



CASTLEWOOD-OAK VALLEY

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

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Letter from the president

By Denise Sample



Happy summer, neighbors! I know that while it may not feel like it, this summer does seem to have milder temperatures than in years past, and for that, I am thankful.

This may be why we saw such a great turnout at the Summer Parade and Picnic at the end of June. It was so lovely to meet so many of our littlest neighbors and their parents who braved the warm temps. A big thank you to those



who came and walked the parade, as well as to those who cheered us on as we approached the potluck with frozen treats at the end. We had a great time and I'm

looking forward to our next event: the National Night Out on October 1!

In other news, your Austin Neighborhoods Council (ANC) Representative Rita Thompson has been especially hard at work attending ANC and City Council meetings to get as much information as possible from policymakers on changes coming to Austin zoning and the HOME initiative. Please read on for more details on this important topic. As usual, if you have any questions about COVNA or any other topics in this newsletter, please reach out to me or any member of the board. ■



Your neighbors kicking off the Summer Parade and Picnic on June 29. (Credit: Denise Sample)

Latest land ordinance update from City Council

By Rita Thompson

Hope everyone found some moments of joy and peace this summer. The Austin Neighborhoods Council (ANC) certainly remained engaged with the Austin community to keep it informed and to strengthen the voices of the neighborhoods in the city. I was fortunate to attend the ANC annual dinner where I received a warm welcome as a new member. At the dinner, the community took a moment to honor David King who passed away on June 2. David was both loved and respected by his Zilker neighborhood as well as the community at large. He served on numerous committees and commissions and was said to be unstoppable with regard to advocacy for

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the citizens of Austin. Castlewood Forest/Oak Valley neighborhood would like to offer our gratitude and condolences to David, his family and his friends.

The ANC continues to express its opposition to the sweeping changes under HOME 1 and HOME 2 without regard to the individual needs and characteristics of the neighborhoods noted in their neighborhood plans. Please refer to our previous newsletter for more information on the initiatives. A new zoning category DB90 Combining District allows developers

that turn commercial properties into residential units to build up to 90 feet in height. The city's intention with the program is to encourage and provide more affordable housing; however, the reduction in compatibility standards between the new developments and existing residences, as well as how the bonuses will be applied, are of concern. To learn more about the changes, you can watch City Council meetings and Planning Commission meetings on ATXN, the city's public television network. To attend the meetings, please visit the City of Austin website for further information. I receive email updates from the City of Austin Planning Department about significant changes to the City of Austin Land Development Code. Please reach out to me if you would like to be included on the email listserv or be sent the latest email newsletter.

Other concerns with regard to the needs of our neighborhoods was the implication of the city selling our publicly-owned electric utility. This discussion was postponed at the last City Council meeting but it appears those discussions will continue. It was also discussed that the citizens of Austin may be looking at a 30% increase of water fees over a 5-year period. Conservation and innovative solutions will be critical in the coming years.

The graphic is a dark blue calendar titled "COVNA CALENDAR 2024" in a gold banner. Below the title, it says "FREE NEIGHBORHOOD EVENTS" in white. Three events are listed: "National Night Out" on Oct. 1, "Halloween Block Party" on Oct. 26, and "Holiday Party & Board Elections" on Dec. 7. A white rounded rectangle contains a "Note" stating "Details for each event will be announced closer to the date." At the bottom is a QR code and the text "Scan to join COVNA".

So like other neighborhoods, we will have our challenges but I am so appreciative we are a community that can continue to grow and support each other in the changes we are all facing. Thank you again for the opportunity to serve as our ANC representative. ■

Free fire prevention programs from the city

By Julie Chang

Neighbor Nelly Ramirez wants to spread the word on a couple of initiatives from the city that provides for free smoke detectors and fire hazard

assessments in your home.

The Austin Fire Department provides a free smoke alarm and installation to any resident with the only requirements that they live in a privately-owned home and have a genuine need for assistance. To participate in the program, call 512-974-0299 and leave your name, address and phone number.

While installing the free smoke alarm, the Fire Department can also offer a home hazard assessment. You can also conduct the assessment on your own by visiting austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Home_Hazard_Checklist.pdf. ■



Austin firefighter Jacob Whittington installs a free smoke alarm as a part of the department's free smoke alarm program. (Credit: Ralph Barrera/Austin American-Statesman.)