

SLNA Newsletter

South Lamar Neighborhood Association www.southlamar.org

NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY, JUNE 17 7:00 to 9:00 P.M.

UNITY CHURCH YOUTH ANNEX – 2806 Del Curto Road

WALGREENS REVISITED

by Kevin Lewis

THIS ISSUE:

- **Walgreen's Update:**
Case # C14-04-0060
- **Neighborhood Planning**
- **Dogs Unleashed**
- **June 22 Meeting:**
Councilmember McCracken

The proposal for a new Walgreens at Bluebonnet Lane and South Lamar has entered the city rezoning process. The zoning case will be heard by the Zoning and Platting (ZAP) Commission on Tuesday, June 15, 6pm at 505 Barton Springs Road. It would then continue to a vote at City Council, probably later this summer.

This is the plan that developer David Darr showed at our April meeting. The 14,500-sq. ft. freestanding Walgreens would sit behind what is currently Taco Xpress and the boot shop, with Taco Xpress getting a new building just south of their current location. There would be access from Lamar and from Bluebonnet. In this plan, Darr has proposed some features intended to mitigate possible negative effects on the neighborhood. Bluebonnet would be widened to three lanes from Lamar to the rear property line; that section would also have sidewalks on both sides. They would continue the sidewalk through to Del Curto if they can get permission from that landowner.

Bluebonnet would have a dedicated left turn lane onto southbound Lamar. The right lane would be for crossing Lamar on Bluebonnet or turning right onto Lamar. In a departure from the norm, Darr has also promised to build these public amenities prior to building the store, and has offered SLNA a performance bond, which would make funds available to sue for enforcement. Those with internet access can review the plans at www.southlamar.org.

Clearly, supporters of Walgreens' plan see benefits from the store, Taco Xpress' relocation, and improvements to Bluebonnet. We should give due credit and thanks to the developer's team, which has worked hard to gain neighborhood and city support. We should also, however, keep our questions in mind. As the developer said last year, the challenges of adapting a suburban design, intended for the intersection of two arterial roads (like Manchaca at Slaughter), make this site less than optimal. Whatever the benefits, this store is single-use, containing no residential component. It would increase traffic on Bluebonnet significantly. While the developer has made promises that, if realized, could improve Bluebonnet, enforcing those promises is problematic. The inclusion of a performance bond may help; but if there are problems we would be entering a situation with which few SLNA volunteers have experience. While appreciating the developer's good intentions, we must remain cautious.

Our June meeting gives us an opportunity to reconsider our position on this case. Earlier, a majority had supported the plan in concept, but voted to oppose the Bluebonnet access as proposed. The above-mentioned measures may persuade some that we should support the current plan. Some already like the plan. Others may feel that the proposed solutions are inadequate to resolve their concerns for neighborhood impact. Some continue simply to oppose the plan. Whatever the pros and cons, the outcome of this case will affect the neighborhood for a long time to come. I urge everyone to express an opinion, both within the neighborhood and to the city. Public comment is welcomed at the ZAP meeting. We will keep everyone updated as the case moves forward.

Neighborhood Planning 101

by Bryan King

Our SLNA area as well as Zilker, Barton Hills, and Galindo (plus the west side of Manchaca and from Barton Creek to MoPac) are slated to enter the City Of Austin ("CoA") neighborhood planning process in the fall. The name for this large area is yet to be determined but will be something like "South Lamar Combined Plan area".

Representatives from the four neighborhood associations have been meeting once a month for the last several months to start our own planning before the CoA cranks up their normal process. Along with reps from the other 3 neighborhood groups, I recently met with the CoA's Neighborhood Planning department head, Ricardo Soliz.

We learned that the informal process will begin approximately in November '04. The formal process will then start just after the first of the year. The informal process will involve an advisory group from our 'hoods working on outreach and process - letting people know what is going on and get them involved, plus scheduling the "workshop" meetings. Next we will start with the formal workshops, which will be open to all "stakeholders" (property owners, business owners, residents within these boundaries). This plan will focus mostly on "land use" (zoning) but will also cover issues such as transportation, safety and density.

CoA will do a survey of our residents, both online and mail-out, but they ask the same exact questions of all neighborhoods, with no opportunity to "customize" the questions. I now have copies of their survey for anyone interested. We are considering composing our own survey, and going door to door if necessary, to get information and suggestions specific to our area. Since CoA staff will actually write our Neighborhood Plan for us (with or without our participation!), we need to have good information from our residents and property owners to keep them "on the mark". This plan will eventually go to City Council for approval, with the applicant being the City of Austin, not SLNA.

At this month's SLNA meeting, we'll need to set up a formal committee for neighborhood planning. I spoke on this briefly at the April meeting and passed around a sign up sheet for those interested - anyone else should feel free to contact any SLNA officer if you would like to get involved. Now that we have an idea of the actual start date, we can lay out OUR timeline. This is going to be a time consuming and lengthy process and will need lots of help. There will be many types of tasks to be done, so you can specify your area of interest.

Dogs Unleashed...

by Cheryl Ressmann

... Do you have one? If you do, you may want to be aware that your neighbors can call 972-6060 to report loose dogs to Animal Control. They will come out and talk to the person that made the report and to the pet owner. If you want to report a loose dog, some helpful details are the owner's address and whether the dog is let out consistently on a regular basis.

Personally, I see the same loose dog on Pin Oak daily, and it is not picky as to the yard it chooses to make its deposit. It has been allowed to roam freely in the 'hood all day long. Is it at your expense? Are you aware of others on your street?

Until recently I was a neighbor that let the loose dogs roam. However, when my little 15- year-old blind and deaf dog was aggressively attacked on my street, by a big dog that got free from it's owner's leash, my opinion changed along with my sadness. The attack took months off of my dog's life, and he only had a few left to live. The owner told me that her dog gets aggressive when it is on a leash. Well, hopefully that owner has realized not to walk the dog on a leash.

You may ask what a dog on a leash has to do with the story about unleashed dogs. Well, there is a loose dog on Cinnamon Path just about every time I walk on that block. The dog may be harmless in general, but it always wants to approach my dogs.

Normally that wouldn't be a big issue, but since my small dog was viciously attacked, even my other dog is now frightened by dogs that approach us because she witnessed the attack on my smaller dog.

Pet owners – please be aware of the effects your cats and dogs have on your neighbors -- including the things they deposit! It will be greatly appreciated.

Editor's note: Animal Control (972-6060) takes calls Mon-Fri 7am-6pm and Sat-Sun 7am-5pm. Outside these hours, report a loose dog by calling 311.

Councilmember Wants Our Two Cents

SLNA will welcome Councilmember Brewster McCracken to a special meeting on Tuesday, **June 22**. It's at our usual place at the **Unity Church Annex**, but at **6:30pm**.

Councilmember McCracken will discuss the city's current effort to improve commercial design standards. Austin has among the lowest commercial design standards in the region, and the City Council has been working on an initiative to improve them.

We probably don't think about commercial design standards much, but as cases like Walgreens and Cityview Storage have shown, they can have a huge effect on our daily life. Commercial spaces define the environment in which we spend much of our waking time. We may often not realize the degree to which city standards and requirements influence architects and developers, both positively and negatively. Books like "The Geography of Nowhere" and "A Pattern Language" describe interesting new potentials in community and commercial design, but city policy often hinders innovative design instead of enabling it.

The current initiative proposes significant improvements, its multiple objectives guided by a citizen survey. These include allowing developers flexibility in design while providing code enforceability, encouraging diversity and uniqueness in buildings, mitigating environmental impacts (e.g. from massive parking lots and drive-through services), and encouraging re-use and rehabilitation of existing buildings. This should be a fun and interesting meeting. Everyone is invited! -- Kevin Lewis



COMPUTER HELP!

In-House PC Tech Support
Repairs, Troubleshooting, Tutoring
Windows and Macintosh

If you have trouble with your PC - crashes, slowdowns, etc.
If you are annoyed by viruses, or constant pop-up ads.
If you want to learn to be more efficient in Word or Excel.

Then Call Me Today!

Use this as a coupon for \$10 off your first visit!

912-8468

Joshua Robertson
A+ Certified PC Tech

Just \$33 An Hour!



ALIEN SCOOTERS

1122 B SOUTH LAMAR
AUSTIN, TEXAS

512-447-4220

OUT OF THIS WORLD
ELECTRIC TRANSPORTATION

WWW.ALIENSCOOTERS.COM



LONG'S VACUUM & APPLIANCE

2118 S Congress Ave – 442-5562
13048 Research Blvd – 249-5562
Same Family Since 1957

**MIELE APPLIANCES & VACUUMS
RICCAR – SEBO – SHARP – SANYO
PURIFIERS–A/C FILTERS–CARPET CLEANING
CANDLES – POTTERY – FRAGRANCES**

South Lamar Neighborhood Association

Membership Status: New Member _____ Renewing Member _____

Please complete the following. Couples, please use both first names.

NAME(S): _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

AREA CODE & PHONE NUMBER: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

☐ Check here if you want to join SLNA's Yahoo Email Group.

If you live outside SLNA's borders, please note the address of the SLNA property you own: _____

Membership is \$10 per year per household (due in January each year)
Or be a "Big Bubba/Big Bubbette" for \$20 (or more) per year.

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

☐ Request Hardship Waiver of Membership Fee

Make checks payable to "South Lamar Neighborhood Association"
Mail/Deliver to Bill Stoughton, 3200 South Oak, Austin, TX 78704

Check out the SLNA Website at www.southlamar.org

2004 SLNA Contacts

Kevin Lewis, President
443-1576 klewis@wholeearthprovision.com

Carol Gibbs, Vice Pres. & Newsletter Editor
442-8060 cgibbs1@austin.rr.com

Roberta Leahy, Secretary
444-3568 laverta@msn.com

Bill Stoughton, Treasurer & WebMaster
448-2754 bill@southlamar.org

Charlton Perry, SCC/ANC Delegate
731-6518 cperry@ststephens-texas.com

Membership in the Association shall be issued on the basis of residency and payment of **annual dues** *. SLNA boundaries are: North - Oltorf; South - Ben White; East - Union Pacific Railroad; West - S. Lamar / Manchaca.

Persons meeting the above criteria but who are unable to pay membership dues may request a reduction in dues or a waiver.

The privilege of introducing motions and voting shall be limited to those who have joined the Association at least ten days prior to any regularly scheduled or special called meeting.

* Complete bylaws are available at regular meetings and online at www.southlamar.org.