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# CRESTVIEW

## NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

### NEWSLETTER

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MAY 2021

## Thoughts on Strong Mayor Issue From Three Previous Austin Mayors

*We have included several pieces about the strong mayor proposition over the course of the past few months. As we go to the polls this May, we'll leave you with some last thoughts expressed by three of Austin's past mayors:*

As three former Mayors of Austin, all of whom served as city council members prior to being elected to the top office in the city, we strongly oppose Proposition F.

If successful at the polls on May 1, this devastatingly dangerous proposition would change Austin from a council-manager form of government to a strong mayor structure.

Most people who have served as mayors of any city would admit, if pressed, that they would have loved to have had more power while in office. The lure of autocracy is strong! Fortunately, our city charter ensures that that can't happen. The council-manager form of government is the most representative, democratic and accountable system imaginable. Numerous checks and balances are built into it, and tremendous access for the public is guaranteed.

A switch to strong mayor would mean one person holds



the city. This is a situation ripe for cronyism and backroom dealing.

Please join us in rejecting Proposition F. Vote NO on strong mayor.

Sincerely,

The Hon. Lee Cooke, Austin City Council, 1977-1981; Mayor of Austin, 1988-1991

The Hon. Lee Leffingwell, Austin City Council, 2005-2009; Mayor of Austin, 2009-2015

The Hon. Ron Mullen, Austin City Council, 1977-1983; Mayor of Austin, 1983-1985

*(Reprinted with permission)*

all the cards in municipal government. He or she would have the enormous power of a veto; they would not have to attend council meetings; and they could appoint (and fire) the heads of every department in

## Overview of the Propositions on the May 1st Special Election Ballot

**Proposition A:** Would require the city and the Austin Fire Department's local union to enter into arbitration if they can't hammer out an agreement over labor contracts.

**Proposition B:** Would prohibit public camping, sitting or lying down on a public sidewalk, or sleeping outdoors in and near Downtown and the UT-Austin area. Opponents of the proposition say Prop B criminalizes homelessness. Supporters say the current policies adversely affect public health and safety issues as camps have cropped up throughout Austin.

**Proposition C:** Would transfer the power to appoint and remove the director of the Office of Police Oversight from the city manager to the city council. If approved, the proposition would set up a framework for an independent office led by an appointed director.

**Proposition D:** Would move the date of Austin's mayoral election to presidential election years. If the proposition passes, whomever is elected after Mayor Steve Adler's term expires in 2022 would serve a two-year term, and then another election would be held in 2024. Supporters say this would increase voter turnout. Opponents say that it would overshadow local elections and issues because of the unbalanced focus on national politics in presidential years.

**Proposition E:** Would allow ranked-choice voting in city elections. A ranked-choice voting system allows people to vote for multiple candidates in order of preference (the voter

specifies first, second and third choice for each position, or more as needed). Supporters say this would save money on run-offs. Opponents feel it may be confusing to many voters and would not necessarily save money as elections are often held for other offices than city elections anyway. Currently, it is illegal under state law.

**Proposition F:** Would change Austin's form of government from "council-manager" to "mayor-council," also known as "strong-mayor." If passed, this would eliminate the position of city manager. The mayor would not have a vote on City Council but would have the authority to veto council decisions. (see the Crestview Newsletters for January through April for more on this proposition. <http://crestviewna.com/>)

**Proposition G:** Would create an 11th City Council district. If Prop F passes, the mayor would become a nonvoting member of City Council, and an 11th single-member district would prevent potential 5-5 deadlocks. If passed, Prop G would go into effect even if Prop F failed, raising the possibility of 6-6 deadlocks.

**Proposition H:** Would establish a public campaign-finance program providing up to two \$25 vouchers to all registered voters, who could then contribute the vouchers to their preferred candidates for city office.

■ Election day: Saturday, May 1.

■ In-person early voting: April 19-27.

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## NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

### NEWSLETTER

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

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CNA General Meetings are held the second  
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#### Neighborhood Email Groups

crestview-gardeners@googlegroups.com  
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## Howdy Neighbor!

by Mike Lavigne, CNA President

We had a successful (informal) Zoom meeting last month with Council Member Leslie Pool attending to discuss and answer questions about the ballot propositions. I encourage you to get out there and vote. Of course your vote always counts... but it counts more in these elections with low turnout.

Personally, I'll be mainly going to the ballot box to make sure Prop F gets an F. I think our Mayor is plenty strong. I shudder to think of what would be left of our neighborhoods or small businesses if Adler had any more power.

### Legislative Session

Speaking of dangerous, the Legislature is nearing the end of the regular Session, and this is when things start getting interesting. The real estate lobby and urbanists are pushing HB 2989 this session. The point of that bill is to remove your state guaranteed protest rights to zoning changes bordering your property.

Currently, if twenty percent of the residents within a certain distance of a zoning change sign a protest form, it triggers the requirement of a super-majority of council to enact the change. The bill seeks to remove your protest rights and some notifications of zoning changes. These protest rights are why CodeNEXT failed. The city refused to recognize resident protests and got taken to court and lost. So now the Mayor's money people are at the capitol trying to change the laws.

Funny how the Mayor and Greg Casar will rail against the Republicans in office and then waste no time currying favor from them to get their big money land deals done. That sort of hypocrisy is everything that is wrong with our city government.

### Oktoberfest!

Oktoberfest! has been scheduled for this fall on September 19 from 2-5 in the Crestview Center and is being presented by The G.I.F.T. and the Violet Crown Clubhouse.

The G.I.F.T. is the secular community center at the Episcopal Church across from LaLa's on Justin Lane. They've got a lot going on over there, and it is a pretty awesome asset for our neighborhood to have access to. They are putting their resources towards advancement of the arts and sustainable food sources.

If you haven't visited it yet, I encourage you to go on over and look at the beautiful murals they've installed throughout, walk through the garden (or hit a yoga sesh there), check out a band or volunteer to help me cook for those in need when the new kitchen gets put into the Parish Hall. That building will also be an event space for non-profits. You can find them on Instagram and Facebook if you want to learn more.

More details to come on Oktoberfest!, but we'll have plenty of beer, pretzels and live polka music!

As always, feel free to reach out if you have any questions or concerns. It continues to be an honor to be the prez of the best neighborhood in Austin!



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## May Art Stuff

by Marilyn Querejazu

Here we are in May, and there's lots of arty stuff to do. Be sure to check websites and Facebook for details before heading out.

### Austin Galleries at Black Studies

These two galleries are a unique dive into the UT Black Studies and UT collections. I heartily recommend taking this in. The Art Galleries at Black Studies (AGBS) collects and displays art, archival materials and special collections at two galleries on the UT campus. This is a very special opportunity to see some great art and stroll through campus!

**Christian-Green Gallery** January 21 – May 14, 2021

*Collecting Black Studies: An Exhibition* is a view into The University of Texas at Austin's holdings of African, American and Caribbean art. The exhibition features more than 20 local and international artists from UT's collection of more than 900 objects from Sub-Saharan Africa, 200 contemporary artworks and 100 jointly owned pieces with other entities on the university's campus. Curated by AGBS director Lise Ragbir, the show was inspired by the recently published *Collecting Black Studies: The Art of Material Culture*. The book is beautifully assembled and available from the University of Texas Press.

The Christian-Green Gallery is located on the second floor of Jester Hall (201 East 21st St.)

**Idea Lab** January 21 – May 14, 2021

*With New Eyes: Work by Adrian Armstrong* is a curated collection of multimedia work by Austin-based artist Adrian Armstrong. Armstrong creates detailed portraits using ballpoint pen. This is a lovely exhibit. The Idea Lab is housed in the Gordon-White Building (210 West 24th St.).

Both the Christian-Green Gallery and the Idea Lab are open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1-3 pm or by appointment. Email [kendyllgross@utexas.edu](mailto:kendyllgross@utexas.edu) to schedule your visit.



Untitled (Green) by Adrian Armstrong

**CamibaArt Gallery** 6448 Hwy 290 E Suite A102

*Jen Rose: Since Last We Met* is on display through May 15– cool mixed media projects. Contact [Camibaart.com](http://Camibaart.com) for appointment.

**Austin Public Libraries** reopen in a limited way on May 10. Online creative opportunities are ongoing – these both look interesting:

Monday, May 24 6:30 – 8. *Virtual Night Crafters* (Crafty adults, being crafty in the night). Chatting all things craft, show and tell, and things they want to learn.

Saturday May 29 2:00 – 3:30, *One Million Stars Texas Star Weaving Workshop*. Learn about the project and how to weave stars for One Million Stars Texas - installations at select Austin Public Library locations in Fall 2021.

You can register online.

**Pools** - Keep your eyes peeled for pools to reopen, especially Shipe Pool (4400 Avenue G) with its newly remade ceramic mosaic mural, *A Day in the Park*.

### Other Options

**Austin Flea**, Saturday May 22, 10 AM - 4 PM Violet Crown Clubhouse, 7100 Woodrow in the Crestview Shopping Center. Featuring local, handmade, and vintage vendors.

**Frida Friday ATX Markets** - various locations around the city. Next event Saturday May 8, 11 AM - 3 PM, 2505 Webberville Road (VeraCruz All Natural). Vintage and handmade arts and goods. <https://www.fridafridayatx.org/all-events>

### Out of Town

**Mayfest Handmade Market**, Sat. May 8, 11 AM – 5 PM Lost Pines Art Center 1204 Chestnut St, Bastrop. Find unique gifts and gorgeous works of art on the back lawn of the Art Center, just in time for Mother's Day! Shop for handmade items from regional artists and craft makers, enjoy artist demonstrations as well as food and beverages. <https://www.lostpinesartcenter.org/>

**Old Blanco Third Saturday Spring Market**, May 15, 9 AM - 4 PM Old Blanco County Courthouse grounds. An array of vendors showcasing regional arts, crafts and food <https://www.historicblanco.org/market-day>

**Fredericksburg Spring Trade Days**, May 14 -16, 355 Sunday Farms Lane (across from Wildseed Farms on Hwy. 290). Vendor booths featuring collectibles, antiques, tools, and a little bit of everything. <http://www.fbgtradedays.com/>

**Fredericksburg Oyster Festival**, May 08, Noon - 10 PM 7905 Old San Antonio Road. Live music, children's area, beer, wine, and oysters. <https://txartisan.com/events/fredericksburg-texas-oyster-festival/>

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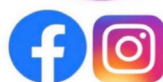
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## Zoning & Redevelopment In & Around Crestview

Here are a few of the zoning and redevelopment cases that will significantly change the landscape in our community.

### 7113 Burnet Road

This is the 4.3-acre site of the former Dallas Nightclub and currently home to The Local Post Pub. The existing zoning is primarily commercial on the western end with a height limit of 60 feet, while the portion on the east end farthest from Burnet Road is zoned office, with a reduced height limit of 40 feet where it is closest to the homes along Hardy Drive and Hardy Circle. The rezoning request is for the entire site to be zoned MF-6 which has no limit on the number of apartment units and allows heights of up to 90 feet, making it potentially the highest structure between downtown and The Domain. Located mid-block, access to the site is limited, and the applicant has said that they have an agreement with the adjoining center to the north to use their driveway and have access to the signal light at Greenlawn Parkway. In a prior zoning change request last year that was withdrawn, city staff cited lack of access as a concern and recommended a more moderate zoning of MF-4 which would cap the number of units at 232 and limit the height to 60 feet. City staff has not yet issued their recommendation on this year's zoning request. CNA's main concerns involve the height issue, both the total height and the height closest to the homes on Hardy Drive and Hardy Circle that back up to the property. Currently, nothing can be built within 50 feet of the property line affording some protection to the adjoining homes, but the new zoning request cuts that to 25 feet. Fortunately, compatibility standards apply and limit the height closest to the single-family homes with increasing heights farther away. CNA is working to minimize the building height closest to the homes and at the same time, limit the total height. Thus far, the applicant has indicated that they would follow compatibility standards and limit the overall height to 75 feet, but they have not committed anything in writing. Likewise, their current plan calls for 330 apartment units, but the requested zoning of MF-6 doesn't have an upper limit.

### 901 & 907 Stobaugh Street

Located at the northeast corner of Crestview, both of these lots are zoned SF-3, and each has a single-family home on it, the one at 901 dating back to 1924. Last year, the owner of 901 approached CNA proposing to build six to

eight units. An agreement was reached in principle to allow that development. However, the owner walked away before finalizing the arrangement. They've returned, along with the adjacent landowner of 907 Stobaugh, and submitted a zoning change request for both lots to MF-4, a multi-family zoning category that would allow up to a total of 54 units on the combined properties with an allowable height of 60'. The impervious cover limit, now at 45%, would jump to 70%. There are 20 homes on this block of Stobaugh and this up zoning could increase that number to 72. Aside from the towering height, neighbors are also concerned about the additional traffic and parking issues.

### 2001 & 2013 W. Anderson Lane

This large lot is currently occupied by Genuine Joe's and Evin's Personnel Consultants and zoned as a community commercial district. The rezoning request is to add a Vertical Mixed Use component that would allow redevelopment including residential uses and more flexible development requirements. Additional information will be provided as it becomes available.

### 2711 W. Anderson Lane

You may have noticed that site work has started on this five-story, 320-unit apartment complex located on the southwest corner of Northcross Drive and Anderson Lane. With the former Chase Bank and office building demolished, construction has begun on the 300,000 square foot mixed-use building called 27 Eleven Apartments. When completed, it will include a two-story subterranean parking garage for residents.

### 5700 Grover Ave

Rezoning of the property housing the Dart Bowl has been initiated and the applicant is asking for MF-6 zoning for the 4.1-acre tract. But while the zoning would allow for a 90-foot height, the developer is planning a four-story building with a height of 40 feet.

### Threadgill's

Close by at 6416 N. Lamar is the former Threadgill's restaurant, an Austin institution. While little is known at this time, a site plan currently under review by city staff calls for a mixed-use project including residential, office and retail on the roughly one-acre property.

### The Frisco Shop

Located at 6801 Burnet Road, The Frisco Shop closed in 2018 and the property was sold last fall for redevelopment. Currently planned for the site is a five-story, 314-unit apartment complex with a six-level parking garage.



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## We Just Can't Stop Talking About COVID

Getting a vaccine soon? You may want to skip the alcohol for 24 hours before and after your shot. Drinking beforehand can lead to dehydration that can make any side effects you experience worse. Drinking afterwards can also potentially enhance any side effects, and some research suggests it could slightly increase the chance of an allergic reaction. However, there is no evidence to suggest that alcohol will adversely affect your protection from COVID after your shot.

Now that you have your vaccination, there are some dos and don'ts for that little paper card you were given. Do save your card and keep it in a safe place. You should also make a copy(s) of your card so you do not have to use the original. Knowing which vaccine you received and when could be important information for health care advisors to have. Having the information on your card could also be useful as certain activities open up such as travel. If you misplace your card you will have to do some work to replace it, but you can probably get a replacement by going to the place where you got the shot(s) or by calling the state health department. If you should decide to laminate your card, Office Depot offers lamination services for vaccine cards for free through Saturday, July 25. Customers can provide coupon code "52516714" at checkout. Staples has not set an end date yet, and customers can coupon code "81450". But beware, because some cards use a thermal printer, it could turn the card black. So you may want to laminate the copy instead. Also be sure to wait until your second shot if one is required. Don't post a photo of your card on social media as scammers might be able to use the personal information on your card to steal your identity.

It's also a good idea to tell your family and your doctor that you have been vaccinated. If you are ever unconscious or incapacitated and receive medical care, your doctor or your family can let the nurses and physicians treating you know that you have been vaccinated against COVID.

What do COVID variants need if they want to spread? Research suggests they just need a lucky break. In the brief period during which a COVID carrier is at or close to his/her peak viral load, the new variant needs to hitch a ride to someplace like a large party, a poorly ventilated barroom or a packed indoor arena where people are not wearing masks. In other words, the variant needs to find its way to a super-spreader event, which allows it to move through the population. The more variants that establish themselves in the community the more difficult they are to control.

The new variants that are emerging are changing the virus landscape. Unlike the past year or so, with the new B.1.1.7

variant, kids are getting infected at the same rate that adults do. While COVID tends to cause only mild illness in many children, they can spread the disease to those that are at greater risk for severe illness. There has also been a shift to more hospitalizations of younger adults, even those who are generally healthier. It is estimated that B.1.1.7 is 50 to 100 percent more transmissible than previous strains of the coronavirus and causes 50 to 60 percent more severe illness with the potential for increased hospitalizations and deaths.

Some good news is that some people who have had lingering side effects from their bout with COVID, sometimes referred to as "long-haulers", are reporting a substantial reduction or even disappearance of side effects after their final vaccination. Although researchers have barely begun to explore them, several theories have emerged. Among the theories are the possibility that T cells, boosted by the vaccine, could eliminate a viral reservoir; a heightened immune response could clear any lingering virus fragments; or the vaccine may "divert autoimmune cells," if long-lasting symptoms are the result of an inappropriate autoimmune response.

As more people receive the vaccine, it has created a whole new set of etiquette rules raising some thorny questions that leave us trying to strike a balance between ensuring our personal safety and preserving relationships in this new normal. If you get an invitation to a dinner party, is it OK to ask whether the other guests have been vaccinated? If you're told to return to the office, is it appropriate to ask your cubicle mate whether they've gotten a shot? If done in a respectful way, it is considered acceptable to inquire about someone's vaccination status if your own health is at stake. Rather than bluntly demanding to know if they've gotten a shot, you might share your experience with them about scheduling your shot and ask if they have been able to find an opening. Also be careful not to pry into another person's medical history or ask personal questions just out of curiosity. In some situations there is an ethical obligation to take responsibility for another person's health risks by sharing whether or not you have been vaccinated. At social gatherings, it would not only be impolite for the host not to spell out what's expected as far as the social protocol, it would also be irresponsible. It doesn't hurt to give some positive strokes to individuals who have gotten the vaccine or are living their lives showing their care and concern for the well-being of their fellow humans.

**Clarification:** Last month we said if you have had COVID you did not need to get a second shot. While a growing number of researchers agree this may be the case, obviously, one should follow the currently prescribed protocol that is to have both shots if it is Pfizer or Moderna.

*Thank you, Crestview!*



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# Overview of House and Senate Bills

## Limiting Property Owners Rights

by Community Not Commodity

1. HB2989/SB1120 would limit property owner notice and protest rights to the rezoning of individual or contiguous properties in limited areas.

2. HB2989/SB1120 would create a massive loophole allowing a municipality to deny every residential and commercial property owner in the city their rights of notice and protest if the city rezones all of the properties at once.

3. The purpose of HB2989/SB1120 is to legalize the City of Austin's illegal conduct in denying property owners their rights to notice and protest under the Local Government Code. In *Acuna v. City of Austin*, a Travis County District Court held the City violated state law when it acted to rezone property across the city while denying notice and protest rights to property owners.

4. The City wants to effectively end single-family neighborhoods and change the regulations governing commercial properties — actions the public adamantly opposes. The Council's revision, if permitted, will destabilize neighborhoods, lead to the displacement of families and result in higher property taxes for residential and commercial properties.

5. A comprehensive revision of a land development code, or amendments to regulations that apply uniformly to multiple zoning districts or areas, have far-reaching and irreversible impacts on the most important investments most people will ever make — their home and their business. Eliminating the right to notice and protest allows a simple majority of a city council to make decisions that will reverberate for



generations.

6. Allowing an "amendment of a regulation that applies uniformly across boundaries or areas of the municipality" without the right to protest would permit a city council, by a simple majority vote, to redefine single-family zoning as multi-family zoning. Additionally, it would enable a city council to limit or expand the size and permitted uses of commercial properties across the board. Protest rights, requiring a super-majority vote, protect against extreme changes in land-use regulations that don't have broad support.

7. The Legislature designed notice and protest rights to check the abuse of zoning power by municipalities. The proposed legislation will remove those safeguards. The City of Austin has shown us what happens when a city council's simple-majority feels unconstrained without any need to compromise and work toward a broader community consensus.

8. Protest rights are essential with a single-member district form of government where a simple majority of council members can target one part of town for dramatic changes (while protecting others), knowing that they are not accountable at the ballot box to the residential and commercial property owners in those areas. Protest rights reduce the opportunity for that.

## Storm Debris Pickup

Still have storm debris needing pickup? Tree limbs in your yard or sitting on your curb? Austin Resource Recovery has started ramping up collection. They're serving the hardest-hit areas first, starting in Northwest Austin and then heading Southwest. Get your materials out on the curb as soon as you can, and call 311 to report pickup needs if you haven't already. More information can be found on Austin Resource Recovery's Facebook page.



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## Austin Public Libraries Reopening to the Public May 10

Austin Public Library's (APL) timeline for reopening to the public for limited capacity in-person Express Services will begin on Monday, May 10 at 12 libraries. Those libraries are North Village, Yarborough, Old Quarry, Carver, Hampton Branch at Oak Hill, Manchaca, Milwood, Ruiz, Spicewood Springs, St. John, Windsor Park and Central.

Digital services, along with curbside pickup, will continue. The following services will be added inside the libraries: Book and material browsing and checkout, Printing and copying, Public computers, Wi-Fi, New Library cards, Holds pickup and checkout, and Technology and reference help.

The Austin History Center will continue remote reference and add limited capacity in-person service on Thursdays and Fridays beginning May 13.

Starting Monday, June 28, in-person service will expand to all Austin Public Library branches (except those under renovation). APL has been running curbside collection since June 2020.

APL provides crucial computer access to residents so they can take advantage of vaccination sign-ups and other social services offered by the City, State, and Federal governments.

All APL libraries have implemented necessary precautions to keep customers and staff safe, such as the measures included below:

- Plexiglass is installed at all circulation desks
- All customers and staff are required to wear masks
- APL has installed bipolar ionization equipment in the HVAC Systems system wide at all APL locations
- Furniture and computers are spaced a minimum of six feet apart
- Libraries will close for the last 15 minutes of each hour to sanitize surfaces. All customers will be required to exit the building during that time.

## Turn your Lights Out and Help Migrating Birds



Every year, billions of birds migrate north in the spring and south in the fall, the majority of them flying at night, navigating with the night sky. However, as they pass over cities on their way, they can become disoriented by bright artificial lights and skyglow, often causing them to collide with buildings or windows. While lights can throw birds off their migration paths, bird fatalities are more directly caused by the amount of energy the birds waste flying around and calling out in confusion. The exhaustion can then leave them vulnerable to other urban threats.

Audubon's Lights Out program is a national effort to reduce this problem. The strategy is simple: by convincing residents and businesses to turn off non-essential lights during the months migrating birds are flying overhead, we help to provide them safe passage between their nesting and wintering grounds.

Here are ways to contribute to the Lights Out solution:

- Turn off exterior decorative lighting
- Extinguish pot and flood-lights
- Substitute strobe lighting wherever possible
- Reduce atrium lighting wherever possible
- Turn off interior lighting especially on higher stories
- Substitute task and area lighting for workers staying late or pull window coverings
- Down-shield exterior lighting to eliminate horizontal glare and all light directed upward
- Install automatic motion sensors and controls wherever possible
- When converting to new lighting assess quality and quantity of light needed, avoiding over-lighting with newer, brighter technology



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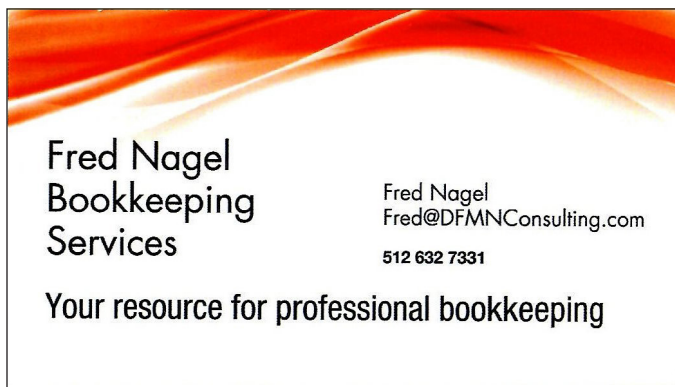
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