



Gifford Park's Pride

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

October 2012

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Weaker Alcohol Ordinance Passes

By Margie Magnuson, Chris Foster

Alcohol Impact Coalition and LOCAL Campaign

On September 25, the city council voted to throw out the city's original alcohol ordinance asking for a three-pronged approach to address problems associated with alcohol-selling businesses. What they did pass was a weaker amendment by Councilman Pete Festersen to implement just the operational standards for all alcohol businesses, but the original language of the operational standards that the neighbors agreed to was changed and never brought to light. Those changes are highlighted below. Of all the organizations in Omaha, we were especially surprised and disappointed the Omaha Chamber of Commerce actively fought against the ordinance, even providing miss-information publically.

While some are calling the vote for the operational standards a victory, to some of us it felt like a hollow victory. Yes, we do have some operational standards and a business's certificate of occupancy can be taken away if declared a nuisance, but no money (original proposal included \$75/year fee for businesses selling alcohol) for city personnel to provide enforcement. Instead the adopted weaker ordinance puts "enforcement" back on the backs of the neighborhoods and the planning department. Those neighbors who have had personal experience working to correct a problem business or protesting a liquor license all the way through the state system understand we needed so much more from our city on this issue than they were willing to give to our neighborhoods. So this means our work is not done; we need to stay involved to make sure the city does follow through in enforcing these nuisance standards.

Changes made to the operational standards in Councilman Pete Festersen's amendment:

- In the first standard, the word "demonstrable" was

Next General Meeting
Thursday, October 11
Speaker: Lennis Pederson on
Creighton's Master Plan

7:00 pm
Morrison Seminar Room
Creighton University Medical Center



added before the phrase, "operations and activities of the business shall not result in adverse effects to the health, peace, or safety of persons residing in, working in or using the surrounding area." By adding that word does that mean neighborhoods will be required to provide data outlining the adverse effects caused by a poorly run business? What is that proof-official police reports that shots were fired, fights took place, noise was reported late at night? Will they take a call from a neighborhood president who tells them they have gotten complaints or will they need us to produce official documented proof?

- The list of nuisance activities that were removed were: public drunkenness, illegal parking, police detention and arrests. Why? One of the comments we heard from folks when we were out talking about this ordinance was that police do nothing about drunk persons even if a business calls 911. We assured them we were trying to get language to address this concern. We acknowledge that there's no state law that prohibits public drunkenness, which

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From the Vice President

By Jeff Spiehs

My family and I recently moved out of the Gifford Park neighborhood. We bought a house just south of the Old Market. Our time in Gifford Park was relatively short, we lived there for about 1 and a half years. But in our time we were able to learn what an engaged community looks like.

Whenever we would take a walk around the neighborhood we would assume that we would see someone that we know. It is nice to have the feeling that your neighbors are outgoing and hospitable. An engaged community is a safe community. I also was given the opportunity to sit on the board of the neighborhood association and learn from people who have had decades of experience dealing with neighborhood matters, and how to communicate back to the community issues that affect them that are coming down from the city of Omaha. I also learned how to voice those concerns of the neighborhood back to your elected officials who represent this community.

My friend Travis (who is also on the board of Gifford Park Neighborhood Association) would often say “school is in session” when we are around such seasoned leaders, and he is right, my time in Gifford Park has been an education.

The leadership in Gifford Park isn’t just those who are on the board, it has been obvious to me in all of my interactions with the neighbors in Gifford Park that many have led various projects throughout their lives that benefit Gifford Park. Many have given and sacrificed their time for the good of the whole. I am continually inspired by people who have lived in Gifford Park for many years and slowly but surely, are making this neighborhood great.

I appreciate the opportunity that the board is giving to younger, newer families in Gifford Park to take on leadership roles. They are doing the job of leadership development, and investing in the next generation of people who are community stake holders who will carry on the torch that has been passed down to them. To continue to make Gifford Park the greenest, most civically engaged, safest, most economically robust neighborhood in Omaha!

Thanks for letting our family be a part of your community. We look forward to coming back and getting a taco at Cali Tacos, getting my bike worked on at the bike shop, and visiting our friends from Gifford Park.

Weaker Alcohol Ordinance Passes

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the city was willing, through this ordinance, to address this chronic issue by including public drunkenness as a nuisance. Why take out police detentions and arrests- wouldn’t we want police calls (like neighbors complained about for months at Silhouettes on south 16th street) to be part of the nuisances the council could take action on?

- Removed all of #4 which had the language requiring businesses to comply with city, state or federal laws, regulations or orders, as well as any condition imposed on any permits issued pursuant to applicable laws, regulations or orders, including payment of any city business taxes and fees. Again, why? Many years ago, we fought a liquor business owner who did not pay their property taxes, scammed the federal government to obtain small business loans, but wanted to continue to sell liquor in our city. Shouldn’t we expect all business owners to abide by the law?

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.

The Ups and Downs of Dealing with OPS

Editorial by Mike Caban

About a month ago we received news that OPS had a plan in the works to restore Yates School to a fully functioning 2-6 grade school around the 2014-15 school year. Needless to say, this news brought a welcomed ray of hope to those of us who have been working with OPS to do just that since they closed Yates in 1998. Of course, there were no guarantees, and of course we had been down that road before, and suffered disappointments a plenty in our efforts to keep the school open as an elementary school going back to the 1980's.

I've lost count of the numbers of meetings that I've been involved in, with past and present administrators and superintendents, in our attempt to keep that school open, and even after they shut the doors and bussed our kids out to a dozen different schools, or had them walk that dangerous gauntlet to Kellom, we have kept trying to work with OPS... hoping that they would see that as a community, we have done everything in our power to demonstrate a good will effort, and concern for the well being of our neighborhood children.

So, ever since we received that hopeful news a month ago, we've been giddy with anticipation... until today. Today we received information that the plan to re-open Yates has been scrapped. In conversation with our OPS contact, we floated several scenarios that could possibly work for our neighborhood, if it was impossible for Yates to be re-opened. One of those scenarios was the old Tech High School/TAC building. Of course, that building would be able to accommodate not only K-6 grades. It would most likely be able to have pre-K through 8th grades. Of course, that was out of the question, because where would all those

OPS offices and administrators go? Personally, my response to that is the same response we've been getting from OPS about our kids, in so many words... I don't give a hoot where they go!

Something else said during conversations with OPS... "It's always a few people talking to OPS from the neighborhood association, and most of you don't have children."

There are over 400 children of school age in the Yates attendance area... how many of these parents do you want to see, and hear from? Especially when they learn that one of the reasons OPS has a problem with us having our local school, comes straight from OPS Administrator Dr. Thomas Harvey's mouth, at our last meeting, back in October 2011... He said something to the effect that one of their concerns was that bringing all these children back here to their neighborhood school would throw off balance the socio-economic diversity that they have established in the schools these children are attending now.

So, we had a school that from the beginning was one of only two schools in OPS exempt from the court ordered bussing because our attendance area has traditionally been a model of diversity, and you close this school and bus our children to other schools, and in doing so you create a socio/economic balance in those schools, and that is one of the reasons you are reluctant to allow us to have our neighborhood school? Because it'll affect the balance at "those" schools?!!! Give me a break!

Folks, parents, concerned neighbors, I got used to being jerked around by OPS a long time ago. I continue being involved in this issue because I care about our kids... and our families... and our neighborhood. There are several of us doing all we can to restore our neighborhood school to what it once was and will be again, a great school. Here, in our neighborhood. Are you with us?



Around the Neighborhood

Neighborhood volunteers planting bushes in the park along 33rd and Cass Street.

18th Annual

HALLOWEEN

HAUNTED HOUSE



When: Friday, October 26

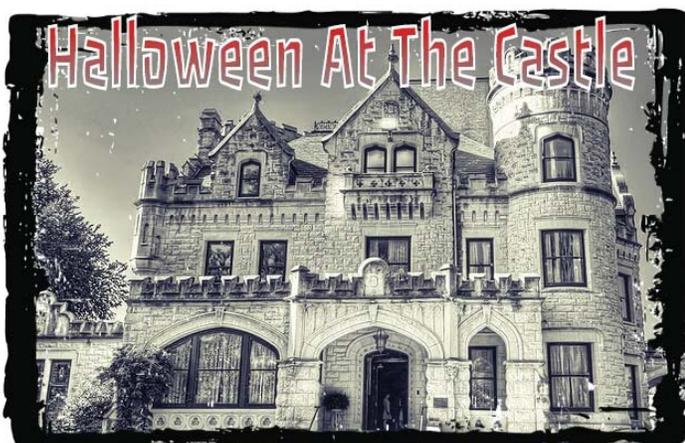
6:00 p.m. - Ages 10
and under

6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. - All ages

Where: 31st & Chicago

Join us for tricks &
treats!

All neighborhood kids
(and parents) welcome!



Sunday, October 28th – 3:00 – 8:00 pm

“Kids at the Castle” – \$15/family

Face painting, haunted tour, pumpkin decorating,
apple biting, costume contest, scavenger hunt, trick or
treating, fire pit, witches cauldron, food for purchase.
All kids must be accompanied by an adult.

Monday, October 29th – 7:00 – 10:00 pm

“Monster Mash” – Adults only -- \$15/person

Costume contest, tarot card and palm readers, food,
music, cash bar. Reservations and pre-payment re-
quired at www.joslyncastle.com or call 402-595-2199.

Report Crime

This is a great opportunity for us as a neighborhood to help law enforcement and help our own neighborhood, especially with a string of recent burglaries and break-ins in and around the area. We understand police have recovered many stolen items and made arrests of individuals involved in a string of more than 15 burglaries and are continuing their efforts in this case.



Here's things you can do to help keep our neighborhood safe:

- Observe and report suspicious activity (it's the right thing to do and it helps to document issues);
- When calling 911 be willing to meet with officers even if you meet at a nearby location (the call will be given a higher priority);
- If possible, take pictures and provide as much information as you can.

Northeast Police Precinct Crime Prevention Specialist Theola Cooper (402-444-3367, Theola.Cooper@ci.omaha.ne.us) is an excellent resource to contact if you have specific information on problem issues. Remember the old saying "If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem."

Neighborhood lights are going out

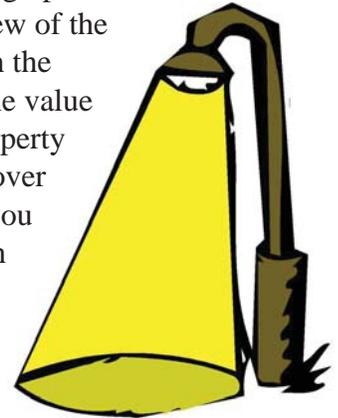
by *Martin Janousek*

Last month, we reported on the extra safety lighting in our neighborhood, paid for through the generosity of an anonymous donor. Most of the street lights installed are scheduled to go out in a matter of two months.

These additional lights have added to the safety of the park, alleys and other public streets over the course of the last three years. If you ask most people who are familiar with these areas prior to the installation, they would tell you the lights have made a big difference in making the neighborhood better.

Knowing this donation wasn't limitless, the GPNA Board proactively worked to secure additional funding through grants. However, we're sad to report Gifford Park Neighborhood Association's luck ran out this year when grants were awarded.

Thanks to neighbors stepping up and taking responsibility for a few of the lights, not all will go dark in the neighborhood. If you see the value of these lights or if your property has benefited from the spillover from the light, we ask that you step up and make a donation for one or two of the lights. Lights cost about \$18 per month to keep the light on from dusk until dawn.



Please let us know if you would like to contribute to keeping the lights on for the safety of our neighborhood.

Bounce House

Step right up and mark your calendars for another Bounce event on Sunday, October 21, 1:30-2:30 PM in Gifford Park. This free event is organized by Flatland Church and will have inflatable rides, carnival games, hot dogs and other fun activities.

Flatland Church also hosted a neighborhood gathering Saturday, September 15 morning in Gifford Park by the new playground equipment. They provided free pastries & coffee (5 different flavors!) from Delice European Bakery. During the past year Flatland Church members have volunteered at some of our neighborhood events.



Tales of Poe

Selected short stories and poems
by Edgar Allan Poe performed
throughout Joslyn Castle

Joslyn Castle
3902 Davenport St.
Omaha, NE 68131
www.joslyncastle.com

All shows are at 7 p.m.

Tickets:

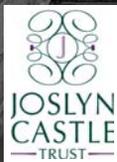
Joslyn Castle members and students: \$15
All others: \$20

Reservations required:

www.joslyncastle.com or 402-595-2199

Stand-by seating may be available.

October						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			



METROPOLITAN
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
www.mccneb.edu | 402-457-2400

Connect with MCC



Community Garden Update

by Chris Foster

Thanks to everyone who attended our fall harvest potluck dinner Saturday, September 29 at the community garden. Great warm fall weather made it an enjoyable event. We had over 70 adults and children sharing good food among friends and neighbors. Thanks Sallie Foster for organizing nice picture-board displays of this year's Youth Garden program. Thanks again to our grilling guru Neil Liberty, the burgers and hot dogs hit the spot!

Before the pot luck, community garden and Youth Garden volunteer Betsy Goodman shared her expertise with gardeners on "the art of seed saving." They took a look at garden plots and Betsy demonstrated how to control disease, clean seed, and how to properly label seeds. If you want to learn about seed saving, please call Betsy at 402.321.1806 or email at betsy4589@gmail.com for more information.

On Sunday September 30 our garden was one of the host sites to the first Tour de Gardens event – a bike tour of community gardens. It was presented by Omaha Serves and the seven participating community

gardens. Riders started at Aksarben Village and visited the Farnam Farm, Dundee Community Garden, Benson Community Garden, City Sprouts, The Big Garden (Augustana Lutheran Church site), Hands to Harvest, and Gifford Park Community Garden. The Community Bicycle Project was also a host site along the route. Thanks Mike Caban and Cynthia Shuck (Teen Market Garden director) for helping. GPNA and community garden volunteer Ricky Green helped organize the event.

As the garden season winds down we have scheduled a fall garden cleanup for Saturday, Oct. 20 from 10 AM to 1 PM at the community garden at 35th & Cass St. Everyone is invited to help as we plan to cleanup both family and youth plots, mulch flower beds, repair/paint picnic tables, organize tool sheds, and other tasks depending on volunteer's time. We ask plot owners to bring yard waste bags, but we will also have bags on hand if needed. Note for plot owners: if you clean out your plot before or after Oct. 20, please leave the yard waste bag in your plot and we'll put out for yard waste pickup. Please have all plots cleaned out by November 1. Contact Mike Caban (402-341-4722, caban3321@cox.net) for garden plot information, and Chris Foster (402-290-8187, foster3413@cox.net) for any other community garden questions.



Greetings from the End-of-Season Potluck!



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 | | | |