

February Meeting

When: 7:00 pm
Monday, February 6, 2017

Where: Griffin School
5001 Evans Avenue

Note: HPNA meetings usually take place on the first Monday of each month.

HPNA General Meeting Agenda for February 6

- A Conversation with Sen. Kirk Watson
- Vote: Baker School resolution
- Announcements

See You There!

It's My Park! Day 2017

Want to hang at the park on a beautiful spring day and help your community at the same time? I do!

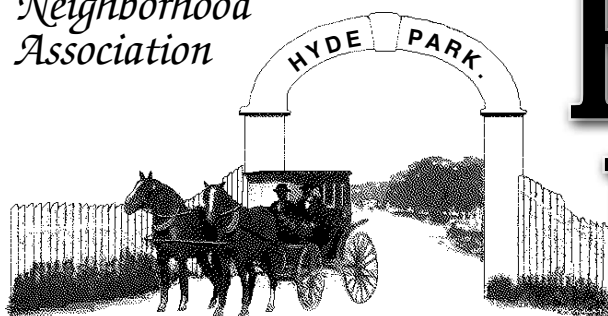
Every year, hundreds of volunteers of all ages join in the fun to improve and beautify our beloved Shipe Park and Ney Museum Grounds.

On Saturday, March 4, between 9 am and noon, we will gather at Shipe Park and work on needed efforts to improve and beautify Shipe Park and the Ney Museum grounds, including aerating and weeding tree beds, spreading mulch, removing invasive plant species and debris, aerating and fertilizing the field, beautifying the interior pool areas, spiffing up the playscape, and generally making the park and the Ney a better place to enjoy. There will be music to enjoy while we work.

You can register to volunteer online on the Austin Parks Foundation web site at www.austinparks.org. All registered volunteers get a free T-shirt, so be sure to register early and indicate your size.

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*The Hyde Park
Neighborhood
Association*



Pecan Press

February 2017 • National Register District Neighborhood • Vol. 43, No. 2

The Future of the Baker School Property

Editor's Note: At its January meeting, HPNA invited Jim Sessions of Austin Independent School District to discuss the future of the Baker School property. We thank Jim for his willingness to speak to us.

Jim Sessions: My name is Jim Sessions. I'm the Director of Contract and Procurement. Normally my role at the district is to buy stuff, buy tables and chairs and copy paper by the truckload. So this is a little bit different for me, this project. About March, the Board of Trustees said, we have potentially surplus property or property that could be repurposed for a better use. They asked that we advertise. The group of property we advertised included six vacant lots - some are larger, some are smaller - scattered around. There's a piece of land right next to Burnet Middle School, a piece of land on Tannehill Lane next to Norman Elementary, and there's a piece of land in a creek right next to my warehouse. Surprisingly, all of those pieces of land fetched reasonable bids. But I think what you want to talk about tonight is the Baker School building, as we currently call it, the Baker Center.

The Baker Center is about 65-68,000 square foot building, on not quite 4 ½ acres of land. I think you've all been by it many times. Perhaps you've been inside it at some point in the recent past. The building is currently used by several of our departments: it's the office for our department called Community Education, the Transportation Department is headquartered there, and our Nutrition and Food Service. The possibility is that if we do something different with that property, whether we use it for other purposes or whether we give it to you for use for another purpose or whether we sell it to a developer, the folks that currently work there would be moved to a different location.

So perhaps you saw in the newspaper or attended our bid opening or looked on line and there is the spreadsheet. Our website is www.Austinisd.org and you'll find it under a section called Purchasing and Bid Opportunities. The sub-selection would be Bid Tabulation.

So let me tell you what we got. We got seven bids and effectively three proposals, so we got a very robust response to our public notice. Now if you read the public notice, it was worded carefully so that it would allow the opportunity to sell the property, to exchange the property, to lease the property, or to consider proposals and offers that would repurpose it, have a short-term lease, create a partnership for some type of other open-ended opportunity. We intentionally wanted a variety of offers that would give the trustees the greatest flexibility in ultimately choosing what to do next.

Let me tell you quickly about the bids. The bids are pretty straightforward.

1. There's a group called Alliance Realty Partners. They're out of Houston. They bid \$15,105,000, so they set the high bar. The appraisal we had done

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From the Desk of the Co-Presidents



First, we want to congratulate the 2016 recipients of the HPNA's Volunteer awards. The recipients are HPNA co-Vice Presidents Kathy Lawrence and Betsy Clubine, Crime and Safety co-Chairs Carol Welder and Kristen Remeza, and membership co-Chair Karen Saadeh. These good neighbors were all instrumental in helping to apprehend the alleged perpetrator of a stabbing that took place in Hyde Park last year. They were also very helpful in supporting the victim of that horrible crime.

The 2016 recipients of the Walter and Dorothy Richter Award are Dr. Robert Duvic and Dianne Orbeck Duvic, the owners, restorers, and preservers of the historic Monroe Shipe House. Dorothy Richter personally selected the Duvics, noting that their work preserving the Shipe House set the standard for the rest of the neighborhood. Dorothy thinks that if it was not for their care of the Shipe House, Hyde Park would never have become a Local Historic District. Congratulations to the Duvics!

In our last letter, we discussed issues facing the HPNA in the upcoming year. We talked about neighborhood flooding, the future of the Austin State Hospital (ASH), CodeNEXT's potential impact on Hyde Park, crime prevention, new plans for Shipe Pool, and the future of the Baker School. At our February 6 HPNA meeting, we will focus on ASH and on the Baker School.

HPNA has invited State Senator Kirk Watson to discuss his idea of keeping the historic 160-year-old ASH in state hands and turning it into a state-of-the-art facility for research and treatment of mental illness. According to *The Quorum Report*, Senator Watson "plans to ask lawmakers to approve funding to replace the facility with an institution he's calling the 'MD Anderson of the brain,' referring to the renowned cancer research and treatment center in Houston." *The Quorum Report* also reports that in Senator Watson's vision, the State would share the running of the newly configured ASH with organizations like Travis County Central Health, Austin Travis County Integral Care, and University of Texas Dell Medical School. The Dell Medical School would train health care professionals to meet the community's demand. We hope to learn more from Senator Watson at February's meeting and encourage everyone to attend.

The future of ASH is important to all of us, as it is 60 acres of valuable land right next to Hyde Park. If the land is not retained by the State and is sold to private investors, we will then work diligently with the new owners, along with the City, to come up with a development plan that retains historic buildings, provides ample green space, provides community space and affordable housing, and protects the surrounding area from potential problems of flooding and increased traffic congestion.



The potential sale of the Baker Administrative Center, aka the Baker School, by the Austin Independent School District (AISD) to a private investor also requires the attention of all of us. In this issue of the Pecan Press you will find a copy of a resolution proposed by the HPNA Steering Committee

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Hyde Park Neighborhood Association

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www.austinhdepark.org

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Pecan Press

The *Pecan Press* is published monthly by the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association in Austin, Texas.

Advertising deadline: 15th of the month preceding publication.

Editorial deadline: 10th of the month preceding publication.

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Baker School Property Resolution

Editor's Note: At the February meeting, the HPNA membership will have the opportunity to discuss, amend, and vote on the following resolution.

WHEREAS, The Austin Independent School District (AISD) is currently considering proposals for a number of district properties, including the Baker Center, located within the boundaries of the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association and the Hyde Park Local Historic District; and

WHEREAS, AISD trustees have specifically recognized the value of community input regarding these proposals and the fiscal benefits that arise from community goodwill, through support for school bonds, tax ratification elections and positive support for the district and its campuses; and

WHEREAS, AISD trustees have further adopted guiding principles for considering land use proposals including: expanding academic offerings for students; supporting efforts to increase the availability of affordable housing; considering the district's administrative space and design needs; and providing a fiscal advantage for the district, preferably in the form of a recurring revenue source; and

WHEREAS, Given the ongoing densification of central Austin, Baker's proximity to large tracts of state land ripe for future redevelopment, and the growing preference among millennials to remain in urban areas after starting families, it would be extremely short-sighted to permanently preclude the Baker site from future use as an active school campus or as a location for popular alternative programs such as those offered at Garza High School; and

WHEREAS, The Baker property is currently in full use, housing extensive professional development services for teachers and numerous other programs vital to student success, the relocation of which would incur significant costs to the district; and

WHEREAS, Baker's substantial brick building is important to the community, having served generations of Austinites as a school and administrative building since 1911, and has benefitted from significant bond investments to upgrade mechanical systems and provide technological updates; and

WHEREAS, To best protect the fiscal interests of district taxpayers, any contemplated contract for this property should be in the form of a lease that will provide ongoing revenue for the district, not a one-time sale, the proceeds of which will quickly vanish within the district's annual billion-dollar-plus operating budget; and

WHEREAS, Baker is a valuable, well-located, fully used property and its permanent ownership by AISD is critical to ensuring continued access to a quality education for Austin children, as provided by state law, and to protecting the ongoing fiscal interests of district taxpayers;

now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association strongly urges the AISD board and administration to act in accordance with the guiding principles adopted by AISD trustees regarding land use proposals and to retain ownership of this significant civic structure and its site for current and future use by AISD employees, families, students, and community members; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That any interim use for the Baker structure or its site be in the form of a revenue-generating lease, not a one-time sale.

Membership Information

- Membership in HPNA is open to all residents 18 years or older residing within the boundaries of Hyde Park or within 300 feet of its boundaries.
- All memberships expire on September 30th of each year.
- New members and members who lapse in dues for over six months are eligible to vote at HPNA meetings 30 days after receipt of dues.
- Membership dues can be paid in several ways: By signing up at an HPNA meeting or event, by mailing in the membership form, or by joining online using PayPal. To pay online, go to www.austinyhydepark.org and click on the Join Now button. Dues paid online are \$6.

Submission Information

- Send your articles, letters, and photos by the 10th of each month to Lorre Weidlich at lweidlich@grandecom.net.
Opinion articles & letters to the editor must not exceed 500 words.
- Send your poems to Charlotte Herzele at herzele@gmail.com.
All poems, even if written under a pen name, must include a name and contact information for identification and verification purposes.

Hyde Park Neighborhood Association Membership Form

Name _____ Phone _____

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Notify me by email of HPNA meetings & events _____

Dues per Person Standard - \$5/yr. Check
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	2014	2015	2016
NUMBER OF HOMES SOLD	21	29	24
AVERAGE SALES PRICE	\$470,419	\$570,905	\$578,158
AVERAGE SQ FT	1,582SF	1,549SF	1,927SF
AVERAGE SOLD \$/SQ FT	\$321.75	\$376.47	\$361.16
MEDIAN DAYS ON MARKET	14 DAYS	7 DAYS	7 DAYS

All statistics & square footage are from Austin MLS for Single Family Residence taken 10/04/2016 from the Austin MLS. For detailed market information about your home, contact Sam Archer, Broker.



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Future of Baker School...

...cont'd from page 1

said the property would be worth about \$10.5M, so another \$4.5M over our appraisals. Certainly a good high bid.

2. The next two bids were submitted by a group here in Austin called Colina West LTD: \$20M in one offer, \$11M in a different offer. To explain briefly the difference between them, it has to do with the amount of affordable housing they would be promising to include. The lower dollar bid would have a higher amount of affordable housing.
3. Marquis Residential offered \$10.7M.
4. JCI Residential, also out of Austin, \$10.6M, to round it off.
5. Alamo Drafthouse Cinemas, \$10.6M.
6. A group called Sackman Enterprises, \$10,282,000.

Audience: Can you say that these are all for housing or commercial?

JS: We don't know. When they offer a bid package, and they say they're going to buy it, we don't know, unless they added some kind of wording that tried to explain it, which generally they don't want to do. For example, Colina West, they did say, we're going to make two offers and we want to explain the difference. But generally, with all these folks, you can kind of tell by the business they're in. These folks are all in the residential development business. That's where the money would be spent for them. Now, what kind of residential, we don't know.

So let me tell you about the three proposals, and I can't tell you a whole lot. Rather than going through all the legalities about the difference between a bid and a proposal: most of the content of a proposal is held until we finish our scoring, so it's not yet public record. The bids are public; they're posted out there for you to look at.

Alamo Drafthouse Cinemas offered a bid for purchase. They also offered a proposal for a redevelopment or repurposing of the site and it would be a mixture of buying part of it and then it's a little unclear to what degree the city would take ownership or the district retain ownership for part of it. But I think what you're interested in: using part of the existing building, about 1/3 of it, for their corporate offices and then using the rest of the building in various considerations - as a community center perhaps, partnering with the Hyde Park Theatre group for part of it, they mentioned perhaps Meals on Wheels using part of the cafeteria area, to build a new kitchen for Meals on Wheels. So these were some of the thoughts they had.

The city of Austin submitted a proposal. Their proposal says, essentially, the dirt around the building, they would want to redevelop and build housing. Some component of that would be affordable housing. And then they don't really say what they want to do with the building.

And then a group, WLVH Management - and we really haven't spent much time looking at their proposal, on first glance there wasn't anything to it that would catch much interest. It's a redevelopment, affordable housing, type of program. In their case, they weren't clear on how

Monthly Calendar February

- 3 — Recycling Pickup
- 4 — Print Austin at the Ney Museum
- 6 — HPNA General Meeting
- 9 — DRC Meeting
- 11 — Frontera Fest at the Ney Museum
- 13 — Steering Committee Meeting
- 14 — Happy Valentine's Day
- 17 — Recycling Pickup
- 18 — Urban Birds at the Ney Museum

much money they would offer to the school district.

The city's proposal was \$1 plus other consideration. That's a challenge for us, and let me tell you why. State law, government code, section 272, says that when a public school district tries to sell or exchange or lease property, we have to do it at fair market value. The way we read it, it's pretty straightforward. And our legal counsel tells us the same. The city has got a long way to go to convince us and everybody else where that consideration would be equal to market value, which has been established by Alliance at \$15M. For us to do a transaction on this property with the city, we have a long way to go to get from \$1 to \$15M.



Photo from the Austin History Center Collection

That's pretty much it. Now the process. We have started our evaluation, started it December 14 when we opened the things. We have focused on, honestly, some of the easier properties to deal with. One of the properties has a single bid, cash money, it's kind of cut and dried. One of the properties, the Allen Center out in east Austin - it's a large, 19 acre, piece of property, so it got a lot of bid activity - but several of the trustees have expressed perhaps a second thought that maybe we shouldn't get rid of that property. It's kind of hard now because we know what the value is. We'd be turning down a lot of cash money, so this may be a good time to sell. So we'll see.

Audience: Is there an option to retain the Baker property as a school property?

JS: Oh, certainly. There's been absolutely no decision made on any property, so at the moment it's really just

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HPNA General Meeting Minutes: January 9, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 pm by Reid Long, co-President. The following agenda items took place.

1. Co-Presidents' Briefing, from Kevin Heyburn and Reid Long.

The following items were mentioned as those with which we are likely to be concerned in this New Year:

- CodeNEXT is coming. As the process continues, there will certainly be items for us as a neighborhood to discuss and upon which to voice our concerns. We will need to be ready.
- The fate of both the Baker School property and Ridgetop Elementary will be decided over the next months. Baker has already gone through the bidding process (more on this below) and there has been talk about closing Ridgetop. Again, we will need to be ready to voice our opinions.
- The plan for the renovation of Shipe Pool is largely complete, though there might be some opportunity for some modifications in terms of bathroom facilities. (There might be the possibility of improving the existing ones in the Log Cabin, lessening the need to make the new facilities quite so large.) Renovations will begin at the end of this year's season and hopefully be complete for the summer of 2018.
- Flooding – and its mitigation – will continue to be an issue. (A vote on a resolution occurred later in the meeting.) Special thanks were accorded to Lorre Weidlich for her transcription of flooding issues in the January *Pecan Press*.
- Upcoming events at Shipe Park: March 4 will be It's My Park! Day and April 15 will be the annual Egg Scramble.
- There will be a Home Tour this year. It will occur on November 12.
- The future of the Austin State Hospital is uncertain; it will likely not be decided until the end of this year's legislative session. At our February meeting, our State Senator (and Hyde Park resident), Kirk Watson, will present his vision for the property: A brain institute, caring for mental health just as the Central Health district cares for physical health. In any event, we will very much need to be involved.
- Crime is always an issue. It is important to report any incidents that do occur by calling 911. In addition, there has been an uptick in graffiti in the neighborhood. Call 311 to report it.
- There is a proposal for a Red River Music District, extending the hours for live outdoor music in that area. Given the topography of the area, that music can easily waft its way to the neighborhood.
- Commercial trash haulers have been creating some noise pollution, particularly on the fringes of the neighborhood. It's somewhat unclear just what the regulations are.

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2. Hyde Park Awards

- The Walter and Dorothy Richter Award, for efforts in historic preservation in the neighborhood, went to Dr. Robert Duvic and Dianne Orbeck Duvic, the owners, restorers, and preservers of the Monroe Shipe House.
- HPNA Awards for civic involvement went to Kathy Lawrence, Carol Welder, and Kristen Remeza. All were instrumental in dealing with the aftermath of the stabbing that occurred on Speedway last year.

3. Presentation about AISD's proposed sale of the Baker School

Jim Sessions, Director of Contract and Procurement for AISD, presented.

In March, 2016 the Board of Trustees of AISD cited properties it owned that were either surplus or that could be better repurposed. Included within this list was the property containing the current Baker Administrative Center (formerly Baker Elementary School), a 68,000 square foot building (built 1911), on a 4 1/2-acre tract at 39th Street and Avenue B. Last fall AISD posted a call for bids and proposals, with the minimum sales bid set at 10.6 million dollars. For information, access <http://tinyurl.com/baker-school-bids>.

- Alliance Realty Partners make a \$15.105M bid. They are a firm from Houston that primarily builds high-end condos.
- Colina West Ltd. had differing bids, one at \$12M and one at \$11M; they differ in the number of affordable housing units proposed.
- Marquis Residential made a bid at \$10.7M.
- JCI Residential made a bid at \$10.6M.
- Alamo Drafthouse made a \$10.6M bid, proposing to repurpose the historic Baker School, using 1/3 for its corporate offices and 2/3 for community projects such as a Meals-on-Wheels kitchen and Hyde Park Theater.
- WLVH Management, Ltd. made a proposal for affordable housing.
- The City of Austin proposed a \$1 purchase (plus other considerations) with a proposal for civic use.

Among the questions asked were the following:

Is there an option to retain the property?

Yes. No decision has been made.

Why would we let the Baker Center property go?

"Complex subject. A subject that in every part of town stirs emotions."

Do the trustees look at the historic nature of things, or are they just trying to make money?

There are different opinions. Some take history as more important, others are just looking toward creating more modern facilities.

Will we know what the property will be used for?

No. As it is unzoned, after sale it will have to go through the City of Austin zoning process.

When is the decision expected?

That's hard to say. The trustees will begin talking

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Future of Baker School... ...cont'd from page 5

asking the market place for bids and proposals. We'll take those back to the trustees. I'm sure they will have a lively debate about what they want to do with it. It's tied into FABPAC (Facilities and Bond Planning Advisory Committee). This is a group of folks who've been working for several months to do an assessment of all of our school facilities around the district. I'm sure you've heard that, as part of this process, we urgently had to close the T.A. Brown Elementary School and move those kids out, because when they sent the drones under the building to inspect the structure, they found such significant deterioration that it was deemed critical that we move them immediately.

So it's a process we're going through right now. I did want to tell you about some meetings coming up. As part of the facility master plan community engagement series, they will have meetings they would like to invite you to attend. The first meeting is Tuesday, January 24. This will be at 6 pm at McCallum High School cafeteria. There are other meetings around the city, if you would like to attend any of those. What they would really like is to get not just your engagement but neighborhood groups all throughout the district.

It's going to take some work to get to a decision on what we do with any property, whether it's one of these that was listed for potential sale or repurposing or some of the schools. What are we going to do about Brown Elementary? Demolish that structure and build a new school at that site? Or are we going to move those kids to a different location? There's been a push to build a new school at the Muller development and that would probably lead to the closure of Pecan Springs Elementary, which is a pretty darn old campus. So the FABPAC has a lot of work to do to make some recommendations, then the trustees have a lot of work to do to work through those and make some decisions, and it's all geared toward coming back to you, the citizens, in November for a bond package.


This time around we want to come to you and say, we got a really solid 30-year vision of what we need to do to modernize the facilities in this district. It could be that the Baker Center is a part of that future. It could be that they decide to take one of these bids and sell the property. It could be that they decide to negotiate some better deal with the city of Austin. We're nowhere close to that decision.

Audience: It really bothers me that we have a historic school with a tremendous history and playing fields around it in a site that our neighborhood uses and we'd love to continue to use. We've been fighting this battle for 10-15 years, I think, that whole context of, do the Hyde Park children deserve to have any school in their neighborhood? These things need to be looked at together. I see it as a problem for our neighborhood.

JS: It's a complex subject. It's a subject in every part of town that does stir emotion.


Audience: In the past, in all honesty, do the trustees look at the historical importance of something like this or is it really just more about business?

JS: I can only tell you about my observation of the trustees attending board meetings. They're nine individ-



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uals. They come from different parts of town, different education, different careers; they really see things differently among the group. Some of them probably do have a greater value for the historical nature of some properties. Some of them clearly don't. Some of them say, kids don't care about all of that history, kids want a modern equipped classroom that's got all the latest technology and it's engaging, it's a fun environment; and in their opinion you couldn't create that at a building like Baker in an affordable way, the two are too far apart. And we have that problem all throughout our district because think how many old facilities we have. Don't quote me on the number, but the average age is 40 something. I've replaced the furniture in the past five years in 38 elementary schools and they're all over 50 years old. We've got a lot of old buildings that do not meet modern educational specifications. One of the reasons we lose kids to the suburbs - suburbs have new schools. They're shiny, they're cool and groovy, all that stuff. We've got a lot of old buildings with a lot of mismatched tile on the floor. So it's a real problem for us.

Audience: You mentioned the top bidder, Alliance from Houston. Before the property is sold, would we know what Alliance would use the property for?

JS: No guarantee of that. When you sell a property, you're negotiating on the price, some of the terms, but you have no real say in what they're going to use it for. And they have no obligation to tell you what they're going to use it for. They just know that this is a piece of property, it's a certain size, it's currently unzoned, so they're going to have to go to the city and deal with the city on the zoning process. For us, we may be curious what their intentions are but we didn't ask and we can't.

Audience: You mentioned that these decisions will be made before the November bond election, but when do you think the decision on who the winning bidder will be will take place?

JS: It's really hard to say. The trustees want to start talking about this subject later this month, maybe in February, something like that. Some of the properties that are pretty much baked already as to what we're going to do, the transactions will begin in March. At least, they'll vote on it and declare the property surplus and begin that process. I think to meet a November bond schedule, they have to vote on that by August, so they have to pretty much do their decision making between now and June. I think for some of these properties, it'll take them that long. For some other properties, like the land next to my warehouse - we're never going to use that land for anything, it's a creek, to build on it would be substantially difficult. Our best deal, let's make a deal with the city, the city wants to make it park land. We got to get an offer from them a little above \$1.

Audience: So if you're concerned about declining enrolling and moving kids to the shining new schools, if you take the existing schools and you're talking about closing Ridgetop and building something over by Muller and moving the kids on a bus over there, that's not something that a parent buying a house in Hyde Park wants to have. You're kind of creating a situation in some ways where you create suburban flight by not addressing the

schools in the community. It may not be the cheapest option to fix the school or knock it down and replace it, but by looking for vacant land somewhere else you're creating a situation where it's not a neighborhood school and you're creating the flight that is part of your problem.

JS: From me on the inside, I'm not hearing any discussion about closing Ridgetop. We've talked about it in the past. It's a small school, tough location as far as not much land to do much with it and all that, but the question has always been where to take those kids. There's not a good answer to that. If you go north to Reilly, we just brought all the Brown kids to Reilly and it wasn't big enough to handle them, so we have to bus some of them all the way across town to Allen. So I would not jump to the conclusion that what is decided about Baker ties tightly with what they ultimately decide to do with Ridgetop. What I would suggest you do, make sure you engage with the FABPAC and engage with the trustees as they discuss these things this semester. So attend that meeting. If you can, send them cards, send them letters, send them email. Provide input to them on what you would like to see.

Audience: Are you inviting input from the residents that don't attend meetings? Input via mailing or some other communication, specifically with the residents of the community?

JS: I'm not directly involved. They usually do; that's part of the community engagement program. In the past they've tried different things. They've tried surveys, we've put some unique websites out there and asked people to respond to that. How they will do it, I don't know.

Audience: I was wondering -the community engagement meetings, who would be there that I would be talking to? Would that be the FABPAC that you were talking about?

JS: Yes, I don't know whether it would be led by members of that FABPAC committee or members of the architectural and engineering firm that was hired to participate in the process. It would not be led by trustees. They have to be careful about their role.

Audience: And those are the people that we need to communicate with?

JS: Right, those people are writing the plan for the next 30 years.

Audience: So the community engagement needs to get any ideas? There are several bids, there are several people coming to say how much money they would give to buy the land, but there are other ideas perhaps for repurposing, for Baker School, to keep it as part of the school district?

JS: Let me go back and try to clear up something. The FABPAC is not participating in the bid evaluation process for these bids. The FABPAC is trying to guide the trustees on what should they do with all facilities in the district including Baker, including the Carruth Administration Center downtown, including some of the land I mentioned. It's two different groups, two different purposes. My group is supposed to look at these and make a recommendation first to the superintendent, and then the superintendent would carry that forward to the trustees. At the same time, the FABPAC committee is bringing

Continued on page 11

PENDING



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Future of Baker School...

...cont'd from page 9

their recommendations to the trustees.

Audience: Were there any restrictions in the request for proposals in terms of lease or purchase agreements?

JS: The first restriction was that we wanted a minimum of \$10.6M. If you weren't going to offer us \$10.6M, why bother? That was our determination of market value. For the folks we were looking to get bids to sell the property, there's really not much other than that. We have to determine, do they have the financial capacity to pay the district that much, so is it a bona fide solid offer, that kind of thing, but no restrictions as far as what they can do with the property.

Audience: Lease agreements?

JS: In this case we did not get such an offer. For example, downtown in the building we call our Carruth Administration Center, the choice there is do you sell that property or do you do a ground lease for 99 years? In either scenario, we'll move out and vacate the property, and they're going to tear it down. It's a matter of do you want \$36M cash in hand to do something with today or do you want a million dollars a year for 99 years? It's a little different scenario. But that was not offered for Baker.

Audience: I'm still a little bit confused about the process. From what you said earlier, it sounded like the actual nature of the bids will not be known by the public and the decision will be made. Sounds like it will be over by the time anyone actually knows what's being proposed.

JS: Generally what happens, you know what's been offered, trustees will probably have some discussion on it at meetings, and then at some point in time, there'll be a recommendation made. When that recommendation is prepared, its posted 72 hours prior to their business meeting. They always meet on a Monday night, so it gets posted on a Friday night, and you rely on either checking the website or the Austin newspaper to tell everybody, hey, on Monday night they're going to vote.

I would not wait until that weekend when a recommendation is made. I think what you know is that we have a bid for \$15M cash, sell it to them, it's now their problem. They can do what they want, from the district's point of view, it's just business. For you, it's way more than business. It's your neighborhood where you live and where you jog and all that kind of stuff, so for you, it has a different meaning. But for the administration and ultimately the trustees, it's a business decision. So if you wait, I think you're going to miss your opportunity. I think now that you know what's been offered, you have a group of folks who want to buy it, they want to develop housing. You have a couple of folks, the city included, they want to acquire the rights to do something with the property

Audience: The building has to stay, though, right?

JS: No.

Audience: It's protected. It's a contributing structure in a local historic district. According to the rules that the city accepted for our historical district, it cannot be torn down.

JS: If you read what the experts prepared for us, this building is south of that historic zone.


Audience: Mr. Sessions, since there's some disagreement over whether the building is in the historic district or not - you mentioned an expert report. Can we obtain that report?

JS: If you'll go on the website for Southwest Strategies - they were the firm we hired to market the properties - and they put together a document. It was their sales and marketing, and it was somewhere in here that I read that.

It's one of those things. I have four kids that are attorneys, they can't agree on anything. You get ten attorneys in the room, five are going to tell you it's this and five are going to tell you it's that. It's not for me to tell you.

Reid Long: Thank you for your time.

JS: Thank you all very much for inviting me.



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It's My Park! Day 2017... ...cont'd from page 1



It's My Park! Day 2016 — photo by Lizzie Chen

Want to do more? Before the event, we need help organizing and publicizing. At the event, we need folks who can lead activities, help the volunteers, and work the registration table or refreshments table.

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January Meeting Minutes... ...cont'd from page 7

about it soon. Some of the properties on the bidding list might proceed as early as March, some will take longer. In order to make a November bond election, everything must be in order by August, requiring a decision by June.

Is suburban flight by families (for more modern school facilities) a self-fulfilling prophecy? Can we redevelop schools in the older neighborhoods?

Mr. Sessions suggested that we get and stay involved in the process, that we make the case.

There are community engagement meetings planned. Are they designed for input?

That will possibly be the case. They will be run by the Facilities and Bond Planning Advisory Committee (FABPAC) of AISD as well as by the architectural and engineering firm retained by AISD to manage the process.

How would you summarize the situation?

Developers want to develop housing.

One question that remained outstanding is whether or not the historic Baker School building is included in the protected Historic District.

4. Discussion of the Baker Center property situation:

- The school district is not formally subject to city regulation (though there is an agreement to stay close to same). Were a private buyer to acquire the property, it would have to get the Landmark Commission to agree to demolition.
- Ridgetop is among those schools that might be closed or demolished.
- The HPNA needs to formulate a game plan for reacting to events as they occur.
- The selling off of central urban property by AISD is a problem; once it is gone you can never get it back.
- AISD has been too quick to abandon existing schools.

5. Oliver Franklin from the Elisabet Ney Museum spoke briefly.

- He expressed his thanks to all those who participated in planning and conducting the HPNA Holiday Party, specifically Sarah Cook and Joan Burnham. He also expressed thanks to all who attended the recent community engagement event.
- The Elisabet Ney Museum is not going anywhere. It will be here for us to enjoy.
- The Austin Garden Club wall, built in 1939, will be restored. It is mostly in great shape. The parts that are falling down, including the gate, will be taken down and reconstructed piece by piece. A new mortar cap will be put in place.
- The Ney will be starting a friends group. The community outreach gathering was very successful.
- Outdoor sculptures will continue to cycle through. Some will go and new ones will come in.
- There will be restoration work on the lodge building, starting soon.

In addition he addressed some questions:

There's been some talk about using the grounds for a Farmer's Market.

Yes, it's a possibility, but not every week.

Will there be another open house?

Yes, in February.

6. Deaton Bednar presented briefly about her business, Texas Bike Tours (www.texasbiketours.com).

- It's all about trying to get people to ride their bikes.
- They host special events, pre-wedding parties, reunions, whatever. If the event can get people on bikes, they can do it.

7. Vote on the resolution to add the proposed Guadalupe Project to the next bond election.

The results were 24 in favor, none opposed, and no abstentions.

8. Announcements.

The Longhorn Run (on Speedway) will be coming in April.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:40 pm.

— Submitted by Artie Gold
Co-Secretary, HPNA

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News from the Ney

The wide variety of ways to have fun at the Ney will be on display during the month of February!

On Saturday, February 4, from 1 to 4 pm, the Ney will be a part of PrintAustin, the annual, month-long celebration of the robust print art community in town. This year, the Ney will have a very family-friendly event, the Massive Face Trace Print Project. Austin artist Aron Taylor will construct several face trace panels: 4 x 8 sheets of plexiglass in frames, with two people sitting on opposite sides of the plexiglass. On the glass, the artist of the duo can draw the face of the person right in front of him or her, never failing to create a remarkable representation. At this event, visitors will be able to make transfer prints of the drawings onto paper so they can take the images home with them. The museum will provide all the materials that you need (be prepared to be messy!), and the event is free. It will take place outside, on the north bank of Waller Creek; watch the weather just in case.

On Saturday, February 11, the Ney will be participating in FronteraFest 2017, Hyde Park Theatre and Scriptworks' world-renowned performance festival. From 11 am to just after noon that day, the Ney and its grounds will be transformed into a stage on which several yet-to-be-chosen pieces will be performed, both inside and outside the building. All pieces produced will be short and likely unrelated to each other, so it's a creative adventure that will unfold before your very eyes!

Celebrate urban birds with the Ney again this year, on Saturday, February 18. There will be fun family activities as well as bird counts at 1 and 3 pm. At 2 pm, listen to "The Birdchasers," a lecture from Kevin Anderson, which focuses on the history of birdwatching in Austin, from Roy Bedichek to Margie Adams to Robin Doughty, including the places and changes they have seen. Bedichek and Doughty kept track of birds on Waller Creek and, of course, Barton Springs. This should be a fascinating program!

Wow! Each so different, and all free! More programs follow in March and April, of course, so follow the museum on Facebook or join its email list to get the most up-to-date information available.

Hyde Park Poets

Conundrum (Damned If I Know)

I am the lonely participant
In a beautiful fantasy,
Obsessed, though no fault of yours,
I cannot describe it.

This is my private universe
Where I go, wherever I go,
I like, to be alone,
And I am never lonely.

You have always been there
I do not have to call,
I walk, talk, I listen to music
And think about you.

Now, when you come,
When you are actually here,
You are like an intruder
Who enters into my private world,

You are not a fantasy,
I have no illusions,
It is not the person, you,
Whom I imagine,
It is the togetherness,
It is the being with you,

I have never been without you,
This, of course, you would not know
This is a universe in which
You and I exist, together and apart

It is impossible to know
Your part in this, your role,
You have not been in my life
In a way in which I can touch you, but
I feel you, always, in my mind,
My soul, and heart,

Not something I understand,
My imagination has always been active
At the same time, I am a scientist,

Always asking why? How? If this,
Then what? But this conundrum,
Cannot be answered
By science, or logic,
Or by any formulae,
By default it must be answered
By experience;

I do not know how you feel
About any of this but I cannot help
But wonder if it even matters
I have lived with you
And without you
Forever.

— Herzele
05-13-16



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Around & About the Avenues

Sunshine Community Gardens Spring Garden Sale. Local heirloom vegetable transplants grown by Gabriel Valley Farms in Georgetown and herbs grown by Sunshine Community Gardens (SCG) make their debut March 4 at 4814 Sunshine Drive. Over 120 proven and tested tomato varieties by local gardeners, over 85 wicked hot and sweet bell pepper varieties, 15 different types of eggplants, and thousands of herbs ready for spring planting can be purchased starting at 9 am. This annual non-profit spring garden sale enables Sunshine Community Gardens to teach best organic practices to schools, clubs, and organizations and to donate some fresh vegetables for a local food pantry. “Come join with gardeners of all ages at Austin’s green oasis in the middle of the city. Buy locally grown transplants and support local merchants. Sunshine Community Gardens, started in 1979, is the largest and oldest community garden in the Austin area,” said Jeff Monks, President of SCG. For a complete list of plants on sale and varieties to grow for the Austin area, go to <http://sunshinecommunitygardens.org/>. For information, contact Bob Easter at 512-346-1692 or beaster1@austin.rr.com.



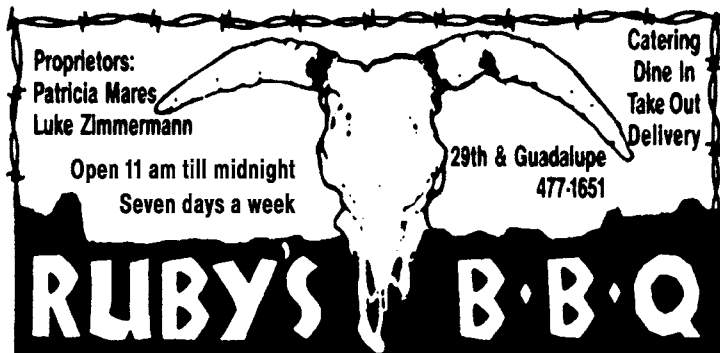
APD Commander’s Forum Report from HPNA Crime and Safety Chairs. Kristen Remeza and Carol Welder attended the recent APD Commander’s Forum at McCallum High School. The Commander reported that violent crime in Region 1 went up in 2016, but property crime went down. The hot spot for violent crime in Region 1 is the St. John’s area, so APD is paying close attention to that area. He reported that the crimes take place primarily late at night and are crimes of opportunity. Commander Todd Gage, APD Special Operations, gave a report on the various areas under his command, primarily swat teams, canine units, bomb technicians, and air rescue. Someone from that department can attend community events and show some of the equipment.

Hyde Park has a new District Representative, Officer Everett Beldin. His phone number is 512-974-1219 and his email is everett.beldin@austintexas.gov. Previously, he served in the Emergency Planning Department, and before that, he was a Patrol Officer in Northwest Austin for 11 years. Officer Beldin is willing to attend an HPNA meeting. Officer Eric Copeland, previous Hyde Park District Representative, is covering a larger area until a new person is hired.



Looking for a Pecan Press Volunteer. Jessica Charbeneau, our “Kid’s Corner” editor, has resigned due to family commitments. We thank her for all her effort during the past year and a half. It’s been satisfying to hear people say that they took their kids to a particular place because it was recommended in the “Kid’s Corner.” Because we want kids to be a part of the *Pecan Press*, we are looking for a new editor. Do you like to write? Do you enjoy talking to kids? Please get in touch with the *Pecan Press* editor at lweidlich@mail2sevens.com.

Hyde Park Artist Featured by Time Warner Cable News. Michael Torres, Hyde Park artist, was recently featured in a news video by Time Warner cable. Deaton Bednar says of Michael, “I had the good fortune to meet Michael during one of the West Austin Studio Tours years ago. He is not only an excellent, interesting artist but a good person.” To see the news video, access <http://www.twcnews.com/tx/austin/news/2017/01/10/austin-painter-sources-pixels-as-latest-source-of-inspiration-.html>. Notice part of the video is filmed through bicycle spokes! Michael can be contacted at findmichaeltorres@gmail.com.



Co-Presidents’ Letter...

...cont’d from page 2

calling on AISD not to sell the school. There was consensus among Steering Committee members that central Austin will likely need the Baker School reopened in the future, given the growing development in and around Hyde Park and the crowding at Lee Elementary, Ridgetop Elementary, and the other nearby schools. The possible closing of Ridgetop Elementary also is of great concern to Steering Committee members, and as we learn more, we will continue to update you here.

If Baker is not retained by AISD, there is a strong consensus among Steering Committee members that the historic portions of the building be retained and that all or part of Baker be used as a community space. Some Steering Committee members were also open to Baker being developed into affordable housing.

The Steering Committee’s Baker School resolution will be presented to the membership at the February HPNA meeting, with possible amendments to address alternative uses of the property if AISD does not retain the school. We hope that you can attend to add your voice to this resolution.

Please let us know your thoughts on the issues facing the neighborhood. We appreciate everyone’s participation. We have a busy year ahead of us, and we need your help.

– Kevin Heyburn & Reid Long
HPNA Co-Presidents

HYDE PARK & NORTH UNIVERSITY HOMES GALLERY



2311 SHOAL CREEK BLVD.

Former home of Gov. Ann Richards. 1949 Mid-century modern architecture near Caswell Tennis Courts. 3,000 SF 3 BR, 2 BA, open floor plan, beautiful yard, .384 acre lot.
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3502 RED RIVER STREET

Tucked away down a private drive, this gorgeous traditional townhome has 3,186 SF with 4 BR, 3 BA, 2 LIV, 2-car attached garage. Hardwoods, fireplace, two decks.
Listed at \$699,000



838 EAST 37TH STREET

Spacious 1940s Austin stone house located just south of Hancock Golf Course. 2,271 SF, one-story, 3 BR, 3 BA, 1 LIV, 2 DIN, 2-car garage. Walk to UT and Lee Elementary.
Listed at \$675,000



103 WEST 32ND STREET

1930s Colonial Revival with guest house and swimming pool. Main house has 3,064 SF with 4 BR, 4 BA, 2 LIV, 2 DIN. Beautifully updated kitchen & baths. 1-car garage.
Listed at \$1,045,000



3306 HARRIS PARK AVENUE

Charming renovated 1930s duplex available for immediate move-in! Adorable downstairs unit has hardwoods, screened porch, 2 BR, 1 BA, 1 LIV, 1 DIN. Appliances provided.
Listed at \$1,950/mo.



4809 AVENUE H

Two adorable homes on one lot. Main house is 3 BR, 2 BA, with new kitchen & baths. One-story guest house has 1 BR, 1 BA. Ideal for rental or extended family.
Listed at \$669,000



821 HARRIS AVENUE

1930s storybook cottage just steps from Lee Elementary. 3 BR, 2 BA, 2 LIV, formal dining. Upstairs master suite. Stone patio, pergola, private gardens. Detached workshop.
Listed at \$650,000



4202 AVENUE C

Classic 1920s Hyde Park bungalow featuring 2 BR, 1 BA plus separate 1 BR, 1 BA garage apartment. Both have hardwood floors and many recent updates.
Listed at \$529,500

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