


President's Report April 2008

by Bill Bednar

In early March the Executive Committee met and reached decisions on several matters. We decided not to propose a dues increase at this time, since the newsletter budget seems well under control and since we have had such vigorous voluntary contributions for the special projects that have come up. We had a very complete report from Steve Wilkinson on the status of the Aldridge Place column repairs, including a suggestion by the city bureaucracy that NUNA might have to take out insurance on the 33rd Street column if it were rebuilt. Steve wanted to know whether we thought NUNA would be interested in that, and the view on the Executive Committee was unanimous that we thought not. Steve said he would continue to press the city for permission to rebuild the column with no strings attached. We also declined to take a position on the issues recently aired on the List Serve regarding Trudy's restaurant, since there was considerable difference of opinion throughout the neighborhood. The Executive Committee also decided to have the Nominating Committee report recommending a slate for new officers posted on the List Serve as soon as practicable in advance of the April meeting.

Just another word or two on the Trudy's flap. The danger in becoming divided over small things is that then we may still be sore at one another when we really need to come together in our common interest. I'm sure Mary Ingle will report to you much more completely, but I was very impressed with the way the Neighborhood Planning Team did its job in getting to the bottom of the recent controversy about Trudy's. The NPT met on March 12, heard from the owner and manager of Trudy's, discussed the complaints, and reached a good result in an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation. It would be good to see that kind of problem come to the NPT more often, because, insofar as NUNA is going to be involved, that is the best way to get it taken care of-face to face, person to person, in polite discourse with ample and immediate opportunity for listening to other views. Let's do more of that!

Our next general membership meeting is Monday, April 7, 2008, at 7:00 PM at the First English Lutheran Church. Ed Clark at Austin Energy will give a short program on energy saving ideas, plus we will have a drawing for prizes from the Chronicle Kill-a-watt Program. In addition, we may have a performance artist with some brief information about the piece she performs in NUNA and Hyde Park called "Floodlines." Please be there! My contact information is 476-1135 or 587-3504 (cell). 

NOTICE: Next Neighborhood Meeting

Monday, April 7, 2008
7 pm

First English Lutheran Church at
30th and Whitis Streets

Agenda:

Ed Clark, presentation for energy efficiency

Ann Graham, announcement of Floodlines
performance

Nomination of Officers for 2008-2009

Approve NUNA plan amendments for
CANPAC

Committee Reports

NUNA Wins First Place for Energy Conservation

NUNA won the KILL-A-Watt challenge sponsored by the Austin Chronicle last summer. There are prizes available to residents; we will have a drawing for these prizes at our next neighborhood meeting. In addition, Ed Clark from Austin Energy will give a small presentation about key energy efficiency improvements homes need, how a person gets a free home energy assessment, their rebates and low interest loans, their free thermostat program and our Power Saver volunteer program. He will also answer questions our green power program and solar rebate program.



Slate of Officers for 2008-2009 Executive Committee

President: Bill Bednar
Vice-President: Mary Ingle
Treasurer: Jan Moyle
Secretary: Doug Plummer
NE Quadrant: Carol Journeyay
NW Quadrant: Ethan Cohen
SE Quadrant: Carol Fredericks
SW Quadrant: Dan and Kimberly Renner



Adams/Hemphill Park Update

By Roger Binkley

Regarding the placement of the new trash cans in Hemphill Park, two of the receptacles are already in place at 32nd and 33rd Streets. A concrete pad has been poured at 30th Street. for another trash can. The fourth one will be installed across from Wheeler Street. These cans are being installed by the Paaaarks Deeepaaaaartmeeeeent...be patient!

It appears that we have a go ahead to upgrade the Adams Park footbridge adjacent to Fire Station #3, but not replace it. It was deemed safe and stable by the inspecting engineer, even though it is in need of railing repair and refurbishment. (Of course, the definition of stable depends on how you feel about swinging bridges!) Work on the bridge would begin in a couple weeks according to Ricardo Soliz of PARD, and this project should be completed shortly.

The scope of the Hemphill Park bridges and sidewalks includes repairs to the bridges at 32nd, 33rd, and Wheeler Streets and includes replacing both sidewalks on 32nd, as well as, the south sidewalk that crosses the bridge at Wheeler. The bridge work will include wing wall repair, concrete crack repair, pressure washing, and sealing the surfaces. Of course, additional fill behind all walls will be required. The objective is to save the bridges by limiting erosion. The timing of this project has not been determined, because it still needs City Council approval. Since bids have been submitted, a timeline of 3-4 months would not be unexpected.

Adams/Hemphill Park Spring Cleaning

Saturday, April 12th from 9 to Noon

Join the neighborhood for the annual It's My Park! Day on April 12th/Hemphill Park Spring Cleaning. Convene at the bench at 9 am. Chores will include gathering litter and debris in the park and the creek. String trimmers to rid the creek of over growth will be needed, if you have them. Wear appropriate clothing for protection and bring gloves. Trash bags and water will be provided. Please register to volunteer at www.austinparks.org or call 477-4566 so that you can get a free tee shirt in your size. As an added convenience, we will be collecting your hazardous disposal. The creek and park cleanup coincides with It's My Park! Day sponsored by the Austin Parks Foundation.

See you at Hemphill Park.



In Memoriam

John Slatin, a professor of Rhetoric and Composition in the English Department at the University of Texas died on Monday March 24th. He was a resident of NUNA for many years. As well as being a scholar, John championed causes on the internet for accessibility to people with disabilities. He was a gentle soul, and we will miss him. Our thoughts are with his wife Anna Carroll and seeing eye dog, Dillon, who is also suffering from cancer.



2007-2008 NUNA OFFICERS

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Time: Day Tour: 10:00 - 4:00
Twilight Tour 6:30 - 11:00 pm

Tickets: Day Tour: \$15 member/\$22 nonmember
Twilight Tour: \$75 guest

Contact e-mail: information@hsaustin.org
Contact phone: 512-474-5198



Sparky Park Construction Slated to Start at End of April

By Douglas Plummer

NUNA Members- Douglas Plummer, Mary Ingle and Rick Iverson- met on Thursday, March 27, 2008 with representatives from the Parks Department (PARD) to track progress on the creation of Sparky Park. PARD stated that the park's construction permit had been filed with the Permit Department last Friday, and they expected the approval process to be completed within 30 days, (allowing for construction to begin in late April). They have received several bids for the construction work and will be selecting a contractor soon.

PARD noted that signs would be put up in the alleys on both sides of the construction area reminding residents that alley parking in NUNA is illegal and that cars might be towed in order to permit heavy equipment access to the site.

NUNA members discussed budget issues and expressed hope that there would be sufficient funds left over from the original amount given by the cell phone companies to permit the addition of some small decorative gates, lighting, and a couple of small stone benches. Any funds left over after that, would hopefully be used as "seed money" to obtain a grant to start the renovation of the old substation building. In the meantime, PARD has stated a willingness to remove the protective boards over the building windows and place protective sheets of bullet proof plastic instead for a more aesthetically pleasing look.

NUNA members also asked about the timing of installing park signs which would indicate the appropriate hours to be in the park and were assured that hours and park rules would be added to the main sign after it is



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moved from the middle of an entrance path to the park!
The contract for construction of the art wall that will be built on the southwest corner of the park is set to be formally signed next week. Building of the art wall will start prior to the general construction of the park. NUNA members are still encouraged to donate any interesting, charming, and durable curios to either Mary Ingle (320-8449) or Douglas Plummer (512-789-6466).



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P R O P E R T I E S

NPT Update

By Mary Ingle

The NUNA Planning Team (NPT) has had a busy agenda with cases to discuss and resolve. NUNA's **VMU application** which was submitted last June with CANPAC (a City mandated planning area umbrella group) has been postponed at the Planning Commission until April 22; this date may change for the public hearing on VMU due to the complexity of design standards for parking facilities (something the City is working on presently). The next issue which concerns the CANPAC group is the plan amendment process. The City staff gave CANPAC and NUNA the ability to do some "cleanup work" with the Neighborhood Plan from 2004. Most of these changes are small errors or typos in the various documents, but not changes in policy. NUNA's NCCD is missing a map which contains all the areas/districts listed in the text. Also, there were 2 properties which received the wrong zoning- 404 and 406 W 30th Street; these properties both have LO (limited office) which should be LR (limited retail). The zoning change will be LR for 404 and 406 W 30th Street. There also may be other errors in the NCCD which wait to be discovered?!

Other business for the NPT was a case in which the City issued a permit in error to **205 E 33rd Street** with a garage built in front of the principal structure-a building prohibition in our NCCD zoning ordinance because of continuity of style with the existing housing stock already on the street. The real important significance of this permit is that it would have made this new construction **non complying with our ordinance**. The City staff helped facilitate a meeting between the NPT, the owner, and the contractor; our collective solution was to make this **property come into compliance** with the NCCD ordinance by making the already built garage and breezeway into livable space, rather than a parking structure. The garage will now sport windows and perhaps a door to look more neighborhood friendly and will compliment the principal structure, the house. This was the simplest and best solution for making the project legal and complying after the intractable City permitting error.

The NPT also received notice of a zoning request/change for a property at **3101 Speedway** from CS (commercial) to a CS 1 which would include liquor sales. The applicant wanted to put in a drive thru liquor store that presented a couple of conflicts with NUNA's NCCD. The NCCD prohibits the use for a liquor store in the residential district because it is location- surrounded by a residential component and residing in the middle of the neighborhood. Additionally, drive thru facilities are also prohibited within NUNA, as well as, the whole CANPAC planning area. Fortunately for many neighbors, the applicant withdrew this zoning change request after long conversations and no recommendation from the City staff for this change. This property needs to be redeveloped or used appropriately and has the appropriate zoning; CS zoning is one of the most generous zoning categories in the City of Austin.

Kirby Hall School, a fine neighbor within NUNA, has made plans for improving and expanding their school. Due to a lack of funding at the moment, they have decided to dedicate the property at **400 W 29th Street** (which is

zoned MF3) for a parking lot which they desperately need. The NCCD provides flexibility for redevelopment of this kind without a zoning change; a conditional overlay could be used to change the use. This case then would proceed with a plan amendment which is vetted procedurally through the Planning Commission and the City Council. This particular case is still being studied by the City staff. Kirby Hall has been invited to our next NPT meeting which will be April 17 for an update of their plans and an update from the City Staff on the status of their CO (conditional overlay).

After many years, the NPT is still working with the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest and the property at **3100 Duval Street** currently owned by the Phi Delta Theta Fraternity; there has been keen interest for the Seminary to acquire the property and redevelop it for married student housing. The architectural firm of Cotera/Reed has been very helpful in providing test files and ideas for situating this housing on the site. Let's see where this project will go in the future.

Finally, Trudy's Restaurant is interested in having an ongoing dialogue with the neighborhood about their front parking lot and some perceived violations with outdoor tables. The NPT hosted some representatives from Trudy's at our last meeting; both sides want to continue talking in a friendly manner about issues which affect the neighborhood and Trudy's. This is an positive example of the power of dialogue for viewing both sides of a situation. The NUNA Planning Team (NPT) meets the second Wednesday of every month to discuss issues of zoning, permits, and other related matters.

If you are interested in attending one of our meetings, please contact the chair, Mary Ingle at 320-8449.



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