

**Austin Neighborhoods Council  
General Meeting  
July 26, 2006  
721 Barton Springs Rd.**

7:06pm Call to Order—President Laura Morrison

7:06pm Announcements and reports:

**Affordable Housing Incentives Task Force**—Bo McCarver, Blackland NA  
The task force (under auspices of Council Member Jennifer Kim) has met twice. Work is ongoing, but action has not been taken yet.

**Streetcar Route Planning Workshop, August 5**—Bo McCarver, Blackland NA  
Capitol Metro is in the early stages of proposing a streetcar route from 51<sup>st</sup> St. at Lamar to Seaholm power plant downtown. To facilitate discussions about this route, neighbors are bringing together Capitol Metro, the City of Austin, and the University of Texas. It will be August 5 from 9am-noon at the Joe Thompson Conference Center, Red River St. at Dean Keeton.

**AISD Schools Sustainability Update**—Kathie Tovo, Bouldin Creek NA  
AISD has begun to respond to neighborhood input regarding the importance of sustaining older schools. AISD board members, meeting June 29 (the night after the last ANC general meeting and panel discussion on this topic), expressed the desire to work with the city on this issue. Neighbors are hopeful that the attention may lead to good results, but aware that the threat of closing older schools remains very real.

**City of Austin Open Government and Environmental Task Forces**—Jeff Jack, Zilker NA  
The city task force on open government has not yet begun to meet. The task force on environmental quality is starting to work. Donna Tiemann of Barton View NA is included. They are considering questions even beyond the scope of the spring 2006 charter amendments.

**Office of the Police Monitor: Past, Present & Toward Our Future**

Panelists:

Susan Hutson, City of Austin Acting Police Monitor  
Ann del Llano, American Civil Liberties Union, Austin Chapter  
Susana Almanza, People Organized in Defense of Earth and her Resources  
Sam Holt, Commander, Austin Police Department  
Nelson Linder, NAACP Austin Chapter President

[ALL STATEMENTS ARE PARAPHRASED.]

Jeff Jack:

Austin is dealing with many issues relating to our police department, including,  
-Is there enough representation of minorities in the police force and its management?

-What are the budget implications of the current contract with the police officers' union? City forecasts for tax revenue and costs from 2007 forward indicate that all additional tax income will not be adequate to cover costs for public safety.

Susan Hutson, Acting Police Monitor

The Office of Police Monitor (OPM) began in 2002 after being created by City Council. OPM is a city staff position. The Citizens Review Panel is the volunteer group that participates in the review process.

In first years of operation for the OPM, complaint volume was:

273 complaints in 2002

421 complaints in 2003

600 complaints in 2004

In the previous year the Internal Affairs section had reported only 72 complaints, so the OPM was concerned that citizens might have difficulty reporting complaints. Therefore, they implemented an informal complaint process, separate from the Internal Affairs investigations. These can be completed more quickly than IA investigations.

There is more information at [www.austinpolicemonitor.com](http://www.austinpolicemonitor.com)

In the future the OPM will seek to provide more information to the public. OPM is restricted in its powers, but seeks to fulfill their role as effectively as possible.

Ann Del Llano, ACLU:

There are serious concerns over the lack of consequences for police misconduct. Also, citizens should be concerned about budget growth and the negative impact on other city services.

Civilian oversight is a top priority for the city. Prohibiting civilian oversight should not be written into the contract with the police union. In other cities in the state and the nation civilian oversight is common, and not tied to a union contract. In the ACLU's study of other cities' policies on police management and oversight, Austin's was the worst in the country in terms of transparency to public view.

Nelson Linder, NAACP:

The OPM is a vehicle of the city government. The office has been abandoned by the city and was never empowered to successfully investigate the police. The OPM has the potential to be effective but the larger city government has refused to take the responsibility for civilian oversight. Until and unless the city council takes responsibility the OPM will not be able to be effective in regulating the police.

Susana Almanza, PODER:

There is a systemic problem that goes back many years. The police union is so strong that other city services are neglected to fund police raises. Examples where an officer has killed someone and is not disciplined, create an atmosphere where people don't make complaints, because they believe that no action will be taken. Harassment of innocent citizens erodes the feeling of safety or respect for the police.

Sam Holt, APD Commander:

The APD management are aware of the need to ensure public safety and prevent or investigate misconduct. They are pursuing means to improve APD's success in correcting misconduct while maintaining public safety.

An example of a new program, created in cooperation with the OPM, is the Guidance Advisory Program (GAP). GAP is an effort to direct attention of supervisors to investigate and correct behavior when an officer is not performing to standards.

Factors which are considered in using this program:

- Pursuits
- Collisions
- Sick leave use
- Internal affairs complaints
- Officer as crime victim incidents
- Exercise of physical force reports

How To File an Open Records Request—Ann Del Llano, ACLU

See handout for details. The state law, the Public Information Act (which superseded the "Open Records Act") requires government bodies to produce public information in response to citizen requests. Public information is defined by the state law. Non-public, privileged information (e.g. medical records, personnel records) is also defined and protected by state law, and is not open to typical PIA requests.

Code Enforcement in North Austin—Linda Moore, North Austin Civic Association

A coalition of eight North Austin neighborhoods, including NACA, Wooten, Brownie Street, Walnut Acres has been meeting to work on issues of substandard properties and lack of code enforcement. They employed a systematic approach and have met with some success.

9:00 Meeting adjourned.

Minutes prepared by Kevin Lewis, ANC Secretary, South Lamar NA.

Agenda appended.

## **Austin Neighborhoods Council**

General Meeting

July 26, 2006

721 Barton Springs Rd.

### **Agenda**

7:00pm Call to Order

7:01pm Updates from ANC Representatives

- AISD and Neighborhoods (Kathie Tovo)
- New Open Government Ordinance Committee (Jeff Jack)
- New Environmental Ordinance Committee (Donna Tiemann)
- Affordable Housing Task Force (Bo McCarver)
- Streetcar Workshop (Bo McCarver)

7:20pm Program

Discussion Office of Police Monitor

Susan Huston, Acting Police Monitor

Ann del Llano, ACLU

Susana Almanza, PODER

Nelson Linder, NAACP

How to File an Open Records Request (Ann del Llano, ACLU)

Code Enforcement in North Austin (Linda Moore, NACA)

9:00pm Adjourn

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### Reminder

Streetcar Route Planning Workshop

Saturday, August 5

9:00am - noon

UT, Joe Thompson Conference Center

Red River @ Dean Keeton (park free)

Co-sponsored by Neighborhood Planning Teams and the Austin Neighborhoods Council, the Workshop will bring together Capital Metro, the University of Texas, and the City of Austin. It will be moderated by Bo McCarver, Blackland Neighborhood Association, representing them Upper Boggy Creek Neighborhood Planning Team.

Teams will make recommendations and define problems. All observations be captured and reported to stakeholders. The Workshop will be in the Center dining room. The entire streetcar route will be laid out on tables using enlarged GIS maps showing the proposed route and intersecting streets.

All are invited

For more information, see <http://asnic.utexas.edu/~bennett/tmp/0~Aug5.pdf>