

# Dawson Neighborhood News

Newsletter of the Dawson Neighborhood Association  
and Dawson Neighborhood Plan Contact Team  
[www.dawsonneighborhoodassociation.org](http://www.dawsonneighborhoodassociation.org)

Jan/Feb 2025

## The Bats Above Us

— Diana Claitor

Most of the wild animals around Dawson are the bothersome or humdrum kind. The random possum on the porch, the raccoon family in the attic, those damnable squirrels raining down pecan shells. Coyotes and foxes range up and down our streets at night and sometimes, in broad daylight. Geckos and red-throated anoles—typically everywhere.

Other creatures are not so typical. One Saturday evening, a strange something lay stretched out underneath one of our pecan trees. It was a coppery red furry bat with wingspread of more than a foot. It didn't move, but it seemed alive. Sure that no conservationist would answer a Saturday night call for advice and also sure that our neighbor's prowling Siamese would attack it, David gently placed a metal garbage can lid over it with the idea of getting advice in the morning. Without touching it, of course.

Sunday morning we lifted the lid and found...nada! How did Red manage to lift that lid and disappear?



I called the hot line to Bat Conservation International headquartered in Austin, and to our amazement, a bat biologist-rescuer was at our door in an hour. She looked at the spot where the bat had been and lifted two tiny wiggling things out of the leaves and immediately began feeding them with a miniscule bottle. She informed us that these were the babies of a female Eastern red bat (*Lasiurus borealis*) who had fallen or been blown down during labor. Babies that she had been forced to abandon.

Feeling guilty for trapping her, I asked the biologist if red bat mothers always had two babies. The rescuer held up a tissue wrapped around something and gave me the bad news with a sympathetic smile: "No, here's the third one that was stepped on." She would be taking the two survivors home where she had a large cage with scores of baby red bats that she handfeeds, 24 hours a day, until they can be released. Hats off to her for this invaluable work and to all the other hardworking rescuers of native wildlife of Austin.

Red bats typically live alone, roosting in trees. It is said they especially like pecans, where ours was found. Sometimes they live in family groups, after the females give birth to one to five pups and breast feed them with four teats! Born blind and helpless, the tiny bats learn to fly in approximately one month and are weaned one to two weeks later, although some are said to hang around longer, just like human kids. I consoled myself that our girl bat would likely have more babies the next spring, since red bats can live a decade or more.

Red bats help out humans by eating crop pests and other problem insects. They also pollinate many plants from peaches to avocados

(See Bat on next page)

## 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.

## Next Meeting

Monday, Feb 10, 6:30  
South Austin Rec Center, 1100  
Cumberland Rd.

## Agenda

### Neighborhood Association

1. Approval of the last meeting minutes
2. Update on Gillis Park
3. Community Development Commission election
4. Update on the 600 Cumberland Road project

### Plan Contact Team

1. Approval of DNPCT December 2024 meeting notes
2. Voting on new DNPCT officers
3. Wheels Bar still in transition working on border fences
4. City fire restrictions on weed growth and fire prevention, Alpine pond is being kept at park height growth, more cuttings per year
5. Few new permits from City since last meeting
6. Short Term Rentals city meetings
7. State Lege considers more Homestead relief

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## Dawson Neighborhood List Serve: Groups.io

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

## Find Us On Facebook

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

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

## It's My Park Day Spring 2025 at Gillis Park, March 1st

Open Volunteer Registration begins Monday February 3rd, and will end on the morning of the event, March 1st. We are looking for 30 people for this task of mulching.

<https://austinparks.givepulse.com/event/546989-Gillis-Neighborhood-Park-Spring-clean-up-2025>

The Spring IMPD is Saturday, March 1st starting at 9am at our Gillis neighborhood park, 2410 Durwood Ave, at the corner of West Oltorf and South 1st, behind the Texaco and Habanero. We will mulch the northern side of the park with 12-14 cubic yards of compost mulch provided by the city. We will do a cleanup sweep of trash in Gillis Park and along the creek nearby.

Gloves, shovels, transport compost tubs and trash pick up tools will be provided, but feel free to bring your own, if you can. Some water and snacks will be provided.

T-shirts will also be provided for volunteers as well as a list of participating businesses that will provide some sort of thank you, if you visit them on that day and wear your shirt.

Any input from the community to help improve the park will be appreciated. We are presently putting together a survey to address issues with the park.

Please join us for this event!



Gillis park community survey

*(Bat—continued from front page)*

to cactus, and they disperse the seeds of hundreds of species of plants. Of course, we don't do enough to mitigate our destructive ways of deforestation and development, and we definitely need to improve the wind turbines that are proving to be lethal to red bats in particular.

Our girl had a good coat of auburn hair, but that protection is only good down to about 23 degrees. Austin's already dipped below that in 2025. The red bats actually need leaves on the ground for temporary hibernation when an Arctic front like last month's comes in, and so we can help them survive by turning off the leaf blower and leaving a few piles of leaves here and there.

Please spread the word about that, Dawsonites, and also tell your friends that not all bats hang out at the Congress Avenue bridge—some are our neighbors, quietly living out their lives right above us.

## Minutes of Dawson Neighborhood Association December 9, 2024

Julie Woods, President, called the meeting to order.

1. October minutes approved.
2. Announcements:
  - a. DNA supported Galindo Neighborhood Association to ask the Board of Adjustments to postpone a hearing on a variance for development at 2600 Cumberland and S. 1st St.
  - b. Amy and Marty met with Parks Foundation to survey Gillis Park for improvement ideas and to discuss the closed bathrooms.
  - c. The new HEB is open.
  - d. CRUX gym is in legal dispute with the building owner over their move.
  - e. Waymo is free with a code during a final trial prior to public service in January
  - f. Marty attended CapMetro South Congress Transit open house and inquired about future plans when the light rail is in place.
  - g. David Elliott observed excessive trash at Cumberland and El Paso creek bridges and discussed how we might help keep the creek cleaner.
  - h. Public parks might start charging fees for use (?)....to raise money(?)
  - i. Julia Brookins stated that City Council passed the Historical Preservation Plan
3. Elections of DNA Officers: Julie Woods, President; Eliot Kimber, Newsletter Editor; Rebecca Sheller, Secretary. No volunteers for Vice President.

Meeting adjourned

## Minutes of Dawson Neighborhood Plan Contact Team, December 9, 2024

Approval of DNPCT October 2024 meeting notes.

IMPD Fall 2024 at Gillis Park was a success again. We moved 6 cu yards of mulch and picked up trash in record time.

City planning sent notice of 2600 Cumberland/S1st site plan, across from Ultimate Automotive. We met with the developer group twice now in the past several years.

Voting on new DNPCT officers was delayed to next meeting.

City planning sent notice of site plan for old Old Equipment, car inspection and small tool repair site on 2929 S1st street near Dawson Elementary

CapMetro had an open house to discuss South Congress Transit site last month. Site is being redesigned to allow MU and affordable housing and reflect changes to area usage and respond to transportation changes.

There is to be a trash cleanup of the Alpine Pond area on 12.14.24 @ 9am, overseen by local residents from the south side of the neighborhood.

New Landscape group in charge of Alpine Pond vegetation. Several neighbors and I have been independently in touch with Stormwater and the Landscape contractor hired to keep the area clean and maintained as per WhatsApp for the southern DNA area.

City with days just before Thanksgiving was seen collecting items and clearing camping sites along BW and SC roadway, and Texas AG is putting Sunshine Community Church on Menchaca on notice to clean up area.