



Gifford Park's Pride

Gifford Park Neighborhood: A Great Place to Live, Work, Learn, and Play
www.giffordparkomaha.org

June 2013

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Big Turnout for Park Meeting

By Martin Janousek

The conversations were flowing and the ideas were many from the large group of neighborhood members who attended the S.W.O.T. analysis of our two neighborhood parks, Gifford Park and Turner Park North, on May 9. During the meeting we discussed the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (S.W.O.T.) and the comments and ideas from those attending were recorded for both parks. (See page 5 for the notes from the S.W.O.T.)

Using past neighborhood master plans, the meeting started by reviewing these documents and pictures. With new faces in the neighborhood, this proved to be a good way to start the evening. Dennis Bryers with the Omaha Parks Department was on hand to give the group an update on the Turner Park North Bike Trail extension and answer other questions from people in attendance about the two parks. Dennis also stayed and participated in the S.W.O.T. analysis. At the end of the meeting, he was happy to see the enthusiasm and great commentary from the neighborhood members and could see the pride the neighborhood has for its parks. Adam Andrews and Martin Janousek with the Leo A Daly company were there to help facilitate the meeting and document all the ideas and comments from the audience.

This information will be used as the City of Omaha Parks Department and the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association starts to plan for park improvements. Please stay tuned for upcoming information about the future of Turner Park North and Gifford Park.

Continued on page 5

**Next General Meeting
Thursday, June 13**

**Topic
Kent Bellows Mural Project**

**7:00 pm
Morrison Seminar Room
Alegent Creighton University
Medical Center**

(No July Meeting)

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Gifford Park Neighborhood Market
Fridays - June 7 to Sept 27
4:00-8:00 pm
33rd and California
(See Page 4 for details)**

**Youth Soccer
Wednesdays - June 5 to July 17
6:30-7:30 pm
Gifford Park
(See Page 8 for details)**

**Youth Tennis
Wednesdays - June 12 to July 17
10:00 am-12:00 pm
Gifford Park
(See Page 7 for details)**

2013 GPNA OFFICERS

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Eric Purcell
719-5108

Vice President

Open

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Jill Westfall
213-3105

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From the President

By Eric Purcell

I have some exciting news! After two years of renting the big yellow house on 33rd street overlooking the park, our landlord agreed to sell the house to us. We closed on May 30 and are now proud owners of a home in Gifford Park!

And now that it's June, we're ready for the full effect of summer activities to start taking shape! Already the Community Garden and Youth Garden are in full swing. The Tennis Block Party was another success! The Neighborhood Farmers Market kicked off on June 7 and the summer Soccer Program kicked off on June 5 and Kent Bellows Studio is working on a mural on the south side of the KNJ Grocery. Summers are always fun in this neighborhood!

With all of these great activities, there's

always a need for folks to help out and volunteer. If you're interested in getting involved, please talk to one of the board members listed in this newsletter.

Another thing the GPNA board has been working on is to transition our neighborhood association from a 501c4 to a 501c3. What that means for you is that, upon completion of our filing and receiving notification, donations made to the neighborhood association will be tax deductible. This has been a long process but we're hopeful that it will all be wrapped up this year.

I hope we're all getting outside and enjoying the weather, park, and neighborhood programs. Participate, get involved, volunteer and enjoy!

See you in the neighborhood!

Business District Flower Pots

Now in its 8th year, the 13 Gifford Park Business District Flower Pots have been planted and the flowers are enjoying our recent rains. Having the flower pots in the business district is good for the neighborhood and we receive many compliments from visitors to our neighborhood.

A big Thank You needs to be given to those businesses who donated money this year for flowers. If you have a chance, please stop by their businesses and thank them personally. Keeping the business district vibrant and looking good is important for everyone in Gifford Park as well for our visitors. Have a great spring and we hope to see you in the business district.

Thank you to the following businesses for donating money for the flower pots:

- Blueline Coffee
- California Bar
- Cass Gas & Shop
- Charles R. Kilgore Attorney at Law
- Gifford Park LLC
- KNJ Grocery
- Marrakech Gourmet
- Maud Boutique
- Selena's Market



Editor's note: If you have news of interest to the Gifford Park Neighborhood, we encourage you to submit an article for the monthly newsletter. Editorials are subject to approval by the GPNA Executive Board. Please include your contact information. Articles may be submitted by email to jill.lynn.westfall@gmail.com.



Community Garden Update

Our annual Season Opening event was held Saturday May 11, at the community garden (35th & Cass Street). We had a variety of family activities including Youth Garden program registration; information about the community garden, Teen Market Garden and Big Muddy Urban Farm; information from the County Extension Office; children's take-home project (Mother's Day painted potted plant), face-painting; music; free seeds, plants and refreshments. We also had on hand some of the baby chicks for children to see and handle. Many thanks to all the volunteers and families who came out for the event.

With all the May rain (nearly 6" for the month!) most plants are doing very well. Check out the newest addition to the garden – chickens, now over a month old and in their new home on the upper-north part of the garden. Blackberry bushes have recently been transplanted to the new trellises (near the tall birdhouse). We will have our first Community Garden Pot Luck Dinner of the season, Saturday, June 22 at 5:30 PM Socialize, 6:00 PM Dinner at the garden. Community gardeners, youth gardeners, family, friends, and neighbors are invited; we'll provide the protein (meat or a vegetarian option) and guests can bring a side dish or dessert to share. Wednesday work nights and will continue each Wednesday 6 to 8 PM through the growing season. During these times water and garden tools will be available for plot renters and anyone else interested in helping maintain the community garden – there is never a shortage of weeding! It's a good time to stop by the garden to see neighborhood friends or check out what's growing – things are changing fast! Contact Mike Caban (402-341-4722, caban3321@cox.net) for garden plot information, and Chris Foster (402-290-8187, foster3413@cox.net) for other questions.

Youth Garden Program Begins 10th Year

The first three weeks of the Gifford Park Youth Garden (GPYG) program have seen lots of activities including children getting familiar with the garden, learning about seeds & plants and how to plan what to plant in their plots, and actually preparing the soil and planting their plots. We also have chickens in their new coop so our young gardeners can learn about raising chickens. The program is each Saturday morning from 10:00 to 11:30 AM through August 24. Below you will find the schedule. This free program teaches youth of all ages how to grow our vegetables, prepare, eat, and share our harvest with others. Many thanks to the parents and wonderful volunteers who make this program work! Please contact Chris Foster (402-290-8187 or foster3413@cox.net) or Mike Caban (402-341-4722, caban3321@cox.net) if you have any questions about GPYG program.

Gifford Park Youth Garden Program

2013 Schedule - Saturdays 10:00–11:30 a.m.	
June 8	Plant Your Plot (and stake your plot)
June 15	Compost & Water Conservation
June 22	Art in the Garden
June 29	What's the Buzz About Busy Bees?
July 6	Sound of Music
July 13	Truck Farm and Garden Movement
July 20	Snakes and Reptiles
July 27	Family Show & Tell
August 3	Cooking Matters
August 10	Seed Saving
August 17	Canning & Preservation
August 24	Pizza Garden Harvest PARTY!
Rest of growing season - tend your plot	

The Gifford Park Youth Garden is a fun, educational program for school age youth. Volunteers, parents, and children meet Saturdays from 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. at Gifford Park Community Garden on 35th & Cass Streets.



Gifford Park Neighborhood Market

Friday Evenings - 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Starting June 7th til September 27th

Located in the Gifford Park Business District - 33rd and California Street



Vegetables, Fruit, Jellies, Art, Plants, Vintage.....etc.

There is **NO** charge for a booth just the opportunity to build community.

For Information on being a vendor contact:

Martin - 402-558-4070

Rosenrob@me.com

Like us on Facebook - Gifford Park Neighborhood Market

Gifford Park & Turner Park North – S.W.O.T Analysis

Continued from Page 1

Strengths

- (8) Connection to business district
- (6) Mature Trees/Shade
- (5) Variety of recreational options
- (1) Community Gardens – education for children
- (3) Unique scale of Urban environment
- Picnic Tables
- (4) Playground
- (10) Variety of activities – large number of programs
- Sledding Hill
- Good visibility into park because of bowl shape
- (1) Good Trail connection through park
- (4) Provides good identity for the neighborhood
- (4) Neighborhood volunteers
- Flower beds

Weaknesses

- (12) Better gathering areas...grills/trails
- (11) Tired design/equip
- (6) Baseball diamond is poorly maintained and more often used as a soccer field
- (3) Poor/old/dangerous trees
- Homeless
- (5) Lack of connectivity from Turner Park (TP) to Gifford Park (GP)
- Poor choice of trees planted – seem ornamental (TP)
- Pile of dirt not user friendly in Turner Park
- No restrooms
- (2) Lack of picnic tables and trash cans for easy clean up
- (1) Lack of parking
- Poor lighting
- (4) Lack of connectivity from 30th to Davenport (pedestrian/bicycle)
- (2) Speed of traffic around the parks

Opportunities

- (8) More trees/arboretum/edible landscape. Tree diversity and native trees Wooden play-ground structure
- (6) Soccer field – properly marked
- (6) Splash park in place of half court
- (3) Natural amphitheater on corner of 33rd
- (1) Better signage/Entrance direction
- (1) Frisbee golf More lighting
- More Tennis Courts
- Adult fitness stations
- Better maintenance of softball field
- (3) 33rd and Cass entrance landmark or gathering plaza) Improve parking
- Irrigation system to maintain grass/plantings
- Turner Park Soccer field
- Street Trees (TP)
- (1) Meditation Garden (TP)
- Skateboarding Park (TP)
- (2) Connect the 2 parks
- Pedestrian friendly connection to TP South
- (1) More picnic table and trash cans
- Dog Park w/ waste disposal
- (2) Drinking Fountain
- (3) Power/Light access or hookups
- (2) More Flowers and Ornamental gardens
- (1) Ice Skating
- (1) Decorative Fountain

Threats

- (13) Lack of city funds to maintain the park
- (13) Perceived image of the park being old and not worth care
- (8) Lack of appreciation causes trash/graffiti
- Closing of 35th St
- (1) S Curve
- (2) Mowers and snow removal damage to trees
- (3) Homelessness and Vagrancy. Lack of appreciation
- Hospital Expansion
- (4) CSO? Drainage problems

Midtown Neighborhood Alliance (MNA) Update

By Cynthia Shuck

GPNA Representative to MNA

Due to the Neighborhood Center closing, MNA now holds monthly meetings on the third Tuesday of each month in the Joslyn Castle Ballroom (3rd Fl.) 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM. Meetings are always open to the public and if you ever have any concerns or issues please feel free to contact Cynthia via email dalilabush@cox.net or by phone (402) 556-2090.

Alliance of Alliances: Gifford Park's City Councilman Chris Jerram along with Gray, Gernandt and six neighborhood alliance leaders secured financing within the City budget to fund a neighborhood needs assessment in response to the abrupt closing of the Neighborhood Center. The assessment will identify needs of three groups of citizens: the neighborhood alliances (like MNA and SONA), neighborhood associations (like GPNA), and regular folks not involved in neighborhood associations. Please elect to participate in any forums or surveys that come your way.

Membership Drive: Mayor's Office AmeriCorp Vista volunteer Rob Moore plans to host a pilot project to assist struggling neighborhood associations in successful membership drives. He hopes to reproduce the success of Elmwood Park leaders who were able to boost their membership five times what it was 3 years ago. Their secret? Door hangers and postcards.

Grants: MNA received three grants this year to fund the Re-Tree Midtown project: Nebraska Statewide Arboretum Trees for Nebraska Towns

(\$5,200 for a Dundee Memorial Park (DMP) project), Mutual of Omaha (\$4,000) and HDR Foundation (\$5,000). Along with a 2012 Peter Kiewit Foundation grant (\$10,000) and DMP's Mayors grant (\$4,000), 50+ trees will be planted in parks and parkways in Dundee, Park East, Elmwood Park, Joslyn Castle and Aksarben-Elmwood Park. The total project is estimated to cost \$33,000 where MNA plans to allocate half (approximately \$4,000) of the proceeds from this year's fireworks stand. Many thanks to City Council member Chris Jerram and anyone else who sat on the committee that awarded MNA the privilege to sell fireworks over the 4th of July. And many thanks to all the midtown residents who bought fireworks from our stand at 84th and Grover. Come see us again this year for the best prices in town for your 4th of July.

New Activities: MNA is organizing our first Midtown Garden Walk to be held June 30 from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. If you would like to nominate a garden in Gifford Park then please send the address and contact information to dianafaila@cox.net or call (402) 651-5779.

Another new project starting this month is Midtown Reads, a book club. To coincide with the release of the film *Gatsby*, the club will read *The Great Gatsby* by American author F. Scott Fitzgerald. The club will meet monthly at Midtown Crossing's Marcus Theater. If you're interested in participating then call Diana Failla (402) 651-5779 or email dianafaila@cox.net.

And finally, saving the best news for last: MNA is offering mini-grants to its member neighborhood associations. This year we plan to give away \$3,500 to fund worthy neighborhood projects. More details to come in the next couple months.

All Gifford Park residents are invited to a free picnic at Augustana Lutheran Church, 38th & Lafayette, on Sunday, June 30 from noon to 2:00 P.M. Food & drinks provided with games and activities for the kids. The Augustana members hope to see our friends and neighbors there. Questions to Mary Beth, 402-551-4728.



Tennis Block Party 2013 Highlights



Very cool weather greeted over 60 youth participants and over a dozen volunteers at the annual Tennis Block Party held Wednesday May 22 in Gifford Park. Youth learned the basic tennis skills along with rally courts, and we finished up with watermelon and snacks for everyone. Many thanks go to our dedicated tennis instructors – Buddy Hogan, Jim Wilson, Roger Freeman, Lou Harrison, Laurie Bolte, Jenny Waltemath, Jackie Foster, Marc Bachman, David Liu, Brianna Liu, Kirk Peck, and Vince Emery. Again this year we had some of the older youth participants to help with our rally courts, they did a great job, thanks Stanley sisters (Dawn, Crystal, Justine, Witney) and Marcus Anderson. Thanks also to our other volunteers Bette Tanner, Betty Slayden, Tyffaney Slayden, Kayleen Slayden, Bob Hutton, Dave & Jen Collie, Eric & Lisa Purcell, and Chris & Sallie

Foster, they helped with multiple tasks including registration, signage, setup, taking pictures, and food. Three-time Nebraska State High School Tennis champion David Liu said some inspiring words for everyone about the importance of hard work, practice, and sportsmanship that make tennis a great sport, thanks David! Special thanks once again to Jane Hines for helping again.

We are offering to the older youth the opportunity to continue on playing tennis with several instructors on Wednesday's (10-11 AM for ages 9-11, 11 AM to Noon for ages 12 & over) starting June 12 – July 17 at Gifford Park. Anyone interested, please contact Chris at 402-290-8187 for a registration form, or you can show up at the tennis courts.

Gifford Park Free Soccer Program



For: Youth (3 to 8 years old)

There's still time to sign up!

Dates: June 5, 12, 19, 26, July 3, 10, 17

Where: Gifford Park (33rd & Cass St.)



Time: 6:30-7:30 PM

The Gifford Park Neighborhood Association is offering a FREE summer soccer league and will provide goals, balls and instructors. Parents and others are welcome to help.

To be enrolled, YOU MUST complete the form shown below and return it to Eric Purcell 3152 Chicago St, Omaha, NE 68131. **Special prize for those who attend every lesson and demonstrate good sportsmanship.** There is limited space available so please be on time. Call (402) 719-5108 for more information.

Registration/Permission Form - Bring this form (completely filled out) with you to the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association summer soccer league.

Youth's Name: _____ Parent/Guardian Name _____
 Street: _____ Street: _____
 City, State, Zip: _____ City, State, Zip _____
 Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Cell Phone: _____
 School: _____ Email: _____

As the parent or legal guardian of the child named above, I hereby give my full consent and approval for my child to participate as a member of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Youth Program.

I understand that there are certain risks of injury inherent in the practice and play of this sport, as well as related activities incidental to my child's participation, and I am willing to assume these risks on behalf of my child. I hereby certify that my child is fully capable of participating in this sport and that my child is healthy and has no physical or mental disabilities or infirmities that would restrict full participation in these activities, except as listed below.

I hereby waive, release and hold harmless the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Youth Program, and the City of Omaha, Nebraska, its Officers, coaches, sponsors, supervisors and representatives for any injury that may be suffered by my child in the normal course of participation in this sport and the activities incidental thereto, whether the result of negligence or any other cause. Further- more, I give consent to any necessary medical treatment in case of emergency. I permit the taking of photos during Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Youth Program activities for publication and use as the program deems.

Signature of Parent/Guardian:

At the garden



LOCAL Campaign Update

By Margie Magnuson, LOCAL Campaign Spokesperson



In early April, I was invited to attend the international Alcohol Policy 16 conference in Washington, D.C. and be part of a panel presenting the LOCAL (Let Omaha Control its Alcohol Landscape) effort which addresses alcohol outlet density and the resulting harms occurring in our neighborhoods. The group worked for many years with city officials to create the “Good Neighbor” policy tool that creates a safe and healthy place to live, work and raise our families. The ordinance, passed in October 2012, is community-enhancing, merchant-friendly and establishes a shared responsibility between alcohol-sales establishments, neighborhood residents and the city. The conference was a great experience to see what other communities, states and countries are doing to address alcohol-related problems and to share Omaha’s important work with those national and international policy makers.

One of the key things I learned while attending the conference is that the work LOCAL has done to address alcohol-related problems through the use of the city’s zoning powers isn’t a movement isolated to Omaha. The same kind of work is happening in cities across the country, and this approach is backed as a key strategy by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to reduce binge drinking and the related harms. Our work in Omaha is being watched carefully and is being used as a model for other communities.

The conference also afforded me the opportunity to attend many other presentations relevant to our LOCAL effort. One presentation by two authors of a book connecting violence and the proximity of liquor establishments provided additional information that will be useful as we continue our work. Another presentation by city officials in California focused on guidelines they established to address restaurants that turn into nightclubs afterhours. Finally, one presentation by a community group in North Carolina shared their efforts to monitor neighborhood liquor stores through the use of alcohol purchase surveys. I found the conference very eye-opening and it reminded me that we are not alone in our concerns about liquor establishments that have negative impacts in communities. I also realized that LOCAL can be proud of the work that resulted in the “Good Neighbor” ordinance and that we can take heart that these first small steps to bring about change are resonating beyond our city’s boundaries.

While the ordinance was passed late last year, LOCAL’s work continues. We now are focused on ensuring that the city uses this valuable policy tool. We are asking neighborhood representatives to help us document any problems they are having with alcohol-sales businesses in their areas. With this documentation, we can help the city craft a process that will help city leadership quickly and efficiently address problems related to alcohol-sales establishments before they get out of hand. To learn more about LOCAL, the “Good Neighbor” ordinance or to report problems related to an alcohol-sales establishment, check out our newly updated website at www.thelocalcampaign.com.

City Weed Rule

By Jim Wilwerding



With all the rain we’ve been having, the grass and weeds have been growing like, well, weeds. And there have been some yards and properties that have not been cut, perhaps, as frequently as they might be. So it seems a good time to remind tenants and owners that weeds and grass may not be allowed to grow more than 12 inches tall (Sec. 18-22). If property owners do not keep grass and weeds cut, the city may cut

them and assess the owner for the costs. If property is on an alley, owners are responsible for keeping the property adjacent to the alley cut as well. In an effort to improve the neighborhood, members of the neighborhood association will be monitoring weeds and litter throughout the summer and reporting offending properties to the city. So please do your part and keep lawns cut and weeds trimmed.

GPNA Receives Grants from Mutual of Omaha Foundation and Mayor's Grant Program

The GPNA is excited to announce we received a grant for \$3,809 from the Mutual of Omaha Foundation Neighborhood's Grant Program! The funds will be used for event tents and signage for our Gifford Park Neighborhood Friday Night Market, and for our Youth Garden Program activities. We announced last month the GPNA received a \$5,000 Mayor's Neighborhood grant to partner with Kent Bellows Art Studios to do a large mural project on the south wall of the KNJ Grocery Store at 33rd & California. The project involves getting input from the neighborhood for design

ideas to enhance our business district and Neighborhood Market. During May and June artists from Kent Bellows will facilitate interviews with local residents, businesses, and organizations to come up with a mural design for our review. Once approved by the GPNA and others, the wall will be prepared, primed, and painted in July. The GPNA wishes to thank both the Mutual of Omaha Foundation and the City of Omaha for your tremendous support of the Gifford Park Neighborhood, it will be an exciting summer!

Midtown Neighborhood Alliance - Fireworks Fundraiser!

The Midtown Neighborhood Alliance (MNA) will be selling fireworks again this summer to raise money for Midtown neighborhoods! MNA was once again selected by the City of Omaha to have a fireworks stand in the city limits this year. All money raised will be used to help continue the excellent work that MNA has been doing over the years and to help implement new ideas for the neighborhoods it represents.

WHERE: MNA's stand has moved closer to Midtown! Visit us in the parking lot of Mangelsen's, at S 84th & Valley Streets (3457 S 84th Street) – between Center Street & I-80, on the East side of 84th.

WHEN: 9:00 am – 10:00 pm, Monday, June 25th – July 4th.

HOW: We'll take cash, check or credit card!

Thanks for all of your support last year – we look forward to even better sales year this summer! Send all of your noisy neighbors to our stand – if they're going to blow up fireworks in your neighborhood, you might as well know that at least their money went to support a great cause!

For more information, visit www.midtownomaha.org.

The Gifford Park Neighborhood Market is open!

By the time this newsletter is published, the Gifford Park Neighborhood Market will have had its first day of business. Again this year, vendor stalls will be in the empty lot between KNJ Grocery and the California Bar on Friday evenings between 4:00 pm and 8:00 pm. We have a variety of vendors lined up to sell jellies, jams, fruits and vegetables. This year we'll have live music provided by some of our talented local musicians. If you or someone you know could be interested in being a vendor check us out on Facebook or e-mail us at rosenrob@me.com



<http://maudboutiqueomaha.com/>

521 N 33rd Street

Soul Kitschn Studio & Gallery
www.soulkitsch.com



Gifford Park Neighborhood Association
 PO Box 31462
 Omaha, NE 68131



Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Membership Application

The GPNA Membership year runs from January 1 to December 31.

Type of Membership: Single (\$10.00) Family (\$15.00) Business (\$25.00)

Today's Date: _____

Name (person 1): _____ Email: _____

Name (person 2): _____ Email: _____

Name (person 3): _____ Email: _____

Name (person 4): _____ Email: _____

Name (person 5): _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Volunteer Opportunities! I'm interested in helping with....

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleanup/Beautification | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter Delivery | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Easter Egg Hunt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Block Captain | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Spring Cleanup |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> History | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Planting | <input type="checkbox"/> Fall Cleanup |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landlord/Tenant Issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Watch Group | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Walks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School Liason | <input type="checkbox"/> Call Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday Banquet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tool Lending | | | |