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NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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AUGUST 2019

EVENTS CALENDAR

Wednesday, August 7: Brentwood Elem. School Kindergarten Parent Orientation at 10 am.

Thursday, August 8: Popsicles In Brentwood Park at 4:00 pm. Meet Brentwood Elem School Principal Ms. Laroche and new teachers. Questions? Email brentwood.pta.president@gmail.com or visit www.brentwoodpta.com.

Monday, August 12: Crestview Neighborhood Association Meeting Cancelled. See you in September!

Wednesday, August 14: Atlas 14 Flood Risk Meeting. 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm at the Northwest Recreation Center, 2913 Northland Dr. See article for details.

Monday, August 26: Austin Public Library Commission Meeting. 6:30 pm at the North Village Branch Library at 2505 Steck Ave. Agenda: The Commission will be taking public input about the future of the Recycled Reads Bookstore. See article for details.

Burnet Road Improvements Need Holistic Approach

By Chip Harris, Newsletter Editor

Funding for improvements to Burnet Road were approved in the 2016 Mobility Bond election and included provisions for making the road more accessible for cyclists and safer for pedestrians, both of which will be beneficial. Another proposed change involves removing the continuous left-turn lane and replacing it with a raised median, something that could have serious repercussions for adjoining residential streets in terms of additional traffic volumes. The additional traffic could result from vehicles seeking alternate routes because they can no longer use the left-turn lane to access businesses.

At a recent city-held meeting about the proposed changes, city engineers were asked if they had calculated how much additional traffic might end up on residential streets, and they replied that they had not. Then they were asked if they would consider analyzing the possibility, and again they said no, that their only focus was Burnet Road. This was reminiscent of the planning that went into the intersection of 183 and Lamar Blvd. Their limited focus there, which eliminated access from north-bound Lamar onto west-bound Anderson, resulted in traffic volumes on Morrow Street near 10,000 vehicles per day, much higher than the 300 – 500 vehicles most residential streets in Crestview see. Finally, the issue of traffic mitigation came up, and they explained they had a “toolbox of options” to deal with cut-through traffic. When pressed, they explained that the tools all dealt with excessive speed and that there was nothing to address increasing and excessive volumes.

Let's apply what we've learned from the Lamar/183 project so we can anticipate the unintended consequences. Crestview's residential streets shouldn't have to bear the cost of Burnet Road improvements. The engineers should use a holistic approach that will both improve the mobility on Burnet Road AND maintain the safety and integrity of our residential streets.

How Will The New Flood Plain Maps Affect You?

That's the question that city officials will try to answer at an upcoming meeting to be held on Wednesday, August 14th, from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm at the Northwest Recreation Center at 2913 Northland Drive. The new Atlas 14 flood plain maps will be displayed at the meeting along with a city presentation about new development rules being considered by the city.

Depending on where you live, you may be subject to flood insurance requirements, limited as to what improvements you can make to your house and other issues that may lower its value. The Watershed Protection Department of the city of Austin is developing new rules in order to update the Land Development Code and the Drainage Criteria Manual. These revised rules are scheduled to be approved by the City Council later this year.

The impetus for all the changes is a recent rainfall intensity study done by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Admin-

See Flood Plain Maps continued on page 5

Have Your Say About Recycled Reads

Last fall, the city's library Director, Roosevelt Weeks, recommended to the City Council that they discontinue Recycled Reads, the 10-year old city-run bookstore that sells library discards and donated books at affordable prices, keeping tons of materials out of the landfill. Fortunately, the newly appointed assistant city manager, Chris Shorter, decided that the popular and heavily used facility, located at 5335 Burnet Road, would be continued, at least for now.

Blindsided by the Director's closure proposal, the Library Commission formed a three-person Working Group to review the issues and formulate recommendations to be presented to the entire commission and possibly passed on to the City Council. The working group met privately several times and interviewed the library Director and staff members for their input but decided to pass on holding any public hearings to solicit input from the public.

The working group's recommendations were presented at the commission's monthly meeting in June but action was postponed because the public did not have access to the

See Recycled Reads continued on page 3

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NEWSLETTER

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CNA General Meetings are held the second
Monday of every month at 7:00 PM at the
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Allandale Neighbors Successfully Defend Deed Restrictions

And What This Means For Crestview

By Allan McMurtry



In July, the Allandale Oaks Subdivision (think Cary Dr and Shoal Creek Blvd for two blocks north of Allandale Road) successfully defended deed restrictions that limited residential dwellings to one single-family residential dwelling per original lot. The lot had been re-subdivided into two lots through the City of Austin approval process. However, a State District Court judge in Austin ruled the deed restrictions valid and imposed a permanent injunction against building a 2nd dwelling on the lot that existed prior to re-subdivision. The ruling also upholds single-family residential use only as well.

The reason the lawsuit was brought was fear of CodeNEXT. The current directions of City Council ask the Planning Department to design the land development code to do the following, as applicable to Crestview:

- 1) Permit Accessory Dwelling units on every lot in Austin (violates some single family residential use deed restrictions that limit lots to one house)
- 2) Establish 3 levels of zones
 - a. Transition Areas
 - i. 1 to 5 lots in from Burnet, Lamar and Anderson
 - ii. Distance in varies depending on orientation of neighborhood streets
 - b. Transition Zones - 1/2 mile into neighborhoods from Burnet, Lamar and Anderson
 - c. High Opportunity Zones - the entirety of Crestview from Justin to Anderson and from Lamar to Burnet
- 3) Within these zones, density is to be increased as prescribed by each category and may include one or more of the following:
 - a. All Single Family Residential structures would be a non-conforming use
 - i. Limits will be placed on the ability to add new sq footage to the house
 - ii. Any tear down MUST be rebuilt as multi-family
 - b. All lots within the zone would be required to have 4 dwelling units
 - c. Lots bigger than 14,500 sq ft would be required to have 7 dwelling units
 - d. Lots sizes could be as small as 1,800 sq ft
 - e. New construction could be as high as 52'

The basis for these statements comes from Draft Version 3 of CodeNEXT and City Council directives in April and May of 2019.

According to the timeline set by Council, we will see the specifics sometime in October of 2019 for a final vote by City Council in December 2019.

The final Version of CodeNEXT will end Single Family Residential (SFR) zoning, creating commercial areas within Crestview and designating a significant portion of the entire neighborhood as multi-family as well.

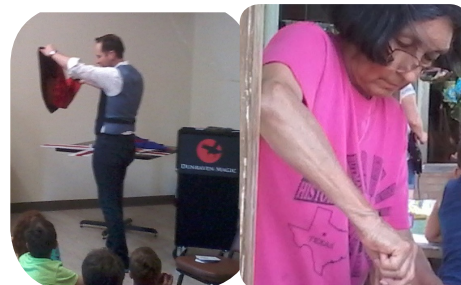
Many areas in Crestview have deed restrictions. These restrictions limit structures and use to SFR use only.

You have a decision to make. Do you want multi-family development next to you, do you want land values to increase, do you want all that parking on the street, do you think the infrastructure of water, sewage, streets, storm runoff, and emergency vehicles are designed to handle that density?

If you object to this taking, you need to organize to defend your deed restrictions.

"Thank you" to **Arlan's Market** and Blue Bell for the ice cream for our 2019 Ice Cream Social. Also a big "Thanks!" to the **Violet Crown Clubhouse** for letting us use the party room for the magician's performance.

Pictures: Left - Adam Dunraven weaves his magic for children of all ages at the social. Right: Dedicated ice cream scooper, CNA Officer Lourdes Jones



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Howdy Neighbor!

By Mike Lavigne, CNA President

I'm short on time and space this month as we prepare for our grand opening weekend at the Violet Crown Clubhouse. But I do want to point your attention to City Council in August. This month they will vote on a couple of initiatives that have garnered tens of thousands of voter signatures, and yet the Mayor and majority of council don't think your opinion matters enough to act on their own. While they could go ahead and just act on these good government items, they will instead demonize the people who put forth the effort to insist on government oversight.

Rather than ensuring that Hotel Occupancy Taxes are used to support things like pools, parks, small music venues around town and non-institutional art endeavors, they want to pour the money into a new convention center and multinational hotel chains. Rather than ensuring that AISD and County government get a chair in negotiating tax giveaways, the Mayor wants to ensure that he can hand out tax breaks to his lobbyist and real estate friends unencumbered.

We live in a time when mainstream media doesn't have the will or resources to cover the sorts of graft that used to get people booted from office. Instead taxpayers and small businesses are left to fend for themselves while the mega rich "friends" of Council get to feed at the trough.

It's not just local government, but some of the most egregious and outlandish deals I've ever seen have occurred during my brief time watching city council. It is incumbent on us as voters, citizens and taxpayers to pay close attention to what our elected officials are doing, especially when their actions have such a direct impact on our day to day lives.

As always, you can find me at the VC Clubhouse trying to get the high score on Ms. Pac Man many afternoons and

on most Free Beer Fridays if you'd like to chat or change my mind!

See you round the hood!

Recycled Reads continued from page 1

recommendations until after the meeting. The issue was not included on the July agenda but should be on the agenda for the Commission's August 26th meeting, to be held at the North Village Branch Library at 2505 Steck Avenue starting at 6:30 pm.

Folks choosing to speak at the August 26th meeting will be given three minutes but must sign up before the meeting starts at 6:30 pm. This will be a unique opportunity to address the commission at our local library branch as they rotate the location of their monthly meetings to different parts of the city. As usual, public involvement (speaking at the commission meeting) may well make a difference in the commission's recommendations to Council and the continuation of this highly valued, successful and award winning city function. If you have used the bookstore and want to see it continued, plan to attend the commission meeting and share your thoughts and experiences. And if you would like more information or would like to be notified if Recycled Reads is placed on the August agenda, please contact Chip Harris via email (austinchip@hotmail.com) or phone: 512-458-2488. Thank you!

In Memoriam

Marna Henley, a longtime former Crestview resident and CNA member passed away on June 5, 2019. She wrote the first history of the Goodall H. Wooten Elementary School and was appreciated for her volunteer service in many organizations. In addition to being a junior high Sunday School teacher, Marna was also president of St. Johns' Women's Society of Christian Service and served as a Campus Ministries representative. Our condolences to her family and many friends.



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August Excursions

By Marilyn Querejazu

Commerce Gallery, Lockhart

Commerce Gallery (102 S Commerce St, Lockhart) opened in March of this year. The 119-year-old building, with its high ceilings and abundant light is the perfect destination for an art road trip. The work of artist in residence, Christopher St. Leger is stunning. The current exhibition, *Simplify*, is the unique work of Stella Alesi. Her stark, beautifully constructed minimalist paintings are on display through September 3. Preview these artists and more on their website www.thecommercegallery.com. Note the calendar, especially the events on the first Friday of the month.



Omnitown (VII Dist. Budapest) by Christopher St. Leger

Commerce Gallery is open Thursday through Sunday 11-5, allowing ample time to enjoy Lockhart's other work of art – that famously famous barbeque before heading back to town.

Davis Gallery, Austin

Art lovers should not miss the summer group show at Davis Gallery (837 W. 12th St.). *Circadian Buzz* is about repetition, the movements and routines each artist uses in the creative process. Thirty-two participating artists will present a work that exemplifies their rhythm. The show continues through August 31.

Austin Film Society at The Line Hotel

The Line Hotel (111 E Cesar Chavez St) and AFS are hosting a free poolside summer film series celebrating Texas cinema of the 70's. *Sugarland Express* with a young, effervescent Goldie Hawn will be shown Tuesday, August 6. Doors open at 6:00 PM with music and food available. The film will begin after sunset, around 8:00 PM.

The film was Steven Spielberg's directorial debut about a mom who'll stop at nothing to get her baby back, based on a true Texas tale.

Coming Late This Fall To Our Neighborhood Park!

By Candace Pruett

The Friends of Brentwood Park and the Brentwood Park Playground Committee are happy to announce that new playground equipment will be installed in Brentwood Park soon! The City of Austin Parks and Rec Department is currently ordering the equipment that will better serve children in our area who are over the age of 5. Equipment to be installed in this initial phase includes a large climbing dome, a climbing block structure, and a portion of interconnected sidewalks for the park. In future phases, a modern playscape structure, a larger sand play area, and additional swings will be installed.

The playground committee has worked diligently since October of 2016 to see this project come to fruition. A combination of private fundraising, business sponsors and in-kind donations, and graphic design services donated by Allison Mabry helped make this campaign a success. The project would not have been possible without the generosity and expertise of Stephanie Saulmon who donated her landscape design services, and a \$50k grant from Austin Parks Foundation.



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Unconventional Austin Citizen Petition Update & Misinformation Alert!

By Bill Bunch, Executive Director, Save Our Springs Alliance

Here's a quick update on the Unconventional Austin citizen petition that calls for voter approval for any major expansion of the Austin convention center. The petition would also prioritize our hotel tax tourism dollars to support what visitors and locals alike love about Austin – our music, arts, local businesses, and natural and cultural heritage.

The Unconventional Austin SPAC, led by local small business, neighborhoods, arts, and environmental community activists, filed a petition with the Austin City Clerk on July 12 with 30,000 signatures. More than the required 20,000 signatures were confirmed as registered Austin voters in late July, and the petitioned ordinance should appear on this November's ballot.

Meanwhile, the misinformation campaign against the petitioned ordinance is already underway. Claims that the petition is "illegal on its face" are simply bald talking points of the downtown hotel lobbyists and others who support the proposed \$1.2 billion center expansion. They want to lock up 72% or more of our hotel tax revenues for 30 years of expansion debt financing – leaving the crumbs to cultural and heritage tourism investments that would benefit both locals and visitors.

State law clearly allows the city to spend its hotel tax on promotional programs, signage, visitor information centers and tourism related transportation projects that also benefit locals (Texas Tax Code 351.101(a) and 351.110). The hotel "venue tax," Chapter 334 of the Local Gov't Code, also provides for funding of arts, culture, sports and other venues. Houston, Fort Worth and Corpus Christi all spend about one-third of their hotel tax revenues on their convention center,

compared to Austin's 72%.

The real legal problem comes from the city plan to fund live music with a portion of the proposed 2 cent hotel tax increase when the specific statute authorizing this increase says it "shall" be used "only" for convention center expansion.

The city faces another problem: the Travis County Commissioners court is now stepping forward to insist that the city not lock up all of the hotel tax for the proposed center expansion and city projects. County leaders would like to see 2 cents of the hotel tax dedicated to a major upgrade to the Travis County Expo Center and possibly other cultural projects located outside of downtown. Since state law caps the overall amount of hotel tax that may be assessed, the city and county are now competing for the same limited revenue stream.

Legal and political issues aside, the convention center has lost over \$400,000,000 over the last 20 years, consuming far too much of our hotel tax revenue, while generating a tiny fraction of our hotel visitors (less than 4%). A larger convention center means larger operating losses, along with taking even more prime downtown property off of the tax rolls. It's the biggest boondoggle in Austin history.

People don't come to Austin for the convention center.

Flood Plain Maps, continued from page 1

istration (NOAA), the results of which show that certain portions of Austin are now much more prone to flooding than previously thought, including a large portion of central Austin that Crestview falls into. Many houses that used to fall within the 500-year flood plain now fall within the 100-year flood plain and ones that fell into the 100-year flood plain now fall into the 25-year flood plain. The NOAA study results state that nearly twice as many Austin homes are at substantial flood risk than before. Possible changes as a result of the study may require that all new construction be raised two feet above the flood plain and that no additional dwelling units can be built on properties within the flood plain.

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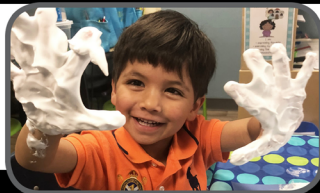


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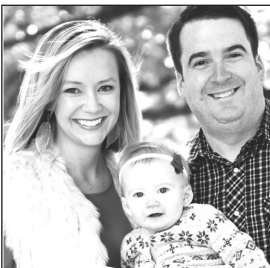


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