



## July Newsletter - City Code Changes & Monarch Butterflies



### City Considers Resolution to Substantially Change SF Zoning

Thursday, July 20th 2023, the Austin City Council will vote on a resolution directing the City Manager to work out details of changing the Land Development Code to allow smaller size lots that will accommodate more structures.

[Read Resolution Here](#)

The resolution includes several items of supporting data, but reading through it feels more like a sales pitch. Let's take a look at two of the claims.

"In 2022, the Austin Board of Realtors reported that homeownership for middle-income earners in Austin dropped to 28 percent of that group from nearly 50 percent in 2012."

What was going on in 2020-2022? The country was in economic turmoil from the effects of Covid-19. Could this have an effect on home ownership? (Think about your grocery bills.) What other factors were in play? This particular analysis is flawed and is in question.

The resolution cites only the title of a paper *Lotting Large: The Phenomenon of Minimum Lot Size Laws* by Paul Boudreaux.

This paper defines large lots as 1-2 acres that are located away from the city centers. This definition applies to very few Austin neighborhoods. As his work is predicated on this definition, the conclusions of large lots "obstructing affordable housing and exacerbating social segregation" do NOT apply to the Austin market. Again, this analysis is in question.

If these two items are in question, then we must question all the other analyses. If these conclusions are the basis for the resolution, then we must question that, as well.

Daryl Slusher has a good description of the situation. If this resolution passes, then implementation is in the hands of the City Manager, and the people of Austin will have had no input.

[Read Daryl Slusher's take on the proposal here](#)

We have deed restrictions that prevent this type of development. Why should we be concerned? In the last legislative session, several bills were offered that would change development rules at a state level, which would supersede local zoning and deed restrictions. None passed, but this conversation is not over. It is important that our voices be heard every time this issue arises.

We have friends and families living in other parts of the city without deed restrictions. We can add our voices to theirs. All these proposals have one thing in common - the erasure of single-family homes, neighborhoods where kids and dogs have a back yard in which to run, safe streets where families can walk or ride bikes, and so much more.

Should you wish to contact our council representative, Mackenzie Kelly, and/or the mayor and other council members, use this link, and scroll down to the City Council.

[City Council Emails](#)

**Monarch Butterflies Migrate Through Austin  
From September Through October**



Have you ever seen hundreds of Monarchs resting overnight on a shrub, or the stream of migrating butterflies traveling through your yard? It is a sight to behold and has happened in our neighborhood.

Texas Parks and Wildlife offers a great summary about the importance of Texas in this magnificent migration. [TPWD - Monarchs' path through Texas](#)

*Texas is an important state in monarch migration because it is situated between the principal breeding grounds in the north and the overwintering areas in Mexico. Monarchs funnel through Texas both in the fall and the spring. During the fall, monarchs use two principal flyways. One traverses Texas in a 300-mile wide path stretching from Wichita Falls to Eagle Pass. Monarchs enter the Texas portion of this flyway during the last days of September. By early November, most have passed through into Mexico.*

*The second flyway is situated along the Texas coast and lasts roughly from the third week of October to the middle of November. Early each March overwintering monarchs begin arriving from their overwintering grounds in Mexico. Seeking emerging milkweeds, they move through Texas laying eggs before dying. Their offspring continue heading north, leaving most of Texas behind, the first of several new generations of monarchs that repopulate the eastern half of the United States and southern Canada.*

A single butterfly does not make the trip from Canada to Mexico and back again. Adults begin mating in spring on the way back to Canada. As these eggs become butterflies, the females mate and lay eggs as they go north. In September, the mating stops, and the last generation is the one that migrates to Mexico.

What can we do to help our tiny friends? Plant pollinator gardens, which are good for butterflies, hummingbirds, and bees, as well as native milkweed for sustenance and home to the Monarch eggs. Of course, it is not quite that simple because there are many varieties of milkweed, and the ones most suited for Texas are in short supply. Seeds are available for anyone who wants to grow them. Might even be a good money raiser for groups.

There are several native milkweed varieties and can be found at this link to TPWD.  
[TPWD - Texas milkweed](#)

The second choice is what we most often see in the nurseries, tropical milkweed, which flowers longer than Texas natives. There are some questions about it harboring a parasite that is harmful to Monarchs, and flowering past October which may keep the butterflies from reaching their over-wintering grounds in Mexico. One way around both problems is to cut it down in October.

Austin is a major part of the migration route to Mexico. The monarch numbers have declined from harsh weather and dwindling habitat. The City of Austin, TPWD, and other organizations are making great efforts to plant more milkweed. So let's do our part and send out a Balcones Village / Spicewood welcome for the monarchs!

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