



Gifford Park's Pride

Gifford Park Neighborhood: A Great Place to Live, Work, Learn and Play

February 2004

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Destination Midtown Master Plan Near Completion

As most of you are aware the final DM (Destination Midtown) master plan document is planned for public release in April. The timeline set by the steering committee is aggressive but will ultimately help keep everyone focused on creating a solid vision and plan for the Midtown area. At our last DM steering committee meeting on January 22 we received the "Neighborhood Programs" draft copy for review. Neighborhood association representatives distributed copies of this 17-page document to their respective neighborhoods for review and feedback. Comments and recommendations will then be discussed by MNA (Midtown Neighborhood Association) to consolidate common issues – these will be forwarded to HDR (the project facilitator) to produce a revised document.

This same process will take place for the other key program drafts according to the following release schedule: Transportation – February 5; Western Business Area - February 26; Eastern Business Area – March 11; Parks and Open Space – March 25; Final review and release – April. Please contact **Chris** at 342-6006 or **Ron** at 344-0757 if you would like a copy of any of the above drafts to review and provide feedback; your input is needed.

The structure of the "Neighborhood Programs" draft document includes specific recommendations for the following areas: implementation mechanisms, public safety (including community policing), code enforcement, absentee landlords, rehabilitation of homes, buildings and small business districts (Main Street Program), zoning and overlay districts, maintenance and upkeep, historic preservation, parks, open space and community gardens, and neighborhood oriented mobility programs (including biking).

Of course implementing this plan will be challenging. This is why some of the DM steering committee members will be visiting Portland, Oregon to learn how this progressive city has implemented its master plan. Specifically regarding neighborhood issues, members of the steering committee will meet with city staff from Portland's Planning, Redevelopment and Community Development Corporation to see how they do it.

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Next Meeting

Thursday, February 5
7:00 P.M.

Guest Speaker
Denise Cousin
Omaha Police Department
Northeast Precinct Captain

Creighton University
Medical Center
Dining Rooms A, B, & C

Free Tax Help Available Now

The site for the annual free tax assistance is the **Lay Apostolate Center at St. Cecilia's Cathedral, 40th & Webster St.** Tax help will be available **Mondays 1 to 4 p.m., Thursdays 6 to 8 p.m. and Saturdays 10 to 11:30 a.m.** though the tax season. Everyone is welcome! IRS representatives will provide free tax help for our neighborhood for the 10th year in a row. Processing of basic tax returns and electronic filing will be available. No appointment is necessary; walk-in appointments only. Please call **Jackie** at 551-3629 for more information.

Note: **Raquel Ayala**, has volunteered to translate for Spanish-speaking people who need help with their taxes. If you are interested or know someone who could benefit from this assistance, please call her at 880-6225 for more information.



HAPPY
VALENTINE'S
DAY!



GPNA OFFICERS**PRESIDENT**

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Cynthia Shuck 556-2090

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Cynthia Shuck 556-2090

TOOL LENDING

Chris Foster 342-6006

WATCH GROUP

Terry Wilwerding 342-2795

WEEDS & BITTER

Jim Wilwerding 551-1344

WELCOMING

Vicki Frey 344-0757

Editor's note: If you have something that would be of interest to our neighborhood, we encourage you to submit an article for our monthly newsletter. Editorials must be approved by the GPNA Executive Board. Articles can be left at the GPNA Office; please include your name and phone number. Contact Sue Wilwerding (342-2795) or Chris Foster (342-6006) for information regarding the newsletter.

From The President . . .

We've received the initial report on the Destination Midtown study. The conclusion? The future of our neighborhood is in *our* hands. We already knew that, but it's nice to have some official recognition.

Well, they didn't come right out and say it, but when you read the fine print of the first draft, it talks about a lot of things that *ought* to happen, about funds that need to be raised—oh, did you catch that? When it comes right down to it, the resources *aren't* there—we have to find them.

We need to find the dollars and organize the priorities and set the agenda for our own neighborhood—and it's time to get started. I don't know about you, but I'm tired of waiting on others. We now have a roadmap that can serve as the template.

The next step is to initiate a Master Plan for the Gifford Park Neighborhood. Part of it has already started. The city planning department did a complete housing survey for Destination Midtown. In the past, the planning department came to Gifford Park and offered their help with a Master Plan. I think it is high time to take them up on their offer. We also need to challenge them on the code issues in our area.

We need to engage the police department in a discussion of "community policing." We have a new northeast precinct captain, Denise Cousin. She is a 20+ year veteran of the force and a second generation officer. I have invited her to speak to us at the next Gifford Park Meeting on Thursday. We look forward to meeting her and working with her on solutions.

We need to work with the City Council to provide incentives on old home rehabilitation. We need to find partners and investors who want to bring houses back to single home ownership and long-term stability. We need to apply pressure to absentee landlords and landlords who do not maintain their property or screen their renters. We are working on surveying rental properties and turning in those in noncompliance.

We need to be vigilant on our "green spaces." The state of Nebraska is due to dismantle the abandoned bridges at 30th and Davenport. We want to see these areas continue to be green and to become part of a "green corridor" between Turner Park, Bemis Park and Gifford Park.

Our business district is special. I would like our business owners and building owners to catch the vision of the future. The future of 33rd and California will be a bustling business district for all residents. There will not be drug dealing, fighting, intimidation or any other activity that detracts from the area. That is the future. Now we have to get there.

To do these things we have to be firm in our resolve, clear with our objectives and painstaking in our work. It is not a sprint, but a marathon. We have to find the right tools, the right partners and a huge long-term energy source to be successful—but I know we will. Would you be part of us? The Gifford Park Executive Board meets every third Thursday at 7:00 at Yates School. This is where we will be discussing and implementing these measures. You are welcome to join us—as a matter of fact, I'd be thrilled to see you!

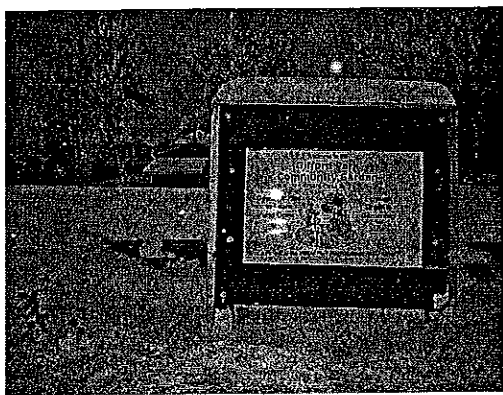
by Ron Frey

Destination Midtown . . .

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Ultimately this plan is a vision of what we want our neighborhoods to be. For the plan to be successful and for us to see real improvement, it will likely mean some changes in the way the City and neighborhoods approach public safety, code enforcement, zoning and other areas, but in the end, positive change should be in everyone's best interest.

by Chris Foster



It's hard to imagine spring and planting season when looking at the Gifford Park Community Garden after a 13" snowfall.

Survey Reveals Members' Business Preferences

At the GPNA Holiday Banquet in December, those members in attendance were asked to complete a short survey about the types of businesses they would like to see in the Gifford Park "neighborhood of the future." The question that was posed was, "What stores or services would you financially support if they were offered in the local business district (33rd & California St. area)?" Ninety-three members responded to the survey question by choosing from 32 options. The top five vote-getters were:

1. Bakery
2. Coffee Shop
3. Deli
4. Bookstore
5. Ice Cream Shop

The results of the survey will be used in formulating the master plan for the neighborhood and in future business recruitment.

Own a Pet? Here Are 10 City Ordinances You Should Know About

1. **Clean up after your pet: Sec. 6-74**
 - It is unlawful for any person owning any animal to permit that animal to defecate on public property or any privately owned or occupied property without immediately cleaning or removing the excrement.
2. **Don't let your pet be a nuisance: Sec 6-74**
 - It is unlawful for your pet to engage in menacing behaviors such as chasing vehicles or frightening neighbors or passers-by
 - Don't permit habitual barking
 - Don't allow unsanitary conditions that would cause foul odors, attract flies or vermin, or otherwise threaten public health and safety
3. **License your pet: Sec. 6-09**
 - It is the duty of the owner of a dog or cat to ensure that the pet is licensed and bears an I.D. tag attached to a collar or harness worn at all times
4. **Transporting pets in open trucks is illegal: Sec 6-86**
 - Domestic animals are not allowed to be transported in an open cargo bed of a truck or the trunk of an automobile
5. **Don't keep illegal animals: Sec. 6-81**
 - It is unlawful for anyone to own any non-domestic animal including agricultural animals, animals that have reverted to a wild state, a wolf hybrid, or any other hybrid animals within the city
6. **It is expensive when your animal is impounded: Sec. 6-50**
 - 1st redemption is \$35, 2nd is \$70, 3rd is \$140
7. **You must have a breeders permit in order sell or give away puppies/kittens: Sec. 6-143**
 - Fee is \$100
 - Reimbursable if female is spayed within 3 months of litter
8. **Special permits are required to own more than 4 dogs or 6 cats: Sec. 6-144**
 - An inspection fee of \$100 is due at time of application for a Pet Avocation Permit, with an annual fee of \$50
9. **Dog fighting is illegal: Sec. 6-85**
 - It is also unlawful to knowingly and willingly witness dog fighting
10. **Dangerous dogs must be: (Amended Sec. 6-152 - 6-157)**
 - Spayed or neutered
 - Micro-chipped for identification
 - Kept where warning signs are posted
 - Confined indoors or outdoors in an enclosed locked pen
 - Leashed and muzzled off-property
 - kept by an owner who must have a \$100,000 liability policy

What's Happening In The Neighborhood . . .

A sign-up for Memorial Park Little League Summer Baseball will be held on **Saturday, February 7th** from 9 a.m. to noon at St. Margaret Mary school (61st and Chicago St.) in the Guild Room (east side of the building). Brackets range from 4 to 18 years of age. Play begins in April and runs through June; all games are scheduled for play at Hillside Field. Kids will play 2-3 games per week depending on their age group.

Boys, if you have completed grade 5 in school or are 11 years of age, come see what **Boy Scouting** is about. Learn skills for the future now. Troop meetings are **Tuesdays 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.** Call Scout Master **Jim Detwiler 932-1907** or leave a message for a call back.

We wish to thank the **United States Tennis Association** for presenting the GPNA with \$384 for our annual tennis program held each August in Gifford Park. Special thanks to all the great volunteers and kids who participated in last year's event. The money will go toward continuing to expand the program to provide racquets, prizes and possibly extending lessons to those children who are interested.

Omaha Main Streets will be sponsoring a series of workshops to help participants learn how to research historic properties. The workshops will be held on **February 5th and 19th** from **1:30-3:30 pm** at the **Neighborhood Center, 115 S. 49th Ave.** Workshops are **FREE**; please RSVP to **Vince Furlong at 553-5644** or vfurlong@cox.net.

Omaha by Design will be holding a community meeting to discuss **Green Omaha**. Here is your chance to be heard and give your ideas on this important process. The meeting will be held at the **Scott Conference Center, 6450 Pine Street, February 18th** from **6:30-8:30 pm**; admission is **FREE**. For more information on Omaha by Design, please visit www.livelyomaha.org or call **342-3458**.

The **Crime Free Multi-Housing Program** presents **"Keeping Illegal Activity Out of Rental Property"**. The program will be held at the **Omaha Home for Boys** campus located at **4343 N. 52nd St.** on **February 11** from **8:00 am – 5:00 pm**. The cost is **FREE**, class size is limited and advance registration is required by **February 2nd**. Contact Officer **Brian Craig** at **444-3479** for more information.



GIFFORD PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
 532 N. 33rd Street, Omaha, NE 68131
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
(Please print clearly)



Membership year: _____ *(Membership year runs from June 1 through May 31)*

Type of membership: Single (\$5) _____ Family (\$8) _____ Business (\$25) _____

Name of business _____

Name _____ (Last) _____ (First)

Spouse _____ (Last) _____ (First)

Address _____ (Street) _____ (City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip)

Telephone Number: _____ (Home) _____ (Work)

E-mail Address: _____

Can we contact you for help on any of the following items? (please circle areas of interest).

- | | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Cleanup/Beautification | Tennis Program | Block Captain | Tool Lending |
| Membership | Youth Activities | History | Newsletter |
| Neighborhood Walks | Park | Merchants | Newsletter Distribution |
| Social Activities | Tree Planting | Watch Group | Meeting Program |
| Landlord/Tenant Issues | Calling Committee | Public Relations | School Liaison |

Just A Reminder . . .

Omaha's Municipal Code requires all sidewalks to be shoveled within 24 hours after a snowstorm. Walks left unshoveled may be cleared by City crews at the expense of the property owner. Also, officials recommend clearing snow from around fire hydrants. For more information, or if you have a comment or complaint, please call the **Street Maintenance Office** at **444-4919**.

**For City Services,
 Information, or
 Complaints
 Call:
 Mayor's Action
 Office
 444-5555**