

Dawson Neighborhood News

Newsletter of the Dawson Neighborhood Association
and Dawson Neighborhood Plan Contact Team
www.dawsonneighborhoodassociation.org

May/June 2024

H.O.M.E. Initiative Update

— Julie Woods, DNA President

Austinites are wondering what is coming next regarding the new housing ordinances and the short answer is that, until the city releases the full text, we don't exactly know. If you wish to keep up-to-date on the process, you can check these websites:

- <https://www.austintexas.gov/page/home-amendments>
- <https://publicinput.com/r6817>

The Austin City Council voted on December 7 of last year to approve phase 1 and on May 17 to approve phase 2 of the collection of ordinances called H.O.M.E. The acronym originally meant Home Options for Middle-income Empowerment but at some point became Home Options for Mobility and Equity. These changes allow property owners to subdivide their lots in order to place more housing units on the smaller lots. The requirements for setbacks between houses and nearby buildings have also been reduced. The goal is to allow homeowners to either rent out or sell housing units in their backyard in order to remain in their home, thereby being able to afford rising property taxes. The increased supply of housing units is thought to decrease housing costs through a straightforward supply-and-demand mechanism.

Critics of this plan have pointed out that first, housing doesn't respond to simple supply-and-demand economics; if so, the huge increase in housing units in Austin would have already decreased housing costs, which hasn't happened in any meaningful way. Second, they note that most middle-income homeowners can't afford to build more units on their property because such units cost at least \$100,000 and interest rates remain high. Third, this ordinance will accelerate gentrification in vulnerable neighborhoods already facing displacement and that such a law is a furtherance of the systemic racism that has already done tremendous harm to communities of color, especially on the east side of Austin.

A final criticism has been that the hidden motivation for this ordinance is a federal grant application the city is making in order to pay for ProjectConnect, with the demand that the city speak honestly about how existing money has been spent and exactly how much the new rail lines will cost in total. If you want to read more about how that situation unfolded, you can read about that here: <https://theaustinindependent.org/council-passes-home-2-link-to-federal-rail-grant-application-becomes-clear/> There are links to more information on that page.

For more information on what these changes will look like, you can see some visualizations here:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1wbS7jvpepDPiMIG6lbdkZUsC CoxXoIsZ/edit#slide=id.p2>

We will continue to share information as this situation develops.

Thanks to Our Sponsor



Dawson Elementary serves children ages 3 to 12 years.

Please contact Dawson's office at 512-698-9151, to set up a time for a tour.

Dawson Neighborhood List Serve: Groups.io

<https://groups.io/g/dawsonneighborhoodassociation>

Find Us On Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/DawsonNeighborhoodAssociation>

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Next Meeting

Monday, June 10, 6:30
Cosmic Coffee, 121 Pickle Rd.

Agenda

Neighborhood Association

1. Approval of the last meeting's minutes
2. What to expect from H.O.M.E.
3. Gillis park
4. South Central Waterfront development

Plan Contact Team

1. Approve Feb 2023 DNPCT meeting notes
2. Crow Bar property
3. Demos of 3001 S Congress and Hill's Cafe
4. Gillis Pool Discussion
5. HEB update?
6. Homeless/transient problems on the south side of construction site

If you want to stay up-to-date, please join our groups.io email group if you haven't already.

<https://groups.io/g/dawsonneighborhoodassociation>

We meet on the 2nd Monday of February, April, June, August, October, and December.

Pictures From the Neighborhood, Spring 2024



It's My Park Day, Gillis Park, 2 March 2024



Total eclipse, Dawson style



Mina in bluebonnets, Cumberland and La Mesa



Minutes of Dawson Neighborhood Association February 12, 2024, 6:30 at South Austin Neighborhood Center

Rebecca Sheller, secretary, called the meeting to order.

Minutes approved.

1. Update on HOME initiative discussed.
2. Dawson Elementary School playground might be locked and unavailable to dog walkers due to new state legislation about school safety and security.
3. It's My Park Day is March 2nd.
4. Austin Marathon is February 18.
5. Lights have been turned back on at Gillis Park.
6. Tree trimming around utility lines seems aggressive.
7. The new Equity-based Preservation Plan brochure was distributed.

Meeting adjourned

Minutes of Dawson Neighborhood Plan Contact Team, February 12, 2024

Martin Harris, Chair, Dawson Neighborhood Plan Contact Team, called meeting to order.

1. Approved December meeting notes.
2. This was not a formal meeting as only one of the two board members was present. We only discussed the following:
 - a. Mention was made of city planning notices: City Council moves to allow more denser housing on properties and will soon decide how many on a lot size. The lot size is also going to be changed to a smaller size requirement. <https://www.kut.org/austin/2023-12-07/austin-scraps-some-zoning-restrictions-in-the-pursuit-of-cheaper-housing>
 - b. Gillis Park Lights are now on at nights.
 - c. The city came and cleared out the creek and pond from at least Alpine to Lightsey of trash, weeds and some tree limbs before the last storm.
 - d. Trees are now being tagged to cut limbs away from the power lines on the south side of the neighborhood. They will be cut in the next few weeks.
 - e. Bulk pickup is on January 2nd.
 - f. IMPD November 2023 mulching at Gillis Park was a success.

Meeting adjourned