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NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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May 2018

EVENTS CALENDAR

Saturday, May 5: Violet Crown Spring Festival, 10 am to 5 pm at Brentwood Park. Free admission. For more information, visit www.facebook.com/VioletCrownFestival

Saturday & Sunday, May 12-13 and 19-20: West Austin Studio Tour (WEST). For more information, visit <http://west.bigmedium.org>.

Monday, May 14: Crestview Neighborhood Association Meeting. 7:00 pm at the Crestview United Methodist Church, 1300 Morrow St. Agenda: Officer elections and representatives from the Austin Police Department to discuss graffiti and other issues of interest to the community. See article below for more information on officer elections.

Tuesday, May 15: Last day to file a property tax protest with TCAD. For more information, visit <https://www.traviscad.org>.

CNA OFFICER ELECTIONS

Elections for officers of the Crestview Neighborhood Association will be held at the CNA meeting on Monday, May 14 at 7 pm, at the Crestview United Methodist Church, 1300 Morrow St.

Executive Council positions up for election include Vice-President, Secretary and Newsletter Editor, each for a two-year term. Four additional Executive Council positions, Place 1 through Place 4, will be up for election for a one-year term. The current positions of President and Treasurer have a year remaining in their two-year terms.

To be eligible for office, one must be a paid CNA member. To be eligible to vote for CNA officers, one must be a paid member at least seven days prior to the election on May 14, meaning that their dues must be paid by May 6, 2018.

CodeNEXT Updates

The City Council will take public testimony on CodeNEXT at two hearings. Tuesday, May 29 at 10:00 am and Saturday, June 2 at 10:00 am, Austin City Hall, 301 W. 2nd Street.

Free parking below City Hall. More information at austintexas.gov/page/codenext-postcard

Community Not Commodity (CNC) (www.communitynotcommodity.com), a neighborhood advocacy group, has created two documents, 101 Reasons Why CodeNEXT is Beyond Repair (www.communitynotcommodity.com/wp-content/uploads/101-Reasons-Why-CodeNEXT-is-Beyond-Repair-04_24_18.pdf) and We Need Another Approach to Land Development (www.communitynotcommodity.com/wp-content/uploads/CodeNEXT-Is-Beyond-Repair_04_24_18.pdf). Both papers describe the adverse impacts that will result from city council's approval of CodeNEXT, and they provide helpful background information you can use to develop your comments if you plan to attend one of the hearings or email your comments to the Mayor and council members (www.austintexas.gov/email/all-council-members). Reading the documents may provide you with a better understanding of how CodeNEXT will negatively impact the quality of life in our neighborhood. Also, on page 5 of this newsletter, see Barbara McArthur's presentation from the April 28 hearing held jointly by the city's Planning Commission and the city's Zoning and Platting Commission. In a well-researched piece, Ms. McArthur explains how CodeNEXT-type land uses were utilized in Austin's Chestnut Neighborhood Plan in 1999 and have resulted in accelerated gentrification and rising property taxes. Another presentation that drew a round of applause at the hearing was that of Nancy Harris who said the following: "CodeNEXT is not supported by the communities that will be impacted. It threatens to upend existing neighborhoods by changing their culture by introducing elements that are not compatible with the residential character and by displacing people of color, poorer families and the elderly by incentivizing rapid development that will encourage demolition of currently affordable homes and small apartment complexes and replacing them with more expensive, market driven units thus making them less affordable."

CodeNEXT Petition Status

The City Clerk's Office has certified that more than 20,000 signatures were collected in an effort to give citizens more say in the process and place CodeNEXT on the ballot in November. Even though only 20,000 signatures were required, the grass-roots effort was actually successful in collecting more than 31,000 signatures from Austin voters requesting a more democratic process for planning Austin's future. Even with the City Clerk's certification of the petition, a majority on the City Council (Mayor Adler and Council Members Kitchen, Garza, Renteria, Casar and Flannigan) voted on April 27 to deny citizens their referendum rights and refused to place CodeNEXT on the November ballot. However, District 7 Council Member Leslie Pool, along with Council Members Houston, Tovo and Alter, supported democracy and voted to put CodeNEXT on the ballot. It's not over yet and likely headed to court.

In a recent editorial, the Austin American Statesman stressed the need for the Council to be responsive to the citizenry with this statement: "In making their decision, council members should consider the following: The same charter that enables Austin's 10-1 system of government guarantees citizens the right to petition their local government for a referendum. That right, based in the First Amendment, is considered sacrosanct and should not be cast aside without legitimate or moral cause.

It's worth considering taking a break – shelving CodeNext until next year. That would help tamp down tensions and remove CodeNext from center stage as November elections approach. It would give the council time to study the lessons learned regarding CodeNext so that the public's investment is not wasted.

Time spent wisely would give the council the best shot at restoring public trust and fixing the city's zoning code."

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NEWSLETTER

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CNA General Meetings are held the second
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Reduce, Reuse, Recycle? Call It In! The City's On-Call Bulk Collection Pilot

By Nancy Harris, CNA Treasurer

In all the junk mail one gets, it may have escaped your attention that Austin Resource Recovery (ARR) has implemented a pilot bulk collection program that began in April. During this nine-month pilot program that involves two routes in the city, including Route 23 (Crestview, Brentwood and Allandale), bulk collection will be by request only for the remainder of 2018. This will replace the usual bi-annual collections. Instead, users will call 3-1-1 and submit a request for a pick up for up to three collections between now and the end of the year. ARR will call back to schedule your pickup. Currently, there is no additional fee for the service. The wait time for your collection could be as short as 24 hours depending on how full the pickup schedule is when you call. (ARR can schedule up to 40 collections per day.) You will need to tell the operator what items you are setting out for collection so they can send the appropriate vehicle(s) to your home. All items may not be picked up on the same day.

You are required to put out at least two large items per request. Items should be too large to fit into your trash receptacle and should not be in boxes, bags or other containers. Items will need to be at the curb by 6:30 am the day of your scheduled collection, and ARR asks that you not put them out before your collection day has been set. Items will need to be separated into separate piles for electronics, appliances, metals, tires, and general bulk items. The usual cautions regarding not placing items under low hanging limbs or power lines or near obstacles such as trashcans, parked cars, fences, etc. still apply.

ARR designed the pilot after looking at programs in Sunnyvale, CA and Richardson, TX (where customers can request a bulk pickup as frequently as once a week!). While ARR did recognize that customers desired additional bulk pick ups based on a citizen survey (Did you get one? I didn't.), they admit that they did not seek any customer input into the actual design of the pilot. So it is difficult to say if staff's interpretation of the feedback is actually what customers had in mind or not.

ARR hopes the desired benefits might include an opportunity to divert additional materials from the landfill, an increased number of collections per household, and a potential for mileage reduction on the route. While it is a given that most customers would welcome additional pickups and the convenience of having the option to schedule them at times that suit their needs, some of the other possible benefits may be more difficult to actually measure.

Will this reduce items going into the landfill? Maybe. As the city has no way of measuring the quantity of materials picked up and recycled by the recyclers (and neighbors) who roam the streets during bulk pick up week, there is no way to compare whether more or less material is being recycled. Not having a definite date for picking up materials will not allow for the private recyclers to have a chance to collect items. Not only do these individuals recycle materials, but they also reuse many perfectly useful items that are not technically recyclable by city standards, but can certainly be given a new life. (I have snagged a bookcase or two or grandma's old end table that just needs a new coat of stain myself.). The numbers could also be affected by other factors. Because the city made an early collection just before the project began (only 3 months from the last one), because it is a new system and customers may forget or not realize for a while that they need to call in for service, or because they may put off calling in until they have more items, the numbers for the nine-month trial could be artificially reduced and not be a true reflection of long-term effects.

As for the reduced mileage driven by the trucks, it is difficult to believe that



driving the entire neighborhood twice a year, even by several trucks (different trucks for different classes of items) would result in more mileage than sending trucks out on numerous occasions throughout the year to pick up at individual homes. However, the mileage numbers for the pilot could be skewed for the same reasons that were given above.

There are other potential ramifications of the on call program. What additional cost might be involved in the form of personnel to set up appointments or additional drivers or trucks? Will there be more items on the curb all the time and not just for a few days during the bi-annual pickup? Will the procrastinators among us be more or less likely to let things pile up in the carport or backyard if we have to take the initiative? Currently, many people take advantage of bulk pick up to put out items that might not be considered large enough for call in pickup but eat up a large amount of bin space (particularly with all the small bins). Customers appreciate the opportunity to put those items out when the trucks are already in the neighborhood, but will lose that option. While technically not part of the bulk pickups, some households take advantage of the fact that there are individuals on the look out for usable items during the current bulk pickups to recycle/reuse smaller items. Will more of these items be wasted because they will go into the trash and end up in the landfill instead? Instead of only twice a year, will there be trucks driving in the neighborhood at all times with the associated noise and traffic obstruction? The city will also be tracking what items you are disposing of.

At the end of the pilot, ARR will seek customer input (Again, perhaps this might have been helpful to do beforehand, but then ARR has a history of not getting stakeholder feedback – think the recent textile recycling program and how it affected non-profits.) and feedback on the ease, convenience, and satisfaction with the program through online and mail out surveys, as well as looking at the operational data collected. This will be used to determine the future plans for the city’s bulk collection program. Regardless of whether you decide to give it a thumbs up or a thumbs down, be sure to give you feedback when the city asks for it in early 2019!

For additional information regarding the On-Call Bulk Collection Pilot Program contact ARR Customer Service at (512) 974-1945 or arr.customerservice@austinrecycles.com.

Garden Hack - Pests

The bane of gardeners everywhere! But who wants to use dangerous chemicals that could contaminate the soil or harm other plants, pets or children? Here is one alternative. Mix 2 cups of canola oil with 2 tablespoons of non-degreasing dishwashing liquid and shake well. When ready to use, combine 1 1/2 teaspoons of the mixture with each cup of warm water in a spray bottle. Generously (think dripping off) spray the leaves, including the undersides, when they are dry (so the mixture evaporates more quickly) and temperatures are below 85 degrees. Occasionally shake the bottle to keep the water and oil combined. If you have not treated a particular type of plant before, it is a good idea to test the solution out on a small inconspicuous area first and check after 48 hours. Repeat every seven to ten days.



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Starry Starry Nights

By Marilyn Querejazu

Capturing the beauty of the night sky on a flat surface is an extraordinary challenge. Among artists who have tried and succeeded are Ignacio Zuloaga (Spanish, 1870-1945) and Vincent Van Gogh (Dutch, 1853-1890).

In Zuloaga's *The Victim of the Fiesta*, an aging bullfighter plods home on his wounded nag late at night across a stark Spanish landscape. Horse and rider appear forlorn under a fantastic night sky. Zuloaga adorned more than half the 9 by 11-foot canvas with blue-black night sky streaked by the milky way. This painting hangs in the Museum of Fine Arts in Bilbao, which you can visit online www.museobilbao.com. (Search for *The Victim of the Fiesta* - the Zuloaga painting will be the fourth image listed.)

Vincent Van Gogh gave the world many beautiful images, and among the very best are his night paintings. In *Café Terrace at Night* (1888) stars twinkle brightly in a brilliant deep blue sky above the café. *The Starry Night* (1889) gives us a magical night sky, with moon, stars and milky whirls of light. In contrast to the beauty he created, Van Gogh's life was a sad one, punctuated by poverty and rejection. It's hard to believe these lively paintings are from a time of severe depression and isolation just before he took his life in 1890.

Van Gogh would really despair if he knew that 128 years after his death most city dwellers can't see stars twinkling above them, much less the milky way. It's a crying shame that we've lost the ability to see the star-lit skies that inspired generations of artists and explorers before us by over-illuminating our cities.

The International Dark Sky Association (www.darksky.org/) provides tips to reduce over-bright outdoor lighting, like

where to find dark sky friendly lighting and how to talk to your neighbor about his retina-searing garage door light. We all can do something to reduce unnecessarily bright outdoor light.

Happening in May: Go WEST and get some art.

West Austin Studio Tour (WEST) is a free, self-guided art event over two weekends: May 12-13 & 19-20. This is an opportunity to meet Crestview and Brentwood artists in their creative spaces and participate in other art happenings.

Check out West Austin Studio Tour and Big Medium on Facebook, and then snag a gorgeous WEST catalogue at any branch of Austin Public Library. While you're out and about stop by my studio at 1706 Madison Ave (open from 11am to 6pm during WEST).

Starry, Starry night
Paint your palette blue and grey
Look out on a summer's day
With eyes that know the
Darkness in my soul.

Shadows on the hills
Sketch the trees and the daffodils
Catch the breeze and the winter chills
In colors on the snowy linen land.
And now I understand what you tried to say to me
How you suffered for your sanity
How you tried to set them free.
They would not listen
They did not know how
Perhaps they'll listen now.

Don McLean



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Sunday Worship,
11:00 a.m.



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A CodeNEXT Foreshadowing

By Barbara McArthur

(Editor's note: This speech was originally presented on April 28 at a joint meeting of Austin's land use commissions.)

A lot of the neighborhoods impacted most by CodeNEXT (Urban Renewal Austin Style) are those that still retain some diversity in income, occupation, ethnicity, lifecycle, and housing choice. A lot of people moved to these neighborhoods for what they offered and what they could afford. People built them into communities.

The CodeNEXT experiment started in neighborhoods in the 1990s with glossy brochures from the city during the neighborhood planning process that promised more affordability and more housing if special residential "uses" were adopted in the plans. Several neighborhoods in East Austin adopted the new residential types. Small lots amnesty - which allowed substandard lots to be redeveloped, cottage lots - which allowed 2,500 sq. ft. lots, and urban homes which allowed 3,500 sq. ft. lots with ADUs. Sound familiar? Sounds like the R2C CodeNEXT mapped for most of the older parts of the city? Sound like the answer to the affordability issue?

Some of these plans, such as the Chestnut Neighborhood Plan were adopted in 1999.

Well - how did that work for those communities? The "tools" gentrified the communities, displacing low-income people, and their community voice was gone. In Dr. Eric Tang's paper, Those who Stayed¹, original residents have both the burden of fast-raising property taxes and their belief that their neighborhood had lost its sense of community.

Between 2000 and 2010, black population decreased by 66%, Latino population decreased by 33%, and white population increased by 442%.

CodeNEXT increases entitlements on almost every residential property in the city; if not by increasing units, then by reducing lot size. From an MIT thesis², "Evidence from upzonings shows that ... Increased density appears to correspond to higher rents, higher median incomes, and more white and Asian inhabitants." In a national survey 85% of New Urbanist projects were unaffordable to someone making the Area Median Income³. There are winners and losers in this redesign of Austin, and CodeNEXT is aimed at making Austin a "better" city for the demographic of people who are going to move here in the future at the expense of the people who live here now.

I will close with a quote from an opinion piece in the New York Times: "The central weapon of assault ... that gives the city to a different social class (gentrification) is the massive rezonings of neighborhoods. It is a "a systematic class-re-making of city neighborhoods." Widespread transformation is intentional, massive and swift, resulting in a completely sanitized city."⁴

1 Report from the Institute for Urban Policy and Research & Analysis (UT Austin) THOSE WHO STAYED The Impact of Gentrification on Longstanding Residents of East Austin by Tang, Falola & Desir

2 Goldberg, Leo, 2015, <https://dspace.mit.edu/bitstream/handle/1721.1/98935/921891223-MIT.pdf?sequence=1>)

3 "Affordable housing in New Urbanist Communities: A survey of developers, Emily Talen, Professor of Urban Planning, Arizona State University, 2008)

4 Jeremiah Moss, <https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2014/04/13/the-pros-and-cons-of-gentrification/new-yorkers-need-to-take-back-their-city>



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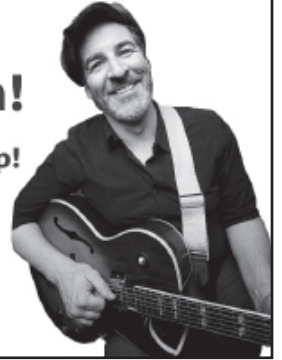


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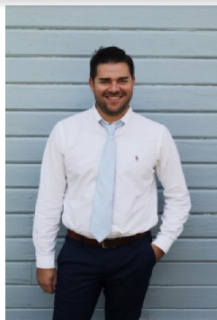
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