

NUNA

NORTH UNIVERSITY
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION



Letter from the Editor

Dear NUNA Neighbors,

“We hadn’t been here very long before we had the issue with the developer buying the house up here on 32nd street and trying to turn it into a stealth dorm. It felt like being part of Charlie’s Angels.”

The above quote from a captivating interview with our neighbor Steven Tomlinson, published here, still has me laughing just a little bit. I like to think of my neighbors as Charlie’s Angels. I imagine who might be Bosley or who got stuck playing the role of Sabrina. Nobody used to ever want to play the role of Sabrina.

There are only two articles in this mid-summer issue of the NUNA Newsletter, but that’s enough--they are great enough to make the issue all on their own. In my humble opinion, you will be more-than-satisfied—maybe even smarter-- if you take a minute to read them.

Like the true and informed food writer that she is, Beth Goulart has scouted out the most up-to-date and titillating NUNA culinary news—but you must read on to find out (teaser: a little bit of Lockhart is coming our way very, very soon. Like maybe today). Furthermore, if you are still recovering from Brazil’s crushing loss to Germany yesterday in the World Cup, you can give Brazil a kind of NUNA sympathy hug by eating a plate

full of yucca at Sao Paolo’s Restaurante on San Jacinto. Because this is my other favorite line in this late summer newsletter: “So you see, drizzling it [Yucca] with liquid cheese is an excellent idea.”

And then there is the interview with Steven, someone who has used his many talents to make this neighborhood a better place for all of us. Not to be crass, but many, many people hire Steven to learn from him. He is an award-winning teacher, consultant, lecturer and lay preacher. The man gives Ted Talks and writes monologues. But here he is, in the pages of your humble



Catching Air in Adams Park One

*“Love thy neighbor - and if he happens to be tall,
debonair and devastating, it will be that much easier.”*

- Mae West

NUNA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

First English Lutheran Church

Monday, August 4, 2014

6:30 pm

AGENDA

- I. **Call to Order** Approve Minutes
- II. **New Business (Quick):**
 - I. **DISCUSS.** New development project.
305 E 34th St (Steck House Apartments)
 - II. **DISCUSS.** Parks plan and timeline.
(Bill Bednar, Laurence Miller, Mary Ingle,
Doug Plummer)
 - III. **DISCUSS.** Options for NUNA projects
to improve our parks
- III. **Reports**
 - I. **Treasurer** - Jan Moyle
 - II. **Quadrant Leaders' Reports** -
Dick Holland, Mary Ingle,
JR Johnson, Rick Iverson
and Laurie Marchant
- IV. **Adjourn**



Catching Air in Adams Park Two

NUNA newsletter, generously, openly sharing with us a few words that relate to us all, and particularly about the fine, essential, but often disparaged art of neighborhood politics.

Please enjoy.

Clayton

Unapproved NUNA General Meeting Minutes

June 2, 2014 • 6:30pm

Eileen Gil, the NUNA secretary, could not be present, so Clayton Maxwell took notes.

The three District 9 City Council candidates—Chris Riley, Kathie Tovo, and Erin McGann-- came to talk about the issues that concern us most. Before Michael Riley convened the meeting, Steven Tomlinson had everyone vote (by putting beans in a jar) on what topics we wanted the Talking to our candidates

Meeting is convened.

Three items of NUNA business were attended to before

the candidates were introduced.

Minutes approved.

Time to elect new officers. Reagan Gammon leads officer selection committee. Only change is that JR Johnson is going to be NE quadrant leader.

It is decided that Mary Ingle will be co-leaders for the northeast quadrant We hear nominations from the floor to amend slate to include Mary Ingle and JR Johnson as the northeast quadrant leaders. Approved.

VOTE: Fourth of July Celebration expenditure vote. Approved to spend \$250 for the event.

We are working on getting residential permit parking back of Tom Green between 34th and 38th. needs to notify neighborhood make sure it gets into minutes. Tom Green--restrict parking on one block east of 35th and 38th—just one block. Approved.

Michael has a meeting with Michael Lazura (sp?) about sidewalks on 34th between Speedway and Guadalupe

Steven Tomlinson introduces Erin McGann, Kathie Tovo, and Chris Riley.

Format for tonight's discussion. Steven asked each of the candidates to talk for 2 or 3 minutes. Here is a summary of their introductions.

Chris Riley

Been on Austin City Council since 2009, born here in Austin, at old Seton Hospital, went to Austin public schools, UT law school, and 17 years as lawyer. Now living downtown west of capital. Started Downtown Neighborhood Association, was on the planning commission for 6 or 7 years. Interested Transportation,

2013-2014 NUNA OFFICERS

President Michael Riley - NunaAustin@gmail.com

Vice President Steven Tomlinson - steven@abporter.org

Secretary Eileen Gill - eileenpgill@gmail.com

Treasurer Jan Moyle - moylejan@gmail.com

NW Quadrant Representative

Rick Iverson - Iver506@sbcglobal.net

SW Quadrant Representative

Laurie Marchant -

Laurie@alexandermarchant.com

NE Quadrant Representative

Mary Ingle - casamia22@att.net

JR Johnson

SE Quadrant Representative

Dick Holland - rh02@txstate.edu

Austin Neighborhoods Council Representative - vacant

CANPAC Representatives

Mary Ingle, Bill Bednar

(Laurence Miller as alternate)

Development Review Committee (DRC)

Steven Tomlinson - steven@abporter.org

Parks Committee

Bill Bednar, Julie Willis

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Eugene Sepulveda - Eugene@abporter.org

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Trish Tang, Debi Rivier-Harris, Don Carnes and Pat Campbell, Rick Iverson and Joe Sosa, Daphny Ainsley, Paul Kens, Carole LeClair, Vicki Ford, Alegria Hibbits, Homer Parsegian, Michael Riley, Clayton Maxwell (with Jim and Jan Moyle as permanent subs)

Newsletter Ads

Julie Willis - Julie_willis@outlook.com

Newsletter Editorial

Clayton Maxwell - nunanews@gmail.com

affordability, maintaining city's character. There's a lot of work to do; we are at a critical turning point as we transition to a 10-1 system, paying attention to our city's issues.

Kathie Tovo

Served on City Council since 2011, lived in District 9 for almost 23 years, lived in NUNA, lived on Laurel Lane. Was the Neighborhood Association president for Bouldin Creek. Interested in needs and interest of everyday austinites, not lobbyists and developers who frequent City Hall all the time. Affordability, working on different solution for affordability. Her voting record shows commitment to neighborhoods.

Erin McGann

Not served on City Council, lived here 12 years, moved from Denver, been on citizen's review panel working with complaints against police officers, people with reentry problems, with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, community reentry program, help offenders trying to come back into society. Says this city can do better.

Following the votes (beans in cups), candidates then discussed Land Use Codes, Enforcement, Transportation, Noise Pollution and maybe other things—not sure because the stand-in, last minute secretary had to return home to her kiddos.

The Dish

By Beth Goulart Monson

I can hardly keep up. It's summertime, when news ought to slow down. But the food news in our little neighborhood just keeps rolling in.

Back in March, **Boomerang's** left its 8-year home in the



The Juiceland Cleanse

old Half-Price Books building on Guadalupe. You can still acquire Boomerang's pies - the company caters, sells frozen pies at **HEB** and **Whole Foods**, and peddles steaming hot ones from an iconic food truck named Sheila that gets all around town.

In Boomerang's old location, a new outpost of **Black's** barbecue from Lockhart is slated to have opened by the time you read this ink. Rumor has it the smoked meat will be carted in from Lockhart, where the renowned

pit holds 500 pounds of eight different meats at a time. Texas Monthly magazine reports that Black's brisket is standout, owing to a methodology the magazine describes as possibly "the weirdest smoking routine in Texas." Black's is going to fit right in around here. How will **Ruby's** fare with another legit barbecue outlet so near? We have our barbecue-eating work cut out for us, neighbors. Let's support them both.

Wasn't summer supposed to be quiet? No one told the folks from **JuiceLand**, apparently. They must have

enjoyed their time in our midst when they occupied the building behind **Spider House** last year, because they've made a serious commitment to the neighborhood by locating the company's new headquarters in the old **Rita's Italian Ice** location at 29th and Guadalupe. Pop in for a healthy vegetarian or vegan meal, a juice, or a smoothie. Curious about a juice cleanse? You can buy juice by the day for any of several regimented cleanses, or one you create yourself.

It's hard to talk about news in Austin without talking about the weather. This year, uncommonly frequent rains have watered our gardens, making eating at home especially succulent this year for the green-thumbed – and the lucky neighbors of gardeners with more harvest than they can handle alone. Just tonight, my family enjoyed a tart of fresh heirloom tomatoes, grown by our neighbors, goat cheese and olive tapenade from **Central Market**. I grew the chiffonade of basil I sprinkled over top, thank you very much.

Also this month, we got swept up in Brazil World Cup fever and dined at **Sao Paolo's Restaurante** on San Jacinto for the first time – and we'll go back. We started with cocktails: for my husband, an on-trend caipirinha, made with a Brazilian liquor called cachaça and lime juice; and for me, a caipiroska, a Russia-meets-Brazil spin on his drink that subs in vodka for the cachaça. It was a little like a Mexican martini, and happy hour priced at \$4.00.

From the happy hour menu, we ordered a starter of yucca with queso (\$3.95), which is like cheese fries, but with culture. Yucca, also known as cassava and manioc, is a woody shrub. Its starchy tuberous root provides carbohydrates and fills a culinary niche much like that of the potato. So you see, drizzling it with liquid cheese is an excellent idea.

Join the Discussion!

Listserves are a great way to become more connected with your community. **The North University Yahoo Group** is a hands-on, public communications resource, helping neighbors inform, communicate, and build a stronger community. The list is inclusive, open to anyone who lives in the North University Neighborhood and to people who have a material interest here, such as operators of a business, non-profit, or civic process. One can subscribe by sending E-mail to:



nuna-residents-subscribe@yahogroups.com

or by visiting the Yahoo! Groups site at:

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@crimeatx is a crime watch Twitter feed that promotes crime prevention and public safety awareness in our area. It was established by the Central Austin CDC in January 2012 to help inform and prepare the returning student community in the immediate aftermath of the NYE attacks and murder of Esme Barrera. To sign up or learn more, visit **twitter.com/crimeatx** and tweet with the hashtag **#NORTHUNIVERSITY**.

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Next, we moved onto the “Brazilian Entrees” page of the menu, opting to save the “Tex-Mex Entrees” page for another time. We loved the Estrogonofe do Sul (Stroganoff) (\$10.95) with its strips of chicken and creamy-tangy sauce and the Galinhada (Brazilian paella) (\$11.95), a savory casserole of saffron-flavored rice with chicken, vegetables, and cilantro mixed throughout. I’m a big fan of hearts of palm, and thus loved the flavor of the vegetarian Palmito ao Forno (\$8.99), in which a mix of finely chopped vegetables and the palm hearts were smothered in a cheesy, creamy sauce, and baked. Some bits of palm were too fibrous and unpleasantly difficult to chew. The “banana tots” that came on the side were pure pleasure, though. How could slices of banana breaded, fried, and dipped in house-made honey-mustard sauce be anything else?

Our waiter at Sao Paulo’s surprised us when he confessed he wasn’t from Brazil. He seemed very knowledgeable and tirelessly answered our many questions about the menu. We asked him to pack our leftovers into boxes that would feed us for another two meals at home. We felt disappointed to be too full for dessert. Rumor has it that the Tres Leches cake (\$6.00) here is sublime. I consider it my solemn duty to confirm this for you.

Happy summer, and bon appetit.

An Interview with Steven Tomlinson, our NUNA Vice President and Development Review Guy

by Clayton Maxwell



Steven Tomlinson is our neighbor. He is also an award-winning monologist whose works have been performed across the country. He gives Ted Talks. (Google

them, they are very, very good). He is a pastoral counselor for businesses, helping people develop the conversations and questions that make good things happen. He’s the director of faculty development for the Acton MBA program. He got his Economics PhD from Stanford. He and his partner were early and essential supporters of Austin’s fabulous avant garde arts festival, Fusebox. He’s a former chaplain and minister who has been a counselor to many. And that’s just a smidge of his accomplishments.

And here he is, hanging out with me in his solarium on a warm summer morning, eating an avocado he just bought from Wheatsville, spooning it out of its skin for breakfast. It feels downright luxurious to have the time and space to delight in Steven and what he knows, to talk with him about such juicy and important themes as why he is dedicated to our neighborhood association, how to handle neighborhood conflict, and the sacred in-between of the late philosopher Martin Buber. I gained a lot from our brief hour together; it would be great if you would join us, too, by reading on. If you have thoughts or comments, email me at: nunanews@gmail.com

Clayton: Okay. Tell me. Right now you are on NUNA’s development review committee. What other roles have you played in the neighborhood?

Steven: I have been the Vice President now for several years. I was on the first development review committee that Scott Morris started back when it was the Neighborhood Planning Team. Those are the very early days. I got involved with that group, which included Mary Ingle, Rick Iverson, whenever I first moved to NUNA. That was back when Bill Bednar was the president of the Neighborhood Association.

CM: I see. I was just talking to Mary Gay yesterday and she said they are about to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Rick and Mary and Mary Gay and the others all doing the Neighborhood Plan together.

Steven: Yeah, the NCCD.

CM: Were you part of that at all?

Steven: No, but the NCCD was finished right before we moved into the neighborhood-- that was 2004.

CM: That is right, okay.

Steven: That is a huge accomplishment. Very worthy of a celebration.

CM: Yes. So why you are involved in the Neighborhood Association?

Steven: I got involved because I felt responsible for helping protect the character of the neighborhood against careless or thoughtless development. We had had several troubling developments over in Harris Park whenever Eugene and I lived there in the Hancock neighborhood. We had some super duplexes that were being built behind our house, and we got very involved with the neighborhood association, the City, and as a result of that we were able to help steer that project in a way that was less damaging than it could have been.

At the same time it was a painful experience because it became divisive. Eugene and I wound up having to take an adversarial role at the City Council with our own neighbors. All of that was painful. What happened to us was reactive. There wasn't a process or practice in place for these conversations. If it had been part of a more active and connective community something different would have happened. So when I got here I thought--



there is obviously a great Neighborhood Association in place here that has already accomplished the kind of things that we could have only dreamed of in our old Neighborhood Association. I need to come learn from these folks and how they do it and also contribute to helping build this process. I didn't want to give up after having had a frustrating experience. I thought, "I am going to try and do this better, be a better neighbor."

CM: I love what you said about coming to learn from the people who are already here.

Steven: It is really obvious. The first time you show up at a Neighborhood Association meeting in NUNA it is very obvious that these folks have a practice of neighborhood politics. That is important. We hadn't been here very long before we had the issue with the developer buying the house up here on 32nd street and

trying to turn it into a stealth dorm. It felt like being part of Charlie's Angels. Here are Eugene and me and Mary and Bill Bednar and Mary Gay and the Wilkinsons-- and all of us are moving really fast to make sure that the code is enforced to keep the Council and the city involved, to be in conversation with the owner. All of this stuff that in the end lead to a really good outcome.

CM: Oh my gosh, I love that idea of you guys as Charlie's Angels.

Steven: But, at the same time, no sooner than we got that resolved, then we had another problem arise about tearing down a house--that was like a replay of the story that Eugene and I had been through before. I was kind of pulling back and saying "Okay, here is another chance to do this better as a neighborhood." That got very exciting because now everyone is in a room together. It is clear that people are certainly out advocating their own positions, but when we were in the room together we could hear each other. There was room for people to express whatever needed to be expressed and somehow the fact that that was contained in a neighborhood conversation was very, very hard and yet it was...hopeful. I felt a lot of hope after we went through that process even though in some ways there are still wounds from that. The way we stayed in the conversation and the way we tried to use the tools that were available to us. That to me is why I stay involved with the neighborhood--because it is like a relationship. It is not easy. It is messy. People are going to be human. They are going to do what they do. And if you are willing to accept, that then you can be surprised. And I think at the end of the day, what has happened at the end of our street is a beautiful outcome. There were a lot of surprises for a lot of us.

CM: So accepting that there will be difficulties, differences, but still staying engaged and curious and willing to be surprised.

Steven: Yes. Because to me, neighborhood politics is a spiritual practice. It is the willingness to persist in openness despite the messiness of intimacy, the intimacy that comes with living next to people. I am always startled when people say "I don't like to go to neighborhood meetings because they are tense or I don't want to hear people gripe or because..." and I always think "okay, hummm..." Then I wonder, where do we learn how to be with that? And where do those of us that are stuck, as I sometimes am, in frustration or discouragement--where do we see models for how to get out of that? And what better place to practice that than with the people with whom you are linked, whether you want to admit it or not, in creating the value of probably your most important assets as well as your quality of life.

I guess if I have any aspiration at all--besides making sure that our meetings run on time and that all of us are trying to be true to the best standards of civility that I know we all have--it is that we try to model this presence to each other, this engagement, this willingness to keep showing up and keep trying. We try to gently steer each other away from desperation or selfishness or pessimism or discouragement. And that every time we show up for one of these meetings, it is kind of like a jam session. Bring your instrument, bring it tuned, let's try something different.

CM: I like that. It's a Jazz improvisation. Although I am not so sure how tuned my instrument is at times.

Steven: Yeah... We just had the most wonderful meeting. It was not at all what I expected. It was an impromptu development review committee meeting that I called. Some of the neighbors that I invited had invited other people, people that I had not invited. We got to the meeting. I thought, you know, I was trying to manage this so that it went well, because we brought



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Douglas Plummer

35th St. Resident and NUNA Member
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the property owner, we brought the engineer. I thought this was going to be a tense conversation that we would have to handle delicately. Turns out I was wrong. That what we needed in that meeting was an entirely different conversation and the people that showed up were exactly right for what needed to happen. I learned from the way that meeting went what can happen. I have learned.. needing to be right in neighborhood politics is the end of creativity, right?

CM: Yes. But it's not always easy letting go of the need to be right. But I love the idea of you letting what needed to unfold, unfold.

Steven: I decided what would happen if I trust and decide at the beginning of this meeting the right people are in this room. Let's just all be present and patient. I think you know, as you said before, the presence that

Michael has in a meeting or I think that Rick Iverson brings a particular kind of presence to a meeting that helps people be better behaved than they might otherwise be.

To me, the neighborhood meeting is a naturally occurring lab for presence, learning, collaborating, negotiation, agreement. And the less of an agenda you bring and the more you can bring facts and perspective and experience, the more you can be open, the more you can be surprised.

CM: There are several people in our neighborhood who amaze me with the work they have done, with what they know; they bring a lot of facts and experience to the table. Not that I understand a lot of it, but I'm impressed with how prepared they are.

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Steven: Indeed. The other big lesson for me is... well, I have I have been in meetings with some of our neighborhood leaders who are controversial or lightening rods and I've seen them show extraordinary, exquisite flexibility and ingenuity and innovation because of the kind of conversation that we prepared for. For me, the art of neighborhood politics is setting the table. What are the questions we are going to put on the table? How are we going to model our rules of engagement? How are we going to respect each other? How are we going to express gratitude and appreciation and honor what others are contributing?

After the meeting, if I can say to someone else "this was a great meeting," what I mean by that is not just that we got a good result, although we usually do. It is more "I feel good that I was able to be the way I was in this conversation. I am honored that I got to be part of listening and talking and thinking with people like this." If these things we talk about, these spiritual practices of attention and presence and non-manipulation and all that stuff... if they are for anything, they are for neighborhood meetings. That is the place where the practice is real.

Speaker 1: It makes total sense to me and yet I think about what you said earlier. So many people shy away because they don't like the tension in the room or they think that certain people are too busy-bodied and so they just don't go, because they are turned off by the whole thing. And you said you have compassion for that-- but I wonder about my own tendency to shy away from things because I don't like the tension or conflict.

Steven: Another way to think about it again comes from spiritual practice, which is, those of us who care about this and who can find the humility to say "I don't know whether I am right or not. I just know that I care about



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what my street looks like. I just care about the safety of the neighborhood. I care about having a place to take my kids on the 4th of July." So I ask what can we make in conversation with each other that will be a light to other people in our neighborhood? "Why don't you come to neighborhood meetings?" Well, you don't come because that tension is annoying or scary to you. Whereas in fact, if these meetings happened in a way that underneath the tension there was also respect, and we could see how conflict can be gracefully held or how creativity can surprisingly emerge from presence and respect then maybe you would say "I really need to come to that." Because it is awfully scary to think about developers bearing down on our neighborhood and trying to change it in scary ways. But if I went to a meeting and I saw that there is a place where that is being met with creativity and courage and ingenuity and community, then I would want to be there. Because neighborhood politics are essential to the preservation of our quality of life and the character of our streets.

CM: You said something about holding conflict gracefully. I have a hard time with that sometimes. I get super knotted up and sometimes can't speak without my voice getting shaky. Do you have any tips for how to hold conflict gracefully? What do you do when you find yourself getting stuck like that?

Steven: Yeah, yeah, so one is to try to get up above it in the sense of saying "What is going on here? If I could look at this as a play. If I could look at this as a puzzle, one that I weren't in..." I had this recently with the Hobby Lobby decision from the Supreme Court. I have friends that immediately became completely unhinged and angry about this. I was listening to them and found myself saying "You know what? I feel that way, too." And, at the same time, I can also see just a little bit about what it might look like to those who might feel

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differently. And I wonder if I can stretch myself for a moment to hold both of those things, both of those points of view, which means letting go of being right. It means letting go of defending myself. It means having faith that ultimately your safety, your identity doesn't depend on fight. It depends on understanding, it depends on deeper grounding. So what I try to do is to try and say "Can I find a bigger perspective on this question?" And sometimes it is about curiosity. It is simply about curiosity. Asking someone on the other side: "How does this work for you? What do you do?" You know, Krista Tippett the moderator of the On Being radio series? She and I have been friends since grade school.

CM: Oh, I love her!

Steven: She and I were high school debate partners and very close... Krista and I we grew up together and...

CM: She is awesome.

Steven: She is totally awesome. I think the questions that she uses in her civil conversations project have been so inspiring to me, which is when you look at people on both side of questions like abortion or sexuality and you ask them "What is it about the other side that you must admire? What is it about your own side that makes you most uncomfortable?" Just answering those two questions helps me get over my stuck place in the conversation, which is very predictable and feels limiting. And it is not because I believe there aren't principles here that must be defended, it is just that if I spend all my time in a defense posture I am going to lose perspective. And once I have lost perspective I can't do anything but react.

CM: Okay, so open up your perspective and ask those questions about the other side, what

you admire, and what makes you uncomfortable about your side. Don't get too stuck in your own reactivity.

Steven: I think also what we want to do is we want to meet other people by honoring what it is they are trying to do. Now, it may be simply that they are afraid of something, in which case I can have compassion for their fear. I am not afraid, which means at the moment I have freedom, but I have certainly been afraid before. I know what that feels like and I know what I have done when I am afraid.

CM: Sounds like a really nice kind of freedom.

Steven: But Martin Buber, the philosopher, says that meaning happens in between. It happens between people who recognize others as "thou" as opposed to objects. If I want something from you, I am going to treat you as an "it," but if we meet each other in a conversation where we are mutually curious and respectful, the thing we will build between is going to be surprising and valuable and beautiful.

The thou practice, the thou perspective. My mentor asked me a long time ago, "Would you rather be right or would you rather be pleasantly surprised?" I didn't know how to answer that question, because I could answer it either way. And then I realized that my answer to it was determining my life.

CM: Gosh.

Steven: That is a good question isn't it?

CM: It is a really good question.

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Cell (512) 217-1047

pringle@ameliabullock.com

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