

President Coan Dillahunt called the meeting to order at 7:01

Harry Swinney moved to adopt the minutes from the December meeting, and Laura Tull seconded.

Coan reminded everyone to pay dues. Dues are \$7/adult and the term runs for the calendar year. Instructions are at <https://www.hancockna.org/www/join>.

Treasurer report from Bruce Fairchild: beginning balance of about \$4068, \$557 expenses for newsletter, ANC dues and bank fee; \$471 gained in HNA dues, ending balance of \$3983
Money market account has \$2500.

Coan introduced the candidates for officer. Three candidates from last year were able to continue serving: Coan as president, Bart Whatley as vice president, Bruce Fairchild as treasurer. Robyn Ross did not run again for secretary but nominated Laura Tull to serve. Robyn's nomination of Laura: "Laura has been an enthusiastic volunteer in her 2ish years in the neighborhood, most recently participating in the creek cleanup on It's My Park Day. She also writes a backyard birding column for the Hancock Herald newsletter and serves on the newsletter's editorial board. Laura is a retired librarian and has served as secretary in other organizations. She'll do a great job." Laura said hello.

The candidates were each nominated verbally by an HNA member. A voice vote was taken and the slate was unanimously approved.

Next was a discussion of the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan, which had been the subject of much conversation on the groups.io. The city of Austin is making amendments to the ASMP and wanted comments by January 30.

Coan showed the city's website about the project and the map that shows where individual changes might be made on streets. There aren't many changes to our neighborhood on Level 1 streets; the focus has been on Level 2 (of which there are multiple types). For example, the proposed changes to Harris Avenue are considered a "technical correction," meaning the ASMP is aligning terminology with actual plans for changes to the street for the bicycle network. The city is encouraging you to comment on the map and submit questions.

Bart also put together an analysis for our neighborhood. He said the changes can look alarming, and the city didn't do a very good job alerting people to the proposed changes, but the plan is probably not as radical as it might initially seem. He agreed with Hannes Mandel's email to groups.io about the situation. Bart suspects city planners will modify the standards in the ASMP document to make them fit actual conditions on the ground, but it would be good to hear from the city about how they'd do that. This could be a future agenda item.

Bart said one potential concern is the types of buildings and uses that the city says are appropriate for each "level" of street. For instance, a future zoning request could be justified on the basis that "a level 2 street is appropriate for X denser development." Bart would like to hear the city say this is all about bike/ped safety and not using ASMP as backdoor tool to justify future zoning requests.

Coan said that if the city were to take property to expand the ROW, there would have to be compensation for that, and as far as he knows pretty much all the bond funding for sidewalks and bike lanes is spoken for. The sidewalks by his house on Red River were recently expanded, and the city's initial plan had to be revised to take into account heritage trees, power poles, and road elements. Ultimately the sidewalk remained next to the street and just expanded from 5 to 7 feet because of conditions on the ground. Coan assumed a similar dynamic would be in play with these ASMP changes.

Send comments/questions to asmp@austintexas.gov

Hannes Mandel of the transportation committee gave a quick update on I-35. TxDOT was holding a meeting the following week and revealing updates to its plans.

The City of Austin is taking public comment for the cap and stitch project. Their framework is mostly focused on the downtown area, so it would be important for us to comment and ask for additional caps and stitches in our area.

The transportation committee is still planning to invite both TxDOT and Project Connect reps to come to meeting and present/discuss together about I-35.

Bradley Price, HNA's Liaison with Lee Elementary, introduced himself. His sons went to Lee and now his grandchildren attend. He said that a bike lane on Harris would help the many kids who ride bikes to school – the Lee principal encourages people to take alternative modes of transportation. Bradley helps with the chicken coop at Lee and runs the Styrofoam recycling project (the blue bin) – he takes full loads to the Recycle and Reuse facility, where it's turned into a liquid that can be turned into more plastic on site.

Guest presentation: Michelle Myles, director of the Office of Violence Prevention, spoke about her team's work. Ms. Myles has two degrees in psychology and training to work with people with severe mental illness. She has worked in drug treatment centers and with the homeless population in Austin including at supportive housing locations. She previously worked for the Homeless Strategy division, on projects including the response to encampments around the ARCH in 2019 before the pandemic, and the city's efforts to provide food and information to people experiencing homelessness during the early days of the pandemic.

The Office of Violence Prevention aims to create safety for every Austinite to thrive. It takes a public health approach to violence, with an equity focus. A public health approach looks further upstream and asks, what do communities with no violence have in common (food, shelter, jobs, community support, relationships with friends and neighbors)? And where are the inflection points between that situation and the opposite, which is crisis response/police involvement? The office is trying to work further upstream and provide support to communities to reduce the likelihood they'll need police response.

Origin: In 2019 the Gun Safety Taskforce suggested the need for an OVP. The Reimagining Public Safety process also called for an OVP. Council Member Alison Alter really championed it. The office was established early 2020, initially funded with \$1.9m in FY21 reallocated from APD, and Ms. Myles was hired June 7, 2021.

The OVP's value proposition: choose interventions with impact and hold ourselves accountable. The goal is to make health, peace and prosperity accessible to all Austinites. Build trust between community and the city/OVP. Interventions will be data informed and OVP will be transparent about showing results. OVP wants to partner with community orgs and other city departments and government agencies. The OVP will use evidence-based practices (that have been shown to work elsewhere) but tailor them for local Austin conditions. Technical advisors who are national leaders are helping the office build its plans. Ms. Myles also noted that the word "violent" can be used to stigmatize communities and populations and cause further harm.

Focus for 2022: The office became fully staffed in December with three FT permanent staff plus some temps. It hired Dr. Chico Tillman (a violence prevention expert based in Chicago) to identify hotspots with the highest incidence of violent crime. Community-led interventions will be targeted in those areas.

The National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform and Cities United are other organizations supporting OVP. Austin is among 16 cities selected by the Biden administration to work on

community violence intervention, and through this initiative technical advisors have been assigned to Austin.

Programs in development:

- Limiting impact of firearms. Lock Arms for Life is a safe gun storage awareness campaign and gun lock distribution. This will launch in March.
- Firearms surrender protocol – relates to the nexus between domestic violence and gun violence. Goal is to establish a protocol for surrendering firearms (there isn't one right now). Also to give the person who is causing harm the resources they need to stabilize.
- Investing in youth: school-based programs for kids experiencing behavioral disturbances; art projects in communities impacted by violence, to build social cohesion among kids from Latinx and African diaspora communities
- Community violence prevention intervention: connected with Dr. Tillman, in high-risk areas
- Trauma recovery centers: these offer psychotherapy, case management, assistance applying for victim services dollars, legal assistance, housing assistance; these are put in communities most impacted by violence. Texas doesn't have these yet. There are 39 across the country.
- Community rooted mini grants: to invest in community organizations doing violence prevention/healing work; proposals open in March.
- Community violence interruption initiative: projects with Dr. Tillman and the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform. These look at violence as a public health issue and work with people who have witnessed violence or have experience with the criminal justice system.
- Address Your Stress campaign: to raise collective awareness of how stress impacts behavior; the pandemic and all its side effects have raised ambient stress levels across the board, making it more difficult for people to control impulses

More information: austintexas.gov/ovp

Question: If people in the neighborhood own firearms, what should they do to create a safer environment?

Answer: Secure your firearm. A gun lock secures it (from children, accidental shootings, etc.) but also can interrupt impulsive behavior. see lockarmsforlife.org for free gun locks.

Question: How can we be an ally or receptive to the work of your office?

Answer: Have compassion for yourself and others. Be more in tune with the ways we create small harm to our selves and others. Realize systemic racism and structural problems continue to influence our world today, but we have the ability to create new things. Understand and have compassion for what happened before and also be open to opportunities to change.

Question: Where is the dashboard you mentioned (regarding local violence data)?

Answer: It doesn't exist yet but will be on the OVP website. We're meeting with other cities and figuring out what data to collect and how to display it. We don't want this process to further stigmatize communities. The hotspots we've identified include Rundberg, St. John, Dove Springs, Downtown. There are backstories that influence people's behavior including institutional racism, generational trauma and extreme stress.

The meeting adjourned about 8:33 pm.