

**NORTH SHOAL CREEK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
**GENERAL MEETING**  
**PILLOW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
May 6, 2014

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:31 pm by Elizabeth Ray, President, with the President being in the Chair and minutes being recorded by Donna Eagar, substituting for the Secretary. Agenda was amended by reversing items 3 and 4.

Two candidates for District representative to City Council introduced themselves.

2. As amended, motion to adopt the agenda by Dallas Maham, seconded by Levi Bullock and unanimously approved.

3. Joanna Wolaver, Executive Director of Shoal Creek Conservancy. The Conservancy was founded in October 2013, and is a nonprofit dedicated to improving Shoal Creek and the trail. Activities are detailed at ShoalCreekConservancy.org including work days on May 16 and June 7 and a Shoal Creek geology walk on May 17. Current projects include completion of a bike trail from Lady Bird Lake to the Pickle Center and restoration of the 6<sup>th</sup> Street bridge that was built in 1887. New members are welcome; membership is \$25 and helps demonstrate support for Conservancy projects.

NSCNA is invited to designate a representative to the Shoal Creek Conservancy Advisory Board. If you are interested in being considered, provide that information to the NSCNA Beautification Committee through the neighborhood website, NSCNA.org.

4. Marya Crigler, R.P.A., Chief Appraiser for the Travis Central Appraisal District, provided information about how tax appraisals are accomplished. The Notice of Appraised Value that everyone recently received are based on market value of the property as of 1-1-14.

She encouraged everyone to utilize exemptions for which they are eligible: **Homestead Exemption** allows property taxes to increase no more than 10% per year. With rapidly increasing market values in our area, the 10% limit could result in substantial savings. It is not too late to file for Homestead exemption for last year. **Over 65 Exemption** puts a ceiling on school district taxes – they will not increase beyond the level in the owner's 65<sup>th</sup> year.

Homeowners can protest the appraisal and instructions were included with the Notice of Appraised Value. If you have evidence that was not available to the Appraisal Board when they determined the market value of your property, it may result in a re-determination. They have access only to the outside of your home, so if a major problem like a cracked slab exists that would substantially lower the value of your home, you can provide photos and estimates costs to repair as evidence of market value. If you recently purchased your home for less than the market value, that is also evidence.

Most importantly, the way you can influence your property taxes is to VOTE. More information is available on the website: [traviscad.org](http://traviscad.org).

Bruce Elfant, Travis County Tax Assessor/Collector, encouraged payment of property taxes on time as the penalties and interest can go up to 24%. He offered a consumer alert: Investigate carefully any organization offering to lend you money to pay your property taxes. His office can work with you on payment options. He specifically mentioned that taxpayers who are 65 or older or disabled can make 4 equal payments that are spread out over 12 months without interest. You must make arrangements for that plan in advance. If you have a payment plan in place and are keeping up the agreed payments, your property cannot be foreclosed.

Because of the high volume of work in the Tax Assessor/Collector's office, Mr. Elfant encouraged payment of property taxes on-line by e-check; arrangements are in place to do that for a \$1 fee. Additional information is available at [traviscountytax.org](http://traviscountytax.org).

5. Committee Reports led by Mike Blood, Vice President.

**Media:** Sharon Justice reported that the Summer 2014 Newsletter is scheduled for mid-June.

**By-laws:** Dallas Maham asked members to let him know if revisions need to be considered.

**Beautification:** Mary Jane Weir asked anyone interested in representing NSCNA with Shoal Creek Conservancy to let her know. Also, let her know of other beautification projects. E-mail her through the NSCNA.org website at Beautification Committee.

**Development:** Kevin Weir reported on zoning changes that are being considered by the City of Austin. NSCNA is working with Austin Neighborhood Coalition and Imagine Austin to develop a neighborhood plan. Kenneth Webb reported on CodeNEXT; 176 photos have been submitted. The Land Development Code will be discussed at a meeting on May 19, 2014, at Penn Field, 3601 South Congress.

**Social:** Amelia Cobb reported on the recent Neighborhood Garage Sale. She encouraged volunteers to sign up to help with the 4<sup>th</sup> of July event at Pillow school. Contact her through NSCNA.org, Social Committee.

6. Kevin and Mary Jane Weir presented information about National Neighborhood Association program they have developed to help neighborhoods coordinate information and activities while minimizing in-person meetings that may discourage participation. NSCNA is linked to the website: [www.MyNNA.com](http://www.MyNNA.com).

A neighbor announced several shooting of pets with a pellet gun on Briarwood. The incidents have been reported to the police. Sharon Justice requested that neighbors post such information on the Yahoo Group, a communication tool available through the NSCNA.org website.

7. Scott Gross, City of Austin Urban Rail manager, provided information about mass transit developments in Austin. He described the process through which Project Connect

rail transit in the central corridor has been prioritized. The bond election in November 2014 is viewed as a down payment on a comprehensive mass transit system for the 4-county area including 13 cities. He encouraged participation in the planning process through Speak Up Austin online discussions.

8. The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 pm.

Minutes prepared by Donna Eagar.

Minutes approved at November 4, 2014 General Membership meeting.