WNA Meeting Minutes
April 30, 2010
5401 Porsche Lane (Gary's house)

In attendance: Chris Schexnayder, Gary Buvenick, Jan Boswell, Chris Morris, Barbara Huffman, Vicki Phillips, and Trudy Hasan (plus Nick Weynand and Judy Jefferson, briefly)

- Nick Weynand and Judy Jefferson were each presented with a wooden plaque for their service to the WNA. Thank you Nick and Judy!

- Jan presented the Treasurer's Report. Ninety-six (96) homeowners have paid their dues so far this year. There was a brief discussion on why the numbers are lower than in previous years.

- The Board approved the March 2010 minutes.

- May 15th is the date of the neighborhood garage sale. Chris S. proposed that we have three permanent garage sale signs made that can be used year after year. Chris M. has been obtaining quotes from both local and non-local companies. We can reduce the cost by not including the WNA logo. Need to have them ready by May 12th. Chris S. made a motion to approve up to $150 for the three signs; seconded by Barb and approved. Jan will run the garage sale ads in the Statesman and Gazette, plus in our newsletter. It will also be posted Craigslist by Robin Mayfield.

- Gary updated the Board on the status of the Trail Cleanup by Stefano Crispieri, an Eagle Scout candidate. We now have permits from the City of Austin Forestry Department and from the City Arborist for this work. The first meeting will be on Friday May7th at 4:30 pm to mark the trees to be trimmed. Bartlett is scheduled for Saturday May 8th. Chinaberry and lagustrums along the trail will be removed in addition to poison ivy. The arborist will follow behind with authorized herbicides to prevent them from growing back. There will be lots of weeding, weed-eating, and spreading of mulch. About two weeks after the scouts complete the work, the arborist will inspect the site. This is a “trust-building” exercise in that, if the job is done properly, we will be able to do future trail cleanups and tree trimming more easily in terms of city permits, paperwork, etc.

- Barb gave an update from the Neighborhood Enhancement Committee (NEC). The April YOM has been awarded to 5302 Wolf Run, owned by Sue Stewart. Sue has lived in Westcreek about 10 years and has created a peaceful oasis with native plants and a park-like bench. Barb will send this information to Elaine and Karen to post on the website and in next month's newsletter.

  Discussed code compliance problems and our desire to have more positive examples such as creative trash enclosures and shared side yard projects. Chris S. said that he found large limbs recently dumped in the drainage easement near Hill Forest behind Summerset (this was less than two weeks after the big KAB cleanup). We may want to consider “no dumping” signs for a few areas in our neighborhood.

- Chris S. discussed three grant opportunities for WNA. First, Keep Austin Beautiful has a matching grant program to beautify public spaces. We could apply for the cost of the trail cleanup or apply for landscaping of Brush Country with flowering trees. Second, the City has

just initiated a “Neighborhood Partnering Program” whereby the City will provide matching funds for neighborhood parks and public spaces. Gary suggested that we beautify the dead-end of Brush Country where the red and white barricade is now. Chris S. will send an email requesting a volunteer grant writer to complete this application. Barb also has a neighbor who may be interested in helping us with this project. Third, grant money is available from Austin Parks Foundation for neighborhood associations.

- To recognize all the work that Rick Perkins with Oak Hill Trails Association (OHTA) has done so far for the Westcreek Neighborhood, Chris S. suggested that WNA make a donation to OHTA through the Austin Parks Foundation. Gary made a motion that the donation be for $200. Seconded and approved.

- The Board discussed how such a small percentage of the Westcreek neighborhood (<10%) are paid members and how much the rest of the neighborhood is benefitting from our work without paying for it. Do we need to knock on doors to increase our membership? Vicki suggested that we have a membership table at all events. Gary suggested that we form a Membership Committee with some fresh volunteers. Trudy wants to know what other neighborhood associations in Austin are doing to build their memberships (ones that are not HOAs).

- Chris M. received a letter from the Comptroller's Office regarding our non-profit status. A franchise tax exemption is easy to obtain and he will proceed with it with help from Gary and the Central Appraisal District to fill out the application form. Currently we are a non-IRS organization and we plan to stay that way for now since it would cost too much to obtain a sales tax exemption ($400 application fee plus yearly CPA fees to file the paperwork).

- Trudy discussed the National Wildlife Federation's (NWF) neighborhood challenge that runs from April 12-November 15. The “Wildlife Austin” challenge encourages individual homeowners, businesses, churches, etc. to create habitats for wildlife and then certify the habitat through the NWF. There are three basic components for a wildlife habitat: native plants that provide year-round food (nectar, seeds, berries), a reliable water source, and protective cover. A community-based habitat project is also required for the challenge. Trudy will send out an email requesting a volunteer to lead this project and submit an application to the City.

- Brush Country right-of-way needs regular mowing, especially with all the rain we've had. The mowing season is expected through October. Gary made a motion to authorize Chris S. to have the ROW mowed as needed (approx. every three weeks, typically $125); seconded. Chris M. questioned why the WNA is paying for this instead of the City. In the past, the City rarely mowed the ROW and didn't do a particularly good job when they did. Chris M. may contact the City the next time mowing is needed. If the City mowed regularly, then WNA could pay for weed-eating. The motion passed, however, to ensure that the ROW is maintained.

- Chris M., Trudy, Jan, and Gary need to submit short bios and photos to Karen for the June newsletter.

- The next meeting will be Monday May 24th at 7 pm at Chris Morris' house (6100 Smith Oak).

Meeting Adjourned.