drizzle was light during the first hour, it was much more of a hassle the second hour – yet we had 95 homeowners come through the Doss parking lot and fill up a 26-foot U-Haul truck with Batteries, Oil, Paint, and Antifreeze. The City staff unloading the truck was really impressed! And they told us about something the City is just starting to accept at the Hazardous Waste Center on Todd Lane – Styrofoam! So, please don't throw it in the trash any longer; save it up and take it down to Todd Lane for disposal.

This month, there's a lot of activity underway to engage the surrounding neighborhoods in a collaborative design effort for the Austin Oaks site. As you'll read in the article, a working group is planning a charrette for the last week of January, with four community meetings before then to provide information about the process and to get community input about their vision and values for the site. Please review the meeting times and see which ones work for you; also plan to spend some time at the charrette at the end of January. Here's our chance to provide some really creative input on how to make that site a strong asset for our neighborhood and for Austin.

Our final 2015 article on coyote education explains the contract used by the City for handling coyote reports. Other articles this month give you advice on wildfire prevention, school crossing safety, and crime prevention. If you have experiences or lessons learned

about crime and safety, please send them to us, and we'll share with the neighborhood.

We're very grateful for the volunteers working on these issues in the NWACA committees, and we welcome more neighbors to get involved. A special need we have now is for an Oak Wilt "go to person." For several years, John Warden served as our neighborhood tree expert, visiting with neighbors when they suspected an oak tree might be infected with oak wilt. If a tree was at risk, John would help the resident get guidance from the City Arborist or point them to services to help treat the tree or have it removed. We're looking for someone with the background and interest to take on this role, since John has moved away from the neighborhood. To learn more about this opportunity, or about any of the NWACA committees, please contact us at nwacainfo@gmail.com

This month, we close out the 2014-2015 term of the NWACA Board. An article provides the results of the election ballot for the 2016-2017 Board and the names of the new Board officers. Term limits require me to leave the role of President. Along with the rest of the Board, I welcome Chris Hajdu into that role as of January 1. It's been a privilege to serve the community in this role, and I look forward to continuing as a Board member and officer, as well as being involved in a variety of other ways for this great neighborhood!

Happy Holidays, everyone! Enjoy the time to relax with friends and family and rejuvenate!

What is NWACA?



The Northwest Austin Civic Association (NWACA) serves the area bounded by Spicewood Springs Road, RM 2222, Mopac, and Loop 360. Formed in 1970, NWACA helps to foster communication and discussion regarding broad concerns of the whole neighborhood, such as crime prevention, traffic safety, wildfire prevention,

elections, and zoning matters.

NWACA's mission: to preserve, promote, and enhance the exceptional and unique character of the neighborhood. That mission is carried out through a wide range of activities and services performed by an elected volunteer board and a dozen committees of volunteers. See www.nwaca.org for information on how you can get involved (click on the Get Involved section).

"NEIGHBORS SERVING NEIGHBORS. THE NWACA LEGACY"

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Austin Citywide Information Center.....512-974-2000 or 311
 Emergency, Police..... 911
 Non-emergency (coyote sightings, compliance issues) 311
 To check status, go to: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/myaustincodestatus>
 APD District Representative, Office Darrell Grayson 512-974-5242

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Each of the Board members can be reached at: nwacainfo@gmail.com

The NWACA Board meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, except December. Please visit our calendar at www.nwaca.org to see the specific time and location. If you wish to speak at a Board meeting, please send email a week before the meeting, so that we can get you on the agenda.

NWACA is bordered on the north by Spicewood Springs Road, on the west by Loop 360, on the south by RM 2222, and on the east by Mopac (Loop 1).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	Calendar
4	The Austin Oaks Charrette
4	Local Schools News
5	If You See Something, Say Something
6	Your Home Needs Defensible Space
7	Working on those End-of-Year Items?
7	Special Thanks to Members
8	History of Coyote Management in Austin
11	NWACA Membership Form

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NWACA AND NEIGHBORHOOD EVENTS

DEC. 1, 8 AM

Kneaded Pleasures

NWACA Communications Committee

DEC. 1, 5 PM

Temple Beth Shalom, 7300 Hart Lane

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committee

DEC. 1, 6-8 PM

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Room B-18, 8134 Mesa Drive
Austin Oaks Charrette – Community Information Meeting

DEC. 2, 8:30 AM

Kneaded Pleasures

NWACA Crime and Safety Committee

DEC. 2, 11:30 AM TO 1:30 PM

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Room B-18, 8134 Mesa Drive
Austin Oaks Charrette – Community Information Meeting

DEC. 3, 8 AM

Kneaded Pleasures

Membership and Sponsorship Committee

DEC. 6, 2 PM

Kneaded Pleasures

NWACA Parks Committee

DEC. 16, 6-9 PM

*St. Matthew's Episcopal Church,
Huffman Hall, 8134 Mesa Drive*

Austin Oaks Charrette – Neighborhood Vision and Values
Workshop

JAN. 12, 11:30 AM TO 1:30 PM

Austin Board of Realtors,

Auditorium A, 4800 Spicewood Springs Road

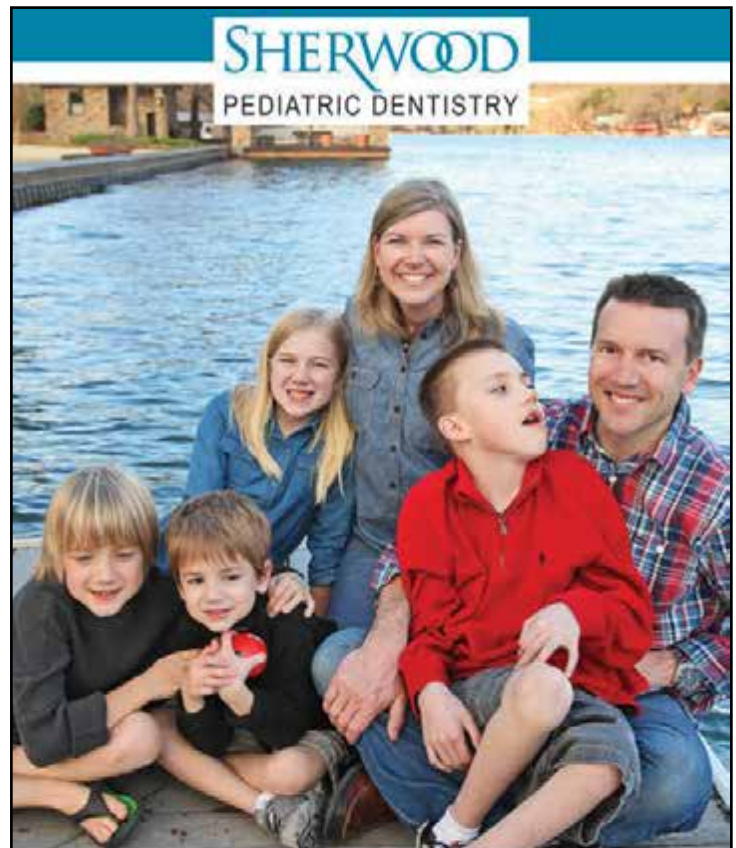
Austin Oaks Charrette – Neighborhood Vision and Values
Workshop

JAN. 24-29

*Austin Oaks Meredith Building, Suite 264,
3721 Executive Center Drive*

Austin Oaks Charrette – Community Design Workshop

Note: For each of these events, please check our web site for the latest information, since meetings may be rescheduled because of other conflicts.



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The Austin Oaks Charrette

Joyce Statz and Shannon Meroney

As most readers know, Austin Oaks is a 31-acre office park located at the southwest corner of Spicewood Springs Road and Mopac. The development, which was built between 1973 and 1985, currently includes 12 buildings encompassing 445,322 square feet.

The property was purchased in 2013 by Twelve Lakes LLC, an affiliate of Spire Realty Group. In 2014, Spire sought to rezone the property to redevelop the site as a mixed-use development with approximately 1.6 million square feet of office and retail uses and several hundred apartments. The proposal and its impacts sparked neighborhood opposition to the rezoning, including many “Stop the PUD” signs throughout the neighborhoods.

At the suggestion of neighborhood representatives, Spire agreed to engage in an alternative to conventional development negotiations and try a design-based approach: a Design Charrette. A charrette is a multi-day design exercise that brings stakeholders, including neighbors, together with a multidisciplinary team of designers, engineers and other specialists. During the charrette, the designers, neighbors, and stakeholders plan the site through a collaborative process. Throughout the charrette, the stakeholders provide input and feedback to the design team, and various development scenarios are reviewed against agreed-upon objectives and measures, refining and revising as appropriate. The outcome of the charrette is a consensus-based design for the site, which can be used to guide the redevelopment.

Since early October, neighborhood representatives have been meeting with the owner, Jon Ruff, and his new legal representative for redevelopment of the property, Michael Whellan of Graves Doherty Hearon and Moody. Mr. Whellan took over from the Drenner Group in October.

On October 27, the neighborhood representatives met with Mr. Ruff and Mr. Whellan and established a charrette working group. The group is divided into four committees to plan the charrette, educate the neighborhoods about the process, and engage the community in identifying values that guide the collaborative design. Ben Luckens, a resident of NWACA, who is a city planning consultant with charrette experience, is the project manager for the charrette process. Neighborhood representatives and the developer have hired Doug Farr, FAIA, <http://farrside.com> to be the design facilitator for the charrette, and TBG Partners <http://tbg-inc.com> has been hired as the design team. Doug Farr and the architects and landscape architects at TBG are among leading urban designers in the United States.

The charrette working group adopted the following mission statement which guides all the committee work: Create a redevelopment plan for the Austin Oaks site that satisfies the values of the neighborhood stakeholders and is economically feasible.

The charrette is scheduled for January 24-29, 2016 at the Austin

Oaks site (3721 Executive Center Dr., Suite 264-Meredith Building). Prior to this charrette week, there will be two informational meetings for the neighborhood, explaining the process and how neighbors engage to bring their creative ideas into the design. There will also be two workshops that gather neighborhood input on vision and values regarding the site.

Community Information Meetings:

- Tuesday, December 1st 6-8 PM at St. Mathew’s Episcopal Church, Room B-18, 8134 Mesa Drive
- Wednesday, December 2nd 11:30 AM-1:30 PM at St. Mathew’s Episcopal Church, Room B-18, 8134 Mesa Drive

Neighborhood Vision and Values Workshops:

- Wednesday, December 16th 6-9 PM at St. Mathew’s Episcopal Church, Huffman Hall, 8134 Mesa Drive
- Tuesday, January 12th 11:30 AM-1:30 PM at Austin Board of Realtors, Auditorium A, 4800 Spicewood Springs Road

Charrette Design Workshop:

- January 24-29th at Austin Oaks Meredith Building, Suite 264, 3721 Executive Center Drive

This web page carries background information about the charrette, the latest meeting information, and the status of work throughout the charrette process: <http://nwaca.org/austin-oaks-charrette/>

More information on the Charrette process may be found on the NWACA website at <http://tinyurl.com/CharretteProcess> and on the National Charrette Institute website: <http://www.charretteinstitute.org/charrette.html>

Local Schools News

Lauren Ward

Austin is considering changes to the crosswalk at Far West and Northledge, due to the high percentage of walkers and bikers at Doss Elementary. As many of you know, at peak times that intersection can be dangerous - even with a crossing guard. Sherri Gallo, the District 10 representative, is responsible for driving all traffic improvements - please email her your support for a more visible crossing area (blinking lights, traffic light, etc) at District10@austintexas.gov

As an additional note, the holidays will soon be upon us, so get ready for changing schedules at the schools. All of the area schools will be off December 21st - January 5th for Winter Break.

If you See Something, Say Something!

Cuatro Groos, Crime and Safety Committee Chair



Neighbors in NWACA are doing a good job of alerting others through social media about crimes and potential crimes in our neighborhood. However, we need to also be alerting the Austin Police Department (APD) when we see something suspicious.

Suspicious things happen in our parks – like drug dealing at Stillhouse Hollow Preserve. At the October 18th Town Hall meeting on Community Policing, we learned that APD has 40 officers assigned to parks, rotating among them, shifting resources to hot spots. If you see anything suspicious, call it in. Call 911; if they see fit to route to 311, they'll do that. Such a report can get a Park officer to check it out.

Thefts and burglaries also happen in NWACA. If we see a crime in progress, or if there's suspicious activity, call 911. Many burglaries happen during daylight hours, and alert neighbors can protect each other from being victims.

A house burglary early in October happened late in the morning on a fairly secluded street just east of Mesa. The resident took a car that normally stays in his driveway to work that day. Burglars broke a side window with high shrubs in front of it. They put the dog in the back yard and shut the dog door. The alarm wasn't activated so they knew they had lots of time to load a pillow case with valuables. But they left quickly when a family friend came through the garage door to leave off a cake in the kitchen. Police believe she scared them and they fled out the front door. Police later concluded that the robbers had arrived on foot from a nearby bus stop, and they made their exit the same way.

The resident said that he has an activated alarm and uses it almost every day. He said many people he's talked to since then admit that even though they have an alarm they don't use it every day.

Three different neighbors in the area told him that they saw two guys acting strange, walking through the neighborhood knocking on doors that morning. They all said they thought something was wrong and they wished they had done something. One person said she encountered two guys meeting the same description that morning knocking loudly on her door. When she opened it they couldn't even say why they were there and left. However, she didn't call the police.

While it may seem awkward to call the police, it has become clear

that we all have to get over that feeling and just do it; when our senses tell us something doesn't look right, it probably isn't right. If the solicitor turns out to be a sweet high school kid raising money for the Glee Club, the police will sort it out. and all will be well. If it's burglars casing our homes and a police cruiser scares them off, or better still, an officer interviews them and lets them know that we call the cops, all the better. It's such a shame that a friend had to be burglarized when so many people could have made that phone call.

Some lessons we are learning:

- Always arm your security system when you're gone.
- If you're at home and notice something suspicious – call 911 and report it.
- If you see a robbery in progress – call 911 and report it.
- Keep garage doors closed when you're not there; open doors are an invitation to check out the contents and come back later.

If your street has a Neighborhood Watch, let your captain and the neighbors know about the situation. We want our Neighborhood Watch captains and our NWACA Facebook group to hear about every single suspicious incident.

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Your Home Needs Defensible Space

Joyce Statz and Al Simmons, Wildfire Prevention Committee



Watching the Hidden Pines wildfire burn in Bastrop County over 11 days in October, many of us worried about our homes and nearby green spaces. Important lessons come to us from the Hidden Pines fire, as well as from the Labor Day 2011 fires throughout Central Texas. A key lesson for homeowners is that defensible space can save your home from the embers and from a moving fire.

What is “defensible space?” It’s an area around your home cleared of the debris that can provide fuel to embers or to a moving wildfire. Think about several levels of care within your defensible space. Zone One extends from your house, deck, and other structures out 30 feet. Zone Two is the area 30 to 100 feet from your house, deck and other structures. Beyond that is Zone Three, which for most of our homes, is someone else’s property or home, or an HOA common area, or green space that is part of Balcones Canyonlands Preserve or City property. A homeowner’s focus needs to first be on Zones One and Two first, then work with the community to deal with Zone Three.

To protect your home in Zone One, use these guidelines on a regular basis:

- Remove all dead and dying vegetation
- Trim tree canopies to keep branches a minimum of 10 feet away from structures and other trees [provide breaks in the canopy]
 - Remove leaf litter from the roof and rain gutters
 - Remove combustible material and vegetation under and around decks
 - Remove or prune vegetation near windows; allow an 18-24 inch gap between shrubs and windows, and keep the vegetation low
 - Remove “ladder fuels” (low-level vegetation that allows a fire to spread from the ground into a tree). Trim low level vegetation to keep it short, and limb-up the trees to 6 feet or so, to maintain a separation from the low-level vegetation.

In Zone Two, similar guidance applies. Remove dead plant material and ladder fuels. Cut or mow annual grasses to a maximum height of 4 inches. Trim tree canopies regularly to reduce continuity between branches and remove dense underbrush.

Creating a defensible space matters. An article in the October 15, 2015 edition of the Austin American Statesman notes that “Authorities praised officials from the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center Science Park for its work to clear brush from surrounding forests. That may have saved the \$500 million facility

from the new blaze.” The Austin Fire Department added that the Science Park had also installed an external sprinkler system and taken other measures to create a defensible space around the facility. These practices helped reduce fire intensity around the facility allowing firefighters to make a more aggressive defense.

On a home-sized scale, an article in the October 25th edition of the newspaper described how homeowners who had been evacuated in front of the fire found that their home and their cat had survived the fire, when they returned home. “[The] home was untouched – the fire appears to have made it within a few feet from their home and fire crews were able to fight it off. They had moved to the wooded area in Bastrop County about a year and a half ago from a mountain town in Colorado. Knowing about the devastating fire in 2011, [they] had removed brush around their home as a preventative measure.”

Similar stories were found in the Labor Day 2011 fires. In the 2011 Bastrop fire, 1645 homes were lost, but 1157 survived, many without the aid of suppression – but with a “defensible space.”

To learn more about creating a defensible space and to see what wildfire risks may be present around your home, sign up for a free wildfire risk evaluation: <http://nwaca.org/firewise-request/>




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Working on Those End-of-the-Year Items?

Chris Hajdu, Membership Committee Chair

As you are checking off all those end of year items, here's one more thing... joining NWACA or renewing your NWACA Membership. Only \$25/year supports NWACA activities and outreach that benefit our whole neighborhood.

Also, we will be holding a drawing for four weeks starting the week of Nov 23rd. Each week we will give away a \$50 Delaney's Icehouse Gift Certificate to someone who joined or renewed during that week. The drawings will be held as shown on the schedule below.

Go ahead, check one more thing off your list this holiday season, get a chance to win a free meal for the family!

- Week of Nov 23rd - Drawing on Nov 29th.
- Week of Nov 30th - Drawing on Dec 6th.
- Week of Dec 7th - Drawing on Dec 13th
- Week of Dec 14th - Drawing on Dec 20th

If you're not sure if you are a member, or need to check if your renewal is due, email name and street address to us at nwacainfo@gmail.com and we can verify your status.

Special Thanks to Members

Membership Committee

NWACA thanks our members who have so generously contributed to the Oak Wilt Fund, the 4th of July Parade Fund, or the Park Fund, between October 14, 2015 and November 15, 2015.

Donations to the Oak Wilt Fund provide financial assistance to property owners dealing with oak wilt. Donations to the 4th of July Parade Fund help NWACA to host the best 4th of July parade in Austin! The Park Fund helps us revitalize parks in NWACA with projects such as cleanup days.

- Stan Brooks
- Lou Cartwright
- Kathryn and James Clark
- Judith and Charles Cooley
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- Jerry Kilpatrick and Patricia Orlosky
- Jim Penny and Amozia Larkin
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History of Coyote Management in Austin

Wildlife Management Committee

This year, as the City of Austin considers its annual renewal of support of a wildlife biologist to handle coyote management, it faces some opposition to the contract. To provide background as the community considers the issue we provide some history of the contract, which serves both Travis County and the City of Austin.

On November 11, 2015, Travis County Commissioners ratified the contract with Texas Wildlife Services (TWS) for coyote management for an additional year. This management program contract has been in effect since 2004, and the City of Austin opts into the contract as a funding partner for the cost of \$10,000 per year. The program also must operate in accordance with the City's Coyote Management Policy passed in 2014.

In 2004, residents in Highland Park, Highland Park West, Highland Hills, Northwest Hills, and Westover Hills were collectively experiencing bold coyote behavior which threatened, intimidated, and negatively affected daily lives and activities of residents. Coyotes were regularly seen in streets and yards during daylight hours in groups of two or more. There were numerous reports of encounters, incidents, and attacks on pets.

Ultimately, a hearing was held before the Travis County

Commissioners. Residents seeking a resolution of the issue filled the room and lined the back wall of the court that day. Individuals testified regarding frequent encounters/incidents/attacks and the killing of pets. The Principal of Hill Elementary School testified that coyotes were appearing on the playground in the morning and were present when children were arriving for the school day. Others testified to a hot spot of incidents and attacks in the vicinity of Allen Park. Women individually testified to being followed by multiple coyotes while walking a baby in a stroller or walking with small child during daylight hours.

Randy Farrar, wildlife biologist with TWS, had conducted an investigation. He testified to the existence of three coyote packs which were large in number and aggressively competing for limited food sources. He explained that in such a highly competitive state, the normal behavior patterns of the packs become altered and increasingly aggressive. The result of the hearing was the partnership of Travis County and City of Austin in a contract with TWS.

The following procedures are followed by the City of Austin, supported by the TWS contract:

(Continued on Page 9)



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STONE RUGS CARPET TILE

(Continued from Page 8)

- citizen reporting utilizing the 311 non-emergency system
- data collection and analysis of citizen reports by the TWS professional wildlife biologist
- outreach to citizens who report coyote activity
- education dissemination to both citizens and communities including information on hazing techniques and minimizing coyote attractants
- investigation of locations affected by habituated pack activity
- humane lethal control only as warranted, when there is an incident of coyote snarling and/or baring of teeth toward humans; or attacks on human, a leashed pet, or a supervised pet in yard.

As a result of using the contract with TWS, the coyote behavior in our community was successfully modified eleven years ago, and it has remained effectively modified. There has not been a return to the dangerous level of aggression present in 2004. This is a direct result of TWS methods which are focused on data analysis, outreach and education.

Without support from this contract, people may take matters into their own hands, especially after an attack on a pet. An individual using their own methods of control would likely result in the inhumane treatment of coyotes, potential harm to other wildlife or pets, and potential harm to people. That is exactly why it is necessary

and responsible to have a management program led by an educated and experienced professional, who limits the use of lethal options to be humane ones, used only at times when warranted.



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- Transportation (raising awareness about excessive vehicle speeds, congestion, etc.).
- Zoning concerns
- Wildfire Prevention (helping homeowners harden their homes against wildfire)

NWACA plans the annual 4th of July Parade (43rd Annual in 2015!), organizes election and issues forums, sponsors an annual neighborhood garage sale, publishes this newsletter and much, much more!



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Help Keep our Wildlife Wild!

NWACA advises residents to NOT feed wildlife. Many well-intentioned individuals do so out of concern for the wildlife they are feeding. However, intentional and unintentional feeding of wildlife attracts predators to the wildlife being fed. Additionally, an association with humans and food contributes directly to habituated behaviors of animals like coyotes and feral hogs, which then become aggressive in pursuit of a food or prey attractant. Please eliminate food attractants from your yards for the safe enjoyment of our streets, parks and playgrounds for neighbors and pets.



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You can also pay via PayPal by following this link on our web site: [Join NWACA](#). If you've already paid your dues for this year, please pass this on to a neighbor who is not yet a member.

Volunteers are always needed on our committees.

Please mark those on which you'd like to actively participate.

- Civic Engagement
- Communications
- Crime and Safety/Neighborhood Watch
- Events/ 4th of July
- History
- Membership
- Parks
- Sponsorship
- Transportation
- Tree and Environment
- Wildfire Prevention



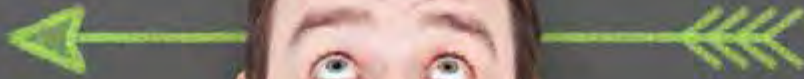
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