

Volente Voice

March 2011

****** ANNUAL VNA MEMBER APPRECIATION DINNER & SOCIAL ****
SATURDAY - APRIL 2nd @ 4:00 PM**

On behalf of the VNA Board, we would like to extend a big invitation to all of you to join us for our annual appreciation dinner at the Volente Fire Station on Saturday, April 2th, starting at 4:00 pm in the afternoon with an interactive social hour and ending with a catered dinner 5pm to 7:30pm. Representatives from CoA WTP#4 will have their displays on one side of the room and will be on hand to answer any questions. Councilmembers from the Village of Volente as well as members of the VNA board will be on hand to answer any questions regarding current issues facing Volente and the surrounding areas. The member appreciation dinner will be catered by Berry Hill and is for all new and existing VNA members and their families.



Following dinner the VNA board will hold a short meeting of all members to elect the board members for this coming year. All current board members are running for an additional term, but we are always looking for additional members to join us. If you are interested please call Ken Beck at 512-917-5188. See you on Saturday April 2nd at 4:00pm.

~ Jessica Janda, Newsletter Editor ~ Volente Neighborhood Association

[A MESSAGE FROM YOUR VNA PRESIDENT](#)

Dear Residents of greater Volente,

Being from Minnesota I especially enjoyed "The Prairie Home Companion" with Garrison Keillor. His monologue would always start "It's been a slow week in Lake Wobegon". Well it hasn't been a slow year in Volente, and now it's time for the annual meeting of the Volente Neighborhood Association. As you will see throughout this newsletter, it will be held from 4:00 pm to 7:30 pm on Saturday, April 2nd. We will have an interactive social hour, a catered fajita dinner followed by a short business meeting. Please mark your calendars.

The issues that we have been facing and that we continue to face are numerous this year. In each situation the VNA board has been active in representing all of you to the best of our ability to pursue solutions that are fair and equitable, and that take into account the needs of our unique area. Issues that we have been working on are:

1. BCRUA – the joint project by Cedar Park, Leander and Round Rock to build a deep water intake in Lake Travis to pull out water to serve the growth of these three cities. Judy Graci who serves on our board as well as the Village council has written an update appearing in this newsletter. Work continues on this project and we still do not know where the intake itself is going to be built. The VNA and the Village oppose it being built within the village boundaries.
2. ESD #14 and it's future direction – the urban encroachment into the ESD service area at the South end near Cedar Park has put extreme pressure on the ESD and Volente Fire Department. The contract with Cedar Park for coverage of those areas is not a sustainable one. In the newsletter you will see an article from Bill Connors and myself regarding the work we are participating in, and the hopeful direction that we have for emergency services throughout our area.
3. City of Austin Water Treatment Plant #4 and the Raw Water Pumping Station – the need for power and communication lines between these two facilities has created a plan by the City of Austin to severely impact

traffic on Bullick Hollow Road for an extended period of time. We are hoping to influence the final solution to lessen the impact and to keep Bullick Hollow Road open during construction. You will find an article in this newsletter written by Judy Graci and myself about our efforts. Representatives from the City of Austin project will be at our annual meeting to answer any questions you may have about their most current plans.

4. LCRA – we've entered into another drought period. Lake Travis is four feet lower than it's average level for this time of year. The Village of Volente has become a lead partner in the North Lake Travis Neighborhood Coalition that is sponsoring an economic impact analysis of the dropping levels of Lake Travis – heightened by drought but truly at risk due to the raw water intakes being constructed by the City of Austin and the BCRUA. You will find an update article in this newsletter from Judy Graci giving you much more information.

Finally, I want to make an appeal to all of you out there. We as an extended community represent ourselves to the outside world via elected officials and via volunteer efforts such as the VNA. It is only when we collectively come together that we have the power of numbers that can truly influence change such as the major issues that you see above. We would love to have more people join us on the VNA board. Please call me at 917-5188 or email me at kbeck@thecypresscreek.com if you are interested in serving. I want to also take the time to thank the current board members as your commitment to our monthly meetings and then to projects that we take on has had a significant positive impact during 2010.

FUTURE OF ESD #14

The Volente Fire Station was first chartered in 1961 as a volunteer fire department to provide services to a growing population in Western Travis County. In November of 1985 the area voted to create a Travis County Rural Fire Prevention District in order to collect up to 3 cents per \$100 of property valuation to provide additional funds to support this fire station. In November of 1999 our residents voted to change the RFPD to an Emergency Services District with the ability to tax up to 10 cents per \$100 of property valuation. The first paid firefighter started at the station in 2004, and in January of 2008 service was upgraded to two paid firefighters on duty 24/7.

As the demographics of the service area have changed, the ESD has also changed to address the increasing needs of a larger more permanent population. The largest change to the district has been the growth, or the urban encroachment, of the five neighborhoods/developments at the South end of the ESD district. These subdivisions now contain high density neighborhoods of approximately 1700 homes. In January 2005 the ESD contracted with the City of Cedar Park to provide emergency services to this area leaving the current fire department to concentrate on the central and Northern parts of the district. This contract has turned out to be financially unfavorable to the district. Early attempts to renegotiate the contract were unsuccessful leaving the district with difficult options – cancel the contract and find a different way to provide services to the affected subdivisions or renegotiate within the construct of a totally new solution for emergency services to a larger area than just ESD #14 and Cedar Park.

A potential new solution would include a more formal agreement between ESD #14 and ESD #6 in Lakeway in order to provide greater efficiency of operation. It also would involve increasing the sales tax by one cent in the service district outside the Village of Volente to bring in additional funds in order to increase the staffing at the fire station to three fulltime firefighters 24/7. This staffing increase would allow both ESD #6 and ESD #14 to fully participate in an "auto aid" agreement with the City of Austin that allows Travis County's computer aided 911 dispatch system to dispatch automatically across city and county areas. Finally, this new coalition would attempt to strike an agreement across county lines into Cedar Park and Williamson County so that Cedar Park can become a full participant in this automatic dispatching system. This solution would benefit all parties by allowing them to more efficiently and cost-effectively serve the public and leads to improved service for all.

The potential solutions are complex. We have to have multiple solutions at our finger tips should negotiations not go as we would like. We also have to balance the needs of the entire ESD service district. A strategic planning committee has been formed to assist the ESD #14 board in fleshing out all options that should be considered. There are two members from the ESD board, there are two members from the ESD board, a member from the VFD, a member from the Cedar Park ETJ area, and myself, Ken Beck, with Bill Connors as my alternate. Know that we are working very hard to find a true win-win solution that also enhances the emergency services provided now and in the future.

~ Ken Beck, President & Bill Connors, Treasurer ~ Volente Neighborhood Association

CEDAR PARK, ROUND ROCK AND LEANDER WATER INTAKE FACILITY AND PIPELINE THROUGH VOLENTE UPDATE

The Village of Volente has had no communication with the BCRUA in 2011. The LCRA is in the process of selling off their retail water/wastewater facilities. Leander plans to acquire the LCRA Sandy Creek Water Treatment Plant off of Trails End Rd. in Jonestown which supplies Leander's water. This site has a buffered area for the BCRUA pump station. The project can use Starnes Island for their intake and tunnel the pipeline to the Sandy Creek Treatment Plant. The Sandy Creek site is four miles on a straight road to the new BCRUA Water Treatment Plant. This would avoid all issues with the Village of Volente.

The BCRUA still believes it is feasible to construct the intake and pump station in a single family zoned residential neighborhood in Volente, trenching their 10'x14' pipeline in our right of ways, constructing another launch shaft and tunneling under the lake to Trails End Rd. All construction and excavation traffic using Lime Creek Rd. and FM 2769 with their hairpin turns, narrow width, challenging terrain and safety issues.

The BCRUA disregards the Village's request for impact, cost and benefit reports. Volente residents are still in the dark regarding specific impacts on water quality, air quality, affects of blasting, altered hydrology, wells and septic systems, roads, noise, lighting, sedimentation and erosion, tree and vegetation removal, property values, and future land use.

The BCRUA publicly insists they do not understand what Volente means by detailed and quantitative impact data. The BCRUA has the duty to disclose to Volente residents what impacts will be required for whatever it is they would like permission to do in Volente. Why can't they put that in writing, in a simple report, as requested?

LAKE TRAVIS ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY

We believe that an appropriate economic impact study will show a significant impact of low lake levels on the local economy. Our premise is that the Enabling Act that created the LCRA in the 1930's lists a set of priorities to guide the LCRA. Keeping Lake Travis at full levels falls pretty low on that list. In the 1930's the local economy was virtually non-existent. This study should show that we now have a significant local economy derived from the health of Lake Travis. After 75 years, we believe a lot has changed and this study would help us illustrate the need to re-organize the LCRA's original list of priorities as well as providing other significant economic data for our efforts in many areas. Travis County has spearheaded an effort to perform an economic impact study. They have garnered the support of many municipalities and some water districts surrounding Lake Travis to include Briarcliff, Jonestown, Lakeway, Lago Vista, Point Venture, Volente, plus the City of Austin. The proposed study is to be performed by Robert Charles Lesser and Company, real estate advisers, and encompasses property tax revenue, sales tax revenue and other sources of revenue from the Lake Travis area based on development and spending driven by residents, property owners, tourists, visitors and local business. The process is proposed to be a combination of data collection from tax and government records as well as interviews of local business and property owners.

~ Judy Graci, Membership ~ Volente Neighborhood Association

ROADWAYS UPDATE

Bullick Hollow road to be used for City of Austin Water Treatment plant #4 electrical plans:

- Austin did not include an electrical plan in the \$10 million deal with Comanche Canyonland Preserve Lands (Oasis Development) for the pump station site and raw water tunnel easements.
- WTP#4 now needs to use Bullick Hollow Road for the electric and communication route from the treatment plant to the pump station (Hwy 620 to Oasis Bluff).
- Balcones Canyonland Conservation Plan was designed with no expansion of Bullick Hollow Road.
- Austin has been working on this problem for two years without bringing it to the attention of the affected communities. Now it is too late to amend the BCP permit to acquire additional ROW.
- Tunneling was eliminated because it was 4-5 times the cost.
- Austin did not construct the merge lane to the top of the hill. They are now working to finish the lane.

The intent is to trench a 10' wide x 8' deep duct bank on the north side ROW, crossing the two primary road lanes in two locations.

Austin is looking at two construction options:

Day time lane closures from 7:00AM - 5:00PM, 8 months

Night time road closure from 8:00PM - 6:00AM, Sunday - Thursday, 6 months

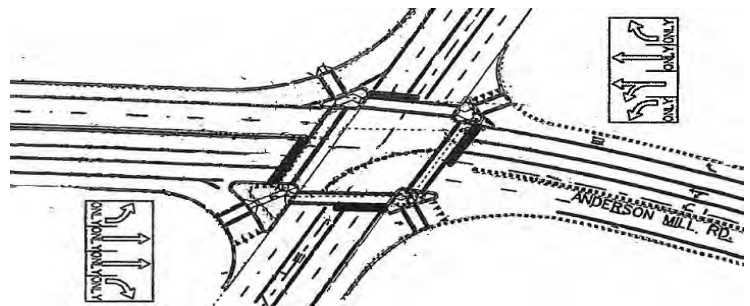
This is complicated by their plan to start tunnel boring and pump station construction at the RWPS in March 2011 which will create significant full truck traffic up Bullick Hollow to 620.

Optimum Solution proposed and supported by the Comanche Trail Community Association, the Cedar Park Community Action group, the Volente Neighborhood Association, and the Village of Volente:

Increase width of Bullick Hollow to support trenching in ROW for duct bank while keeping 2 lanes of traffic open.

The WTP#4 team will be at the Firehall for the Open House 4-5PM on 4/2 to display their plan and answer questions.

Anderson Mill widening (2769 to 620) - The project for widening the 1 mile section of Anderson Mill road between 2769 and 620 has been slowed due to bad weather over the winter and the installation of a waterline by the City of Austin. TxDot estimates that the traffic switch over to the other lanes is two months behind at this point, so that will put switch over in May. They think that the westbound side of the roadway should go faster, so they may be able to make up some time and still finish by the completion date of September.



The intersection at Anderson Mill and 620 heading east will have a left turn only lane, two straight only lanes and one right turn only lane. Heading west across 620 the intersection will have a right turn only lane, straight only lane, one straight/left turn lane and one left turn only lane.

~ Judy Graci, Membership & Ryan Janda, Roadways and Safety ~ Volente Neighborhood Association

[LAKE TRAVIS ZIPLINE ADVENTURES](#)

LAKE TRAVIS ZIPLINE ADVENTURES is an eco-friendly recreational area designed to offer tourists and citizens of the greater Austin area an opportunity to enjoy the beauty of Lake Travis through an exhilarating Zip Line experience. For the first time in history, a true hidden gem of Lake Travis will be opened to the public. Over 90% of this pristine land will be left in its natural state.

Hiking through tree covered vistas, guests will learn about the unique history of the area and it's abundant Wildlife while enjoying panoramic views of Lake Travis. Imagine flying like a bird. Our Zipline experience will leave you breathless and yearning for more.

Once the Zip Line course has been conquered, our guests will have an opportunity to enjoy over 2000 feet of pristine Lake Travis Waterfront with their family and friends. Come join us at Lake Travis Zipline Adventures. Opening Summer 2011. Contact us at ilovetozip@hotmail.com

~ Brian George & John Shipley, VNA Newsletter Contributors

[!!!! WE NEED YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS !!!!](#)

WE NEED YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS!! In an effort to reduce the costs and environmental resources associated with printing this newsletter on a quarterly basis we will be moving towards an electronic version that will be delivered via email. We plan to continue the paper version until sufficient word gets out to the community and before every annual VNA meeting. To opt in to receive this newsletter electronically please go to www.volente.org and go to "[Click Here](#) to

subscribe to email announcements from VNA and VVFD" located on the top of the page and enter in your email address. If you prefer you can also send an email to news@volente.org with the word SUBSCRIBE in the subject line. Special thanks to **Lonnie Moore** for managing the community email distribution lists and keeping us all up to date with things happening in the area with the "Volente e-News" emails.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO NEW & EXISTING VNA MEMBERS

The VNA Board would like to personally thank all existing VNA members for your continued support. We would also like to welcome the following new VNA members: Jeff & Penny Browning, Paul & Nicola Heard, David & Pam James, Linda Lemieux, Ron Murray, Mark & Sharon Rizzo

SAFE HAVEN

Four years ago the **VNA** adopted **Safe Haven**, a local 24 hour a day low demand shelter for persons who are homeless and are living with symptoms of a mental illness. The goal of Safe Haven is to ensure a safe and accepting living environment, while providing qualified staff to establish a trusting relationship, and to guide each resident to review the choices in their lives. Safe Haven offers sixteen beds and eight semi-private rooms, three meals a day, and laundry facilities to all of their residents. It also provides a place for residents to heal and prepare for re-entry into society. **Safe Haven is in need of the following items:** twin mattresses, new pillows, twin sheet sets, and twin bedding. **If you have any of the items listed above and are willing to donate them please drop them off at the Fire Hall in the white basket marked "Safe Haven".** We will make sure they get delivered to Safe Haven.

VNA BOARD NEWS AND UPCOMING ELECTION

Interested in becoming more involved with the community? Join the VNA Board. The VNA Board meets once a month on the first Tuesday of every month at 7:00pm at the Volente Fire Station. Please consider volunteering as a member of the VNA Board. Because of all the new growth expected and all of the exciting changes coming in 2011, we encourage you to be a vital part of serving your community. The new VNA board election will be held by proclamation immediately following the annual meeting on 4/4. **If you are interested in joining the VNA Board please contact Ken Beck at 331-0298.**

VNA BOARD CONTACT INFORMATION

The contact information for the 2011 VNA Board officers and members along with their respective areas of responsibility can be found below:

* Ken Beck, President	Ph. 331-0298
* Al Blunt, Vice President	Ph. 336-1260
* Connie Curtiss, Secretary	Ph. 258-7646
* Bill Connors, Treasurer	Ph. 422-8344
* Judy Graci, Membership	Ph. 257-8626
* Jessica Janda, Newsletter	Ph. 577-1148
* Al Graci / John Scholtzhauer, Lake Travis	Ph. 257-8626
* Babs Yarborough, Community Relations	Ph. 656-6667
* John Scholtzhauer, Business Development & Public Relations	Ph. 258-8136
* Ryan Janda, Roadways & Safety	Ph. 789-0260

Feel free to contact any of the VNA Board Members with your thoughts and suggestions as many people in the community have already done. **Questions, comments or concerns can also be directed to the VNA board e-mail inbox at: vnafeedback@gmail.com.** This email address is a convenient way of letting us know your thoughts. If you would prefer, write your comments on the feedback form provided at the end of this newsletter and mail or drop it off to the Fire Department. The Board invites you to attend our monthly meetings, held on the first Tuesday of each month, 7:00 p.m. at the Fire Hall. **Our meetings are open to the public.** Feel free to come share your thoughts and **TELL US** what we can do to help. Our role is to serve our community and all of you who live here.

~ Jessica Janda, Newsletter Editor ~ Volente Neighborhood Association

Volente Neighborhood Association
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VNA MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Interested in joining the **Volente Neighborhood Association**? Benefits include an annual dinner, a quarterly newsletter, monthly board meetings, and a great opportunity to be involved in community issues that affect us all. The annual membership fee is \$15 per household / \$30 per business. Please fill out the form below and mail it along with your check (payable to the Volente Neighborhood Association) to the following address:

Volente Neighborhood Association (Attention: Membership)
15406 FM 2769
Volente, Texas 78641



2011 Volente Neighborhood Association (VNA) Membership Form

Yearly Dues: **Name** _____

\$15 / Household **Address** _____

\$30 / Business

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Phone _____ **Alt Phone** _____

Mail To: **Email** _____

VNA - Membership **Comments & Suggestions:**

15406 FM 2769

Volente, TX 78641

