



April, 2022

April Newsletter

Ask the Board

It looks so beautiful as I turn off Bee Cave Road to enter our community. Who takes care of that area and pays for it?

Uhhh.....you do. Yes, a good part of your Barton Creek North POA (BCNPOA) dues go towards beautifying the areas along Barton Creek Blvd (primarily from Bee Caves to almost Lost Creek), selected areas along Lost Creek Blvd, and the Wimberly Lane Blvd median.

The BCNPOA administers these agreements with both Travis County, and other private parties, in order to enhance the value of our community. You may also see the occasional "orange truck" from LandCare who is our current contractor to perform maintenance for these areas. LandCare helps us to perform lawncare type maintenance, clean up debris, maintain our irrigation systems along these areas.

So, thank you for helping us make Barton Creek North such a beautiful place to call home.



Get to Know Lt. Frank Lofton

Lt. Frank Lofton is a dedicated public servant with the heart of a hero. He has worked for the Travis County

Sheriff's Office for 31 years. In other words, he's been "married" to residents of Travis County longer than he has to his wife of 30 years.

He attended Marion Military Institute in Alabama and finished his degree at (now) Texas State University. He was commissioned into the U.S. Army and then went into law enforcement. Lucky for us, his career has allowed him to serve our community in several capacities. He was a patrolman, a detective, a sergeant, a lieutenant and a captain. Now he works in West Command on the day shift, which means you may see him frequently around your neighborhood. He's has been coordinating our security patrols in Barton Creek since 2005.



Lt. Lofton and his wife have two adult children. His daughter is a kindergarten teacher and his son is studying computer science and engineering, also at Texas State University. This proud husband and father is committed to his work and enjoys getting to know the residents on a personal level.

He answered several questions that we thought might interest Barton Creek North POA residents.

- What is the Closed Patrol Service, now called Home Check Request? When residents go out of town, they can sign up on the sheriff's website (https://www.tcsheriff.org/services/public-resources/home-check-request#) to have officers check their property for safety. He urges us to let neighbors know to keep an eye out for unusual activity. The form allows requesters to list visitors and/or vehicles authorized to be on their property while they are away. Residents can request this free service anytime, though people usually request it when traveling for a week or more. Lt. Lofton noted "we have NEVER had a house broken into in the Barton Creek area while on Closed Patrol". Lt. Lofton also emphasizes the importance of not posting any pictures from a trip on social media while you are gone, saying it's very risky. Also, the Closed Patrol can be found on the website using the path View All Services/Public Resources/Home Check Request. They changed the name from Closed Patrol to Home Check Request.
- What tips do you have to prevent break-ins? Most residents in Barton Creek have security systems but he advises not to become complacent. He said lots of people have the gate codes or can follow residents into a neighborhood. He likes the idea of having outdoor lighting to illuminate your property, and motion activated lights can

be helpful too. He adds, “the darker it is, it’s more of a target of opportunity.” It’s helpful to keep hedges and/or vegetation trimmed below windows. He also thinks it’s imperative to lock all doors and windows, even when you are in your home, including locking parked cars. He advises against parking in the street but, “if you do, DON’T leave garage door openers or valuables in your car. And, whatever you do, don’t leave firearms in vehicles.”

- How do we protect packages from being taken from front porches? He suggests that if you are traveling, have Amazon packages delivered to an Amazon locker, or ask neighbors to watch for and pick up packages. He thinks it’s a good idea to have a good security system, as well as security cameras and signs in the yard and/or on the windows.
- What do you do if you are at home and someone is breaking into your house? “First of all, if you can get out safely, leave immediately. Secure yourself and call 911. Don’t allow yourself to be trapped, go to a neighbor’s home, and/or make a lot of noise.” He said 9 out of 10 burglars come to steal property, not to hurt homeowners. He noted, “if you have a gun, take ‘license to carry’ courses, familiarize yourselves with your weapon, and go to the range to practice. If you aren’t willing to use a gun, don’t have one.”
- Some residents are gone for months at a time or have a second home. Is there anything special they need to know? Lt. Lofton encourages you to have security systems in both places and again, you can request Closed Patrol Service for your Barton Creek home. He suggested you make sure you have someone checking on your second residence as well (when you’re here).
- How can we protect pedestrians and/or children on our neighborhood streets? He does not recommend children playing in the street. Drivers should SLOW down when driving and watch out for bike riders and dog walkers. Drivers should think about what they are doing, watch their speed and be mindful of stop signs. “And, call if you see anything suspicious.” “The sheriff’s office cannot enforce traffic laws in gated communities unless it is DWI or reckless driving.”
- Are gated communities safer than non-gated neighborhoods? Gated communities are safer if residents don’t become complacent. He wants us to stay vigilant about locking doors and protecting our property. He noted that some homes also have gated driveways inside their neighborhood. While it may deter some burglaries, it’s critical to not become complacent about our safety. It’s also best to have a gate code for vendors (e.g., Mon–Sat 8 am – 7 pm) and limit use of your 24 hour code to friends and family.
- When calling 9-1-1 from either a landline or a cellphone in Travis County (since we are outside of the Austin city limits here in Barton

Creek), does the 9-1-1 operator automatically dispatch the Travis County Sheriff and the Oak Hill Fire Department on Barton Creek Blvd (if appropriate)?”

1. It's important to know, the 911 operator will always ask for the caller's address. If calling from a landline all 911 calls will go to the Sheriff's Office if the residence is not in the City Limits of Austin. The Sheriff's Office dispatches for Rollingwood and Westlake Hills so their 911 would automatically go to the Sheriff's Office as well. If calling from a cell phone it depends on which cell tower the call comes from to the 911 Call Center. If it hits a cell tower in the County, the Sheriff's Office will receive the 911 call. If it hits off of a tower in the City of Austin, the Austin Police Department will get the 911 call. Law Enforcement will always be the primary contact on all 911 calls and will be transferred to the appropriate Fire or EMS agency if the caller is requesting Fire or EMS. If a call goes to APD 911 for a resident in Barton Creek, it will be transferred to the Sheriff's Office.
 2. Bonus Tip: If you use an Apple mobile device, you can go to Settings, Phone, Wi-Fi calling, turn that option on, scroll down to Update Emergency Address, click on Change Address and enter your home address. If you are on wi-fi from home and call 9-1-1 from your mobile device, if emergency services can't automatically locate you (or you can't speak), they'll go to the address you enter here (note, it cannot be a P.O. Box). Other mobile devices may have similar settings for wi-fi calling and emergency addresses.
- Is there anything else residents without landlines need to know or do with regard to emergency services?”
1. First, it is best to register your cell phones with Warn Central Texas at <https://warncentraltexas.org/>. This link enables you to receive important emergency alerts and it will associate your cell phone with your address.
 2. Second, if you're not familiar with 3-1-1 for non-emergency calls in the City of Austin, not the county. They may just refer you to the non-emergency number or just refer you. Lt. Lofton recommends calling 512-974-0845 and, when prompted, hit the 3 key to be connected to a dispatcher. 2-1-1 (free and confidential information and referrals for help with food, housing, employment, health care, counseling and more), those are also important vehicles for getting certain kinds of help.
- Is there anything else we need to know? If we have fire safety questions, we can call Oak Hill Fire Department. If we are concerned about weather safety, we can download the CAPCOG App to receive alerts about severe weather, or Amber Alerts. He also suggests we “don't shop alone, put packages in your trunk, and cover up them up if we drive an SUV.” He adds, “NEVER leave a purse, backpack or computer bag in an unattended vehicle.” Also, he advises “NEVER leave your car running,” even to go back inside your house, to get mail or when buying gas. He suggests we park in the garage or

driveway. He said “more people run into cars on street, especially when it’s dark.”

1. Homeowners may also make a report online for certain offenses like: Credit Card Abuse, Gang Tip, General Crime Tip, Identity Theft, Interfere with Child Custody, Internet Crime, Lost Property Vandalism, Missing Livestock, Theft, Theft from Vehicle, and Wage Theft.
2. Everything can be found at TCSheriff.Org homepage at the bottom where there is a “File A Report” button.
3. Every 2–4 months, the scammers use TCSO officer names, then they switch to other agencies. They even spoof our actual phone number. Here's what we have on our web site: <https://www.tcsheriff.org/about/community/public-alerts> Scroll down to "Phone Scams". The text of the link is below.

Phone Scam

1. A number of phone scams have been victimizing residents of Travis County. The caller claims to be an officer with TCSO or another local, state or federal agency. The scammer aggressively claims the resident has failed to do any number of things, ranging from jury duty to paying taxes and tells the resident he/she owes a fine that must be paid immediately in order to avoid being arrested.
2. There is a common element in all of the phone scams – the caller seeks immediate payment via gift card or money pack. TCSO will never seek payment for anything via wire transfer, gift cards or money packs.
3. If you receive a suspicious phone call from someone demanding payment, do not hesitate to contact us at 512–854–9770 to verify the validity of that call before giving anyone money.

Finally, Lt. Lofton’s overall advice is simple. “Get to know your neighbors, know each other’s routines. Look out for each other and build relationships so you know who to trust.” He concluded, with a twinkle in his eye, “it’s important to know your neighbors so they know you are looking out for each other, and not just being a nosy neighbor.”

Special thanks to Marianne Rochelle for helping edit this article.



Stop the Spread of Oak Wilt

As you are planning your spring landscaping cleanup projects, please keep in mind that Live Oak Tree trimming is strongly discouraged from now through June to prevent the spread of Oak Wilt Disease.

If trimming must be done because of damage to the tree, use pruning sealer

immediately. In certain conditions, the tree can become infected through a fresh wound in a little as 15 minutes.

Oak Wilt is present in several areas of Barton Creek. It spreads via beetles and through interconnected root systems. Please do your part in saving these precious resources.

Learn more about Oak Wilt and its prevention by visiting: www.texasoakwilt.org

Planning a renovation, pool, or new paint job? Remember to check with Barton Creek North Community Manager, Rebecca Jones, to see if BCN Master Architectural Control Committee approval is needed! BARCREEK@CIRAMAIL.COM



Contact Information

BARTON CREEK NORTH CONTACT INFORMATION

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Need a copy of your Barton Creek North account statement? Sign up for the Resident Portal at www.RealManage.com

WWW.BARTONCREEKNORTH.COM

Barton Creek North Board of Directors Meetings are typically held the fourth Wednesday of the month at 3:00 p.m. at the Oak Hill Fire Department, 4111 Barton Creek Boulevard. Members are invited and encouraged to attend meetings of the Board. Email notifications are sent one week before the meeting.

