

Barton Hills News

Goings on in our neighborhood

New Officers' Elections – Plan, Plan, Plan Autumn's Finally Here!

From the Corresponding Secretary:

Barton Hills' Future

As recent disasters have shown us, social order can quickly break down when electricity, water, sewage, and other basic technological services (those we call “necessities”) cease to function. Many Austinites concerned that Rita would hit us assembled rudimentary survival materials: candles, batteries, propane for cooking and light, jugs of drinking water, first aid supplies, canned and dried foods, and camping gear. As fate had it, other Texans bore the brunt of the storm's fury, and the only traffic jams vexing Barton Hills were those from ACL Fest.

But the experience showed the fragility of our way of life. While politicians propose military solutions to practically every problem, it's fairly obvious that we'll have to rely on ourselves and people nearby when confronted by large-scale disruptions. Consequently, my family put together an emergency situation manual. It details preparing the house, cars, and yard; creating a “safe room” within the dwelling; designating escape routes and rendezvous points; securing important documents, valuables, and photographs; providing for family members with special needs (infants or elderly), including their medications; assuring pets' safety; protecting manual and rechargeable tools; assembling battery-powered radios, clocks, and flashlights; waterless and no-sewer toilet facility; imperishable, easily prepared foods; water storage and purification; ice and cold items; and coping without gas, electricity, or running water.

I believe our neighborhood would be well-advised to include an emergency procedures section in our

upcoming planning process and neighborhood watch program. Where is the closest designated shelter? What's the official evacuation route? How would we communicate with each other when cel phones fail? Without police or fire personnel, who'd be “in charge”?

Much of our vulnerability comes from basic design decisions made long ago that couldn't foresee the big challenges we face today: disruption of basic utilities, upward-spiraling fuel costs, or rampant population growth. While I'm one of our neighborhood's most vocal advocates, I believe we're missing a number of key amenities. Even as friendly as I am, I don't know all the people on my short street. I've toyed with the idea of inviting these close fellow residents to a curbside potluck, but I'm likely to be heading out to another location to meet other folks who live elsewhere. Aside from St. Mark's four times a year, our neighborhood has no central meeting place for frequent, regular gatherings. We don't have a library, shops, or grocery within walking distance. There's no designated promenade where we can strut our pets and ourselves, see each other, converse, and be seen. Zoning protects our property values, but many of our neighbors would welcome a relaxation of the single-family-only regulations to permit “granny flats” for our elders or cottages to rent. As in any society, we're constantly balancing collective good with that of the all-important individual, centralized
(continued on next page)

Message from the President

Autumn 2005

After years of talk and anticipation, it's finally arrived: Barton Hills officially joined the City of Austin's neighborhood planning process with the October 1 kick-off meeting of the South Lamar Combined Neighborhood Plan. I hope many of you were able to join that meeting and to complete the survey on the city's website. Here in Barton Hills, we got a head start on planning with the house meetings headed by Don Long, the research conducted and compiled by Patricia Wilson and her community planning grad students from UT, and the planning for planning committee headed by Melissa Hawthorne. BHNA will continue to use its resources to keep our neighborhood actively engaged in this program. We'll post news of meetings and reports on our listserv and website, our newsletter, through our committees, and at our general meetings. It's not too late to get involved and help set the direction for Barton Hills in the near and long term. For information, call Mark Walters at 974-7695 or check the city's website at www.ci.austin.tx.us/zoning/slcnpa.

As many of you know, Don Long resigned from BHNA to take a position in Washington, D.C. Under Don's able stewardship, BHNA embarked on the neighborhood planning process with vision and energy. I want to send my best wishes to the Long family as they set off for their new neighborhood!

Debby Kalk
President

(continued from previous page)

administration with self-determination, relationship with privacy, interdependence with autonomy.

What's an alternative to suburbia that might address these deficiencies? Where do cooperation, high social interaction, and direct self-government intersect?

Five years ago, a group of Austinites came together to plan a cohousing community. Originated in Denmark, cohousing is a design concept of small, individually owned dwellings around a central common house and green, the ownership of which is split by the residents. Similar to a condominium arrangement, cohousing might be described as an "intentional neighborhood." The whole is designed, managed, and governed in a consensus-seeking, nonhierarchical style by its member-residents. They share many services and facilities such as laundry, guest rooms, landscaping, gardens, workshop, and kids' playground and indoor space. Each family unit comes with a wee kitchen adequate for their needs. But the main attraction is the group meals in the spacious central dining and kitchen area in the common house. There's something almost magical about eating together that builds cohesion among group members. Cars get parked on the periphery, so the buildings' layout is pedestrian-oriented and easily encourages community interaction.

This group, Central Austin Cohousing (CAC), recently acquired a 6-acre site just east of Ed Bluestein and is finalizing its plans for 36 homes, two common houses, several garages, a central lawn, vegetable gardens, and a natural area. Construction will be by green methods, with low-energy usage and provision for solar power. What could Barton Hills learn from this project?

I'll keep you posted.

Howie Richey

Officers

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President
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Scott Smith
Treasurer
707-8610 (h)

Diana Stangl
Recording Secretary
447-5218 (h)

Howie Richey
Corresponding Secretary
444-4550 (h)

Eddie Torres
Austin Neighborhoods
Council Representative
443-2350 (h)

NEXT GREENBELT GUARDIAN WORKDAY:

Saturday, Oct. 29
8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Gus Fruh Greenbelt Entry
2642 Barton Hills Drive

Membership Missive

Dear neighbors,

When I moved to the neighborhood five years ago, I wanted to find out more about my new neighborhood, so when I noticed those signs announcing an upcoming BHNA meeting, I attended. People were friendly and welcoming, the issues were important, the presentations timely and informative, and I signed up. It's that easy to get to know what's going on and meeting many of your neighbors here in Barton Hills. Whether you're new to the area or have been here for many years, I encourage you to participate in BHNA. My participation in BHNA just reinforces my enthusiasm for our great jewel of a neighborhood.

Become a Friend of Barton Hills

For a mere \$20 per year, you can show your support of BHNA's programs by becoming a Friend of Barton Hills. Friends get special recognition in our newsletter and on our Website. Our special contributors help make possible our July 4th parade and celebration, our pilot luminaria project this past December which we hope to expand this year, our Greenbelt Guardian workdays, and other special projects.

Friends of Barton Hills

Kathryn Bender
Bill, Nan, and Glenn Clayton
Teresa Cochran
Chris and Sally Crocker
Don and Diane Long
Don and Susan Madden
Dennis and Nancy McFadden
Sherine Thomas and Tom Nuckols
Fairy Davenport Rutland

Debby Kalk
debby@cortexlearning.com
442-8829

Sample Plan

Want to know what's in a neighborhood's plan? Here's how our friends to the east, the Bouldin Creek NA, laid out theirs:

Planning Team Mission

To preserve, protect and improve the quality of current and future residential life of the Bouldin Creek Neighborhood and to support the success of existing and future locally owned business by creating a proactive neighborhood plan.

Goals & Objectives

GOAL 1: Maintain established neighborhood character and assets
GOAL 2: Protect and enhance creeks and open spaces
GOAL 3: Manage growth by encouraging development on major corridors and in existing higher-density nodes
GOAL 4: Create a transportation network that allows residents to walk, bike, ride, roll, and drive safely
Implementation, Appendixes: Additional Action Items, Final Surveys, Voluntary Design

Planning Process

At the direction of the Austin City Council, Neighborhood Planning staff began working in the Bouldin Creek Neighborhood in October 2000. Following a kickoff meeting, staff, residents, property owners, business owners, and representatives of area institutions have been attending meetings and developing the plan for seventeen months. These goals, objectives, and action items were developed at numerous Bouldin Creek Neighborhood Planning Team meetings.

Meetings

- Biweekly Planning Team meetings held on Monday evenings, 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm, from October 2000 to March 2002. Approximate attendance: 20 persons, including two to three staff persons. Over 450 different stakeholders have attended a Planning Team meeting or returned a survey.
- Community Forum held October 2001 at One Texas Center, 505 Barton Springs Rd., to solicit citizen input on the draft plan in progress.

More info:

<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/zoning/default.htm>

Planning Points

The City of Austin's neighborhood planning process is off and running for our area. Barton Hills is participating with Zilker, Galindo, and South Lamar neighborhoods to draft the South Lamar Planning Area neighborhood plan. The year long process began officially on October 1 with the kick-off workshop held at Unity Church on Del Curto. There were approximately 20 people from Barton Hills Neighborhood present. The final result of this process will be a land use plan that will influence zoning and land use decisions in our area, and potentially more. Check <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/zoning/slcnpa.htm> for updated information and future meeting times.

While the official kick-off was October 1, BHNA was at work a year ahead of time preparing for this process.

- We held 12 house meetings and a workshop about the future of Barton Hills last fall, with a total of 150 neighbors attending. The results are available in a 10 page summary on the BHNA website, along with a visual 'mind map' of the main findings.
- We held a neighborhood walk-about in August to help update the City's land use plan and get more people looking at, and thinking about, the condition and needs of the neighborhood (these walk-about are still going on; you can volunteer to do one in your part of the neighborhood).
- We held an informational workshop, called Zoning as a Second Language, to familiarize people with the 10 most important zoning terms.
- And we held a neighborhood gathering with representatives from the other neighborhoods in our planning area in order to familiarize ourselves with their needs and concerns, and develop a shared picture of the whole planning area.

We would like to see as many neighbors as possible come to the neighborhood planning meetings. The City has designed this process to be participatory, so here's your chance! If you would like to be notified of upcoming meetings, call or e-mail Mark Walters at mark.walters@ci.austin.tx.us at (512) 974-7695. If

you would like to organize a walk-about, e-mail Melissa Hawthorne at apsinc@austin.rr.com.

School Scheme

Our neighborhood school, Barton Hills Elementary, needs your support more than ever. Funding for arts, music and physical education programs has been cut by more than 25% in the last three years. Our teachers for these areas are split between two schools on a three-day rotation. Their classes have gone up to a class and a half in grades kindergarten through fourth. Some of these classes hold 33 to 36 students, including Life Skills kids. We are concerned about teachers' ability to work effectively as well as the safety of our children.

The PTA and parents of Barton Hills want to raise awareness in our community regarding this serious problem. "Music in the Park for the Arts," sponsored by the Barton Hills Parent Teacher Association, is a benefit concert to raise funds to restore the quality of education in the areas of art, music and physical education.

"Music in the Park for the Arts" will be presented by Dig That Noise Production. Barton Hills parents Jena Weatherly and Douglas Gessaman are the founders of Dig That Noise Production with no less than 25 years in the entertainment industry.

On Sunday, April 9, 2006, from 1 to 9 pm, we will have six of Austin's greatest bands pool their talents to support music, art and P.E. in our school. Sara Hickman is one of the neighborhood parents rallying behind this cause. The funds from this one-day event will be used to decrease class sizes and keep our art, music and physical education teachers at our school. Please show your support for your neighborhood school and our precious children.

Kati Achterman, Principal: 414-2103
Christine Stueve, PTA President

Dig That Noise Production: 707-0002

Greenbelt Guardian Glee-Nings

Upcoming Work Day

On Saturday, October 29, from 8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., we will be working on the *Gus Fruh Trail* at 2642 Barton Hills Drive. We are excited to finally begin a project we envisioned two years ago, but have been prevented from working on due to high waters on our work days. At the trail's interface with the large "swimming hole" area (when the water is up), there is a rustic cedar bench next to a precipitous drop-off. There used to be a wood railing above a timber retaining wall holding up the steep drop, but those were washed away in high flood waters.

We are going to try a new solution, using large stones from the creekbed to create a combination stacked retaining wall to hold up the bank and stepping stones to enter into the water. John Cook, our City Parks partner, is very ingenious at creating sturdy solutions with natural materials, and we will be working under his guidance.

We will also continue our aggressive campaign to remove invasive species (primarily ligustrum and nandina in this area) that threaten native plant biodiversity. And we will be collecting native seeds to plant in the recently cleared areas.

The refurbishing work that we did this spring, resurfacing the trail with the cross drainage swales and stone catch basins, is holding up very well, with the exception of a few areas that are challenged by speeding mountain bikes on the steep slopes and sharp turns. We will be doing some small repairs on the trail surface and the side retaining walls. As always, we will also be trash collecting, trailside pruning, and entry trail weeding and other small touches that create a safe and peaceful natural setting.

We hope to have a strong gathering of neighbors to help tend our adopted trail. We always have fun and work hard. It's a great way to get to know your neighbors! Please RSVP to Glee Ingram at gleeful@earthlink.net.

Follow-Up on Homedale Trail

At our last work day in July on the Homedale Trail, our Invasive Species team combed the steep hillsides to find and tag with bright orange tape more than one hundred large *Ligustrum* trees that are the source of so much re-seeding in the greenbelt. This was step one in a larger plan that is being coordinated with Rene Barrera, the Preserves Management Coordinator of the COA Parks Department.

Following Rene's counsel, we are experimenting with the "Rapid Response" model used by the US Forest Service. In areas where Invasive Species are edging ahead of the Native Species, they do an aggressive intervention that involves girdling (cutting around the base of the tree) and applying herbicide (*Arsenal* in our case) to kill the invading plants. The plants are left standing, so their root systems still hold hillside soil in place, and their decaying bark provides a home for all kinds of wildlife, small and large. The large seed bank is put out of business.

We have just gotten news that Stuart Strong, the Parks Department Manager of Operations, has given permission for two of the City's certified herbicide applicators to follow-up on our tagging preparations and do the tree girdling intervention within the month, before this year's seeds come to maturity. This is a wonderful way to assist to our efforts! Without putting these big re-seeders out of commission, we are only "tilting at windmills" in our efforts to preserve our native vegetation. Many, many thanks to the Parks Department for supporting our efforts.

Outreach News

Along the same theme, we are working on increasing the knowledge base and support for managing Invasive Species within our city's parks system. The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center is sponsoring a professional conference on November 17 & 18: "Pulling Together: Invasive Plant Conference." In conjunction with the Conference, they are offering an "Invasives Public Awareness Day" for Citizen Scientists on Saturday. The Wildflower Center has given permission for a small group of us "citizen weed warriors" to

Glee-Nings (cont.)

organize a Round Table/Panel Discussion on Austin-area citizen efforts to manage invasive plant species. Nancy Koch (our invasive species team leader) and I are working with Charlie McCabe, the Director of Austin Parks Foundation, to organize this event. Our panelists will include organizers of the Town Lake Trail Foundation and the Bull Creek Foundation as well as our Greenbelt Guardians. We will be sharing our efforts, successes and challenges in addressing this complex issue. Our Round Table session is scheduled for 2:00 p.m., November 19. There will also be several other presentations and videos and exhibits during the day. It is open to the public and we would love to see some of our neighbors there!

We Can Be Proud

Our July work day used the last of our extended Austin Parks Foundation Grant. As a part of the grant obligation, I had to do a Final Report on expenditures and volunteer hours. We spent all but \$15 dollars of our grant allocation, and managed to exceed our in-kind labor support commitment by eight times! The high "norm" for other grantees is to exceed their pledge by six times—so we have exceeded the high exceeders! Gotta love Barton Hills.

I tracked our volunteer efforts from our inaugural Greenbelt Guardian Day on March 22, 2003, to July 19, 2005, and we have tended the Greenbelt on ten different occasions, contributing 1,316 volunteer work hours. If we figure an hourly basis of \$10.65/hr (PARD's valuation), that is a value of \$14,015 towards the Greenbelt. The U.S. Department of Labor would value our labor more generously, at \$17.19/hr, which would raise the value of our volunteer efforts to \$22,622. Anyway you slice it, it is a generous contribution of our community to the larger community.

Take a (Side) Walk

Sidewalks are coming! Our work in 2002 on the Safe Routes to School Grant has paid off. Even though we didn't get the grant at that time, it put us on the radar screen. The city will be installing a continuous sidewalk on Barton Hills Drive from the Elementary School all the way down to the market. They will notify affected homes as the time draws closer. We can expect work to start in the first quarter of 2006. Thanks again to all who helped!

Jen Stuart

Nominations, etc.

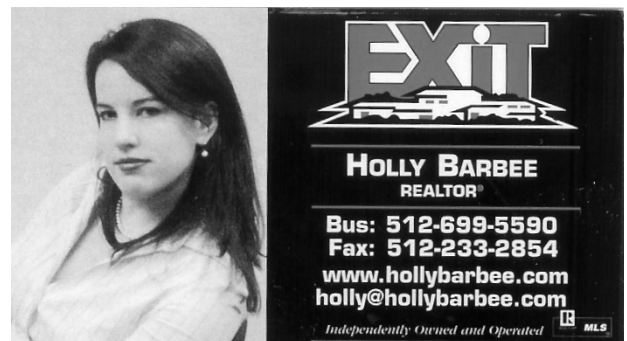
it's time to think about our officers for 2006. We have several positions open and welcome your suggestions

Fun Church Function

St. Mark's Episcopal Day School is having their annual Fiesta Mexicana and Silent Auction on Thursday, October 20th from 6:30 to 8:30. Tickets are \$10 each and can be purchased at the day school or the night of the festivities. Local businesses donated many items for auction and each class assembled the ever-popular theme baskets. For more information, call Jan Kokoszka, Day School Director, at 444-9401. Join us for an evening of food, drink, enjoyment, and fundraising!

Emily Mazac


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Zilker Botanical Gardens

A Garden in Peril...

Earlier this year, the topic of more funding for Zilker Botanical Gardens was discussed by myself and by Mr. Melvin Hinson (the current ZBG manager for PARD) both at BHNA meetings and in the BHNA newsletter. Below (in box) is a report of the most recent facts and figures concerning ZBG funding.

HAPPY HALOWE'EN!

BE SAFE AS YOU TRICK OR TREAT . . .

Recent PARD budgets for ZBG

1999-2000	\$636,267 (actual)	Full time positions: 9.0
2004-2005	\$479,088 (amended)	Full time positions: 7.0
2005-2006	\$453,055 (proposed)	Full time positions: 6.0
<u>For comparison, the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center budget</u>		
2001-2002	\$4,500,000 (approx.)	Full time positions: 52

The current level of funding leaves ZBG the lowest funded botanical garden of its size in the state of Texas. A proper funding level for an equivalent botanical garden is at least 1.5 million dollars. Due to the requests for raises by the firefighters, other City of Austin employees, and expenditures on the victims of Hurricane Katrina, the Austin City Council will most likely have make more cuts to the PARD budget. Mr. Warren Struss, the PARD director, has said that he does not support the idea of managing ZBG by an independent, non-profit organization, despite the fact that adequate funding will not be forthcoming from PARD. The Austin Botanical Garden Foundation recently proposed this type of management as it would make it much easier to obtain more support from the Austin philanthropic community. The current situation leaves the future of ZBG in peril.

Help ZBG receive the funding that would allow it to mature into its rightful role as the beautiful destination that the City of Austin deserves. E-mail the Austin City Council at:
<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/council/default.htm>
and ask them to find a way to obtain more funding for ZBG!

Dr. Craig Nazor
c.nazor@earthlink.net

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BHNA General Meeting Agenda

Tues., October 25, 2005

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

**6:00 to 7:00 p.m., Meet and Greet Social Outside on Deck
BBQ and Peach Cobbler from Green Mesquite**

7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

General Meeting

Opening Business

Updates:

Neighborhood Planning

Austin Neighborhoods Council

Nominations: committee, chair

Committee Reports:

Greenbelt Guardian

Sidewalks

Neighborhood Watch

Adjourn

Babysitting (\$5 per child) for entire General Meeting

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Barton Hills News

The newsletter of the Barton Hills Neighborhood Association is published quarterly, and is supported by the advertisements of our generous sponsors. It is distributed in print to every home in Barton Hills in February and June, and only to paid association members in April and October.

BHNA Newsletter
2802 Oak Park Drive
Austin, Texas 78704