**March 14, 2015**

**WPNA meeting minutes**

Karen called the meeting to order. Thanked sponsors and newsletter deliverers. We need volunteers to deliver newsletters to Rogge (Bob Wheless volunteered), Coventry to Rogge, Sweetbriar and Dunbury (Brandon Fried volunteered), Gaston Place and North Hampton

Karen asked for volunteers to be safety chair. John Nordstrom has volunteered, and the members agreed.

New neighbors introduced themselves.

**Yard of the Month** – Sara Jane Lee introduced YOM on 6214 Walnut Hills of Patrick and LaQuetta Shane. LaQuetta has wanted to win YOM for years, and she was very excited to get the award. Some trees had fallen, they decided to xeriscape with rock and native plants. They’ve won a gift certificate for $50 from Shoal Creek Nursery.

**Minutes** from last month, February – minutes were approved.

**Guest presenter – Multicultural Refugee Coalition** – Katherine Keegan presented on the refugees in the neighborhood.

Refugees flee their home country based on credible fear because of discrimination. We have about 1000 refugees who come to Austin every year. We have a large Bhutanese population in this neighborhood – mostly of Nepali descent and moved to southern Bhutan in early 1900s. Then Bhutanese leadership decided that the Bhutanese of Nepali descent were labeled illegal immigrants and began persecuting the population.

Resettlement agencies in Austin are Caritas and Refugee Services. They get settled in specific apartments, which explains why our neighborhood has a large population of refugees. Texas receives the most refugees of any state. The refugee agencies serve the refugees for the first 8 months of resettlement.

The Multicultural Refugee Coalition provides long-term support for refugees after their initial benefits and services end. They have citizenship classes, basic English classes, tutoring for computer literacy and job coaching, and sewing training. They have a social enterprise called Open Arms to provide living wage to refugees.

New Leaf Agricultural program – refugees have plots that they can garden. There is a collaboration with Green Gate Farms where refugees can farm and take home fresh vegetables. They are also beginning an apprenticeship program to train two refugees to start their own farms. Global Kids Club – social support for the children of refugees who are in their programs. On Saturdays, children can participate in that while their parents are in other programs. They also provide homework tutoring help at home during the week.

They do not receive federal funding; all their funding comes from donations and grants.

**Proposed energy plant on Decker Lake – Jere Locke** – presented representing multiple environmental groups. He is on the community climate steering committee for the city. They favor renewable energy sources. Austin Energy wants to build a new gas plant on Decker Lake on the site of an old gas plant. It will cost $5 billion over 30 years. He argues that it will be cheaper ($3.2 billion) to use renewable sources like wind or solar power.

He states the price of gas will go up because it is harder to get gas, due to the costs of fracking. Solar provides 2.5 times the number of jobs, because gas jobs are on oil fields, while solar requires installation which will be local jobs.

There are almost no emissions from solar and wind energy. Gas is almost equivalent to coal in terms of methane gas emissions. He also discussed the use of water in fracking and concerns about the quantity of water required while Texas is going through a drought. In addition, there are concerns about pollution; 300-600 chemicals are put into every frack.

ANC will probably pass a resolution at the end of the month. He also requested that the community contact the city council to invest in wind, solar and energy efficiency.

The city is holding a study to show whether the gas plant is needed. The study will return to city council in June. The board of Austin Energy is now the city council.

Austin Energy will come to present at our next neighborhood meeting in April.

**Ora Houston**, City Council member for district 1, introduced herself. Currently nominating people to serve in boards and commissions. Please contact her office if you’d like to serve.

**Parks update** – Jeanette Swenson – we received recognition for having certified our yards. There will be another Habitat challenge this year. So if you haven’t certified yet, you will have another chance in April.

Playscape shades – we’ve sent the check for the 50% deposit for the first two shades. We expect that by mid April the smaller playscape and toddler swings will be shaded.

It’s my park day – last Saturday. Good representation from the neighborhood. We had 112 volunteers.

Upcoming – work days on the median, Friday April 10 to mulch. We will finish planting it out and use up our KAB grant. April 11 – Clean Sweep – there will be a church project to do a creek clean up.

Early June – Trails Day

Park Stewards meets Friday mornings. Please send Jeanette any hours you spend cleaning up the park on your own. It helps when we apply for grants to show community involvement.

April WPNA meeting – we will do another plant share so please bring in your native plants.

**School committee** – We are accepting applications for our scholarship. Please advocate for public schools in Texas legislature right now – we need to increase funding for public schools and we need to advocate for seniors who are in danger of not graduating because they are not passing STAAR tests.

We are working on creating an It’s My School Day at Andrews Elementary possibly to paint a portable.

Sheryl Cheatham – Austin Achieve Charter School is building a school in the neighborhood. This school is built on 4.3 acres and will house 1000 students, grades 6-12. The AISD builds on 30-40 acres for 1000 students.

We had a meeting with the director of the school, John Armbrust, to address the issues. Concerns about security with students – students getting in fights and using drugs. Also they will be driving as they get older, and there are only 50 spaces in their parking lot. Traffic is already a problem.

Lack of notification – Sheryl is currently researching why there was no notification to the neighbors.

It is also located very close to the housing for sexual offenders on Wheless.

Neighbors should contact city council members, go to the city website to attend city council.

**ANC Representative** – Ashley Holmes – two resolutions to vote on today.

There will be a link to the ANC resolutions.

Flood Mitigation Resolution – Concerns about development upstream. The resolution directs City Council to appropriate resources for abatement projects, remove dams, etc. Passed support for the resolution, none opposed.

Clean Affordable Energy Resolution – In favor of phasing out gas/coal-powered power plant and direct Austin Energy to use renewable energy. It will be voted on at the end of the month. Currently we don’t have all the information needed to make a vote. Motion to vote for a postponement, the meeting was in favor of a postponement. Second vote – if the postponement is not voted for, do we vote in favor of the resolution? Majority in favor, none opposed. One abstaining.

**Sign initiative** – Karen has ordered signs to slow traffic. It is cheaper to order several signs that say the same thing. Corona’s signs are an individual initiative, not WPNA signs. Karen is asking $5 donation per sign if people would like to display them in their yards. The signs will say Windsor Park Neighborhood Association.

Logo or hearts are much more expensive. Ours will be ready at the end of March. There seems to be a lot of interest.

Eventually we’d like to do dual language.

**50th Anniversary of Reagan High School** – lots of events planned. If you know anyone who graduated from RHS, please contact Randy Teich or Elaine Bohls and creating a Reagan Alumni Foundation for the school. They will have a webpage.

Meeting adjourned.