



## **Call for Candidates for the Mueller Neighborhood Association Steering Committee**

MNA members are invited to join the 2021 Steering Committee to help the association guide the quality of life, safety, and character of the neighborhood.

Please self-nominate at [tinyurl.com/y4g9lloh](https://tinyurl.com/y4g9lloh) and plan to attend the 2020 annual membership meeting on Saturday Nov. 21, 10:00 am held online via Zoom (you will receive participation details).

MNA is an all-volunteer organization whose activities include three signature events (Egg Scramble, Fourth of July Parade, and Fall Festival), maintaining a neighborhood website, and advocating on behalf of Mueller. For additional information, visit [muellerneighborhood.org](https://muellerneighborhood.org).

The 13-member Steering Committee is elected annually and meets monthly for two hours on a weekday evening to plan general meetings, hear updates from committees, and address issues. Members also attend MNA general meetings and participate on committees.

Please complete the nomination form by October 30 to be included on the ballot.

Questions? Please contact Dennis Mick at [dennismick@gmail.com](mailto:dennismick@gmail.com) or reach out to any current Steering Committee members.

## **MUELLER NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION HOSTS ACCOUNTABILITY SESSION FOR AISD TRUSTEE AND CANDIDATES: DISTRICT 1, DISTRICT 3 AND AT LARGE POSITION 8**

The Mueller Neighborhood Association (MNA) serves people who live in the Mueller neighborhood. The MNA organizes around issues such as affordable housing, inclusion, racial equity, and the safety and well-being of children in the Mueller neighborhood and surrounding areas.

MNA leaders believe in holding our elected officials accountable to the community. We will do this through hosting Accountability Sessions. This community-led event will provide transparency to the community about various issues and where elected officials and candidates stand. MNA leaders will also participate in nonpartisan get-out-the-vote (GOTV) campaigns. Those campaigns will be held in our homes and institutions, and through block walks, social media, and phone banking to provide information to the community about the Accountability Session.

The MNA is hosting our very first Accountability Session on Saturday, October 17th, 2020, from 11:00am to 12:00pm. This is an online event and additional information will be posted so community members can attend. The event will be recorded and aired periodically until Election Day, Tuesday, November 3rd, 2020, for those who couldn't attend.

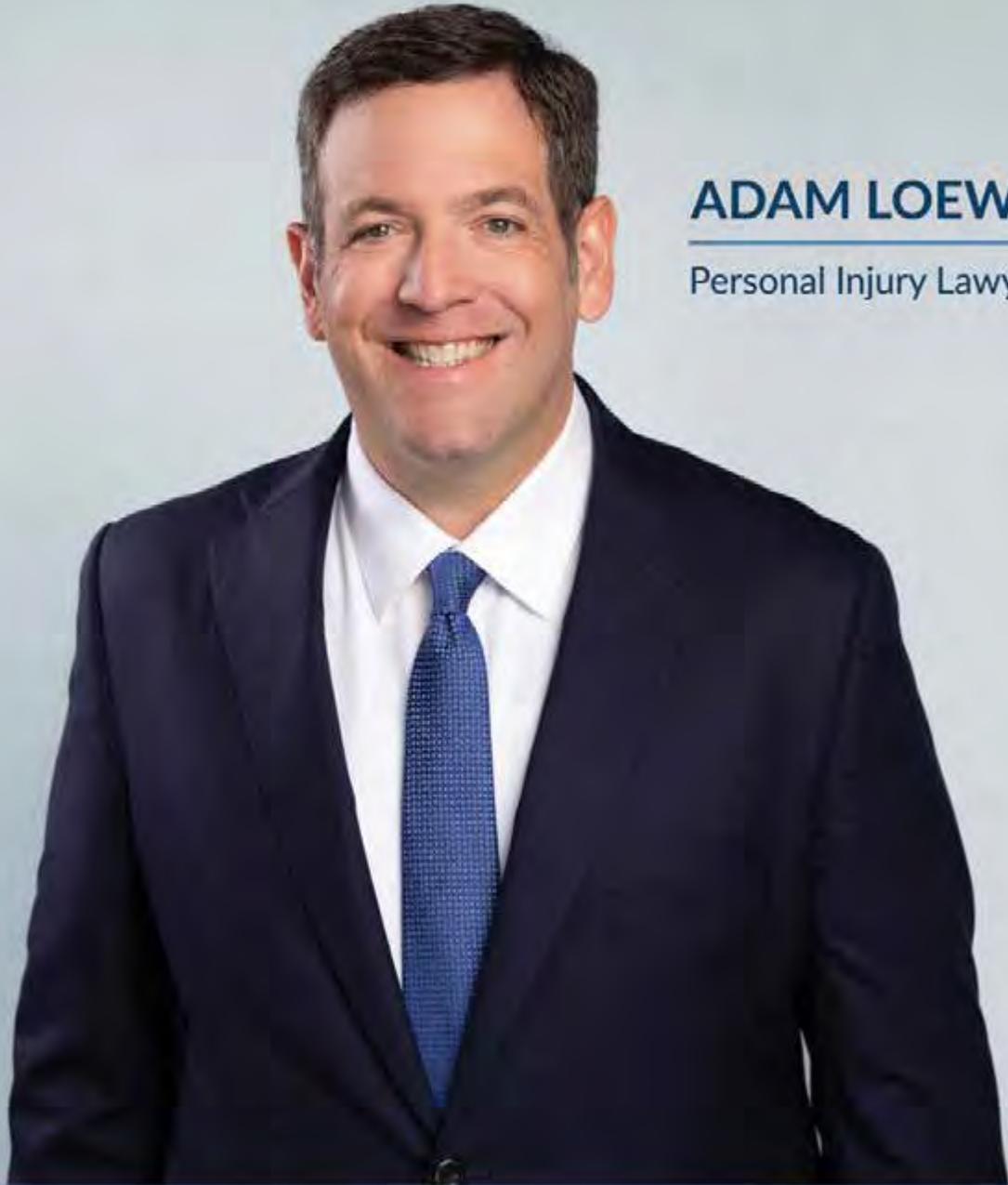
Invitations to participate have been extended to District 1 Trustee LaTisha Anderson, candidate for District 3: Kevin Foster, along with candidates for the Trustee at Large Position 8: Jared D. Breckenridge, Mike Herschenfeld, Noelita L. Lugo, and Leticia Moreno Caballero.

Many of our children attend local schools in District 1, including Blanton, Kealing, Maplewood, LASA, and LBJ, and in District 3, including T.A. Brown, Cook, Ridgetop, and Wooten.

For More Information Call: Koreena Malone – 512-350-0127

*The Mueller Neighborhood Association (MNA) is a non-profit, non-partisan, grassroots organization with a focus on building community. We do this through education, conversation, and gathering at monthly meetings and annual events.*

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Dear Neighbors,

Election season is almost upon us and with it the opportunity to do our civic duty – vote. In addition to the marquee 2020 elections (federal, state, county, and municipal), we will also be electing several members to the 2021 Steering Committee at our general meeting in November.

Early voting for the November 3, 2020 Presidential Joint General and Special Elections starts on Tuesday, October 13th and ends on Friday, October 30th. The deadline to register to vote is Monday, October 5th. If you're not sure if you're registered to vote in Travis County or need to register to vote, visit VoteTravis.com. You can also find more information on voting by mail visiting that site.

As part of our effort to educate voters about candidates on the ballot, the MNA will be holding it's very first Accountability Session on Saturday, October 17th at 11 AM. Invitations have been sent to candidates for the Austin Independent School District's Board of Trustees Districts 1, 3, and at-large position 8. For information, visit our site at muellerneighborhood.org.

Elections for the 2021 Steering Committee will be held at our November general meeting and we are looking for folks to run. The Steering Committee plays a crucial role in guiding the direction and goals of the association and in shaping the large Mueller community. If you want to get involved and give back to our neighborhood, nominate yourself for the committee by completing the form detailed in the call for candidates in this issue of the Front Porch Flyer.

Don't sit this fall out, go vote and get involved in the community!

Take care, John Wooding



## Proposition A (Project Connect) on November 3rd Ballot

*Andrew Clements, Chair, Mueller Neighborhood Association Land Use & Transportation Committee*

On the November 3rd ballot there will be a very important measure for Austin voters to consider – Proposition A will be asking voters to approve a property tax-rate increase (City of Austin portion, a \$0.0785 higher per \$100 property valuation) to help fund the proposed Project Connect city-wide rapid transit system. I've personally been advocating for light rail for twenty years in Austin (and for eight years before then in San Antonio), and I believe this is our opportunity to “catch up” and have a comprehensive, region-wide transit plan - one we needed to pass and should have started twenty years ago.

It is a big plan, but it needs to be – Austin has a big mobility problem that gets worse every year with more new residents arriving. Two new light rail lines, the Orange and the Blue lines, are being proposed. The Orange line will serve North and South Austin from North Lamar to South Congress, and the Blue Line will serve East Austin on Riverside Drive and out to the airport.

In the downtown area these lines will run in a tunnel which allows increased on-time trip performance, avoids conflicts with heavy traffic, and increases safety; all while efficiently serving the largest trip generator in the city - Downtown Austin. Commuter rail, both a new Green Line serving East Austin and expansion along the existing Red Line, will serve those with longer commutes, but with still time-certain travel times.

Such a passenger rail “back-bone” allows for improvements to all bus services. Four new MetroRapid bus routes will offer frequent service (15-minute or less) and faster travel times – including a route through Mueller, on Berkman Drive with the option to continue on to Downtown (on Manor) or Southeast Austin (and a connection to the Blue Line at Riverside Drive). Three new MetroExpress commuter bus routes will be established, joining successful high ridership existing routes; and the entire bus system will be revamped, with increased service, nine new Park & Rides, and 15 new neighborhood circulator zones (for on-demand pick-up and drop-off). Finally, MetroBike, all electric bicycles, will be stationed at transit hubs, rentable from an integrated MetroApp that can pay for all transit trips.

*See "Project-Connect-Initial-Investment-ServiceLevelMap" on next page*

The investment to be voted on in Proposition A will be 7.1 billion dollars. That, obviously, is a large amount. On a \$400,000 home that is \$314 per year, or \$26.17 a month in increased taxes. Federal funding would match, or closely match, that amount (a 40% to 50% “match” of a transit system’s cost is typical). And because of concern over resident displacement, \$300 million in Prop. A will go to ensure affordable housing and a land bank.

There is a lot of community support – check out endorsements at [transitnowatx.com/supporters](http://transitnowatx.com/supporters). Mueller Neighborhood Association’s

Steering Committee has endorsed Proposition A. But I personally, whole-heartedly endorse and encourage you to vote yes.

Great cities have good, equitable, environmentally friendly transit systems that provide all their residents mobility options, and Austin needs this system to continue growing into a great city. Also, because of our pandemic times, such a large public infrastructure project is just the economic boost and job creator needed.

If interested in doing more research, check out the following sites:

Project Connect Fact Sheet, at “Transit Now” (the pro-Prop. A PAC) - [www.transitnowatx.com/about](http://www.transitnowatx.com/about)

Project Connect: [capmetro.org/projectconnect/](http://capmetro.org/projectconnect/)

Transit for Austin (a broad coalition in support): [www.transitforaustin.org/](http://www.transitforaustin.org/)



*Project-Connect-Initial-Investment-ServiceLevelMap*

## Zero Waste Seasonal Decorating

*By Taylor Youngblood, Mueller Zero Waste Block Leader*

It's that time of year. Time to pull out all the boxes, containers, and bags to start decorating.

To decorate in a more zero waste style, it's important to remember a few guiding principles:

- Is the item you're considering made of material that can be reused, recycled, or composted?



*Real Flowers and Pumpkins, by Taylor Youngblood*

- Is it a quality item that can last years, if not decades? Quality will affect the resale value of an item or its possibility of becoming a family heirloom.
- Will this item shed foam, glitter, plastic threads, sequins, paint flecks, glue, or other pieces, causing litter, microplastics, and/or poisoning the soil/ground or water system?
- Is it something that represents your long term style? Or is it “now?” You might spend more money up front for items that last, or less money now but more in the long run to keep up each year with the “now” trend.
- There are several ways to find decorations that already

exist to avoid the price of purchase and the virgin materials cost to produce and ship the item.

- Ask your family and friends. Half of my decorations are from my family.
- Check your local Buy Nothing group, Nextdoor, and Marketplace on Facebook for free items.
- Set up and invite people to a trade party to exchange costumes, decorations, crafts, stationary, and other holiday items.
- Decorate organically and naturally:
- Make your own decorations with craft supplies you have, find free, or purchase locally at reuse/resale places like Austin Creative Reuse. I take pictures of seasonal ideas when I'm reading magazines at the doctor's office, in line at checkout, or see a neat idea a neighbor did while out on a walk.
- Kids love to see their decorations become part of holiday tradition. Ask your kids (or neighbors' kids!) to create decorations, use the ones they make at school, or look online for ideas. Reinforce paper crafts with cardboard or use several layers of cardstock so the craft lasts and stores well.
- Find natural items outdoors or in the grocery store. Through time, decorations have been made with what is locally available, natural, and in season.
- Collect pine cones, acorns, leaves, flowers, wheat/seeding grasses, and corn husks.
- Bake nuts and seeds to kill bugs.



*Real Pumpkin Wearing Real Underwear, by Taylor Youngblood*

***Continued on Page 6***

# FRONT PORCH FLYER

Continued from Page 5

- Press leaves and flowers.
- Pumpkins, squash, cranberries, cinnamon sticks and star anise dried oranges, pine tree clippings, fresh wreaths, and trees are all compostable. You can stack these, string them (using cotton, rafia, or jute twine), drill small holes in them for wires and picks, tie them together, poke them in branch/twig/vine wreath. Best of all, they are reusable.

Happy Holidays!



## Living with Uncertainty

Judith Katzman

Human beings crave information about the future. When faced with uncertainty the brain perceives it as a threat and gets to work creating certainty. Entire industries are built on this need, from strategic planning to astrology apps. From conspiracy theories to fortune telling.

We circle the unknown and try to inch toward the center with arguments and experiments. In the case of COVID-19, we watch the experts as they learn. Their uncertainty compounds our own. So, we either reject them for not knowing or we wait and try to cope.

Coping has taken different forms: baking, over-eating, drinking, limitless technology, more news, on-line shopping, running, more drinking, less news. And zoom. At first, we put up signs saying, “We are all in this together.” We shared videos from all over the world of parents laughing at their attempts to home school, and instructions for how to make masks out of underwear. We put teddy bears in our windows.

But now our uncertainty is outlasting our coping strategies. More than 40% of American adults are experiencing depression, anxiety, and substance abuse issues associated with COVID-19.

Self-care articles have been full of advice: less news, more rest, exercise, gratitude, and meditation.

The key is in the shift from coping to adapting. Coping gets us through the day or week until things go back to normal. When we adapt, however, we acknowledge that a change has taken place and will be around for a while. We’re no longer just waiting for this to be over. The question changes from “How can I feel better right now?” to “How can I meet my responsibilities and what are the activities that help me and my loved ones stay safe and healthy?” “How do we balance safety and joy?” Sometimes it’s the coping strategies that get in the way of adapting.

Our neighborhood is modeled on adaptation to a changing world while finding a way to live in the city. We don’t pretend there are endless resources of land, water or cool weather. We find beauty in what grows in this environment naturally. We learn to live in close proximity to others.

We’re still all in this together. Now it’s in a more proactive way. It starts with a collaborative effort of social distancing and mask wearing. The rest of the details are individual. For how long? Well, that’s still uncertain.

A photograph of a hairdresser wearing a blue face mask cutting a customer's hair. The customer is also wearing a black face mask. The background is a light blue wall. Text on the right says "New safety measures. Same great haircuts." There is a circular logo for "Great Clips PROMISE" with icons for safety and service.

**New safety measures. Same great haircuts.**

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## Our Garden Oasis

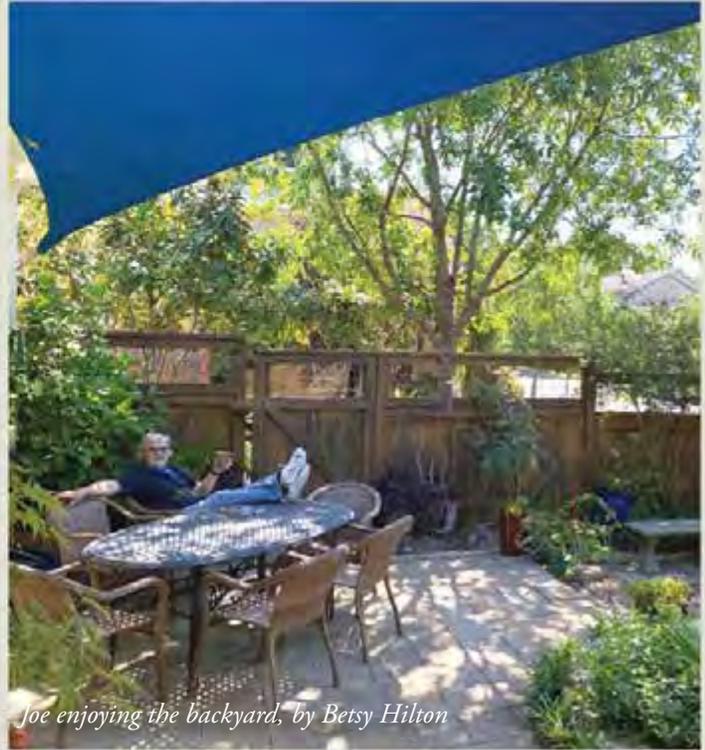
By Betsy Hilton

Joe was designing our backyard garden before our house in Mueller was even built. He had several different options sketched out, and when we moved we brought over 120 plants with us. Joe spent the first year watching the light in the yard and thinking about which design option would best suit our needs.

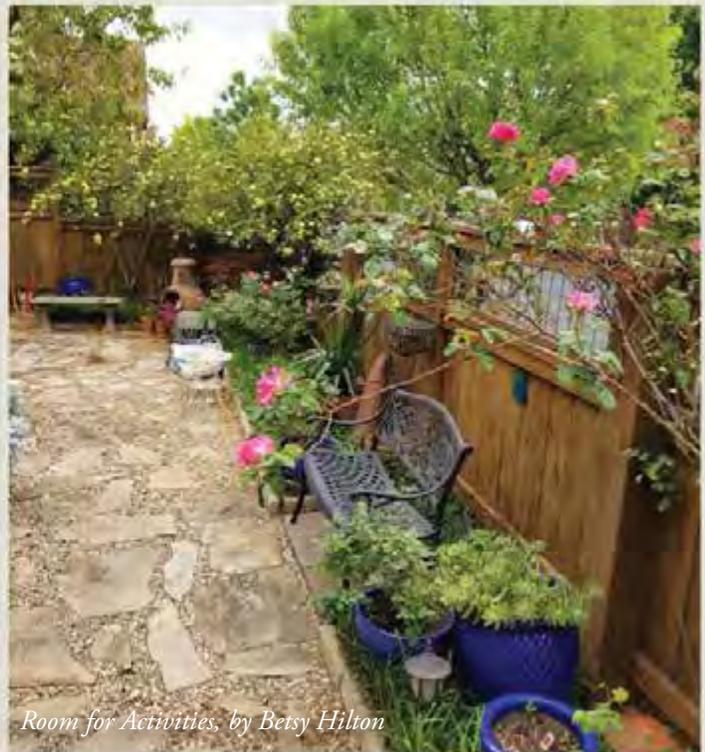
As a result of this planning, and then the landscape work to implement his plan, we are blessed to have an outdoor living room that has served us well. We've appreciated the initial Mueller design requirement for fences to have an open design in the top 18 inches, which allowed us to meet people over the fence when we moved in, and continues to allow us to visit with neighbors as they pass by.

The backyard design is flexible enough to adapt with us as situations warrant. We like to entertain, and pre-COVID parties often spilled into this outdoor living room. Except for in the heat of summer, we can often be found sitting outside, enjoying the flowers and watching the birds land on the small fountain. When our favorite music festival was cancelled this Spring, we were able to join a virtual festival outdoors, including dancing on the patio. And, we've been extremely grateful that during COVID, we are able to have a few singles or couples over to visit outdoors with about 10 feet of separation between each group. Once temperatures cool off some, we hope to resume this practice. It's also been possible for us to see our family in this way.

We don't have any vegetables in the garden, but we do have some herbs and lots of flowers, especially antique roses. As our trees continue to grow, our sun exposure is diminishing and the roses may have to give way to more shade-tolerant plants. The garden keeps changing, just as we all do. We don't know what it will look like years from now but we're pretty sure we'll still be grateful for the joy it brings us. Stop and say hello over the fence if you see us outside.



*Joe enjoying the backyard, by Betsy Hilton*



*Room for Activities, by Betsy Hilton*

# FRONT PORCH FLYER

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## Mueller Neighborhood Association Membership Form

To become a voting MNA member, a Mueller resident must complete this form and submit annual dues. New members must then wait 14 days before they may vote. Annual dues are \$5.00 per resident, 18 years or older. These funds are used to help pay for the Front Porch Flyer, MNA Grants, funding neighborhood events, and operating costs such as printing, record-keeping, and the MNA P.O. Box.

You may give your dues to your Block Captain, bring it to an MNA meeting, or mail it to: MNA, PO Box 49123, Austin, TX 78765.

Checks may be written to "Mueller Neighborhood Association."

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