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NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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JANUARY 2020

EVENTS CALENDAR

Monday, January 13: Crestview Neighborhood Association Meeting. 7:00 pm at the Crestview United Methodist Church, 1300 Morrow St. Agenda: Vote on CNA contribution to Notoberfest and discussion of issues of interest to the community.

CodeNEXT V4 Update

By Barbara McArthur, Austin Neighborhoods Council and Brentwood NA V-P

Here is a year-end report to make sure you have the latest information on where we are on CodeNEXT.

The only scheduled public hearing before the City Council on the new Land Development Code (CodeNEXT V4) occurred on December 7, 2019. Even though in-person, not online, sign-up was required, over 700 folks signed in, with about 70% of those in opposition to the Council's approach to the Land Development Code revision.

Four days later, on Wednesday, December 11, 2019, the Council passed the staff draft, as amended, on first reading. Over 250 proposed amendments were offered – many if not most of these were not available to the public before the hearing. Council Members Pool (District 7), Alter (District 10), Tovo (District 9) and Kitchen (District 5) voted against passage. Due to the number of amendments and the lack of transparency, it is impossible to know for sure until the meeting report is issued, what exactly was adopted. But it appears that the adopted amendments included:

- An amendment expanding transition zones around areas designated as "activity centers"

See CodeNEXT, continued on page 5



Update on Brentwood Elementary Relocation Swing Site

By Brentwood United Group

On November 11 AISD notified Brentwood Elementary families that all 650+ students and staff would be relocated to the Dobie Pre-K campus on Rundberg Lane east of IH-35 during the school renovation, starting in fall 2020. Over the previous two years, families had been told by AISD that students would remain onsite for the duration of the construction. During a November 19th meeting in the Brentwood cafeteria with Brentwood families and AISD staff members, parents voiced a range of concerns about the Dobie Pre-K plan, including the distance, increased commute and traffic dangers for parents, teachers, and children and safety concerns with the lack of a physical building. During the meeting a subcommittee of parents led by Brentwood parent Briana Burns was created to collaborate with AISD staff to identify more adequate and suitable alternative options.

This subcommittee is part of a larger parent organizing group called Brentwood United, whose core purpose is to work collaboratively to create a solution that is best for Brentwood students, families and teachers, today and into the next 50 years. As part of the effort to understand the needs of the parent community, Brentwood United issued a survey with a 68% response rate of current Brentwood Elementary families. The vast majority of parents surveyed shared concerns about

teacher and student retention, disruption of student needs being met, traffic safety and threats to aftercare and extra-curricular education opportunities with 47% of respondents looking into other options for their children. Brentwood Elementary has always been a neighborhood school and many in the neighborhood are concerned that dividing our students into different schools around Austin hurts the larger neighborhood community.

To avoid a divided community and in an effort to keep our students together, Brentwood United is planning to present additional options for the temporary swing (alternative) site in early January. These options fit within the criteria that have been provided by AISD. A couple of these options include using Brentwood Park as a temporary swing location and also adding portables to Burnet Middle School, which is a closer location with space for the necessary portables. Brentwood United has created a larger presentation outlining the options currently being evaluated, which has been shared within their Facebook group and can be requested via email by emailing unitedbrentwood@gmail.com.

If you have concerns and/or want to understand more about the work Brentwood United is doing, below are a few ways to connect: • **Join the Facebook Group** - There is a Facebook group called "Brentwood United" where parents can find resources and ask questions. • **Request to be Added to the Email List** - There is also an email list for meetings, notes, etc. Please email unitedbrentwood@gmail.com.

See Brentwood Elementary, continued on page 4

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NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

Published monthly on 100% recycled paper by the Crestview Neighborhood Association (CNA).

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CNA Contact Information

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www.crestviewna.com

CNA General Meetings are held the second
Monday of every month at 7:00 PM at the
Crestview United Methodist Church,
1300 Morrow St.

Treasurer: joincrestview@gmail.com
Twitter: @CNAneighbors

Facebook: CrestviewNeighborhoodAssociation

Neighborhood Email Groups

crestview-neighbors@yahoo.com
crestview_forsale@yahoo.com
crestview-gardeners@google.com
crestview-parents@google.com

What Happened Here?

by Dona LeBlanc, Crestview resident



If you have taken your daily stroll in Crestview along Saint Phillip Street in the past month, you may have passed this house and wondered “What in the world happened here?” Vandalism? Really big squirrel infestation? No! Just an awesome partnership between builders and the Austin Fire Department!

When a house is scheduled to be torn down, many builders pair with AFD, allowing them to use the house for practice prior to its destruction! Our neighbor sold her home about a month ago. The day after she moved out, holes began appearing in the roof, doors and windows were shredded or missing, and there were giant swaths of wet pavement and grass.

Our neighborhood firemen were coming by and using their equipment on a REAL house with REAL pipes, electrical equipment, and spaces. I spoke to one of Engine 16’s crew, and he shared how beneficial this program is for the Department. “When we get the opportunity to work inside these tear-downs, it presents us with real life situations. Narrow attic crawlspaces, unexpected wiring in the drywall, any number of things we might face in our neighborhood emergencies. Even training at the Academy, we wouldn’t get such a true view of the homes we might be working to save.”

Different crews came out each day – we watched the jaws of life used on the garage door. A ladder truck stretched over the roof as the men climbed up through the attic. Hoses from one end of the street, over the bricks and through the front window sprayed out imaginary flames. The crews were intense, but honestly, also a little gleeful, as they worked safely preparing for events that they might face at any time in our homes in the neighborhood.

So the next time you hear a siren or pull over for a responding fire engine, remember this great program that offers such practice to our first responders. If you are selling your home and realize that the buyer is considering it for demolition, tell them about this program. It might be your life that’s saved using the skills developed by practicing on these houses!

Don’t Forget to Renew your CNA dues for 2020!

Our thanks to those of you who have already paid your annual dues for 2020. If you haven’t had a chance to renew or join your neighborhood association yet, you can use the form below to mail in your dues. Make your check out to Crestview Neighborhood Association or to CNA. Or you can go to the CNA website at <https://crestviewna.com/join/> to pay using PayPal. Each month in the newsletter and at meetings, CNA brings you news that affects our neighborhood as well as working for what we love about our community.



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All residents are invited to join
Annual dues are \$10 per household

Date: _____ New Member [] Renewing Member []

Household Members (List up to 4): _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

New Year's Resolution - See More Art!

by Marilyn Querejazu

If your new year's resolutions include enjoying more art, then an afternoon at the McNay Art Institute in San Antonio fits perfectly. The McNay's current exhibits and the permanent collection offer a wide world of artistic styles to explore. If another of your resolutions involves expanding your knowledge of Tex-Mex food, then the trek down I-35 is well worth your time.

Mary Cassatt's Women is showing at the McNay through February 9, 2020. Mary Cassatt (1844-1926) is frequently labeled an "American Impressionist", but her career and the work she left the world tells a larger story. She was a protégé and colleague of noted French impressionists, but her style was always unique, and she continued to grow and change as an artist. The two greatest influences on her work were the French impressionist Degas and Japanese printmaking.

A Cup of Tea is on loan to the McNay from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Cassatt often painted everyday life and made teatime the subject of a series of works painted around 1880. Her sister posed for this canvas, as she often did for Cassatt. Look for Impressionist characteristics in the brightness of the woman's gloved hand and the teacup and spoon. Notice the scurried brushwork in the background and the gorgeous use of gray



A Cup of Tea by Mary Cassatt 1891
(dry point and aquatint)

and black on the chair. This masterpiece by Mary Cassatt gained critical acclaim in the 1881 Impressionist exhibition.

A decade after *A Cup of Tea*, Mary Cassatt began producing elegant prints, using the repeated patterns and asymmetry of Japanese prints. A dozen of Cassatt's works on paper from the McNay's permanent collection are part of this exhibit.

The McNay's minimalist art collection, aptly titled **What You See is What You See**, is on display through May 17, 2020. Minimalism is abstract art boiled down to large, distinct images. The sharp lines, contrasting colors and simplicity of form draw your attention and hold on to it. If you approach with an open mind, minimalist art is engaging and contemplative.

This exhibition is important. It is considered one of the largest and most important collections of Minimalist and Conceptual graphics in the state and region.

In art, it's about finding what you like. When that happens, stop for a while. Spend time taking in the artwork that speaks to you - don't rush to see everything.

Likewise, there's a Tex-Mex platter for every taste. Whether you like a cheesy hot, hot, hot enchilada plate or the original San Antonio puffy taco, the Alamo City is the epicenter of Tex-Mex. It's part of life here, from the \$2 versions of hand made tortillas to high dollar concoctions. It's everywhere, so slow down and smell the hot sauce.

In Memoriam

Steve Boemer, a longtime Crestview resident and CNA member, passed away on December 10, 2019. He had a love for music, movies and traveling. He loved to laugh and always managed to put a smile on his friends' and family's faces. He was a constant friend with a wonderful memory for details and a great conversationalist. Our condolences to his family and many friends.



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1300 Morrow www.crestviewmethodist.org

Howdy Neighbor!

By Mike Lavigne, CNA President

Happy New Year! This dispatch is being composed from the bar at the Violet Crown Clubhouse as the kids come streaming as they begin their Winter Break. By the time you read this, that break will be coming to an end, and they'll be getting back to school after what will seem like forever I'm sure. We are so fortunate to have such a great public school in our neighborhood. It's easy to take the things that foster such a strong community for granted as we go about our busy lives. I'm not sure what lies in store for Brentwood School over the next couple of years as the renovations get underway. Whether the kids are bussed across town or in portables in the park, I have no doubt that our community will come together to ensure that the inconvenience is minimalized, and that the years spent in transition are full of great memories in spite of the circumstances. We have all sorts of resources in the form of community spaces, helping hands and an amazing network across the city.

You've probably heard about the school closures AISD is proposing. The citywide upzoning the City Council is voting on will absolutely threaten more school closures. As they eliminate single family housing and encourage smaller, less family friendly units and neighborhoods, they encourage suburban sprawl. Forcing families to the burbs will mean less children in the center city. There is more profit for developers in building smaller units and eliminating parking requirements. It is almost as if some of our City Council never had to shuttle kids around town for school, dance, sports, birthday parties, etc...

Your vote matters, whether it is for President, or School Board or any level between. If we continue to elect people who care more about pleasing the growth industry instead

of current residents, it won't be long before our city is just a playground for the young and wealthy instead of a place where one can live and raise a family and grow old in place.

I encourage you to go to www.fileyourprotest.com and fill out the form. It takes about 20 seconds, and it is the last thing the Mayor wants you to do. They just voted against amendments to the LDC that would have helped to ensure your rights to protest your zoning changing.

While the national political stage is all consuming, local government often has an outsized impact on our day-to-day lives despite receiving far less oversight from media or any real checks and balances. This has allowed organizations to act as fronts for the real estate industry but mask their agendas in liberal sounding platitudes without any real facts to back them up. "The market will provide!" "Density creates affordability!" "Missing Middle!" "Transition Zones!". Our local newspapers refuse to provide any scrutiny of those in power allowing them to run amok. It's frustrating to say the least and makes State Government look like a transparent, ethical arena. Words I never thought I'd utter after 20 years working around the Capitol. *****

Brentwood Elementary continued from page 1

All neighborhood families are encouraged to email AISD with input on the proposed relocation. You can email the following individuals at AISD: • Paul Cruz, AISD Superintendent - paul.cruz@austinisd.org • Kristin Ashy, our Trustee on the AISD Board - kristin.v.ashy@gmail.com • Scott Thomas, AISD Asst Director of Public Affairs & Communications - scott.thomas@austinisd.org


The Brentwood PTA is actively planning on how to support the whole community - parents, teachers, staff, and contractors - while Brentwood Elementary School takes a short trip to some temporary location before coming home to a lovely new campus. If you'd like to join, email: bulldogcommunitycarecommittee@gmail.com

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- An amendment expanding the extra-unit “preservation bonus” to include homes 15 years and older and allowing “simple resubdivision” with no minimum lot sizes
- An amendment allowing the rezoning of homes in the middle of neighborhoods for commercial uses, such as restaurants

Before passage, Council Member Leslie Pool offered an amendment calling on the City to “recognize and give full legal effect to property owners’ valid petition rights to protest the rezoning of their or nearby properties made pursuant to Texas Local Government Code, Section 211.006(d).” The Council majority voted it down 7-4 with Council Members Pool, Alter, Tovo and Kitchen supporting recognition of those rights.

The Council directed that the next draft be released in late January 2020 with a vote on second reading in early February – continuing its pattern of leaving the public insufficient time to inform themselves.

The community responded the next day. On Thursday, December 12, 2019, a lawsuit was filed in State District Court by a group of 19 diverse Austin property owners from all areas of the city and backgrounds. The lawsuit seeks a declaratory judgment that property owners, residential and commercial, have state-mandated protest rights requiring a 3/4th vote of the entire Council (9 of 11 votes) to rezone property if the owner files a valid protest petition. The lawsuit also asks for a declaration that the City failed to give proper hearing notice, voiding the Planning Commission’s recommendations and the City Council’s vote on the proposed Code. The highly regarded law firm of Gray and Becker represents the plaintiffs.

Since the Council did not pass the Code on all three readings, **there is still time to file a protest** and trigger the nine vote requirement. There is nothing that those opposed to the accelerated process can do that will be more impactful.

You can file your protests online at the website fileyourprotest.com. Also, Council Member Leslie Pool set up a process for the city to receive protests in writing. Please note that you must file your protest before Council holds the third and final reading on the code and map, which will probably occur in late March but could be sooner.

Address any protest to Communications and Public Information Department, City of Austin

By Mail: Communications and Public Information Department, City of Austin P.O. Box 1088, Austin, Texas 78767

Hand-in delivery only: Communications and Public Information Department, City of Austin 301 W 2nd Street, 3rd Floor, Austin, Texas 78701

By Email: LDC@austintexas.gov

Details aside, it is critical to remember that fundamentally, CodeNEXT is about using the code revision process as a vehicle to do massive rezoning without the public input that accompanies even the simplest zoning change. CodeNEXT is concerned with much more than the creation of new zoning districts with different site development regulations. As problematic as those districts are, even more problematic is the City’s attempt to impose those districts on homes, businesses and neighborhoods all at once without notice, hearing, or the ability to protest. This top-down, cram-down approach conflicts with a promised bottom-up planning process. It is unfair to the public and has produced an inferior product.

The City has its justifications, but the ends, however benignly they can be characterized, cannot be used to justify means that circumvent the law and democratic principles. That is the focus of the lawsuit, the salutary effect of which will not just be validating the rule of law but better policy reflected in a better code in service to and supported by a broader cross-section of the community.



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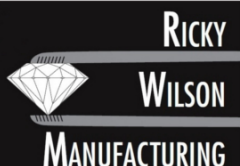
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