

Northwest Austin News

SERVING THE NORTHWEST AUSTIN CIVIC ASSOCIATION COMMUNITY

Volume 15, Issue 1

January 2024



Happy New Year!

By NORTHWEST
AUSTIN CIVIC
ASSOCIATION BOARD

Winners in the Holiday Yard Decorating Contest. There were so many beautiful light displays throughout December! Thank you to those who nominated candidates for our decorating contest, thanks to the NWACA Board judges Chris Bove, Ben Luckens, and Julie Rawlings. The winners:

- First place – 3917 North Hills Drive
- Second place – 4211 Greystone Drive
- Third place – Gnarl Drive – the entire street!

We hope you had a chance to see them and if not, photos are on page 14.



Time to Renew Membership in NWACA. Membership in NWACA is inexpensive, but it's valuable! It entitles you to drop off recyclables that can't go into the blue bin at our spring and fall recycling events, bring paper to our summer shredding event, participate in the annual neighborhood garage sales, and take part in other occasional member-only activities. With a membership, you get to vote in NWACA Board elections which occur every two years, including this year.

NEW YEAR, 3

2023 Land Development Code Survey Results

Northwest Austin
Civic Association Board

The Northwest Austin Civic Association surveyed neighborhood residents regarding proposed changes to the City of Austin

Land Development Code between November 15 and December 4, 2023. Of the nearly 200 who responded, the majority do not support the reduction of the single family home lot size or that up to three units can be added to a 5,750 square foot

lot. Among the 15-question survey, deed restrictions were covered including the question: Are you aware that the City of Austin does not enforce deed restrictions?

LAND CODE, 3

County Judge focuses on diversion center, passenger rail in 2024

By NINA HERNANDEZ
Austin MONITOR

A year ago, Travis County Judge Andy Brown told the Austin Monitor that he intended to double down on overdose prevention efforts and the county's work to build a mental health diversion center to help more people in crisis avoid jail time. In December, Brown sat down with the Monitor again and confirmed not just his work on these subjects in 2023, but the broader business of running Travis County, including the bolstering of its social safety net, the passage of two historic road and parks bonds, and a winter ice storm that tested recent investments in infrastructure and emergency response. With regard to emergency response, Brown said the county saw improvement in certain aspects during the February ice storm.

"So in emergencies, the county has to clear county roads so that emergency crews can get out," Brown said. "That first storm we had not put our sand piles under a tarp, and so they were big ice buckets. This year they were not. And today they let me know that we're using (anti-icing treatment) now, which apparently works

more effectively on melting ice. These are important steps."

In the short term, the county is working to ensure each of its four warming centers is equipped with emergency power backups. The county also added staff to its emergency services department. This summer, the county and city declared a joint local state of emergency because of extreme wildfire risk. While the region avoided a major wildfire this year, Brown emphasized that the county must continue to coordinate regionally and with the Texas Division of Emergency Management.

"Despite my political differences with the state of Texas, we actually work well with TDEM making sure that our emergency services and the city of Austin wildland fire response groups are working to-



Travis County Judge Andy Brown shares about initiatives he and his team worked on in 2023 and about his goals for 2024.

gether well," Brown said.

In 2021, the Commissioners Court pledged \$110 million of its American Rescue Plan Act funds to dozens of area nonprofits in an attempt to bolster the county's social safety net. In 2023, the Commissioners Court allocated the

RAIL, 21

Happy
New Year!
-Hannah
and team



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NEW YEAR, FROM 1

Note the article regarding NWACA membership dues. January is the month when automatic renewals occur and when we mail renewal reminders to everyone else. And, of course, if you’re not yet a member, January is the best time to join NWACA. See the green Membership button on our web site, www.nwaca.org

LDC Activities. Beginning in the summer of 2023, a subcommittee of the NWACA Zoning Committee began to meet to discuss proposed Land Development Code changes. As a result, NWACA held a Town Hall meeting to educate neighbors on Phase 1 of the HOME initiative and deed restrictions. Then, during late November and early December, the NWACA Board ran a neighborhood survey about proposed changes to the Land Development Code (LDC); many neighbors responded. See the article describing the results; those were provided to Austin City Council members as part of our Zoning Committee co-chair’s testimony at the December 7th Special Meeting of City Council.

Council voted to pass Phase 1 of the HOME initiative, after hearing many hours of testimony for and against the proposed changes. The essence of this vote is that each SF-1, SF-2, and SF-3 lot in the city is now entitled to a minimum of three residential units by-right. In addition, the McMansion ordinance no longer applies to lots that construct more than one unit. Multi-unit developments on SF-1, SF-2, and SF-3 lots constructed within the “McMansion” zone are subject to square footage caps, but at much more generous levels than the McMansion ordinance limits, meaning the structures will be allowed to be significantly larger than they are today. Council also removed the zoning limitation on the number of unrelated adults living in a single unit.

As discussed at the November NWACA Town Hall, deed restrictions on your property override zoning rules, as long as those restrictions are enforced by those in your subdivision. The City of Austin does not enforce deed restrictions. Our NWACA team will continue working on how best to inform the neighborhood about deed restrictions that are currently in place. We expect to host another Town Hall meeting to further discuss this.

In the coming months, many other changes related to Phase 2 of the HOME initiative will come before the Planning Commission and Council, and we will continue to keep you informed about those changes on the NWACA web site and through social media.

Be thinking about NWACA elections. In April of even-numbered years, we elect members to the NWACA Board, with Board terms beginning in August. If you would like the opportunity to serve, or if you would like to recommend someone for the NWACA board, please send us contact information for the proposed candidate to info@nwaca.org.

It’s still dark out there! Practice safe winter driving, walking, and biking. Our evenings get dark really early, so walkers and bikers are hard to see when driving through the neighborhood. Please, if you’re biking in the dark hours of the day, be sure you’re well illuminated. If you’re walking, please face the traffic, wear light-colored clothing, and carry a light. Where there are sidewalks, please use them. It’s also deer rutting season; you and drivers need to watch for their unpredictable behavior.

Enjoy the articles in this newsletter. There’s a little bit for everyone, including an outstanding array of activities at the Old Quarry Library. There are opportunities to develop or improve your skills with Dungeons and Dragons, including a multi-month series of lessons. If you’re just getting started with a computer, the Library’s January 30th offering is just right for you. Moreover, twice each year, we solicit ideas for special projects that help our neighborhood. Please see the article in this issue seeking submissions for the spring grants.

Happy New Year, everyone!

LAND CODE, FROM 1

There were 194 responses:

- 20 using paper copies submitted at the November 15 Town Hall meeting.
- 3 via U.S. mail from NWACA members for whom we have no email addresses.
- 171 through Survey Monkey, following notification via the monthly newspaper, NWACA Notes, Facebook, email notices to those enrolled in the NWACA membership system, and announcements on the NWACA web site.

The following chart shows the survey results. Each question required a response, thus there are 194 responses for each question.

Question	Answer 1	% response	Answer 2	% response		
1. Do you support the proposal before Council to reduce the lot size of SF homes to 5,750 sq.ft?	Yes	21.13%	No	78.87%		
2. Do you support the proposal that each SF lot could have three units built on a 5,750 sq.ft. lot?	Yes	15.98%	No	84.02%		
3. Do you support the removal of setback requirements? Setback requirements refer to the distance from a building to an edge of the property, and can currently vary, depending on the property.	Yes	11.34%	No	88.66%		
4. Do you support an increase in height limitations for SF properties? Current height limitations are generally 35 ft. for SF properties, and 32 ft. for those governed by the “McMansion ordinance.”	Yes	17.53%	No	82.47%		
5. Do you support the removal of height limitations on SF properties?	Yes	8.25%	No	91.75%		
6. Do you support a property owner’s right or choice to build a tiny home not to exceed 400 sq.ft. On their property?	Yes	60.82%	No	39.18%		
7. Would you support a future proposal to reduce the SF lot size to 2,500 sq.ft.?	Yes	10.82%	No	89.18%		
8. Would you support an increase in impervious cover allowed on each lot? Current impervious cover limits are 45%.	Yes	20.62%	No	79.38%		
9. Do you know your deed restrictions?	Yes	62.89%	No	37.11%		
10. Are you aware that the City of Austin does not enforce deed restrictions? (It is up to property owners to make sure deed restrictions are followed and some properties do not have deed restrictions.)	Yes	63.40%	No	36.60%		
11. Please provide any other questions or concerns. (Note: this question was optional, and 74 respondents provided responses.)	See summary of comments below					
12. House number	These responses were used for data validation; no issues were found.					
13. Street						
14. Zip Code	78731	80%	78759	18%	Other	2%
15. Are you a NWACA member?	Yes	70%	No	17%	Don’t Know	13%

Category	# of responses
Proposals are ruinous – home values, neighborhood character, etc.	21
Parking will be worse	14
Benchmarking – anything done yet? Is there data to support this?	5
Drainage capacity will be challenged	5
Doesn’t really address affordable housing	5
Tree preservation will be challenged	4
I am generally in support of increased density	3
Deed restrictions are important aspect for property value	2
Environmental impact will be high	2
Noise pollution will rise – during development and with dense housing	2
Data from Vancouver, BC showed prices do NOT go down	1
Neutral – don’t think it will change our neighborhood much	1
Support raising number of unrelated people in a unit – allows friends to buy	1
Miscellaneous (generally 1 each) – trash cans, McMansion limits, impervious cover, FAR, school crowding, mass transit, water pressure, no STRs, ...	22

Responses to the open-ended request for comments clustered into the categories listed in the table below. Many responses included several categories; each category was given a “vote.”

Most single responses, along with statements of gratitude for the survey or comments about voting are included in the Miscellaneous category. However, a few of these comments were singled out to highlight them, as they differ from the majority opinion.

DWI, Theft , Disturbance in Police and Sheriff’s Report

Recent Sheriff’s Office and Austin Police Department reports in the Northwest Austin area include a variety of cases.	11/22/2023 12:44 PM 71XX WOOD HOLLOW FAMILY DISTURBANCE	11/29/2023 1:29 AM 71XX WOOD HOLLOW ASSAULT W/INJURY	12/03/2023 9:26 AM 58XX MESA THEFT	12/06/2023 10:24 AM 72XX HART LN CRIMINAL MISCHIEF	12/12/2023 4:32 PM 36XX GREYSTONE CRIMINAL MISCHIEF	12/18/2023 4:15 PM 44XX SPICEWOOD SPRINGS HARASSMENT
	11/22/2023 7:54 PM 58XX LAKEVIEW CIR THEFT OF LICENSE PLATE	11/30/2023 1:25 AM 81XX MOPAC EXPY TERRORISTIC THREAT	12/03/2023 8:20 PM 78XX CHIMNEY CORNER THEFT OF LICENSE PLATE	12/06/2023 6:24 PM 41XX FAR WEST BLVD THEFT OF LICENSE PLATE	12/12/2023 4:47 PM 39XX MYRICK DR DEBIT CARD ABUSE	12/19/2023 3:20 PM 44XX SPICEWOOD SPRINGS DISTURBANCE
	11/12/2023 8:00 AM 35XX NORTH HILLS CRIMINAL MISCHIEF	11/30/2023 1:25 PM 52XX OLD SPICEWOOD SPRINGS THEFT	12/03/2023 10:34 PM 85XX CAPITAL OF TEXAS FAMILY DISTURBANCE	12/06/2023 6:57 PM 92XX JOLLYVILLE THEFT	12/12/2023 7:32 PM 72XX HART LN THEFT	12/19/2023 4:03 PM 85XX CAPITAL OF TEXAS HWY CRIMINAL MISCHIEF
	11/16/2023 10:21 PM 52XX CAPITAL OF TEXAS AGG ASSAULT	12/01/2023 5:34 AM 34XX FAR WEST BLVD DWI	12/04/2023 9:58 AM 85XX CAPITAL OF TEXAS FAMILY DISTURBANCE	12/06/2023 7:11 PM 68XX CAPITAL OF TEXAS BURGLARY	12/14/2023 10:49 AM 35XX GREYSTONE THEFT OF AUTO PARTS	12/19/2023 5:15 PM 76XX WOOD HOLLOW THEFT
11/19/2023 2:05 AM 75XX MESA AUTO THEFT	11/23/2023 12:12 PM 44XX SPICEWOOD SPRINGS AUTO THEFT	12/01/2023 9:24 PM 35XX GREYSTONE THEFT	12/04/2023 11:38 AM 47XX CRESTWAY BURGLARY	12/08/2023 10:56 PM 35XX GREYSTONE AGG ASSAULT	12/14/2023 12:47 PM 56XX OAKWOOD ASSAULT	12/19/2023 11:41 PM 95XX JOLLYVILLE AGG ASSAULT
11/19/2023 7:32 AM 58XX LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN AUTO THEFT	11/24/2023 6:21 PM 68XX OLD QUARRY FAMILY DISTURBANCE	12/02/2023 10:15 AM 71XX WOOD HOLLOW BURGLARY	12/04/2023 2:37 PM 78XX DEER RIDGE BURGLARY	12/09/2023 1:05 PM 35XX NORTH HILLS THEFT	12/15/2023 2:14 AM 56XX MOUNT BONNELL UNLAWFUL RESTRAINT	12/20/2023 4:51 AM 71XX WOOD HOLLOW DATING DISTURBANCE
11/19/2023 6:53 PM 71XX WOOD HOLLOW AUTO THEFT	11/26/2023 10:33 AM 37XX MOUNT BONNELL BURGLARY	12/02/2023 11:50 AM 95XX CAPITAL OF TEXAS HWY FAMILY DISTURBANCE	12/04/2023 6:16 PM 85XXX CAPITAL OF TEXAS FAMILY DISTURBANCE	12/09/2023 11:46 PM 95XX JOLLYVILLE FAMILY DISTURBANCE	12/15/2023 9:50 PM 44XX SPICEWOOD SPRINGS ASSAULT W/INJURY	12/20/2023 9:28 AM 00XX VALLEY OAK POSS CONTROLLED SUB
11/20/2023 12:33 PM 91XX JOLLYVILLE AUTO THEFT	11/27/2023 7:56 AM 36XX GREYSTONE THEFT	12/02/2023 3:23 PM 36XX LAUREL LEDGE CRIMINAL MISCHIEF	12/05/2023 6:21 AM 76XX WOOD HOLLOW THEFT	12/10/2023 12:26 PM 71XX WOOD HOLLOW SUSPICIOUS PERSON	12/15/2023 10:01 PM 72XX WOOD HOLLOW AUTO THEFT	12/20/2023 2:12 PM 35XX GREYSTONE AUTO THEFT
11/20/2023 6:27 PM 52XX SPICEWOOD SPRINGS ASSAULT BY CONTACT	11/27/2023 10:25 AM 67XX HART LN FRAUD	12/02/2023 7:26 PM 72XX LAKEWOOD FRAUD	12/05/2023 7:57 AM 84XX BENT TREE CRIMINAL MISCHIEF	12/10/2023 4:46 PM 88XX TALLWOOD CRIMINAL MISCHIEF	12/17/2023 1:50 AM FM 2222/DRY CREEK DWI/DUI	12/22/2023 2:15 AM 71XX WOOD HOLLOW FAMILY DISTURBANCE
11/21/2023 10:01 PM 82XX MOPAC EXPY DWI	11/28/2023 1:40 PM 36XX CLABURN FRAUD	12/03/2023 12:10 AM 85XX CAPITAL OF TEXAS ASSAULT W/INJURY	12/05/2023 11:09 AM 71XX HART LN CRIMINAL MISCHIEF	12/11/2023 4:03 PM 95XX JOLLYVILLE FAMILY DISTURBANCE	12/17/2023 7:55 AM 88XX TALLWOOD THEFT	12/22/2023 11:50 AM 36XX GREYSTONE ASSAULT W/INJURY
11/22/2023 3:50 AM 72XX CHIMNEY CORNERS THEFT	11/28/2023 5:10 PM 53XX MOPAC EXPY THEFT	12/03/2023 5:36 AM 79XX FM 620 BURGLARY	12/05/2023 11:46 AM 72XX HART LN THEFT	12/12/2023 8:09 AM 66XX MESA DR THEFT	12/17/2023 9:10 AM 36XX STECK AVE THEFT	12/25/2023 1:17 PM 89XX CAPITAL OF TEXAS THEFT
	11/28/2023 9:51 PM 41XX HONEYCOMB ROCK STALKING	12/03/2023 5:37 PM 71XX WOOD HOLLOW THEFT	12/05/2023 12:01 PM 40XX STECK CRIMINAL MISCHIEF	12/12/2023 10:14 AM 44XX SPICEWOOD SPRINGS THEFT	12/17/2023 9:45 AM 73XX HART LN TERRORISTIC THREAT	12/26/2023 12:47 PM 78XX MOPAC EXPY BURGLARY

Austin Police Department Chief’s Monthly Report for November 2023

City-Wide					Baker Sector				
Crimes Against Persons					Crimes Against Persons				
	Nov 2023	Nov 2022	% Change	All 2023		Nov 2023	Nov 2022	% Change	All 2023
Murder	7	3	133%	603	Murder	0	0	-	2
Aggravated Assault	223	278	-20%	3,187	Aggravated Assault	9	12	-25%	155
Simple Assault	748	764	-2%	8,654	Simple Assault	56	107	-48%	640
Crimes Against Property					Crimes Against Property				
	Nov 2023	Nov 2022	% Change	All 2023		Nov 2023	Nov 2022	% Change	All 2023
Robbery	76	62	23%	847	Robbery	8	3	167%	58
Burglary	333	398	-16%	3,971	Burglary	46	53	-13%	411
Burglary of Vehicle	563	753	-25%	8,138	Burglary of Vehicle	72	138	-48%	1,468
Auto Theft	657	404	63%	6,290	Auto Theft	85	29	193%	536
Vandalism	511	439	16%	5,859	Vandalism	53	46	15%	632
Crimes Against Society					Crimes Against Society				
	Nov 2023	Nov 2022	% Change	All 2023		Nov 2023	Nov 2022	% Change	All 2023
Drug Violations	243	230	6%	3,137	Drugs	10	15	-33%	142
Weapons	65	77	-16%	916	Weapons	0	4	100%	27

12/05/2023 5:24 PM 86XX MARTINDALE THEFT	12/12/2023 10:57 AM 35XX LAKELAND THEFT	12/17/2023 12:21 PM 78XX CAPITAL OF TEXAS FORGERY & PASSING	12/26/2023 6:53 PM 71XX WOOD HOLLOW AUTO THEFT
12/05/2023 6:35 PM 35XX NORTH HILLS THEFT	12/12/2023 11:06 AM 80XX MESA DR SHOPLIFTING	12/17/2023 2:07 PM 59XX BALCONES FORGERY BY MAKING	12/26/2023 10:54 PM 81XX MOPAC EXPY POSS OF DRUG
12/05/2023 6:45 AM 36XX GREYSTONE THEFT	12/12/2023 11:40 AM 76XX WOOD HOLLOW THEFT	12/17/2023 8:49 PM 87XX CAMELIA LN THEFT OF LICENSE PLATE	12/27/2023 3:00 PM 38XX DRY CREEK ASSAULT W/INJURY
12/06/2023 12:17 AM 36XX GREYSTONE FAMILY DISTURBANCE	12/12/2023 10:44 AM 36XX GREYSTONE CRIMINAL MISCHIEF	12/18/2023 3:29 AM 88XX MOPAC EXPY DWI	12/27/2023 9:56 PM 88XX TALLWOOD HARASSMENT
12/06/2023 9:18 AM 71XX WOOD HOLLOW FAMILY DISTURBANCE		12/18/2023 8:54 AM 36XX GREYSTONE DATING DISTURBANCE	

Madison Pharis compiled this report mostly from Spot-Crime at www.spotcrime.com and also from CrimeReports.

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Meet NWACA Board Member Jessica Forrest

By KEVIN KOTT
Northwest Austin
Civic Association

KK: Your NWACA website bio begs investigation into your early background. Please tell us about it.

JF: My parents lived nomadically. Dad fled Nazi Germany at 15, eventually moving to San Francisco where he met and married mom, another German emigrant.

In the fifties, my dad, a dairyman like his father, was in high demand as milk became more of a commodity. A turnkey operator for companies like Foremost and Carnation, this skill took him to countries like Iran, where I was born, then to Beirut, Taipei, Hawaii, and then Mexico when I was 2 years old.

Carnation was eagerly setting roots in Mexico. We moved frequently setting up new plants. Eventually Dad landed as General Manager in Caracas, Venezuela, where we lived for four years before economic conditions deteriorated. After more travel years, Dad founded his dream ice cream company in Mexico, and I finished high school in a boarding school in Denton, TX in order to prepare for college in the USA.

KK: How did your childhood nomadic wanderings affect you?

JF: Travel primarily marked 2 areas of life:

First, it affected how I raised my children. Moving is hard on kids. I love travel but was determined that my children would be like the kids that I envied growing up - those who went to kindergarten through high school with the same friends.

Secondly, it affected my gratitude of the fortune in life. It helped me appreciate how every level of society encounters a unique set of challenges. The poverty seen more in developing countries occurs re-

ally everywhere, it's heartbreaking when people can't get decent food or shelter.

I never want to forget the hardships witnessed in cities like Caracas where every spring, rains washed down the hillside slums. People living on the periphery of the city, in ramshackle shacks, felt they were better off than the rural folk, despite the devastating floods sweeping away their homes every year.

KK: Tell us about your education and work career.

JF: After high school I came to Austin. College was working by day, studying at night, obtaining my BA and MBA from St. Edward's University. My first job, in Joske's security department, transitioned to balancing the vault. Then thanks to an unconventional female boss, I was pushed to seek higher skilled positions. Over time and with continuous education, I grew into Certified Financial Planner (CFP) investing and trading for a Registered Investment Advisor (RIA) firm for 15 years. I joined Austin Asset in 2020, an RIA advisory firm managing accounts for individuals and families much like our neighbors. Taking a holistic approach, we tackle investments, estate planning, tax and estate review, goal planning such as college and retirement, and everything in between. We help clients determine how their finances can achieve their goals.

KK: How would you describe yourself to NWACA newsletter readers?

JF: The NWACA neighborhood has been home since 1993 with my son 31, and daughter 27. You'll find me during the weekends riding a bike or walking dogs Harry and Ollie, all of us complete introverts!. I care a lot about our community. I'm always on the prowl for new theater, shows, latest restaurants, interesting trucks. I'm usually the one in my bike group appointed to



Jessica on the Mont Blanc Biking Tour

find the "it" place to have a post-ride lunch or celebration.

I volunteer on other non-profit boards, but this is my first neighborhood association. The array of skills and knowledge of the team at NWACA is impressive. They delve into some complicated issues

and toil to add clarity, educate, and empower the residents.

KK: Tell us about your non-work-related outlets.

JF: I ran numerous marathons and halves, until my Achilles tore. So,

I started cycling instead, taking some amazing city to city trips. I'm also an avid hiker; I recently traveled with my daughter to hike the Mont Blanc Tour - the mountain top across Switzerland, Italy, and France. It was amazingly beautiful!

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Dr. Bethell: Blue Door isn't your ordinary dental office. Designed as a dental speakeasy, our patients receive care in a luxurious lounge like setting that eliminates the cold environment of a traditional dental office. Throughout your treatment, our small team gets to know both you and your smile goals for a completely tailored experience.



Can you share some of the specialized treatments that your office provides?

Whether you're looking to refresh your smile with composite veneers or ready for a complete smile makeover with porcelain veneers, we handle it all from start to finish.

What are composite veneers?

Composite veneers are an additive procedure where tooth colored filling material is bonded to the front surface of a tooth to enhance it's appearance by improving shape and/or shade.

"Composite veneers can typically be completed in a single visit without shots."



What's the difference between composite veneers and porcelain veneers?

While porcelain veneers boast a longer lifespan, most patients opt to replace their composite veneers every 5-7 years, as they stain similarly to natural teeth. Additionally, composite veneers are a more affordable alternative to porcelain veneers.

Can you still get porcelain veneers later on?

Yes! Many patients choose composite veneers to start so they can enhance their smile non-invasively and switch to porcelain veneers later in life. However, patients that have extremely worn teeth may be a better candidate for porcelain veneers from the start.



How do I get started?

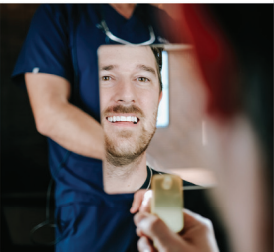
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BLUE DOOR



Meet Dr. Bethell

Owner, Blue Door Dental Design

Dr. Robin Bethell is the founder of Blue Door Dental Design.

He graduated from the University of the Pacific in San Francisco in 2007 and has become an industry leading dentist, teacher, and award winner. He is Invisalign Faculty and a Top 1% Invisalign provider in Texas.

He has completed training in Kois Education, Digital Smile Design, and has been delivering full mouth reconstruction and diagnosis in Austin for the last 10 years.

He and his family call Central Texas home, and his aim is to bring the highest quality orofacial design, diagnosis, and treatment options to Texans.

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Available



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8888 Tallwood Dr, 78759 | \$325k
2 Beds | 2 Baths + Balcony



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January 2024 Road Construction Report

By **RUVEN BROOKS**
Northwest Austin Civic Association

The good news is that improvements to Spicewood Springs Road from Mesa Drive to Loop 360 have begun. Spicewood Springs will be widened to four lanes for the full length of the section,

and there will be new bicycle and pedestrian shared-use paths on both sides of the road and new water and sewer lines. The water system improvements account for \$10 million of the projected \$34 million cost of the project. The work is expected to be completed late in 2026.

Vehicle traffic congestion reduction will have to wait for completion of the TxDOT Loop 360 project which will replace the stoplights at the intersection of Spicewood Springs and Loop 360 with an overpass. The Loop 360 project is now expected to begin in 2028; it

will last about three years. Thus, users of Spicewood Springs west of Mesa can expect to encounter construction for six of the next eight years.

The other large highway construction project in our area, the CTRMA 183 North Mobility project, will add

two new tolled express lanes in each direction and an additional general purpose lane in each direction along 183 between SH45 North and MO-PAC. Construction is underway with targeted completion in 2026. Details of individual closures and detours can be found at www.183north.com/

Loop 360 at Courtyard Drive/RM 2222

Utility relocation continues along the Courtyard Drive/RM 2222 project corridor. Texas Department of Transportation has updated the project design to include an additional 8-foot sidewalk to be installed along the Courtyard Drive bridge. This will accompany the pre-existing 10-foot wide shared-use path (SUP) on the opposite side of the same bridge.

Additionally, TxDOT has extended the SUP along northbound Loop 360 at RM 2222 to allow bicyclists and pedestrians to navigate through the future diverging diamond interchange to continue north.

The project was environmentally cleared in spring 2021 and the design changes mentioned above

were environmentally cleared in fall 2023. Construction is anticipated to begin in late 2024.

The Loop 360 at Westlake Drive/Cedar Street project is in full swing, with crews working in multiple locations along the corridor. At northbound Loop 360 and Westlake Drive, the project team is installing drainage, removing the median,

constructing a retaining wall north of the intersection and installing soil nails for the future retaining wall. Crews are also installing drainage lines and constructing a retaining wall along southbound Loop 360 at Cedar Street.

Using Your Recycle Bin Correctly

By **MERRIESSA ANTON**
Northwest Austin Civic Association

Start the new year knowing what goes into your blue recycling bin.

These items can be recycled in the blue bin:

Glossy paper
Junk mail
Magazines and catalogs

Non foil wrapping paper
Newspapers
Cardboard boxes (broken down)
Cardboard tubes
Cans, steel / tin
Aluminum foil baking pans
Aluminum foil, balled 2 inches or larger
Glass bottles and jars, caps and labels on
Hard plastic bottles and jars, caps and labels on
Non-battery toys

Buckets and baskets
Hard plastic tubs and food containers
Lawn chairs

These items CANNOT be placed in your blue recycle bin because they can get caught in the sorting machines:

Plastic bags from produce
Ice bags
Ziploc and other re-closable bags
Cereal box liners

Case overwrap
Bread bags
Newspaper sleeves (plastic bags)
Dry cleaning bags
Bubble wrap
Plastic e-commerce mailers
Plastic bags from grocery and retail stores
Air pillows
Product wrap
Pet food bags
Plastic bags from mulch, soil, and compost
Styrofoam®

Fabric and clothing
Housewares

Plastic bags may be put into collection bins located near the front doors of our grocery stores. You can also take them to the Austin Recycle and Re-use Drop-off Center. All plastic must be clean, dry, and free of residue, whether in the blue bin or the grocery store bins.

Keep the Styrofoam® for one

of the spring and fall recycling events for NWACA members.

Fabric and clothing can be taken to Goodwill; anything that can't be resold will be recycled. Goodwill is the successor to the "green bag" program that was part of Austin Resource Recovery several years ago.

Tiger Moth Caterpillars

By **WIZZIE BROWN**
Texas AgriLife Extension Service

Tiger moth caterpillars have been a common sight lately in the Central Texas area. These insects are native to the United States and are sometimes called "woolly bear caterpillars." "Woolly bear caterpillar" is a more general term that refers to various species of caterpillars that are densely covered in hairs, called setae, and tend to wander.

While these caterpillars can be highly variable for individual species, the common

ones seen lately are woolly bear (Isabella tiger moth), saltmarsh caterpillar (saltmarsh moth), and garden tiger moth caterpillar, also known as the great tiger moth caterpillar. Woolly bear caterpillars are usually black on each end with brown in the middle. Saltmarsh caterpillars are variable and can be a creamy yellow to brown to black in color. Garden/ great tiger moth caterpillars tend to be black on the top part of the body and brown on the bottom.

All three of these caterpillars feed on a wide variety of herbaceous and woody plants, but are only sometimes considered to be pests when they feed on field crops.

Tiger moths have a complete life cycle with four life stages- egg, larva, pupa, adult. Eggs are laid in clusters on the leaves of host plants. Larvae go

through several instars before they pupate in soil. Larvae tend to actively disperse and may be seen in groups moving over turf, roads, sidewalks, or other locations. Adults usually emerge in the spring to mate and begin the cycle again. Moths can be active year-round in South Texas, but for most parts of Texas, larvae overwinter in the last larval instar in protected locations.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600.

This work is supported in part by the Crop Protection and Pest Management, Extension Implementation Program [award no. 2021-70006-35347/project accession no. 1027036] from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture.



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Tiger Moth Caterpillars



District 10 Alison Alter: My vote against recent zoning code changes

Dear Neighbors,

On December 7th, I voted against Phase I of the so-called "HOME" zoning ordinance. While my colleagues and I share a common goal of wanting to provide safe and affordable housing options, I do not believe this initiative, as adopted, can deliver on its promises. I continue to have significant concerns that this decision will lead to predictable negative consequences for both residents and the environment.

As you may recall, in July I voted against initiating the HOME ordinance related to minimum lot sizes and the number of units that can be built on a lot. Throughout the year, I've spoken out about my concerns with these proposals and the two phase process. On the night of the final vote, the Phase I changes were approved with support from a supermajority of the Council. I was one of two council members who voted against this ordinance.

I believe our zoning code should be guided by Imagine Austin, our city's comprehensive plan, which laid out how we should strategically plan growth on our corridors and around activity centers. Planning for growth on our transit corridors could simultaneously support our transit investments, incorporate affordability requirements, and further our environmental goals. In my view, this latest initiative does not acknowledge the role that planning can and should play as we grow.

Instead, the approach taken makes changes to the vast majority of single-family lots in the City, with no requirements for affordability, and guts our McMansion standards. Every Austinite must understand that the changes to single-family zoning adopted on De-



cember 7 go significantly further than any permutation of CodeNEXT.

Here are a few examples of what would now be allowed with this ordinance:

- Each SF-1, SF-2, and SF-3 lot in the city is now entitled to a minimum of three residential units by-right.
- The McMansion ordinance no longer applies to lots that construct more than one unit. The McMansion ordinance and boundaries are still in effect only when lots have a single unit. If a lot is developed or redeveloped to have multiple units, that development is no longer subject to the McMansion ordinance.
- Multi-unit developments on SF-1, SF-2, and SF-3 lots constructed within the "McMansion" zone are subject to square footage caps, but at much more generous levels than the McMansion ordinance limits, meaning the structures will be allowed to be significantly larger than they are today. There are no safeguards to ensure that additional units are built to house additional people rather than simply adding square footage to one's home. We also likely will see structures that are more box-like and built to three full stories in height.

City staff have created visual models of some of these changes. It is important to note that these models were released prior to Council amendments

which further increased the allowable square footage and therefore do not reflect all of the changes, allowing the number and size of these structures to be even greater.

These changes in the number of units and the new larger unit sizes will combine with a new "preservation" bonus, the removal of the zoning limitation on the number of unrelated adults living in a single unit, and the proposed overall reduction in minimum lot sizes across the city, to make for scenarios that I do not believe our community has fully vetted.

I was successfully able to amend the ordinance to remove the proposed relaxation of short-term rental (STR) regulations, but my other substantive amendments were defeated. Although my amendment to keep existing STR rules in place was successful, the Council has indicated there will be a future exploration of changes to STR rules, which may lead to further relaxations in the future.

The decision to adopt these changes in a single-vote, around midnight was unfortunate and stacked the deck against everyday Austinites who spent hours testifying and sharing alternative ideas and concerns which largely remain unexplored.

Phase 2 in Early 2024

It's important to remember that what the Council supermajority adopted last week is only the first phase of the changes they have initiated. Phase 2 is scheduled to come to Council in early 2024 and would potentially reduce minimum lot sizes in SF-1, SF-2, and SF-3 zones to as little as 2,500 square feet. For comparison, the current minimum lot size in SF-3 zoning is 5,750 and many of our existing lots

in District 10 are 7,000 square feet or larger.

Adoption of Phase 2, as proposed, coupled with the changes adopted by the Council supermajority on December 7 would mean the allowance of three units would be permissible on lots that are much, much smaller than existing lots today.

If you would like to contact departmental staff with questions about these amendments, you may email LDCupdates@austintexas.gov or call 512-974-7220.

Petition and protest rights

Several thousand Austinites availed themselves of the right to protest the change in zoning as established in state law. When the City receives a sufficient number of protests against a proposed zoning change, state law requires City Council to approve the zoning changes by a super majority or $\frac{3}{4}$ vote, (i.e. 9 votes) rather than by a simple majority vote. Because nine Council members voted in favor of this change, the changes were passed by a super-majority of Council members.

I want you to know that I have heard your concerns. I've heard your frustration. I've heard your skepticism. I share them and will do all that I can to amplify them and try to bring common sense to the conversation as Council continues to consider Phase 2. I thank you for sharing your concerns with me and the Council to date and I encourage you to hang in there as we engage in this work together.

Regards,
Alison Alter
Council Member, District 10

WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE *DOWNSIZING*



Reserve your seat at this FREE seminar at www.homesville.com/downsizing



Wednesday,
February 28
10 am - 12 pm

Austin Board of Realtors
4800 Spicewood Springs
Auditorium A

Join experts in the fields of wills and estates, financial planning, health care, home organization, mortgage lending, and real estate for a candid conversation that will give you the knowledge and confidence you need when the time is right to make a change.

90,000 new housing units wasn't enough for Austin's growth

By CHAD SWIATECKI
Austin Monitor

A new interactive map released by the Planning Department shows some of the ways Austin's housing supply has changed dramatically over the course of a decade in which the city has become one of the most popular destinations in the U.S.

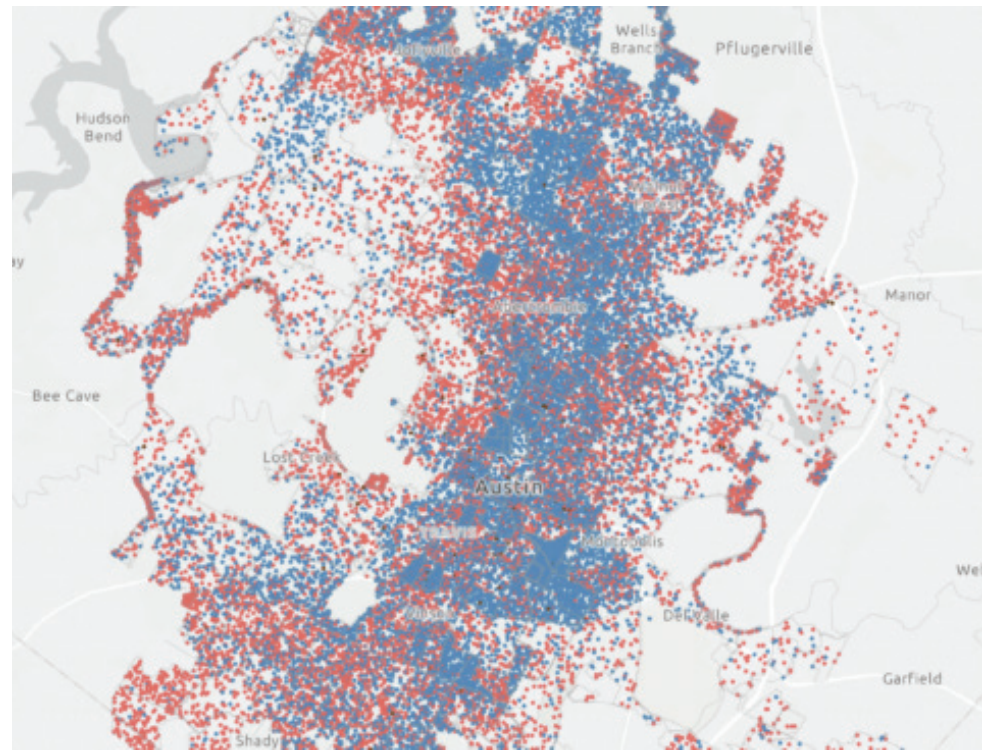
The city Demography Division's Demography Story Map reflects how even though Austin added 90,000 housing units from 2010 to 2020, surrounding communities outpaced the city's rate of housing growth. The shift meant that over the course of the last decade, the city's share of housing in the five-county region accounted for less than half the total, or 47 percent of all housing.

Other findings include that the vacancy rate in ownership and rental units both decreased overall from 8.3 percent to 7.6 percent, which the report notes is an indication of several market factors including high demand, low supply or a mix of both. The bulk of Austin's housing supply as of 2020 consisted of 59.3 percent rental units, with 38.8 percent units intended for ownership. Maps showing locations of rental versus ownership units generally reflect the city's Eastern Crescent socioeconomic dynamic, with the bulk of rentals located in a backward "C" shape

east of Interstate 35.

Walter Moreau, executive director of the Foundation Communities affordable housing nonprofit group, said the study doesn't reflect the recent increase in housing production, such as 60,000 apartment units scheduled for completion in the next two years. By email, Moreau said that increase in supply will cause more price competition, but the city and philanthropic groups will still need to allocate resources to provide housing affordable for lower- and middle-income households. "Market forces really drive housing development. As Austin adds jobs, then demand for housing increases as well. However, the market will never supply enough housing at a low enough rent or price for families that make well below the median income," he wrote. "We need more housing development to meet the demand, and a tremendous amount of new housing is in construction right now, however, rents are unlikely to drop enough for those with very low incomes. If we want Austin to remain a diverse community, then we need more housing production, especially for the lowest-income households that will otherwise be priced out."

João Paulo Connolly, organizing director for the Austin Justice Coalition and member of the Planning Commission, said the raw numbers in the maps may suggest the city



Demography map shows 90,000 new housing units wasn't enough for Austin's growth between 2010 to 2020. City of Austin

is adding adequate housing supply to keep up with demand. As an indicator of the city's continued popularity, Austin is the No. 9 city for millennials, with residents aged 25 to 44 making up 11 percent of the city's population, the financial technology company SmartAsset recently found. "If people just look at the hard numbers around numbers of new units added and percentage of new units added, then people think, well, Austin is really building tons of housing," Connolly said. "You have to look at the actual growth rate of the region. ... We have a picture where I think Austin is clearly not adding enough housing, and the surrounding areas are making up for the lack of housing."

increase its housing supply, but he hopes the Planning Commission and other city bodies will continue to look for new ways to address the city's growing pains.

"As a Planning Commission, we are tasked with some very clear mandates, and one of them is with the successful implementation of the city's Imagine Austin plan and all of the other plans that are embedded in it," he said. "If we take those goals in our Imagine Austin plan and compare them to the picture that is being painted in this demographic map, it is very clear that we are failing pretty radically at meeting these goals that we have set for ourselves as a city."

Connolly said recent moves such as the HOME initiative to increase the number of units allowed per lot will likely help the city

Austin Monitor, an online, nonpartisan, 501(c)3 nonprofit publication that covers local government and politics in and around Austin.



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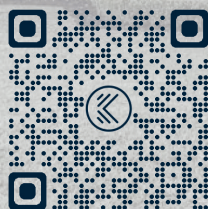
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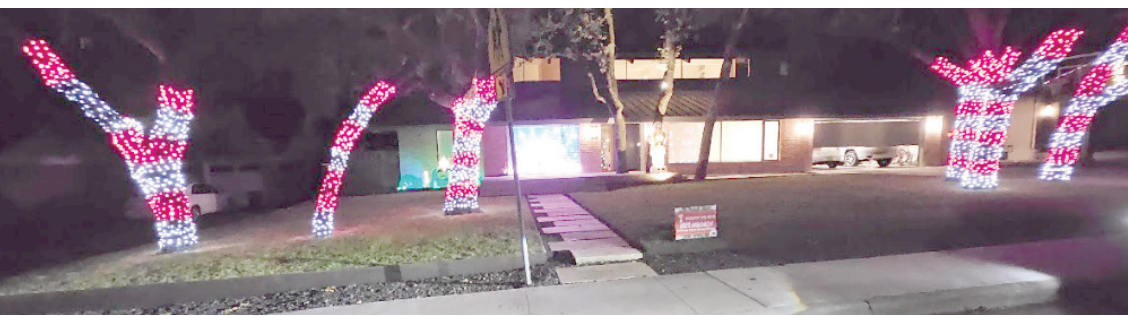
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Writer's Corner: Bookstore Crawl

By IDEE KWAK
Northwest Austin Civic Association

Within less than a five-mile radius of our neighborhood, we have four interesting bookstores.



South Congress Books has been an Austin treasure since antique and arts dealer Sheri Tornatore founded it in the 1980s. She kept its name when she moved it to Kerbey Lane a few decades ago. Its quaint rock home, directly across the street from the Kerbey Lane Cafe, houses a curated selection of first editions and beautifully bound volumes; vintage books, collectors' editions, and signed copies; collectibles on art, history, literature, philosophy, and nature; beautifully illustrated children's books, selected artwork, music posters from the '70s, and old vinyl recordings. There is a rare eight-volume set of folk songs from ancient times to the 20th century; and a 1783 two-volume set of Virgil, Heritage Press, Folio Society. Besides being a joy to read, these books are a wonder to behold, many of the bindings are works of art.

Celebrating forty-eight years in Austin, BookWoman is an independent bookstore that specializes in literature by and about women. It gives a voice to those with marginalized identity and special support to people of color and those in the LGBTQIA community. Though its space at 5501 North Lamar is small with limited parking, BookWoman has a monthly schedule of poetry open mics, as well as a featured poet event, a book club meeting, and a spiritual club meeting. They also have unusual earrings, magnets, cards, and bookmarks.

5335 Burnet Road also appears to be small with limited parking but once you step inside, you're in for a surprise. The home of Austin Public Library Recycled Reads Bookstore, the space is much larger than our Old Quarry Library and has stacks and stacks filled with every kind of book you'd find in the public library plus more. To quote the front desk, it's "fascinating, stimulating, with stuff nobody else has." This is a place to spend all day buying armloads of books. Prices are \$2 for hardcovers, \$1 for soft covers; 50 cents for children's, vinyl, and cassettes; 25 cents for children's board books and sheet music Your purchases help support the Austin Public Library, as do your book donations which are limited to two small boxes or two paper bags per visit.

Construction along Burnt Road makes number 7112, Black Pearl Bookstore, a little hard to find. It's a smallish, white powerhouse that's tucked back away from the traffic. Striving to serve our cultural, multi-generational, multi-socio-economic community, it promotes diversity, inclusion, and representation not only on its shelves but through a panoply of events (in a space that can be rented). It also provides Austin with two non-profit programs. "Put It in a Book" supplies volumes to AISD high school librarians and "H.O.S.T. Honor Our Students and Teachers," invites authors to Title One schools and provides free copies of their books to all the students who attend. One of 125 Black-owned bookstores in America, Black Pearl promotes diversity and stands against banning literature. Kelly Clarkson called it "the Austin bookstore that fights against the Texas book ban." Go Black Pearl!

southcongressbooks.com
ebookwoman.com
library.austintexas.gov/recycled-reads-bookstore
blackpearlbookstore.com

Time to Renew your NWACA Membership

NWACA Board

January 1st is the renewal date for all NWACA memberships. People can join throughout the year, but dues paid in a given calendar year cover just that year.

In 2021, the NWACA Board voted to return to having household memberships, rather than individual memberships. That is, each household pays dues of \$25, and those dues cover the membership of all adults in the household. Each household has one vote in Board elections. Any adult in the member household may join the NWACA Facebook group and may also sign up for the NWACA Notes weekly email news.

Members who have auto-renewal enabled automatically renew on January 1st – thank you! Renewal notices are sent to all others

during January, either by email or U.S. mail (to those without current email addresses in our membership database). To check if you've already renewed for 2024, go to www.nwaca.org, use the green Membership button at the top of the home page, then select the "Make a Payment (Join or Renew)" option. When you specify your email address, you'll be sent a login link in your email. Use that link to sign in and review the date on which your membership expires.

While you can join or renew either online or by U.S. mail, we prefer that you do it online. That minimizes the chance of postal issues, and the online system provides you a way to automatically renew.

If you encounter any issues renewing your membership, please contact us at nwacaweb@gmail.com

NWACA Special Projects Fund Inviting Applications

Northwest Austin Civic Association Board

The Special Projects Fund was established by the NWACA Board to help fund projects that benefit the community/ neighborhood residents and are open to the public. Any group or individual can apply for these funds; just download an application online at www.nwaca.org using the link in the Hot Topics list on the home page.

Applications for a new round of project proposals will be accepted until March 15, 2024; selected applicants will be encouraged to present their proposals at the March NWACA Board meeting. Submit applications, drawings, pictures, and estimated project costs to info@nwaca.org or by U.S. mail to: NWACA, P.O. Box 26654, Austin, TX 78755. The number of projects funded is at the discretion of

the Board. If you have questions about the program, email info@nwaca.org

The Special Projects Fund is just one of many ways that NWACA serves our community. Funding is available because of the careful management of your dues and donations.



January Happenings at the Old Quarry Library

By MARTHA MILLER

Northwest Austin Civic Association

All Austin Public Libraries will be closed on January 15th in observance of Martin Luther King Day!

Monday, January 8 – Teens Create: Alcohol Ink (4-5:30PM) – Join us for a relaxing after-school program creating alcohol ink artwork. All supplies will be provided by the library as long as they are available. FOR TEENS ONLY! Teens 13-18 only Please Register for this event: www.eventbrite.com/e/teens-create-alcohol-ink-printing-tickets-767857180497

Monday, January 8 - Barking Book Buddies: Read to Hanna! She loves to listen! (4pm – 5pm) – Divine Canine's certified volunteers team with trained therapy dogs ready for kids to read to them! This program improves children's reading and communication skills by employing a powerful method: reading to a dog. Recommended for ages 5 and up

Tuesday, January 9 – All Ages Lego (3:30pm-5pm) – Spend an afternoon engaging your imagination - and maybe your silly side - with this open play session. With Legos, you can build anything you can imagine and tell any story you can dream up. Come to the Lego Lab to hear, see, make, and create. All ages welcome

Wednesday, January 10 – Old Quarry Gardening Group (11am-12:30pm) – Join fellow gardening enthusiasts to share tips and learn more about Fall gardening. Ages 18 and up

Wednesday, January 10 - Crafty Adult: Starburst Home Decoration (2:00 -4:00 pm) Join us to make your own starburst home decoration with supplies provided by the library. Seating is limited. Recommended for ages 18 and up

Thursday, January 11 – Chair Yoga (2:45 pm – 3:45 pm) Enjoy yoga no matter your level of mobility. Instructor Katherine will go through basic yoga steps to help with flexibility and strength. Please register for this class Please register for this class: www.eventbrite.com/e/chair-yoga-class-tickets-708047106957

Thursdays, January 11, 18 & 25 - Dungeons & Dragons 8 Week Campaign (4:00 – 6:00) Want to “level up” your Dungeons & Dragons skills? Join this eight-week D&D workshop to learn more about character building, teamwork, problem solving, and combat strategy. We'll grow together from Level 1 as we tackle missions of increasing difficulty... all in the name of fun, glory, and treasure! Email Leslie. Flynn@austintexas.gov to register. Please note that seating is very limited. All participants are expected to attend at least 7 of the 8 sessions or their spot will be given to someone on the waitlist. Teens 13-18 only

Friday, January 12 - Adult Morning Social (10am – noon) Join neighbors and make new friends at this bi-monthly casual social. Games, puzzles,

and simple craft activities will be available as well as snacks and hot drinks. Hungry for conversation? Drop in for open, public dialogue on a variety of topics and add to the diversity of perspectives Ages 18 and up Please Register for this event: www.eventbrite.com/e/adult-morning-social-tickets-763649545347

Saturday, January 13 - How to Be a Dungeon Master Workshop (2:00 - 4:30pm) – Be an Amazing DM! Learn all the skills you need from a professional Dungeon Master! From running a self-contained module to homebrewing, our instructor will teach ways to host crazy fun games of D&D whether you've been playing for years or just started. Open to ages 12 and up. Please register for this event: www.eventbrite.com/e/dungeon-master-class-for-teens-adults-tickets-771849822597?aff=oddttdtcreator

Tuesday, January 16 - Fiber Arts Friends Group (6pm -7:30pm) – Whether you are an expert or brand new, join fellow crafters to work on your projects and learn new skills. Ages 18 and up

Wednesday, January 17 - Emergency Preparedness Pop Up (4:00 – 7:00 pm) Get Prepared! Austin's Office of Homeland Security hosts a pop-up to promote public awareness and provide safety tips to prepare for various emergencies. Recommended for ages 18 and up

Saturday, January 20 - All Ages Lego Lab (1:00 – 3:00 pm see January 9 for description)

Monday, January 22 - For the Love of Books Club (6:30pm-7:30pm) – Join fellow Book Lovers to discuss the books you're already reading and learn about others you should add to your TBR list. Eat snacks, talk books - It's the easiest book club you will ever join! Ages 18 and up. Please register for this event: www.eventbrite.com/e/for-the-love-of-books-club-a-no-homework-book-club-tickets-709505539167?aff=oddttdtcreator

Tuesday, January 23 - All Ages Lego Lab (3:30pm- 5pm see January 9 for description)

Friday, January 16 - Adult Morning Social

(10am – noon) Join neighbors and make new friends at this bi-monthly casual social. Games, puzzles, and simple craft activities will be available as well as snacks and hot drinks. Hungry for conversation? Drop in for open, public dialogue on a variety of topics and add to the diversity of perspectives Ages 18 and up Please Register for this event: www.eventbrite.com/e/adult-morning-social-tickets-763649545347

Saturday, January 27 - Crafternoon: Perler Beads (11:30 am – 2:00 pm) – Create fun Perler bead charms, magnets, and keychains using available patterns or completely from your imagination. Drop by the library and make a craft while you search for books, movies and music. We've got paper crafts, easy sewing and more fun projects for the whole family. We provide the supplies; you provide the creativity. All ages welcome

Monday, January 29 - Dungeons & Dragons One Shot! (4:00 – 6:00 pm) – Join an after-school adventure! These adventures will be built as one-shots for players of all experiences and backgrounds. Pre-made characters will be available. Requires registration through Eventbrite. Registration will open in early January. Teens 13-18 only

Monday, January 29 - Barking Book Buddies: Read to Hanna! She loves to listen! (4pm – 5pm see January 8 for details)

Tuesday, January 30 - Computers 101 (1:00 – 3:00 pm) – Once a quarter, we will be providing a class on basic computer usage in addition to our usual Tech Time assistance. Learn everything you need to know to start using a computer, from how to use a mouse and keyboard to an introduction to the internet. No prerequisites. Recommended for ages 18 and up

Every Tuesday - Tech Time (1pm-3pm) Learn to download books and use digital Library resources. Bring in your tablet, smartphone or eReader for help navigating the Virtual Library Ages 18 and up

Mark Your Calendars

These events are as planned as of December 21. As you consider participating in one of the events listed, please check first with the organizer.

January 16, 7 PM

Parks Committee – virtual

January 23, 5 PM

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committees, virtual

January 17, 8:30 PM

NWACA Board Meeting Waterloo Ice House (360 and 2222)

February 20, 7 PM

Parks Committee – virtual

February 21 – 8:30 PM

NWACA Board Meeting – Waterloo Ice House

February 27, 5 PM

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committees, virtual

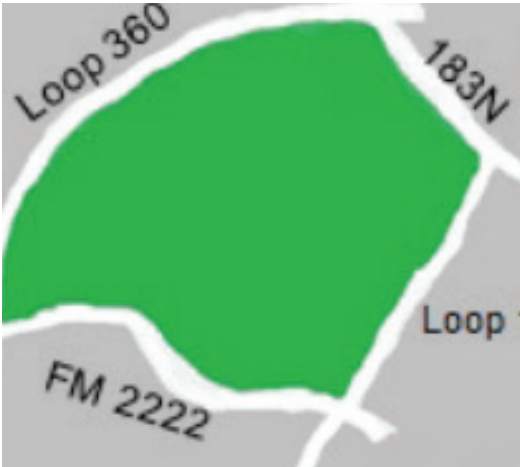
Key Contacts

Austin Citywide Information Center	512-974-2000 or 311
Emergency, Police	911
Non-emergency (coyote sightings, compliance issues)	311
APD District Representative Officer, Phillip Sparkman	phillip.sparkman@austintexas.gov
District 10 Councilmember, Alison Alter	512-974-2110
To get the District 10 monthly newsletter	bit.ly/d10newsletters
Northwest Austin News Publisher	512-483-1708
	Lynette@FourPointsNews.com
Northwest Austin News Co-Editors	Joyce Statz and Julie Rawlings

New to the Neighborhood?

If this is your first copy of our newsletter, welcome to the NWACA neighborhood! The map shows our boundaries – Mopac, RM 2222, Loop 360, and US Highway 183 (Research Boulevard). There are about 13,500 households who are your neighbors and are happy you're here!

This newsletter is one way to know what's happening in NWACA, but there's much more. Check out the quick link For New Neighbors on the home page at www.nwaca.org. Use the Membership button on the home page or use the form in this newsletter to become a NWACA member. Members have access to the weekly email NWACA Notes and the ability to join the NWACA closed Facebook group, to keep in touch with each other and with the latest news about NWACA.



2022 – 2024 NWACA Board of Directors

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• Jessica Forrest	• Ben Luckens	

Each of the Board Members can be reached at info@nwaca.org or by phone at 737-235-7325

The NWACA Board meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month except July and 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 to info@nwaca.org, so that we can put you on the agenda.

NWACA is bordered on the north by U.S. Highway 183 (Research Boulevard), on the west by Loop 360, on the south by RM 2222, and on the east by Mopac (Loop 1).

Special Thanks to Members

NWACA Membership Committee

NWACA thanks members who generously contributed to the 4th of July Parade Fund, the Park Fund, and the Constable Fund, between September 23 and December 21, 2023.

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 do events in our parks and revitalize parks in the NWACA area. The Constable Fund helps us provide the patrol activities of the Travis County Constable.

- David B. Edelman
- JoCarol Snowden
- (and, apologies to anyone whose donation we might have missed!)

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name:	Phone: ()
Address:	Zip:
Email (confidential):	
Annual dues \$25	Volunteer!
Optional Contributions:	Please check a committee on which you would like to participate:
Fourth of July Parade \$10 ____ \$20 ____ Other ____	<input type="checkbox"/> Communications <input type="checkbox"/> Business Membership
Constable \$10 ____ \$20 ____ Other ____	<input type="checkbox"/> Crime & Safety <input type="checkbox"/> Tree, Environment, and Wildlife
Parks Fund \$10 ____ \$20 ____ Other ____	<input type="checkbox"/> Events
To join:	<input type="checkbox"/> History <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire Prevention
go to www.nwaca.org and pay online via credit card	<input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Watch <input type="checkbox"/> Zoning and Transportation
or send this form and payment to:	<input type="checkbox"/> Parks
NWACA P.O. Box 26654, Austin, TX 78755	

Members, please request to join our **Facebook Group** and sign up for **NWACA Notes**, our weekly email.

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GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS

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PROTECT AND IMPROVE OUR COMMUNITY

Learn about fire safety, crime prevention, oak wilt, environmental concerns, park development, wildlife management, zoning/planning, and more!

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY

We are deeply invested in building strong relationships within our business network to positively impact our neighborhood.

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MARKET UPDATE

YEAR IN REVIEW

NORTHWEST HILLS AND WESTOVER HILLS



\$1,116,000
MEDIAN SALES PRICE

↓ 11.8%
FROM 2022



\$206,504,178
SALES VOLUME

↓ 15.5%
FROM 2022



\$443
MEDIAN LIST PRICE/SF

↓ 8.9%
FROM 2022



\$430
MEDIAN SALE PRICE/SF

↓ 11.9%
FROM 2022



\$1,190,000
MEDIAN LIST PRICE

↓ 7.68%
FROM 2022



20
DAYS ON MARKET

↑ 1.5%
FROM 2022



169
CLOSED SALES

↓ 4.5%
FROM 2022



nest
PROPERTIES AUSTIN

JULIE WAIDELICH

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Thank you for your trust, support and referrals! We are anticipating a favorable market in 2024 for both buyers and sellers and look forward to helping our clients, friends and referrals achieve their real estate goals.

Wishing you a prosperous, joy-filled, and transformative 2024. May your homes be filled with laughter, your goals met with resounding success, and your days filled with a renewed sense of purpose.

If you find yourself in need of real estate advice or guidance in the new year, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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Anderson HS 2023-2024 Golf

2023-2024 Boys Golf Roster with class

Campbell Duncan 2024
Jun Lee 2024
Trent Mierl 2024
Jackson Kercheville 2025
Miles Manning 2025
Max Scheindlin 2025
Luke Wootan 2025
Cade Cazin 2026
Liam Doran 2026
Stephen Eidson 2026
Drew Gilley 2026
Andrew Halpern 2026
Cash Hernandez 2026
Elias O'Keefe 2026
Carter Ward 2026
Thomas Ashy 2027
Cash Blanton 2027
Jack Caffery 2027
Charles Helling 2027
Ben Meachum 2027
Samuel Woodberry 2027



2023-2024 Girls Golf Roster with class

Lauren Thompson 2024
Juliette Brutsche 2024
Olivia Andrus 2025
Vivian Dempsey 2026
Elle Elhert 2026
Lola Selberg 2026
Ariana Cruz 2027
Sopie Janicki 2027

Anderson Trojan Golf Spring 2023 UIL 6A Region 4 District 26

- Trojan Boys
 - Regional Qualifier
 - District Medalist
 - Trent Mierl
- Trojan Girls
 - State Individual Qualifier
 - Region 3rd, District 1st
 - Darrelyn Webster
 - Regional Qualifier, District 2nd
 - Caroline Dasch
- UIL Academic - All-District Teams
- UIL Academic - All-State Team
- TGCA - Academic All-State

2023-2024 Trojan Belles Dance Team of AHS



2023-2024 Anderson High School Trojan Belles Sr. Lt. Erin, Captain Maisy, , Megan, Kristin, Ashley, Bridget, Rasa, Emma, Hannah, Mavis, Megan, Dalia, Ayanna, Lauren, Riley, Avery, Malia, Celeste, Avery, Peachy, Taylor Elle, Paige, Celeste, Caroline, Lily, Charlotte, Emily, Teresa, Kylie, Saylor



Jr. Lt. Avery, Sr. Lt. Erin, Captain Maisy, Jr. Lt. Lauren, Jr. Lt. Riley



LEFT:
Megan, Kristin,
Ashley,
Bridget, Rasa



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Home Helpers launches to care for aging residents

1) General manager Eric Hathaway, why did you start Home Helpers?

I launched Home Helpers this past September. Driven by my experiences as a former Director of Youth Ministries and a Patient Support Manager at Medtronic Diabetes, I recognized a growing need to support Austin's elderly population. Home Helpers was established with a dedicated commitment to prioritizing caregiver satisfaction. I firmly believe that a happy caregiver plays a pivotal role in delivering exemplary services to our esteemed clients, ensuring top-notch care.

We started on September 1st and have been thrilled with the response from the community!

2) What brought you to the Northwest area?

An underserved elderly population and a great place to live.

3) What services do you provide?

Home Helpers offers a range of services tailored to provide elderly care at home. This includes light housekeeping, meal preparation, bathing assistance, mobility assistance, dementia care, and

Home Helpers®

companionship. Our caregivers can be available a few times a week or up to full 24/7 care.

4) Are your services in demand now more than ever, and why?

Yes, the demand for Home Helpers' services is higher than ever. This is attributed to the growing aging population, a preference for aging in place, rising health conditions, busy lifestyles, and a heightened awareness of the benefits of professional care. Government support and specialized services further contribute to the surge in the need for caregiving assistance.

5) Do you have some stats to back up why your services are needed and how they help the senior population?

Absolutely. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Austin-Round Rock Metropolitan Area is witnessing the second-fastest-growing population of adults aged 65 and older in the nation, with the fastest-growing population between 55 and 64 years old.



Eric Hathaway is the co-owner and general manager of Home Helpers, which began business in Four Points in September to add a layer of care for senior citizens.

In addition, Travis County's Health and Human Services Department projects a tripling of the senior population in the county by 2050. Highlighting the preference for home-based care, AARP

reports that nearly 90% of seniors wish to age in their own homes. These statistics emphasize the critical role that Home Helpers plays in addressing the evolving needs of the senior population in West Austin.

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remaining \$51 million of the funding into mental health and addiction treatment, eviction prevention, food access, child care assistance and a trauma recovery center.

“The end result would be – after all that \$110 million is out – would be about 1,500 units largely of supportive housing that the county will have added to the community when this is done,” Brown said.

“And that’s key, not only to making people’s lives better by having housing, but it’s also to help the diversion center efforts. Because if we don’t have that housing on the back end, diversion center efforts don’t work that great. Because then you just get a backup at the diversion center if you don’t have a place for people to go after.”

The county’s work to plan a full-scale diversion center is ongoing. However, a parallel effort to pilot a smaller-scale pilot program in 2024 is slated to start with approximately 25 beds.

“That should start (this month), and then the bigger, more permanent one just as soon as we can get the building built,” he said.

Another of Brown’s priorities is tackling the opioid overdose epidemic as the number of accidental overdose deaths continues to rise. Bipartisan efforts at the Texas Legislature this year did not result in passage of a bill that would have increased access to fentanyl testing strips.

“The county – again, doing what the state should be doing – we put up another \$300,000 for methadone services; we convinced Central Health in their budget process to add more capacity for methadone services,” Brown said.

The county is also partnering with the University of Texas’ TxCOPE, which is working to collect data from agencies across the region to understand where overdoses happen and better direct intervention services. Additionally, the county continues to distribute and raise awareness about Narcan in the community.

“I think still trying to create more awareness in general about the dangers of fentanyl, how it can be in any drug you use, and you should always have Narcan and not use alone,” he said.

Brown praised the court’s September decision to expand the county’s paid parental leave policy from eight to 12 weeks, noting that approximately 100 families have benefited from the policy so far. When it comes to transportation, one of Brown’s ongoing priorities is working to support high-speed rail in Central Texas, which he hopes could materialize in the next three to five years. This summer, Texas Central and Amtrak announced a joint effort to build a high-speed passenger rail between Dallas and Houston.

“They have told me that the next step would be doing an environmental survey to build one from College Station to Austin to San Antonio, and then ideally to Monterrey someday,” Brown said. “My sense is that if Amtrak agrees to help fund that and includes that in this national high-speed rail plan, then that would be very likely.”

The big task in that case would likely be convincing the state of Texas to commit to contributing a share of the funding, he said.

“The other part that we’re actually working on building support among county governments from Bexar County, Travis, all the way up to Dallas, is just increased funding to expand Amtrak service on the existing rail, which is not as good in my opinion as building a brand-new one that is just passenger, but it’s better than what we have.”

“I know that there’s a lot of support for it. It seems like, with the way the federal government is now, a real great opportunity to get our share of federal money towards improving passenger rail transportation,” Brown said.

In 2024, Brown said his top priorities will continue to be the mental health diversion center and passenger rail.

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A look back at 2023: Austin's year in review

By AUSTIN MONITOR

Happy News Year! As 2024 begins, it's time to look back on the local headlines that dominated the news in 2023.

NEW CITY MANAGEMENT

This year saw a strange kind of sea change at City Hall led by newly reelected Mayor Kirk Watson. On the one hand, Watson immediately set to cleaning house: Things started to move at what passes for lightning speed in local government – including meetings. It was all a marked departure from the previous 10-1 system that had only operated under former Mayor Steve Adler with essentially the same faces and dynamics on the dais.

On the other hand, things weren't exactly new, in that Watson returned to a seat he held two decades prior and brought some familiar faces back with him. The most impactful return, and departure, took place at the head of city management. Just about a month into the tenure of the newly populated City Council, City Manager Spencer Cronk was fired and replaced on an interim basis with former City Manager Jesús Garza, who has not hesitated to shake things up while at the helm.

COPS

2023 seems to have been a transitional year in terms of policing after hitting a public and Council-relations nadir over the past few years. Whether or not that is true, it was absolutely a year of change and news for Austin Police Department.

The spring kicked off with a call to the Department of Public Safety for help, wide-

spread criticism of the move, then (kind of unheeded) pleas to go ahead and stop patrolling Austin. The year also saw the sudden retirement of Austin Police Chief Joseph Chacon and ongoing fallout from the 2020 police protests, including a mistrial in the Christopher Taylor murder trial and dismissed charges against APD officers. And, though implementation is lagging to a degree apparently worth suing over, voters approved the Equity Action-led Austin Police Oversight Act that is intended to reform how APD is held accountable.

LAND USE REFORM

After years of circuitous attempts to update the city's Land Development Code, this year actually saw progress. City Council, with its new makeup, quickly approved changes intended to ease the city's housing crisis, with a push from Council members to implement changes on a hastened timeline. Austin now has eliminated parking requirements and just this month quickly approved a series of changes that will allow more homes to be built on single-family lots, eliminate occupancy limits and make tiny homes easier to build.

That's not to say that this year was entirely fruitful when it comes to land use reform – just this month, yet another lawsuit was settled against the city, overturning new code that had expanded opportunities for residential development.

I-35 EXPANSION

Though the effort wasn't launched or physically started this year, 2023 was when reality set in about the looming expansion of Inter-

state 35 through downtown. The year brought final decisions from TxDOT, protests and an emerging picture of what the overhaul would actually look like and who it would impact. In an attempt to mitigate that impact, the city also solidified plans to span the enlarged highway and bridge the east/west divide with a series of "cap and stitch" projects.

ZILKER PARK

Despite the number of big issues City Hall tackled this year, a good bit of ink was also spilled over Zilker Park. Most notably, a plan that would have changed the guiding vision and future of the park was stopped dead before it even reached Council, after protracted public outcry. A less-effective racket was made over plans to remove Flo, a century-old pecan tree that was found to be suffering from brittle cinder fungus, making the tree a danger to Barton Springs bathers. And a less fervent (but still myopic) focus was also trained on renovations to Barton Springs' bathhouse and bridge replacement.

TEXAS LEGISLATURE

As seems to be true any year the Legislature is in session, Austin dealt with the fallout from new state laws this year. The "Death Star" bill – so named because it could preempt local regulations – was found unconstitutional by a Travis County court at the end of August. The state ap-

pealed the ruling and the bill went into effect just a few days later. While opponents of the law and legal experts are worried it will expose local governments to a flood of lawsuits, the bill has not yet had the feared impact. However, the city has already faced a reduction in the parkland benefits it is able to collect, and the Legislature has also passed a number of smaller laws that dictate development and annexation rules.

AIRPORT ISSUES

It wasn't a terribly good year for Austin's airport. A number of near-misses on the runway managed to attract national attention, and the city had to pay \$88 million over the whole South Terminal thing. On the other hand, a much-needed massive expansion of the airport finally got rolling, promising brighter (and expensive) days ahead.

SIXTH STREET REVAMP

After a series of approvals earlier this year, Austin's "Dirty Sixth" is on the precipice of getting an overhaul, taking it from its current state to a promised "premier shopping destination." A major change, to say the least.

Austin Monitor, an online, nonpartisan, 501(c)3 nonprofit publication that covers local government and politics in and around Austin.



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Bald eagle sightings appear to be on the rise in Austin

By MOSE BUCHELE
KUT

A slew of bald eagle sightings in Austin has excited birders and nonbirders alike. The iconic raptors are not particularly common in the area, but, according to reports by citizen scientists, their numbers appear to be on the rise.

The first well-publicized recent sighting took place over Lake Austin in the Tarrytown neighborhood early last month, according to KXAN, which shared video taken of the eagle. Then on December 11, someone posted an image of an eagle spotted over Austin Colony, east of the city, on Reddit.

“That is insane!” one onlooker says in the video.

“Where did he come from?” asks another. Despite the surprise, bald eagles are not unheard of in Austin.

“You’ll most often find them along the river,” says Shelia Hargis, a birder and former president of the Texas Ornithological Society.

“There’s been some sightings up at Walter E. Long Lake.”

Hargis says the number of sightings also seems to be increasing.

That’s backed up by reports to the website eBird, run by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The site allows birders to log sightings of different bird species. Hargis points out that the number of bald eagle sightings in Austin appears to be trending up on eBird over the past several years.

“Between 2012 and 2022 for just the breed-



Bald eagles nest along Buchanan Dam, about 50 miles northwest of Austin, in February 2023. Photo by Lower Colorado River Authority

ing season, we have seen basically an 85 percent increase in the number of birds reported (on eBird) for the Austin area,” she says.

Hargis says that tracks with her personal observations. She believes the increase is thanks to the federal government banning the harmful insecticide DDT.

The DDT ban happened in the 1970s, when the bald eagle was threatened with extinction. Eagle populations have been recov-

ering ever since.

“It’s a success story,” Hargis says. “We don’t always get many of those, so it’s a really good story to tell.”

Still, Austin doesn’t have many bald eagles compared with some other locations.

The city is on the western edge of year-round and seasonal eagle territory in Texas,

and a few dozen sightings appear to have been reported this year.

Want to see one for yourself?

Hargis says a good place to bird watch near Austin is the Hornsby Bend Bird Observatory at the wastewater treatment facility.

There’s no guarantee you’ll spot an eagle, she says, but they’ve been seen there before.



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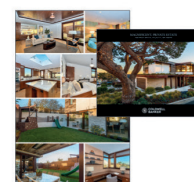
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