

'Face Problems of Growth'

ANC Provides Support for Neighborhood Organizations

by Dale Carrington

(Editor's note: This is the sixth and last of a series on zoning in Austin. In this article, we take a look at neighborhood groups and how they affect the growth of the city. We center our discussion on the Austin Neighborhoods Council and its coordinator Joan Bartz. The ANC represents 11 of the 29 neighborhood groups in Austin. In the accompanying map, all 29 groups are represented. (See legend below.)

Joan Bartz is not exactly the image of the 'radical' she is sometimes supposed to be. In fact, she is the epitome of the average person. The difference between Joan Bartz and the average person is that she cares about her neighborhood.

The coordinator of the Austin Neighborhoods Council, in operation for just over a year now, says "neighborhood groups are formed by homeowners who feel something is wrong but don't know how to approach the problem. That's why ANC was formed. It's a matter of support. We do for neighborhoods what the Chamber of Commerce does for business."

ANC was formed just before the last City Council elections in order to give candidates an opportunity to speak to a large number of neighborhood groups at one time. The candidate forum, held at Highland Mall, was one of the largest and most well attended of its kind. After the elections, a number of those who were represented decided to remain together because they "realized what goes on in their area affects the rest of the city," said Mrs. Bartz.

But, for Joan Bartz, involvement in neighborhood organizations began over two and a half years ago with her own neighborhood group, University Hills Homeowners. As is the case with most groups, it was formed to face a crisis: in this case the destruction of a neighborhood park for the construction of townhouses.

"The owner of the property wanted to destroy the park," said Mrs. Bartz, "to build apartments, though he had led homeowners to believe the park would stay. It was part of the sales pitch."

The University Hills Homeowners took the case to 53rd District Court, and got a unanimous decision forcing the developer to leave the park intact. Afterwards, the City Council approved the purchase of the land and it was officially designated park land. It's due to be

dedicated the end of this month the Dottie Jordon Park. Ms. Jordon, a diabetes victim who died recently, worked to save the park.

"After the crisis was over," Mrs. Bartz said, "we realized we would need to stay together because neighborhoods are a day to day operation. We became concerned about maintaining our neighborhood's integrity and began working with the traffic and transportation department, the planning department and eventually we developed a rapport with the city."

"The ordinary citizen is buffaloed by the city," she added. "When really, it's only a matter of knowing who to call and how to approach problems."

So, in April of 1973, representatives from some 19 groups banded together to form the Austin Neighborhoods Council. Today, that number is eleven, though others still maintain speaking but non-voting rights. According to the by-laws, eight major purposes were set down and adopted then: "1. To act as a coordinating body for the efforts of Austin area neighborhood groups, which shall remain as autonomous groups. 2. To encourage formation of new neighborhood groups. 3. To act as a clearing house for information and guidance in matters pertaining to zoning, environment, ethics and consumer protection relating to neighborhoods and the city as a whole. 4. To research those plans, resolutions, ordinances, and legislation which directly affect all neighborhoods in the Austin area. 5. To make a positive contribution to Austin through the betterment of our neighborhoods and the promotion of civic awareness. 6. To provide to its members information and education through forums, seminars, etc. on those subjects relating to neighborhood needs. 7. To encourage the selection of individuals for official and public service appointments who are responsive to the needs of the neighborhoods, and 8. To serve as an information exchange agency with no partisan political function. (The ANC will not endorse politicians, but does not prohibit member groups from doing so.)"

"We get lots and lots of calls for information," Mrs. Bartz told us. "And so far, we've always been able to find someone in our groups who has the answer."

While each group fights its own battles, remaining autonomous, they realize that

ANC is behind them, offering support in problems. For instance, during the recent rollback request from members of the Concerned Citizens for Development of West Austin, representatives from ANC were present, but did not speak.

Addressing this issue, Mrs. Bartz says that "it's only logical that the request was approved" by the Planning Commission. I think everyone has a right to use their land, but in this case, the commercial interests were trying to impose their views on the residents and homeowners; which, incidentally, is the same charge the real estate interests use against residents. The residential and development people will eventually see that we can live together."

Mrs. Bartz feels that the constant referral to neighborhood groups as "no growth" people is misleading. She maintains that the so called 'no growth' people are actually against the problems that accompany growth. "Most of the growth today," she observed, "is geared toward monetary gain. I think that, to change that,

everyone has the responsibility to face problems that come with growth. We are not against growth; one that is planned and programmed."

The view that Mrs. Bartz and many other neighborhood organizers take toward preserving their neighborhoods is an overall view: that is an overview of all aspects that make up and contribute to the community - streets, schools, parks, creeks and the environment. By organizing the Austin Neighborhoods Council, members have been able to keep abreast of changes in city policies and can transmit information to their own neighborhood.

When she talks about preserving her neighborhood, she's talking about the quality of life in her community. She is convinced that in order to maintain the integrity of the neighborhood, she has to care, and to make sure she is heard.

She realizes the qualities that make Austin so liveable are limited and perishable. They are, as one neighborhood worker said, "not the icing on the cake, but the cake itself."



Joan Bartz

29 Groups Serving Austin Neighborhoods

The following is a list of the 29 neighborhood groups in Austin. The map on the next page identifies each by numbers corresponding with the numbers here. We list here the name of each group, the chief officer and his or her address and phone. Those affiliated with the Austin Neighborhood Council are marked with (ANC). For information on the ANC by-laws, write to P.O. Box 296, Austin, Texas, 78767.

1. Balcones Civic Association-Jimmy F. Landrum, 4102 Rockford Lane, 345-1266.
2. Blackshear Residents for Individual Property Rights-Emmett Lindsey, 709 Concho, 472-1058.
3. Concerned Citizens of East Austin-Cleve Moten, 4907 York Hill, 926-7653.
4. Concerned Citizens of Lakewood-Dempsey Allphin, 7405 Creekbluff, 345-1658.
5. Heritage Hills Homeowners (ANC)-Don Amundson, 8114 Shenandoah Drive, 836-7750.
6. No Crusher Committee-Lydia Schaefer, 3609 Country White Lane, 892-0692.
7. North Austin Civic Association-Janet Krieger, P.O. Box 9022, 78766, 836-5961.
8. North East Austin Residents Association-Arthur Mosely, 1402 Marston Circle, 836-5691.
9. North West Austin Civic Association-Jack C. Goodman, 6301 Belo Horizonte Circle, 345-1646 or 465-7628.
10. Concerned Citizens for Development of West Austin (ANC)-Sandra Weinstock, 1109 West 9th, 472-3720.
11. Save University Neighborhoods (ANC)-Mike McLone, 2104 Pearl Street, 478-6205.
12. South Austin Neighborhood-Norma Guerra, 610 Bouldin, phone unlisted.
13. South Austin Neighborhoods East (ANC)-Patricia Brown, 1713 Rockbridge Terrace, 442-

- 6875.
14. South River City Citizens (ANC)-Terry Carter, 307-C Leland Street, 444-1693.
15. South West Austin Homeowners Association-Jim Ward, 5704 Cherry Creek Drive, 892-0316.
16. Spicewood Springs Valley Area-Betty Ann Theobald, 9122 Yucca Mountain Drive, 345-0869.
17. St. Johns Neighborhood Group-Junious Scott, 7102 Bethune Street, no phone.
18. University Hills Homeowners (ANC)-Joan Bartz, 6713 Tulsa Cove, 926-4161.
19. West Central Neighborhood Group (ANC)-Sally Shipman, 2705 Moonlight, 476-9954.
20. North University Neighborhoods Association (ANC)-Stroud C. Kelley, 3408-A Cedar S Street, no phone.
21. Barton View Civic Association-Bernard J. McSherry, 3221 John Campbell Trail, no phone.
22. Allandale Neighborhood Association (ANC)-Patty Hakes, 5720 Louise Lane, no phone.
23. Ridgelea Neighborhood Association (ANC)-Joseph D. Martinec, 824 West 10th St. #106, 478-1035 or 454-8026.
24. Friends of Eastwoods-Roger Pinckney, 3101 Harris Park Avenue, no phone.
25. Old Austin Neighborhood-Carolyn Bucknell, 808 West Avenue, no phone.
26. South Meadows Neighborhood-Fred Brunell, 6406 South Meadows Blvd., no phone.
27. Save Our Lake Association (ANC)-Charles Cleland, 3427 Monte Vista, no phone.
28. Hyde Park Neighborhood Association-Mrs. Walter Richter, 3901 Avenue G, no phone.
29. East Town Lake Citizens-Jesse Segovia, 2010 Bergman, 478-6060. This group is the newest group in Austin, having formed Monday night to fight the city in its efforts to purchase property to expand Fiesta Gardens.

**For More Information
on Neighborhood Groups
call the City Planning
Department at 477-6451**

Corner Second St. and Lavaca