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NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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SEPTEMBER 2018

EVENTS CALENDAR

Thursday, September 6: Burnet Road Corridor Open House. 5 pm to 8 pm at the Saint John's United Methodist Church at 2140 Allandale Rd. Stop by anytime, review the proposed roadway changes and give the city your feedback – see article on page 3.

Monday, September 10: Crestview Neighborhood Association Meeting. 7:00 pm at the Crestview United Methodist Church, 1300 Morrow St. Agenda: Discussion of Oktoberfest and vote to have CNA be a sponsor. Updates on other events/projects.

Tuesday, October 2: National Night Out (NNO) Parties. 7 pm to 9 pm. Look for signs on your block for party location. NNO is a great opportunity for citizens and law enforcement to partner up against crime. APD encourages you to attend the event on your block and visit with your neighbors. For more information or to register your party with the city, contact Veronica Saldate at the Austin Police Department Office of Community Liaison at 512-974-4735 or register online at <http://www.austintexas.gov/online-form/national-night-out-survey>. APD recommends that you register your party by 5 pm on Friday, September 14th.

Thursday, October 11: Brentwood Elementary School Welcome Walk at 9 am. Do you know any future bulldogs or families interested in learning about Brentwood? Invite them to our welcome walk. During a welcome walk, visitors have an opportunity to learn about Brentwood, tour the campus, and meet Principal Laroche. Please contact Brentwood Elementary at 512-414-2039 for more information.

CodeNEXT Update

by Fred Lewis, President, Community Not Commodity

Recently, Austin's mayor and council pulled the plug on the flawed CodeNEXT land-redevelopment plan and called on City Manager Spencer Cronk to create a "new process" for revising our community's land code.

We welcome a new process. Community Not Commodity and a wide array of other grassroots groups have been calling for an alternative process to CodeNEXT for months, one that prioritizes the needs of everyday Austinites rather than the desires of the real estate industry. For a process like that to work, our city manager must make sure it has diverse and broad community participation, unlike CodeNEXT.

That's what made the rest of Mayor Adler's announcement so disappointing. Our mayor failed to admit the obvious: that Austinites do not want to pursue CodeNEXT's flawed policies. He also failed to give thanks to the volunteers, neighborhood advocates, and other community members who took time out of their busy lives to attend a year's worth of CodeNEXT meetings and review thousands of pages of draft code. He instead denounced them for spreading "misinformation" and blamed them for the plan's failure.

We reject those accusations. CodeNEXT's critics aren't opposed to change, but they do demand a seat at the table. They live on both sides of I-35 and come from all walks of life, but they share the same concern: that profit-driven redevelopment policies like those embedded in CodeNEXT will accelerate their displacement and the displacement of their friends and neighbors.

They don't want developer-defined "transition zones" in their neighborhoods. They don't want to see drainage and flooding issues worsened. They don't want residential redevelopment that moves cars out of driveways and onto already-congested neighborhood streets where they pose a greater danger to their children. They don't want decisions on issues like these made solely by City of Austin staff, and they don't want a Planning Commission whose composition is illegal.

Above all, they don't want a land code that is designed by the 1% for the 1%. They want one that maximizes community values, not land values.

It's time for Austin's elected officials to stop pointing fingers and start doing their jobs. If we are to replace CodeNEXT with a plan that works for everyone, City Hall must earn back the community's trust by fostering an open, inclusive, respectful process.

Community Not Commodity is eager to serve as a partner in that process, but just as prepared to act as its watchdog. Either way, we'll be there—and we'll be fighting for you.

Want to help us? The most important thing you can do is vote FOR this November's ballot proposition (Proposition J) on comprehensive land code revisions. If local residents pass it, they will be given something they didn't have with CodeNEXT or any other comprehensive change to our land-development rules: a choice. They will have the power to approve or disapprove any plan like CodeNEXT at the ballot box.

Make sure to also follow us on Facebook and check out our website <https://communitynotcommodity.com>—and please consider donating to our effort.

Together we can build an Austin for everyone!

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NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER

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CNA General Meetings are held the second
Monday of every month at 7:00 PM at the
Crestview United Methodist Church,
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McKalla Place - A Good Deal for Austin?

by Leslie Pool, Council Member District 7

As many of you know, the City Council voted recently to allow the City Manager to negotiate and execute a contract with Precourt Sports Ventures (PSV) for a soccer stadium in District 7. I was one of four Council Members who voted against this item, along with Council Members Alter, Houston, and Troxclair – and I did so because I believe this simply is not a good deal for Austin. But even though the four of us were in the minority on this issue, I am still proud of the work we did to pressure PSV into providing a better agreement than the City would have gotten otherwise.

Policymaking exists in a gray area. As Council Members, we take in information, hear opinions, analyze the facts, and then vote on how we have interpreted and balanced all of that.

I worked very hard over the last several weeks to examine what this proposal would cost the City, both in direct subsidies (such as when the City spends money on a project) as well as indirect ones (such as when the City provides special tax breaks and forgoes revenues it otherwise would have collected). I also worked to understand what the City would be giving up by choosing to go with a stadium deal instead of an alternative vision for the site, a concept known as the ‘opportunity cost.’

On the prior, the major costs to the City are indirect subsidies. The term sheet does require some direct spending on things like capital repairs contributions, but the largest (known) costs come from allowing PSV to completely control public property at a below-market rate and without paying the property taxes any other for-profit venture would need to pay. There is even a provision in the term sheet that would require the City to support PSV in the event that any other entity challenges PSV’s ability to avoid paying property taxes.

This special treatment was a major red flag to me. In both of my campaigns for District 7, I ran on a platform of opposing big tax subsidies for private companies – and this deal represents one of the largest tax incentive packages the City has ever provided.

By my calculations, there is at least an \$83 million difference over the first 20 years of the deal between the costs and (a generous accounting of) the benefits that PSV has promised. One can think of this (very conservatively estimated) \$83 million figure as the price tag of having a professional sports team.

To me, that figure was too high. Some of my colleagues see it differently. A number of them believe that a soccer deal is inherently different than other incentive packages because of the intangible benefits a local sports team can bring – and believe that providing public property at a discounted rate is a reasonable cost to pay for getting a team. That is the gray area of policymaking that I referenced earlier.

For my part though, I looked at the pattern of recent soccer stadium deals and believe that we could have done better. Public opinion has begun to turn against large subsidies for stadiums recently – and right now, Miami is considering a term sheet under which the soccer team would pay full market value, pay property taxes, and meet their responsibilities.

Some have questioned whether Miami’s experience in not providing public subsidies can translate to Austin, due to some differences in the size of the property under consideration. And it may be true that it might not be possible for Austin to have the ‘Miami deal’ under PSV’s preferred timeline, at PSV’s preferred location, and under PSV’s terms. But I believe the fact that the ‘Miami deal’ exists means that it is possible for these types of projects to be done without special treatment or subsidies.

All of this presented me with a key question: whether I believed that providing these subsidies would be worth it for the chance to possibly have this team in the near future – or whether I believed that these subsidies were too much for a for-profit company, especially when I know that it is possible for this type of private venture to be privately funded in full.

Ultimately, I decided that I stood in the latter camp.



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Burnet Road Corridor Considerations

by Allan McMurtry

The Burnet Road Corridor improvement plan has been funded. That means early planning for Burnet is underway. A meeting has been scheduled for September 6, 2018, at St. John's United Methodist Church, 2140 Allandale Road. You may notice city field crews doing survey work for trees, topography, boundaries, and geotechnical borings.

The portion of Burnet that affects our community the most runs 1.5 miles from Koenig Lane north to Anderson Lane. There are approximately 197 business establishments along the route on 79 lots. A number of the lots are small, some being less than 10,000 sq. ft. Of the lots, 28 lots have multiple curb cuts to facilitate customer traffic.

Small businesses and the Allandale Neighborhood Association have met with the City to go over these issues of importance:

- Raised medians down the entire length from Koenig to Anderson Lane
 1. Businesses are concerned about medians that cut off customers turning left.
 2. Economic studies show that the businesses most affected by medians are those with a single location, in the middle of the block, lack quality of access management, are small retail, service stations, or fast food places.
- Reduced curb cuts into businesses - Again, this issue has an impact on ease of use by customers
- Bicycle lanes out of the roadway and onto an 8' sidewalk - Putting the bicyclists on a sidewalk out of the main roadway is plus for the safety of the bicyclists.
- Signalization - This will relate to timing of turns, pacing of traffic.

- Lane widths - A reduction from 12' to 11'-10' is being studied.
- Additional pedestrian crossings - These would require a study to determine if they are merited based on pedestrian use.
- Traffic in the neighborhood - Medians without U-turns create a need for customers to circle the block or reroute through the neighborhood to come in upstream of the business they want to pull into.

The goals for a successful improvement plan are to:

- Decrease congestion, achieve complete communities, increase open space, increase families, establish harmonious transitions between land use types, and nurture and retain small businesses and minority owned businesses.
- Evaluate current conditions—including demographics, leverage the work of City Housing/Transit/Jobs Action Team
- Include discussions with Cap Metro and Lone Star Rail

Your job in all this is to attend the meetings and learn some of the specifics of design proposed by the City and ascertain their impacts on you, the way you shop and drive, the business and schools that will be impacted, and people who will use the road. Your input is critical. It is fair to say that Burnet could well be the template for other corridors. The hope is that new ideas can be brought forward to make Burnet unique in the way it handles traffic, shoppers, pedestrians, cyclists, and other aspects of a road that contributes to a safe and viable community.

Source Material: ftp://ftp.ci.austin.tx.us/npzd/Austingo/BurnetReport_vMgrs_v4.4.pdf ftp://ftp.ci.austin.tx.us/npzd/Austingo/BurnetReport_vMgrs_v4.4.pdf



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Howdy Neighbor!

By Mike Lavigne, CNA President

You've probably heard the good news by now- our voices have been heard and the attempt to upzone our entire neighborhood and city, known as CodeNEXT, has been killed! For now. Whether it was because the Mayor saw that it would hurt his chances at re-election or he and his votes on council truly want to address affordability and growth via an honest process remains to be seen. But the result is that the new City Manager has been asked to suggest a new way forward.

Either way, we won this battle and it is because your opinions were finally considered.

There will be more on this topic later to be sure, but for now your neighborhood association can work on real issues and get back to focusing on keeping our neighborhood the awesome place it is and even make it better.

We have some exciting things happening, and we'll need your help to achieve them. The next big thing ahead of us will likely be the development on Ryan Drive at the Austin Energy site. Right now we are waiting on draft language for a request for proposal (RFP) for development. We've already had a neighborhood working group do the hard work of determining our priorities for the site to be incorporated into the RFP. This will still need to go before council and certain council members (Flannigan, Garza, Casar) will undoubtedly try to tinker with it to suit their agendas. We will continue to represent our neighborhood's best interests as we go forward with what could wind up being a model for community participation should we be successful. Our recommendations may be found on the CNA website.

Another effort we'd like consider undertaking now that we have bandwidth is enabling the creation of a community development corporation to possibly take donated older

houses and keep them affordable for people like teachers, nurses, public safety worker and others we'd like to make sure can live in our neighborhood. Who knows, maybe we could even get grants and buy properties to manage. This is no small undertaking and will require expertise. If you've read down this far, maybe you are that expert? If so, please volunteer! Come to a meeting!

It is back to school time now and that means we need to take extra care as we drive through our neighborhood. We've all been guilty of being on autopilot as we head home or to work, but let's drive a little slower. The only people it will annoy are those who cut through the neighborhood; those of us who live here are grateful for the extra care.

I'm proud to live in Crestview, proud of the amazing level of volunteerism amongst us and especially happy when I get to tell people where I live. I hope you are too. Our children will remember this as a special place in a special time and we have the honor of carrying forward that legacy.

I'll see you in the 'hood soon, and if it's at a watering hole, come say "hi" and I'm likely to buy you a round of your preferred liquid. Do the same for a neighbor soon!

Cap Metro Double Track Update

Track shift work was completed August 11-12. Crews are now working on the north (east) side of the right-of-way on a track wall and drainage channel. After the track wall is completed, base material will be brought in and compacted much like the bed preparation that took place on the south (west) side of the right of way. This work is expected to take approximately one month. No other weekend work is currently planned during this time.

If you have questions or concerns, contact Jackie Nirenberg, Cap Metro's Community Involvement Manager: jackie.nirenberg@capmetro.org or 512-369-6201.

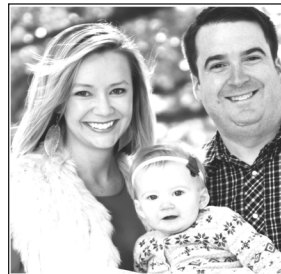


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Artist Profile – Yama Ploskonka

By Marilyn Querejazu

Yama Plonskonka is hard to define - printmaker, craftsman, inventor, artisan - all skills necessary for his main vocation - papermaking. Yama makes lovely, graceful, utilitarian paper for artists in his shop on Ruth Avenue.

Yama developed an interest in printing at an early age. As a young student in La Paz, Bolivia, a teacher introduced him to typesetting, the perfect field for the kinesthetic-tactile learner. Yama was also inspired to use his hands and imagination by



his mother, a ceramist.

Helen Hiebert, teacher and papermaker, inspired Yama to invest his energy fully toward papermaking and helped incubate many of the innovations in his workshop. If you are interested in papermaking, her books are a great way to get started.

Yama's workshop is small but chock full of invention. He

employs Western style papermaking techniques using machinery he adapted or built from scratch. The raw material for his paper is cotton pulp made from recycled cotton t-shirts. The "worn" fiber gives his paper a unique texture. The pulp is soaked for several days in buckets, then run through a washing machine. His pulper is quite a contraption - a series of

tanks, tubing, exhaust fans and a garbage disposal. With these and other handmade machines, he produces fine quality paper for artists with zero waste.

We have an opportunity to see and touch Yama's art at an upcoming exhibit at Imagine Art, 2830 Real Street (78722). The show is called *Touch This Art, Art for the Blind, The Aztec Calendar Stone*. Check the Imagine Art website for final dates and times: www.imagineart.net

Imagine Art is open to the public, reaching out especially to the disabled. This non-profit project is supported in part by the Cultural Arts Division of the City of Austin Economic Development Department and donors. You can also see Yama's work on etsy (www.etsy.com/shop/TXPaper) or email yamaplos@gmail.com to request an appointment.

Interested in printmaking? Flatbed Press is the place to go for instruction and inspiration. The current exhibition *New Editions 2018* features etchings, woodcuts, lithographs, monotypes and monoprints by eleven artists. flatbedpress.com, 2832 East MLK.

...
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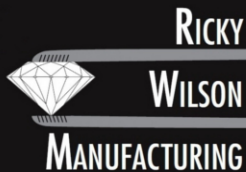
In your blender put:

1 cup frozen strawberries

1 cup Central Market blood orange Italian soda

Blend on medium until smoothie-like

Add 1-2 cups sparkling white wine (I use a Spanish Cava that costs about 8 bucks). You want something dry – not sweet. Stir in the wine with a spoon and pour into glasses. Too sweet? – add a squeeze of lime.



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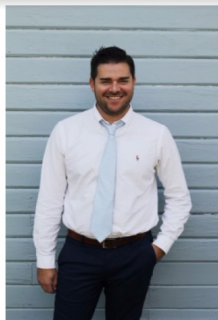


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