

HANCOCK HERALD

Hancock Neighborhood Association



February 2016

Temple Makes Austin the Place to Find Peace and Joy

Each morning Lama Lobtsul, the lama in residence at the Buddhist center Palri Pema Od Ling in Austin, enters the temple and performs the important task of arranging offerings of water, candles and incense in front of the rare statue of Guru Rinpoche.

This 13-foot-tall, 2,500-pound brass representation of the India Buddhist master who brought Buddhism to Tibet in the eighth century radiates like a beacon from behind picture windows overlooking busy 45th Street, across from the Hyde Park Christian Church, in a mostly residential area.

"If you make aspirations in front of the statue," said Lama Lobtsul via Ila Reitz, his translator, "then it will be of great benefit to you in this life and future lives — just as if you were in front of Guru Rinpoche."

There is more to the statue than meets the eye. It is filled with medicines, mantra prayers and approximately 1,000 books, including the canonical text and teachings of the Buddha. It is also heavy with flashy adornments, among them a trident with a staff made of three heads



representing the three kayas, or expressions of the Buddha. In Guru Rinpoche's lap sits a blue, white and gold kapala, or skull cup, filled with a nectar that represents spiritual awakening.

Lama Lobtsul, the resident lama at Palri Pema Od Ling in Austin, with the Buddhist center's statue of Guru Rinpoche.

"Tibetans are big on bling," said Ms. Reitz, a student of Buddhism who is affiliated with the Tashi Choling center in Oregon.

The statue is one of only two of this particular mold of Guru Rinpoche on display in the United States (the other is in Alameda, Calif.). There are 23 more scattered around the world, mostly in Europe and Asia. Collectively, they represent the Padmasambhava Global Project for World Peace, started in 2002 by Khenpo Namdrol Rinpoche, a Buddhist teacher based in Nepal. According to the project's Web site, the statues are meant to "deter negativity and spread blessings of compassion and wisdom."

While the statue alone makes Palri Pema Od Ling extraordinary, the added presence of Lama Lobtsul makes Austin more attractive as a place to study Buddhism seriously — an alternative to California and New York, where the practice has thrived since the 1960s.

"I'm sure he won't tell you this, but he was really quite a high lama where he came from," said David Lunsford, a former Dell employee who was integral in establishing Palri Pema Od Ling in 2008. "He's been instructed by the real thing — the really authentic teachers."

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HOT TOPICS

The “Missing Middle” Solution by Barbara Epstein

Word on the street is that the City Council thinks that they have a solution to create affordable housing in Austin. The city is about to scrap our current zoning code and revamp everything into CodeNext. The plan is to integrate more dense housing in single-family neighborhoods, encouraging the construction of duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, etc. Planners call this “the missing middle”, a form of housing somewhere between single-family housing and apartments.

Whether or not anyone really believes that these units will be affordable, they are probably inevitable, so the question is, what can we, as residents, need do to ensure that the new zoning laws provide stability and reasonable, orderly development, so that as the people who have to put up with absentee owners’ creations, we don’t just cry foul if we don’t like what gets built under the new Code.

There are two issues neighborhoods need to consider---how many bedrooms can currently be permitted in duplexes (and larger units), and what occupancy limits are enforced. If, as tax-paying residents, we tell the Mayor and City Council that we want these two issues combined in the new zoning laws, perhaps we can preserve, and even enhance, our neighborhoods.

Right now, under City Ordinance 25-2-555, a duplex on a lot with 10,000 square feet or less can have six bedrooms and square footage up to 4,000 square feet. But, at the same time, under City Ordinance 25-2-511, the occupancy limit for unrelated residents is only four per duplex site. If the lot is bigger than 10,000 square feet, the square footage can be up to 8,000 square feet and the number of bedrooms can be unlimited as long as the floor-to-area-ratio of the ordinance is met. However, if more than ten bedrooms are proposed, under City Code 25-6 Appendix A, the owner must build one parking space per bedroom.

That is why most developers stop at ten bedrooms per site, though why that sort of duplex isn’t classified as a multi-family apartment defies logic. It also strains credulity that it is appropriate for the city to allow 4,000-8,000 square feet buildings on streets with primarily 2,000 square foot houses. This is neither orderly nor sensible zoning.

The reason that the city allows a permit to contain more bedrooms than the occupancy limit, is that the occupancy limit applies to unrelated people, while the bedroom-permitting limit is meant to comply with case law that does not restrict the number of related persons who can live in a dwelling. The problem in Austin is that there is virtually no enforcement; the city enforcement department is understaffed, and it is difficult to both make a case and prove up the facts.

What can you do? First, think about what you want our neighborhood to look like. If you think the duplex issue has gotten out of hand (reference the 10 bedroom/10 bathroom duplex legally permitted at 3206 Beanna St. because it is on a 17,00 square foot lot), tell the Mayor and City Council that the simple solution to duplex zoning is to only allow permits for the number of bedrooms that meet the occupancy limit—which is now four. (The City Manager has just recommended that this number be increased to five when the law expires in March, 2016, citing few complaints since the number was reduced from six to four two years ago.) If an owner wants to propose building a duplex for related people, the city could require them to file for a variance and establish the relationship of their occupants---and how they will maintain housing only related individuals in the higher number of bedrooms.

What can we do now? Call 3-1-1 and ask for Code Enforcement if you think a duplex has more than the four people per dwelling occupancy limit and ask the city to enforce the occupancy limit. If no enforcement occurs, complain politely but vigorously to your Councilmember and to the Mayor’s office. Matching permitting to occupancy is a starting point in clarifying our zoning laws.

Remember that this is our city, not just an investor’s playground. Investors don’t have to deal with the consequences of low maintenance, tossed garbage, over-parking and noise---but we do. We should all care enough about our neighborhoods to become involved by taking the positive steps to make our neighborhoods inviting and pleasant streets to live in.

*see next page for sample letter

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need with each real estate
transaction. To see how you
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soles4souls.org!



Sample letter to Mayor and/or council members:

Dear Mayor and Council:

I am writing to ask you to direct city staff to include a revision to Code Next as it applies to new construction of duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, etc.

As I understand it, right now, the City Code allows an owner to permit as many bedrooms as the lot size allows, even though that may exceed the occupancy limit for unrelated people, because the duplex could be used to house related people, which would not violate occupancy limits.

I ask you to change the regulation to limit permitted bedrooms to the occupancy limit for unrelated people; if the owner plans to house related individuals, they must request a variance and show how they will maintain occupancy of related people. The current standard places an undue burden on surrounding neighbors, who currently are frequently left to deal with the effects of over-occupancy: decreased maintenance, over-parking, tossed garbage and increased noise.

If you won't direct the regulation change to limit permitted bedrooms to the occupancy limit without a variance, I ask you to staff and fund Code Enforcement sufficiently to enforce the occupancy limits, which are currently unenforced.

Link to send email to all council members: <http://www.austintexas.gov/email/all-council-members>

Mailing address for all members: P.O. Box 1088, Austin, TX 78767



PUT YOUR
HANDS UP
MAKE EM
TOUCH

To Jen Leader for joining the newsletter advertising team

To Barbara Epstein for the "Missing Middle" article and other contributions

To our sole talent contributor, Tony Beckwith

Thank you!!!

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ladybird, \$44



photo by allison narro

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HNA Meeting Minutes

November 18, 2015 Meeting Minutes

<https://www.hancockna.org/www/content/hna-meeting-minutes-november-18-2015>

Item 1

Discussion with Hancock Recreation Supervisor

Jessica Gilzow updated HNA on developments at the Recreation Center, including the resurfacing of the basketball court and installation of shading around the playscape as well as interior painting the Recreation Center. She also reported the Recreation Center has moved certain evening activities to allow the Center facilities to be rented on Friday and Saturday nights. She explained the Parks Department is gathering information from stakeholders on how to use the bond money designated for Hancock Recreation Center. A HNA member requested the trail on the north side of the course be completed and adequate funds be made available to maintain the trail. She asked HNA members to email her for suggestions- Jessica.gilzow@austintexas.gov.

Item 2.

The membership unanimously voted to support the request for curb cuts at Caswell and Barrow Streets.

Item 3.

Linda Guerrero explained the Zoning and Development Committee's new process: The Committee will only review and consider variances and zoning changes (see Zoning Committee's proposal posted on HNA website)

Item 4.

There was no report provided on the recent CANPAC meet.

Item 5.

Update on Accessory Dwelling Units ordinance. The update was provided prior to the Council's vote the following day, Thursday, November 19th.

Here follows the changes the Council made to the ADU regulations:

- Allow ADUs SF-3 zoned lots that are between 5,750 and 7,000 square feet.
- Set the maximum size of an ADU to 1,100 square feet.
- Override neighborhood plans that prohibit ADUs on SF-3 zoned lots of 5,750 square feet
- Reduce building separation to 10 feet (front to back and side to side).
- Eliminate requirement that an entry be more than 10 feet from a property line.

Continued on page 7

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Continued from page 1

Lama Lobtsul's direct lineage to the original teachers sets this temple apart from the Buddhist centers in the United States that are led by American practitioners. It is an anomaly to have a genuine Tibetan Buddhist available to provide instruction to anyone who walks through the door. "I can only name a few places that have that," Mr. Lunsford said.

Lama Lobtsul's road to Texas dates back to when he was 11, the year that his father died, leaving him to care for his mother and his younger siblings, nomads in the mountains near the Yellow River. By day, he would tend to 300 head of sheep and other livestock. By night, he would practice his faith, which the Chinese government had spent years trying to eradicate.

"We would come in secret, not wearing monks' clothing, and practice for three hours and go away," Lama Lobtsul, 43, said over tea and homemade peanut butter cookies in his modest living space. "During my whole childhood, Buddhism was absolutely, completely prohibited. If someone saw you doing a Buddhist mantra, they would arrest you and you would be very strongly punished."

But Lama Lobtsul persevered, and at 21 he attained the title of lama, or teacher, eventually becoming master of ceremonies at his monastery. This set him on a spiritual path from Tibet to India, where he studied with the Dalai Lama, and then in 2008 to Colorado, where he practiced at the Boulder Shambhala Center, and finally, in February, to Palri Pema Od Ling.

The increasing interest in Buddhism in the Western world is attributable to its adoption by public figures like the actor Richard Gere, the musician Leonard Cohen and the tech guru Steve Jobs, as well as the growth of the Asian-

American population.

"In America right now," Lama Lobtsul said, "there's this incredibly strong tradition of scientific thought, and looking and checking and testing things, and Buddhism has that same kind of intensive, intellectual exploration."

The groundwork for Lama Lobtsul's installation was laid in 1999, when two revered Tibetan Buddhist teachers, Penor Rinpoche and Gyatrul Rinpoche, came to Austin at the request of a small group of aspiring students. Together they enlisted a number of monks and other influential Buddhist teachers for a series of events leading to the consecration of the land where Palri Pema Od Ling was established.

One participant was Khenpo Namdrol Rinpoche, who observed the momentum of these pursuits and gave them the Guru Rinpoche statue, which is valued at \$10,000.

This spreading of Buddhism to a new, receptive audience is the silver lining to the plight of the Tibetan people, as epitomized by the Dalai Lama's exile. And while their reason for coming to Austin is known, their continued investment in it, through Lama Lobtsul's tenure, is a mystery.

"Maybe they saw something special here for the future," Mr. Lunsford said.

From The New York Times, Temple Makes Austin the Place to Find Peace and Joy, April 28, 2012

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Request a City service online:

<https://austin-p1csrprodcwi.motorolasolutions.com/ServiceRequest.mvc/SRIntake>

Lost and Found Pets:

<https://www.austintexas.gov/department/lost-found-pet>

Austin City Council meetings

<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/city-council/council-meetings>

City Austin Boards and Commissions:

<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/boards-and-commissions-information-center>

Travis County Commissioners Court meetings:

<http://www.traviscountyclerk.org/eclerk/Content.do?code=Commissioners>

Property Appraisals, Deeds & Records:

Travis Central Appraisal District:

http://www.traviscad.org/property_search.html

Travis County Clerk Online Records:

<http://deed.co.travis.tx.us/ords/f?p=105:5:0::NO::>

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Neighborhood Tweets



"Surprise December bloom - Just Joey rose...

but the squirrels had a field day using my Meyer lemons as ping pong balls and eating most of the kumquats just as I was about to finally pick them.

I guess it's a good thing squirrels don't eat roses yet."

From Barbara Epstein

Continued from page 4

- Remove driveway requirement to rear ADU.
- Provide one parking space for the ADU in addition to main structure parking.
- Eliminate parking requirement for ADU within 1/4 mile of an activity corridor identified in
- the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan.
- Limit use as short-term rental to a maximum of 30 days per year for ADUs constructed
- after October 1, 2015.
- Prohibit use as a Type 2 short term rental.

Item 6.

Update on Short Term Rentals:

The City Council voted to put a one year halt on issuing Type 2 commercial Short Term Rentals in residential neighborhoods. On December 8, 2015, the City's Planning Commission will take up issues related to occupancy limits, variances, and timetable for phasing out commercial STRs in residential neighborhoods and send its recommendations to City Council. The City's final decision on STRs will be posted to HNA website.

Item 7.

CodeNext, the rewrite of Austin's Land Development Code. Members were encouraged to participate in the CodeNEXT "sound check" public meetings.

Item 8. Treasurer's Report.

Thank you HNA Officers:

President: Mark Harkrider

Vice President: James Harkrider

Treasurer: Bruce Fairchild

Secretary: Mary Sanger

Historian: Tiffany Scolnic

Webmaster: George Wilson
webmaster@hancockna.org

Newsletter Editor: Carleen Edgar
editor@hancockna.org

Newsletter Ads: Kathleen Strong
ads@hancockna.org





Save the Date - Hancock Native Plant Swap Is April 16th

The Fall Swap was cancelled due to flooding. The Spring Swap has been scheduled Saturday, April 16th, 8-9:30am at Mother's Café & Garden.

The swap is a way for neighbors to spread great performing plants around the neighborhood. Every spring and fall, we usually see a lot of small plants pop up around mature ones. Many times we don't need more of the same. Pot those up and bring them to the event, put them in the appropriate category of sun/shade, then go seek out plants you want/need. **This time, by popular demand, we are going to have a selection of great Central Texas plants to buy!**

LIN TEAM, OLD AUSTIN REALTOR®



My tag "Old Austin REALTOR®" expresses the commitment to historic preservation that led me into real estate in 1997 to work with others who want to preserve the history and culture of Austin's older neighborhoods.

In 2000 I led in developing a class on "Marketing and Selling Historic Properties," an eight-hour MCE class sponsored by the Austin Board of REALTORS® and Preservation Austin. Fifteen times over the years I have gathered a team of experts to present useful information and every time it is done I learn more. The class will be offered again in February (For info see PreservationAustin.org)

Real estate companies change and evolve, and the Kinney Company where I have been affiliated for the past ten years is soon going to close its doors. I am happy to announce that I will be joining Elizabeth Brooks and her colleagues at Landmark Properties. Elizabeth has had a respected presence as a Broker south of the Colorado River in Travis Heights and other neighborhoods for more than twenty years.

Searching for a home in Old Austin can be difficult and frustrating—especially without the help of a REALTOR® who knows and appreciates central neighborhoods and old houses. I encourage anyone who wants to buy or sell an old house to work with a REALTOR® who lives and works here. We may not all be "old," but we have a proven commitment and knowledge that can be extremely helpful to a buyer or seller who wants to help save "old Austin."

As I join Landmark Properties, I will continue to work from my home, accessible to people who want to contact me by phone, cell phone or internet.

Office phone 512-472-1930

Cell phone: 512-917-1930

LTeam@austin.rr.com

LANDMARK PROPERTIES

THE TALENT

All submissions from neighbors welcome!
Please send to editor@hancockna.org

Valentine Video

If this were a video shot with my phone
you'd see her hair tousled in the breeze
her eyes shining
They're walking on the beach alone
his arm around her neck
He whispers please
pulls her to him
kisses her cheek, will you be mine?
She's nodding, yes
then just like that
he's down on his knees
and she laughs, oh yes!
when he says Please
be my Valentine

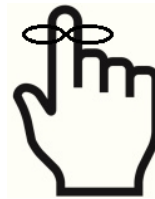
tony beckwith.2015



A Request from the Newsletter Editor:

Quarterly newsletters have recently been late due to new obligations outside of the newsletter. I would like to see if a new editor would like to take over the reins.

If you are interested, email me at editor@hancockna.org.



Important Dates

Hancock Spring Native Plant Swap

Saturday, April 16th
Mother's Café 8 – 9:30am

HNA regular meeting

March 16th
7pm – 8:30pm
Hancock Rec Center

Santa's elves at Hancock Rec: Starting from the bottom row left to right: Jessica Steinman, Lea Paulin, Tabitha Muraida, Mari Sanchez, Laura Kofahl, Jenna Holik, Santa, Kelsey Buckner.



PUT YOUR
HANDS UP!
MAKE EM
TOUCH

Hancock Neighborhood Association works with Keep Austin Beautiful's Adopt-a-Creek program (<http://keepaustinbeautiful.org/program/adopt-creek>) to improve the quality of creek water.

Four times a year we clean the creek from 32nd to 41st Streets, picking up cans, bottles, golf balls, clothing, and all kinds of things one would not expect to find in a creek. Thanks to the volunteers who worked on this quarter's clean-up.

Patricia Fontanals
Claire and Dave Bench
Tom Carlisle
Kathleen Strong



Your Neighborhood Specialist

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4009 AVENUE A | OFFERED AT \$609,000
3 BED | 2.5 BATH | .135 ACRES | +/- 1596 SQ FT

Nicely updated home in the heart of the neighborhood! Well-executed floor plan, great for entertaining. High ceilings and wood floors in main living areas. Open kitchen with Bosch appliances, stone counters, pantry, and recessed lighting. Bonus detached studio with HVAC.



4608 CASWELL | OFFERED AT \$459,000
3 BED | 2 BATH | .145 ACRES | +/- 1372 SQ FT

Darling stone cottage in Hyde Park featuring vaulted ceilings, wood floors, open living/kitchen/dining, and updated kitchen and baths. Large spacious utility room with pantry storage. Detached 1 car garage with workshop. Outdoor deck. Pre-Inspected!

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