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CRESTVIEW NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

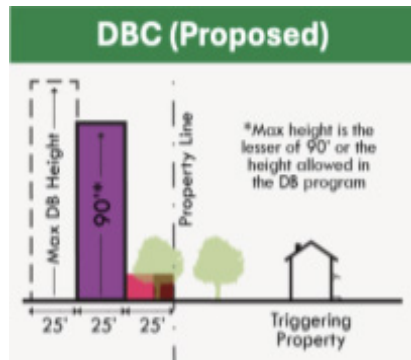
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JUNE 2026

New City-wide Legislation Fails to Reform the DB90 Planning Failure

The City is proposing a new density bonus program to replace DB90 (Density Bonus 90) – the provision that allows an additional 30 feet of building height above the base zoning (up to 90ft) on commercial property in exchange for a small percentage (10%) of affordable units. The city says that these categories will be available for “future City-initiated area-wide rezonings as directed by Council”. The proposal was supposed to be a reform, but isn’t. To understand why, a brief history is helpful.

At its May 22, 2025, meeting, the City Council considered a request to upzone the market-affordable Acacia Cliffs apartments under the Density Bonus Program (DB90). This change would trigger the future demolition of the property and the displacement of its tenants. Before testimony began, Mayor Watson acknowledged serious problems with DB90, calling it an “extremely unhappy experience” with “significant unintended consequences,” and likening it to “swinging an axe.” He proposed further study and revision of the program. Council Member Fuentes added that she was particularly interested in “looking at the one-for-one replacement on affordable units” under DB90. For context, the Council has approved ninety DB90 combining-district upzonings across the city. Without waiting for the ordered study and revision, on June 5, the Council lowered the axe. It granted the applicants’ DB90 rezoning request, enabling, even incentivizing, a redevelopment that will result in a net loss of 210 affordable housing units. The city has now considered its proposed reforms in a draft of the new code, a memo, and a presentation. The proposal would replace DB90 with 5 new density bonus districts and a new nomenclature: DBCBase, DBC15, DBC30, DBC45, and DBC60. Unlike DB90, the numbers do not represent the maximum height of the structure but the additional height available, e.g., DBC60 adds 60ft. In local and general office zoning, for example, the with-bonus height under DBC60 would be 105 and 120 feet, respectively, at least doubling their base heights. DBC45 would yield 90 and 105 feet, respectively – significant added height with no added compatibility requirements. The staff proposed compatibility standards would allow a 90-foot



building 25 feet from a single-family lot line, and a 120-foot building 50 feet from that lot line, as the current DB90 allows. This was amended on the dais (see below amendment 4) to no more than 60 feet of height 50 feet from triggering property and no more than 120 feet of height 75 feet from triggering property. Previously 60-foot-tall buildings had to be 300 feet from single family homes, and buildings 120 feet tall could not be built within 540 feet of single-family home.

The proposal would also extend density-bonus eligibility to the Neighborhood Office (NO) district — the commercial district historically intended to be most compatible with residential neighborhoods. Under state law, it currently has an allowable height of 45.’ Under DBC60, Neighborhood Office -zoned properties could reach 105 feet. (45 + 60).

In their table of equivalencies, the city shows that several of the new density bonus categories are equivalent to the automatic upzonings created under last year’s Equitable Transit-Oriented Districts (ETOD). But if ETOD’s special height allowances were intended to attract “transit supporting” density to locations near transit, then doesn’t offering comparable heights on commercial property across the city undermine that rationale?

And returning to Council Member Fuente’s call, how does the new proposal fare? The city’s draft states that a developer must replace the number of units affordable to someone earning 70% of Austin’s Median Family Income (MFI), with

See DB90, continued on page 3

CNA Monthly Meeting and Annual Officer Elections

The Crestview Neighborhood Association (CNA) will be holding its monthly meeting on Monday, June 8, 2026, at 7 pm to elect officers for the coming year. The meeting will be held in the Chapel of the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection at 2200 Justin Lane.

Three executive council positions, including Vice-President, Secretary and Newsletter Editor, in addition to the four advisor positions, Place 1 through Place 4, will be up for election. The positions of Vice-President, Secretary and Newsletter Editor will be elected for two-year terms. Elections for the four advisor positions are held annually and are for a one-year term. The current positions of President and Treasurer, elected in 2025, 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 June 8, meaning that their dues must be paid by May 31, 2026. (Note: Membership dues are due annually on a calendar year basis.)

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

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CNA Contact Information

P. O. Box 9505, Austin, TX 78766
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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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3 Landscaping Trends That Are Not So Eco-Friendly

by Nancy Harris, CNA Treasurer

While it is appealing to think of a lawn that requires no water, no maintenance and no sweat and is good for the environment, this is probably more of a dream than a reality. Let's examine three popular trends in lawns and look at their pros and cons.

Synthetic Lawns or Artificial Turf - This is basically a plastic rug that you are laying on your lawn. While it doesn't need cutting and doesn't need as much water as a natural lawn, it is not as maintenance-free as some think. While it may look good when new, it will have to be raked and fluffed up periodically to keep it looking good and to add to its longevity. The spaces between the plastic blades, the fill that is usually sand or crumb rubber, will need to be kept filled and leveled. Just like any rug, it will need cleaning to remove pet and bird droppings from time to time to prevent odors and maintain sanitary conditions. In warmer climates, surface temperatures of artificial grass are about 20-50° F higher than natural grass and typically reach the same temperature as asphalt pavement – not so great if staying cool in your yard is a priority for you. Synthetic lawns add to the heat island effect and can potentially make your house hotter and increase utility bills. This is also not so great for any real plants that are nearby. High summer temperatures cause it to deteriorate more quickly. As the plastic components break down, plastics and the chemicals in them can be absorbed into the ground. Instead of increasing the life of your soil, it compacts soil and creates an inhabitable environment for the living organisms in it. Compacting the soil contributes to flooding problems. Artificial grass is hard and can hurt if your kids fall while tumbling around with the dog.

Gravelscaping - This landscaping trend is also touted for its ability to save on water usage and reducing yard maintenance. Rocks almost never need replacement. But unlike grass, rock absorbs large amounts of heat and causes the same issues with the heat island effect mentioned above. Rocks don't aid plant growth or soil health. Rocks also cause soil compaction. Most trees prefer acidic soil, but rocks create alkaline soil, which can kill trees. Rockscaping also increases flooding problems. Wind will eventually blow soil between rocks, creating a spot for weeds to grow, often times resulting in the temptation to use herbicides to kill unwanted vegetation. Rocks and gravel tend to "travel" which means it can be dangerous to mow or trim close by if they get picked up by lawn equipment and thrown into the air. They can also migrate on to sidewalks and walk ways and be a physical danger to pedestrians who can sprain an ankle or fall if they step on them.

Drought-tolerant Grass - In theory, drought-tolerant grass sounds great because it means less watering is needed to keep your grass healthy. Unfortunately, much of what is sold as drought-tolerant grass is made up of invasive species of grasses that have been known to cause or exacerbate the risk of fire dangers. While they are undeniably beautiful to look at, Feather, Fountain and Pampas grasses are among the worst of them. While they outperform natives during the good times, invasives tend to dry up when the going gets tough. The multiplicity of seeds produced by these grasses make them difficult to keep from spreading. Invasives often outperform the native foliage, leaving native species of wildlife bereft of sustenance and shelter. Although they will need more maintenance, because drought-resistant grasses are living organisms, they avoid the negatives of artificial grass and rockscaping. Just be sure to do your homework before you plant to make sure you are making a good choice.

It really comes down to why we grow plants in the urban environment. Plant materials provide so much more than just aesthetic value. They help improve water and air quality, reduce temperatures, reduce storm water runoff, and provide habitats for animals, insects, bees, and birds. With our increasingly built-out urban environment, less and less of our land is porous, allowing rainwater (and, sadly, irrigation runoff) to infiltrate into our soil, which acts as a natural filter. This means our landscapes need to act more like sponges, allowing water to move slowly over the soil and spread its benefits.

the same number of bedrooms. That sounds good until the next section, which caps the affordable units at no more than 20% of the total units built (and, in some cases, at no more than the original 10%). So, if you tear down a building with 300 affordable units, you would have to replace it with a building of at least 1500 units to replace the 300 affordable units lost (20% max on replacement units). So, there would always likely be a big loss in affordable units that these “reforms” were supposed to cure. And it gets worse: you can also ask for a waiver that exempts you from the minimal replacement requirements! So, while the new DBC code amendments act like they are being supportive of people living in existing affordable units, well, it is just an act.

Amendments were considered on the dais, not posted for the public until the day of the hearing. Those included: 1) An amendment by mayor pro tem Vela which substituted DBC 45 for DBC190 – that is 190 extra feet in CS districts. (this motion failed with Velasquez, Duchen, Siegel and Watson voting against) 2) Another amendment by Vela that the rezoning could modify existing (minimal) compatibility requirements. This motion passed with CM Duchen opposed. 3) An amendment by Council Member (CM) Alter to allow fee-in-lieu for rental units in addition to those allowed for purchase units (Developers pay a fee rather than build the affordable units). This passed with CM Duchen voting no. 4) An amendment by Mayor Watson to have compatibility to the existing DBETOD standards. A structure 50 feet from a triggering property may not exceed 60 feet (instead of 90 feet) and less than 75 feet may not exceed 120 feet. This was approved.

On May 21, the Austin City Council voted to pass this new Citywide Density Bonus Program (DBC) land use ordinance, with only CM Duchen voting no. The final legislation has not

yet been published. CM Duchen made extensive comments: “We pass this and it’s going to be a wonderful day to be a real estate developer in Austin, Texas....Who are we serving and what way does increasing the economic return and the base land value of commercial property serve the vast majority of constituents?... So just as under DB90, we’re going to cannibalize existing affordable housing that works for potential affordable housing. I worry this endeavor ignores, like a lot of other efforts, the diversity of our city.”

“I know I’m a broken record on this, but not everybody wants to live in mixed-use apartments jammed up against their neighbors. The appeal of the city for many is the open space, the clear sky, and the quiet leisure of private life. And while I appreciate that some are enjoying the bustle of an urban playground for the well-heeled, I know from talking to my constituents, a lot of people just prefer close knit communities with compact, shared common spaces. Many different people want to build their lives in many different ways, and I really hope we let them...”

“By my analysis, we declined one out of 60 DB90 applications, and that makes me suspect that we’re going to continue to give away the store and potentially trade away neighbors’ quietude to chase property tax revenue. “

In summary, the city’s proposal does not solve the three primary problems DB90 posed. When redeveloping existing multi-family housing, it does not require replacing the affordable units, but only a token amount. Second, while it laudably offers multiple height options, some with maximum heights of less than 90ft, most will result in the same or even greater height than allowed under DB90. Third, it does nothing to address the incompatibility of the DB90 zones adjoining or in neighborhoods, and by including the Neighborhood Office district, it widens that incompatibility to zoning districts intended to be compatible with neighborhoods.



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Salt – The Lowly Mineral with Many Uses

By Nancy Harris, CNA Treasurer

In the modern world, salt is often given a raw deal – primarily because of its over use, especially in processed foods, and its contribution to hypertension and cardiovascular disease. But salt is one of the five basic taste sensations and is an essential mineral for humans. Historically, salt was so valuable that it was used as money by the Romans. In fact, the word “salary” comes from the Latin word sal, for salt (and thus the saying “worth his salt”). Wars have been fought over it, and salt taxes have fostered protests the world over. Salt is an important part of many religious and cultural ceremonies and rituals. There is even an old English folktale about a king’s daughter who was banished for saying she loved her father “as meat loves salt” because he felt she didn’t love him as much as her sisters, only for the day to come when he realized how much she did care for him. Before refrigeration and canning, salt was the primary preservative for foods.

But salt is also useful for more than a seasoning for food. Salt can remove red wine from carpeting. (While the spot is still wet, dilute it with white wine, then dab the spot with cold water and a sponge. Sprinkle the area with salt, wait 10 minutes and vacuum.) A half a cup of salt mixed with 8 cups of warm water is great cleaner for your refrigerator. Salt and lemon juice rubbed into your wooden cutting board will sanitize it. Covering an oven spill immediately with salt will not only stop smoke and odors from building, but the mess will also be easier to wipe up after the oven cools. For a clogged drain try 1 cup of salt mixed with 1 cup of baking soda and 1/2 cup of white vinegar. Pour it down the drain. Let it sit for 10 minutes before pouring about two quarts of boiling water down the drain and then flushing with hot tap

water. If your pots and pans are dotted with stubborn food stains, leave them to soak in salt water overnight. The salt will soften and lift almost any kind of residue. To remove grungy grease stains on your carpets and couches, mix one part salt to four parts rubbing alcohol and vigorously rub it into the area. Be sure to rub in the direction of the fabric’s natural nap. Salt will dehydrate fleas. Try bathing your dog in a salty solution and washing the bedding in saltwater.

Throwing salt on a small grease fire will douse the flames. Not sure about those old eggs sitting in the back of the fridge? Place an egg in a bowl of saltwater. If it sinks, your batch is fresh. An egg that is rotten, on the other hand, will float. A paper towel dipped in a mixture of two teaspoons of salt in a cup of water then wrapped loosely around cheese will slow the growth of mold on it. Placing bottles and cans of soda, beer or wine in a bucket of ice water with a handful of salt mixed in will chill them more quickly.

A little salt sprinkled in your sneakers or canvas shoes will absorb odors and moisture. Too much of a good thing can irritate your skin, but using the correct ratio (1/4 teaspoon of non-iodized salt for each cup of warm water) will speed up the healing process and prevent infections if you soak new body piercing jewelry in it. Remove grass stains by squeezing lemon juice over the stain, sprinkling on a thick layer of salt, and then rubbing the stain with a lemon rind, Freshen up your broom by soaking it

(See Salt, continued on page 5)



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In Memoriam - Johanna Bible

by Chip Harris, Newsletter Editor

Johanna Bible, a Crestview resident since 1953 and JCN member since 1984, passed away on May 9, 2026. She was an incredible person in so many ways. Johanna, along with her husband Jack, co-hosted National Night Out parties long before they became common. Johanna's house on Morrow Street was one of the first ones built in that area of Crestview and was surrounded by fields of Johnson grass. She told me that when she and her husband bought the house in 1953, the real estate agent assured them that Morrow Street, which dead-ended at the railroad tracks, would stay that way and wouldn't become a thoroughfare. Unfortunately, he was wrong, but Johanna worked to keep the street safe even with the excessive volume of traffic that developed on it as it became a cut-through route. Johanna was a Crestview treasure, and she will be sorely missed.

Here is her obituary as printed in the Statesman:

Johanna Williamson Bible was born December 21, 1926, and passed from this earth May 9, 2026, at the age of 99 years. She was born in a small farmhouse in Leander, TX. She graduated from Leander High School in 1944 in a class of 12 seniors. Johanna later went to work in Georgetown for Southwestern Bell Telephone Company.

On December 28, 1944, Johanna married Jack Allen Bible who was serving in the U. S. Navy in Washington D.



C. during World War II. After the war, Jack and Johanna moved to Austin, TX where Jack worked as an electrician, and she was a stay-at-home mom.

Johanna was always there for her three sons, encouraging them in school, baseball, swimming, attending and singing in church, and fishing.

Johanna and Jack were active members of Crestview United Methodist Church for 30-plus years. She sat on many church committees and helped organize programs for seniors that included Thursday Fellowship and Double 5's. Both programs included a meal with games and fellowship. She was also a devoted member of the church-quilting group, making hundreds of baby quilts.

Salt continued from page 4

in a bucket of hot salty water for 30 minutes to loosen up the grime. Then wipe it off with an old cloth and leave to dry.

Covering a bee sting with a salt paste can lessen the pain and reduce swelling. Itchy mosquito and chigger bites can be relieved by soaking them in salt water then applying a coating of vegetable oil. Itchy skin from poison ivy can also be soothed by soaking in a hot salt water bath. One teaspoon of cooking salt with 1 teaspoon of baking soda mixed with half a cup of water makes a great mouthwash to kill bacteria that causes bad breath. The next time you wake up that telltale tickle in your throat, mix some table salt in a glass of warm water and gargle for 30 seconds to ease the pain. The salt will flush out mucus and other irritants that cause a sore throat. Make a face scrub that will leave your skin feeling soft by applying a paste of ¼ cup of salt and ½ cup of olive oil in a circular motion to your face and skin and leaving it on for five minutes before rinsing it off. Brushing your teeth with salt once a week can brighten up your smile by whitening your teeth.

With all those uses, it's no wonder salt has played such a role in history!

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