



Gifford Park's Pride

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

March/April 2019

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Still confused about talk of development in Gifford Park? What is TOD? Come to this meeting.

by Alex Goswami

The new talk about development is transit oriented development aka TOD. Google it. The City of Omaha and Metro Transit are building a rapid transit bus along Dodge Street from Westroads to downtown. This is called Omaha Rapid Bus Transit or ORBT for short. This is happening. The new bus may attract people, and to make it more attractive the city needs to update its Master Plan to allow for old stuff, new stuff, and good stuff around these bus stops. The plans are not final yet. Now is the time to let the city hear what we love about our neighborhood and ways that we develop our community ourselves.

Come let the city hear your opinions and ask your questions at the meeting on Thursday, April 11th at Yates Community Center at 6:30-8:00. Yates Community Center is at 3260 Davenport St. The City of Omaha is hosting another meeting in our neighborhood, and we have a voice. The city wants to hear our voices. Nothing is decided yet, but the city wants to finalize plans in July for what the space around the new rapid transit bus stops will look like along Dodge. How will this fit into our vital neighborhood? Will houses be torn down? Will new ones be built? Will this housing be affordable? What can we do to make the streets around the bus stops walkable, pleasant, attractive, pedestrian-friendly? What kind of design do we want to see? These are all questions that the city is asking us. Come and make your voice heard. You can speak up or write out your thoughts. This is the second meeting that the city has posted in our neighborhood. The first one was Feb 7. Our neighbors are working on their own to host meetings among neighbors at Media Corp. Check out their Facebook page for updates. Email me alexandra.goswami@gmail.com if you want more info, follow the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Facebook page for event details and updates, and go to the City of Omaha's "Transit Oriented Development" page to learn more about TOD.



NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

Thursday, May 9 // 6:30 - 7:30 pm
Yates Community Center
3260 Davenport Street

Presentation:
TBD

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Easter Egg Hunt
- Transit Oriented Development Meeting
- Meet your Street
- Spring Cleanup
- Park Cleanup

Event dates and details in articles of newsletter

2018 GPNA Officers

Eliza Perry, President

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847-477-2156 | omaha_beef@hotmail.com

Board

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Martin Janousek, Business Rep

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Chris Foster, Landlord Rep

402-290-8187 | foster3413@cox.net

Susan Mayberger, Yates Rep

402-342-6606 | susanmayberger77@gmail.com

Opportunities – Contacts

GPNA General Meetings

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Community Bike Project

Adams Blowers 423-307-4136

adam@communitybikeproject.org

Community Garden/Youth Garden

Chris Foster 402-290-8187

Adventure Playground

Jasmine Frierson 402-213-0223

sfadventureplayground@gmail.com

Midtown Neighborhood Alliance Rep

Adrian Petrescu, 402-769-9070

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Gifford Park Market

Martin Janousek 402-558-4070

Yates Community Center

Susan Mayberger 402-557-2431

susan.mayberger@ops.org

Youth Soccer

Eric Purcell 402-719-5108

Youth Tennis

Chris Foster 402-290-8187

Spring Cleanup

Chris Foster 402-290-8187

Newsletter Editor

Brent Lubbert 402-213-9646

From the President

by Eliza Perry

The loudest, hugest, most enthusiastic applause to the neighbors that gathered together to submit THREE grant applications on behalf of the neighborhood: Marie H el ene Andr e, Martin Janousek, Anna Deal, Pell Duvall, Obed Sanchez, Alex Goswami, Alex O’Hanlon, Chris Foster, Matt Wettengel and Emily Hefeli!!!! Fabulous efforts by a huge group of people which takes tons of time and coordination. Regardless of how much we are granted, we learned a lot about grant-writing and the needs and dreams of the many programs here in Gifford Park.

I also want to shout out to the countless volunteers who have been meeting since January to plan and improve our programs: the Easter Egg Hunt crew, the Youth Garden crew, the Community Garden crew, the Market crew, our New School crew, and of course the unstoppable GPNA board - thank you all. Each and every one of you is an inspiring community leader. You are what makes this neighborhood SO AMAZING!

Spring is here and I feel it, see it, smell it everywhere. I cannot wait for the 2019 growing season and, most of all, spending time with new and old neighbor friends.

Seeking Volunteer Hosts for “Meet Your Street” Events

by Anna Deal

GPNA is looking for new ways to spread the word about all the amazing things happening in our neighborhood! We are seeking households willing to host a small, front yard gathering for their immediate neighbors, on a Sunday afternoon in April or May. We hope these events will provide an opportunity for neighbors to connect with one another and learn about Gifford Park’s many programs and events. GPNA will assist with event promotion and supplies, and will have a representative on hand to talk about all things Gifford Park. If you are interested in hosting a gathering for your surrounding streets, please contact Anna Deal at anna@immigrantlc.org for more information.

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 brent.lubbert@gmail.com.



TOOL LENDING HOTLINE
Call Chris 402-290-8187
Mowers - \$5
Rent for most tools - \$3

Gifford Park Elementary Updates

by Kim Jones

The new Gifford Park Elementary School is coming along nicely and construction is running right on time! Classroom teachers are in place for our August, 2019 opening! Playground equipment has been selected and grants have been submitted to Sherwood Foundation to cover the costs of the playground. Administration is anxiously awaiting an answer regarding funding for our playground equipment. Once this happens installation scheduling will be the next step. Kids Club has been finalized and will be in place for our 2019-2020 school year. Weekly tours through the building by administration are exciting! All furniture and supplies have been ordered. Cabinets have been installed. Electricity is working inside of the building. Painting is underway and building colors are present on bathroom walls and desk and cabinet areas. Ms. Jones has transitioned from Minne Lusa Elementary and is working from the TAC building until occupancy of the building is ready. Teambuilding days will occur for staff in late July. Gifford Park PTO is underway and is working to plan many partnerships with community members and businesses, as well as planning some great family and community events for 2019-2020. Please contact Gifford Park Elementary PTO member Joy Doll at joyvoltz@creighton.edu for more questions. OPS is currently working on the Dedication Ceremony, which is planned for September. Continue to follow progress on our Facebook and Twitter accounts.



Gifford Park Elementary Bike Parking

by Pell Duvall

We need your help! Upon reviewing plans for the new Gifford Park Elementary School, I discovered that we can improve the accessibility of bicycle parking for our neighborhood students. We are working to raise \$2000 to install the best bicycle parking and raise funds to provide Safe Routes to School for our GPE students.

Omaha Public Schools' standard policy uses a 'Wave' bicycle rack that is very difficult to use for elementary age children. They need to lift up their bike to secure it to the rack, and the current space allocated for bicycle parking can be better configured with 'inverted u' racks. OPS has agreed to install the improved parking racks if we can fundraise that difference in cost. Walking and biking to school is a fantastic way to keep our kiddos healthy!

If you believe in keeping our children safe and healthy, please contribute to this fund and leave the comment "Bike Rack" at <https://omahapublicschoolsfoundation.org/gifford-park-fundraiser/>

Out My Front Window

by Bob Hutton

So, there I was, on a Sunday afternoon March 24 the year 2019, doing some paper work trying to catch up on a lot of lost time which never happens. I look out my front window, what do I see? Lo and behold I see eight young volunteers picking up trash in the area. With just a little misty damp day; I just had to inquire what this was all about. Well most of us know or at least have heard about the Big Muddy Urban Farm group and you more than likely know the rest of the story. Yes, I had to ask what this picking up was all about. Yep, they informed me they were just doing a little service project to help clean up the area and help the image of the Gifford Park neighborhood. Wow, can I appreciate this type of people? You bet, and when you get a chance, thank these young people. Maybe, just maybe, one of these upcoming nice days we can organize a larger group and do a real bang up job of picking up trash. It's our area of Omaha, let's show them we can do it!



Park Clean Up Saturday, April 13 // 10am - noon Gifford Park (33rd and Cass St.)

Please join the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Saturday, April 13, 10:00am-noon in Gifford Park (33rd & Cass St.) for a park cleanup with a lot of help from the Creighton University Phi Delta Theta Fraternity. Volunteers will pick up litter, trim bushes, weed and mulch the flower beds near 33rd & Cass Street and by the tennis courts. We will also have a crew edging weeds around the playground concrete perimeter, and cleanup Turner Park North just north of 31st & Dodge St. We will have yard tools, buckets, wheel barrows, mulch, gloves, etc., but please bring these items if you have them. Many thanks to the Phi Delta Theta Fraternity guys for asking to help with Gifford Park!

Restore Nebraska - 14th Year

March 1 & 2 marked the 14th year for the Restore Nebraska (formerly Restore Omaha) Conference. Restoration Exchange Omaha and History Nebraska presented a hands-on interactive and educational conference held at the historic Fort Omaha/Metro Community College campus. The snowy weather kept attendance down a bit, but the conference included 18 workshops to restore, revive, and preserve great older homes, buildings, and neighborhoods. Highlights and workshops included: keynote Daniel Carey from Historic Savannah Foundation; historical brewery tour; how to buy, finance, and restore older buildings; repairing old windows and plaster; paint for historic buildings; masonry tips and tricks; reception at the soon-to-be-restored Benson Theater; book sale; Restore Jam with before and after project photos. This event offers the perfect opportunity to connect with hundreds of people who love old buildings and are looking for products and services to make their restorations successful. Check out a listing in Restoration Exchange's on-line resource directory on their website: www.restorationexchangeomaha.org. Restoration Exchange Omaha is an organization which promotes preservation and restoration of old buildings.



EARTH DAY
OMAHA

ELMWOOD PARK

APRIL 13, 2019



Metro Community College and Big Muddy Urban Farm Partnership on Orchard

by Gavin Johnston

Contractors have begun grading and landscape work at a Big Muddy Urban Farm plot near 34th and Burt St.

Plans for the Burt St. Plot are to host a hoop house, fruit production, perennial production, and a 35'x35' space designated for annual vegetable production/cover crops. All while trying to find the middle ground of providing an educational, demonstration site that community can stop by and learn from, while also maintaining an easy work flow for resident farmers to bring products to market.

Pomology students at Metro Community College are partnering on the project to come up with designs for an urban orchard on the lot. Pomology is the science of growing fruit. Big Muddy is always open to ideas on this renovation and plan to plant fruit trees later this Fall. It's great to connect the classroom to real world scenarios. It is a benefit to all.



Whatever Magic

by Tyler Magnuson

A long time ago (but not that long) there was a summer snow storm. Not biting and cold, but warm and soft, made up of hi(n)xpe (seeds) from the ma'a to(n)ga (cottonwood trees). One hi(n)xpe, possibly from an ancient mother over the ridge (we now call 38th St.) in the next stream bed (we call Saddle Creek) got caught in the mud of a small draw. There it stuck, was rained on and sprouted. It grew among brothers and sisters and for over 200 years it stretched tall and wide.

Its own hi(n)xpe may have been gathered by people of the Umo(n)ho(n) tribe for bedding and its roots harvested to make simple hand drill sets, fire. Eventually different people (that looked more like me) came and some of its brothers and sisters flesh was hacked into, burned for warmth. As muddy tracks were laid-over with brick and then later concrete only seven ma'a to(n)ga were left among the reeds and grasses.

Many years later as the lilacs bloomed a great summer storm swept over the hill. Feeling the pull of the wind and the lashing of the rain it decided to let go of one of its branches instead of bowing completely to the will of the storm. This learned evolutionary advantage, losing a limb instead of a whole body, is so common in cottonwoods that many cities have enshrined laws into their city code banning them from being planted. This branch crashed into a barren dead space (what we call a parking lot) and destroyed three cars. The next day city workers quickly came, removed the branch and toppled this tree to the ground. They hewed its flesh and left one more stump in the small draw (in what we call Gifford Park). Finding the aftermath a night later, I stood on its stump and screamed curses into the dark.

The previous spring my kids and I had made fairy houses at the base of its trunk, inviting whatever magic that is left in this world to feel at home there. Of the seven ma'a to(n)ga that were growing in the park when I was born only four remain.

This is only one telling of this story, the trees have their own, and the native people of this land have theirs as well. Those are stories worth knowing, as much as this one and maybe even more so. But I think this story is important in its own right. As our neighborhood asks collective questions about change, who is welcome here and what we want to see, there seems to be a lesson or maybe a question to be learned or asked. What does it mean to belong? Who and what are included in that sense of 'we,' that is so often invoked? Will my children be able to find a ma'a to(n)ga sprouting, watch it grow as they do? Will the summer snow storms grow smaller and smaller as the final siblings of this tree fall?

This spring we will plant a ma'a to(n)ga in its place, inviting whatever magic is still left in this world to have a home there.

I would like to remember, in words, that this land still belongs to the Umo(n)ho(n) people (physically as well as spiritually) and thank my teacher Glenna Slater for the permission to share some of her language in this reflection.



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30th Annual
Gifford Park Neighborhood - EASTER EGG HUNT



Where: Gifford Park

When: **Saturday, April 20**
Noon (Rain or Shine!)

Who: Children Ages 12 & Under

Bring Your Easter Baskets!

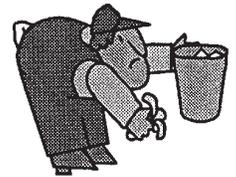


***Volunteers needed to help pickup litter in Gifford Park at 10:30am prior to the event

SPRING CLEANUP - Saturday, May 18, 9am to 2pm



**Neighborhood & Park Cleanup
Trash Compactors in Gifford Park
Membership & Donation Drive**



- * Neighborhood volunteers will monitor the dumpsters (NO commercial hauling!)
- * Items **ACCEPTED**: furniture, bulky items, appliances, metal
- * Items **NOT ACCEPTED**: yardwaste, rocks, concrete, paint, hazardous & toxic material
- * **Toxic materials** (paint, oil, pesticides, chemicals) can be taken to the *Under the Sink* facility near 120th & I Streets
- * **Tree brush** vouchers will be available at Gifford Park
- * **Tires** may be dropped off for FREE at Baxter Arena, parking lot 26, (2425 South 67th St.)
- * **Tires** will be accepted at Gifford Park site at \$1 each
- * **Appliances** containing freon (refrigerators, A.C.) will be accepted at Gifford Park site at \$10 each
- * Gifford Park Neighborhood Association members will get highest priority for hauling items
- * If you can help with our neighborhood cleanup or if you need help hauling, please call:

Eliza // 207-590-9880 // yrrepazile@gmail.com

Membership Drive: Gifford Park Neighborhood Association (GPNA) annual membership dues are only: **\$10 for Single, \$15 for Family, \$25 for Business.** Your membership helps support **neighborhood cleanups, newsletters, youth activities, watch group equipment, tool lending** and many other worthwhile programs. The Spring Cleanup is a great time to join! You can also find our membership form on our GPNA website: **www.giffordparkomaha.org**

Report Crime

This is a great opportunity for us as a neighborhood to help law enforcement and help our own neighborhood. Northeast Police Precinct Captain Mark Matuza has asked the GPNA to share these tips we all can do: 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@cityofomaha.org) is an excellent resource to contact if you have specific information on problem issues.

Big Muddy Urban Farm Update

by Matt Wettengel

With the snow melted and spring having sprung, Big Muddy has been busy getting ourselves out working on the land we manage in the neighborhood. This year's aspiring farmer residents have been living in the Big Muddy houses on Burt Street since January working to create our business plan, plan and prepare for the growing season ahead. You can read more about this year's residents at www.bigmuddyurbanfarm.org/team, or visit our website and schedule a tour.

We hosted our first Open House of the season on Saturday, March 23, to introduce ourselves to the community and publicly launch our 2019 Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) subscription. If you're interested in subscribing to our CSA and receiving a share of fresh produce each week from May 28–September 27, please send us an email at residents@bigmuddyurbanfarm.com or give us a call at (402) 590-8702. We will offer pickups on Tuesdays from 5–7 p.m. at the Big Muddy garage (3328 Burt Street), or Friday nights from 5–8 p.m. at the Gifford Park Neighborhood Market (520 N. 33rd Street) and you can choose from the full 18-week season or any combination of the three seasonal share offerings. There are only 30 spots total, so be sure to inquire today so you can secure your spot!

The aspiring farmer residents also partnered with Keep Omaha Beautiful to host two neighborhood cleanups on March 23 and 24. We were thrilled to have solid groups of volunteers show up to each event to begin the process of cleaning up the neighborhood. If you're looking to get involved with similar cleanup events or other volunteer opportunities, follow us on Facebook or Instagram ([@BigMuddyUrbanFarm](https://www.facebook.com/BigMuddyUrbanFarm)) or sign up for our mailing list at www.bigmuddyurbanfarm.org/connect.



Community Garden/Youth Garden/Adventure Playground Update

After our brutal winter, folks are thinking about gardening and getting their hands dirty. We are starting to plan for community garden projects and the youth garden program, as well as Adventure Playground. The community garden and Adventure Playground are located at 35th and Cass Street. At the time of this newsletter we have a few community garden plots available. Stay tuned for more updates, including our youth garden program, in our May newsletter. If you have any questions or are interested in becoming involved with the community garden, youth garden program or Adventure Playground, contact Chris Foster (402-290-8187 or foster3413@cox.net), or Mike Caban (402-341-4722 or caban3321@cox.net).



Community Bike Shop Update

by Adam Blowers

We would like to introduce you to the Bike Project's newest employee Jessica Shadduck! Jessica is our new Program Coordinator and we are super excited about it.

Jessica has a degree in Spanish and Women's and Gender Studies, and a background in youth and non-profit work. She was a recipient of QBP's Women's Bicycle Mechanic Scholarship in 2018, and is certified through the United Bicycle Institute in Professional Bicycle Repair and Shop Operation. She is also part of the team at Ponderosa Cyclery + Tour, in midtown Omaha. Jessica's excited about expanding outreach in languages other than English, and making sure that people throughout the Omaha metro know about the resources available to them at the Community Bike Project.



Speaking of the resources at CBPO, now is the time to get your bike ready for spring. Stop on in and let us show you some quick maintenance tips and help you get it dusted off and ready to go. The kids might've grown out of last year's bikes so now is a good time to get them enrolled in Earn-a-Bike classes (where they can meet Jessica!).

Greetings from your neighborhood market organizers!

by Matt Wettengel

The year has already gotten off to a busy start, as we have had to navigate new challenges that come with Gifford Park Neighborhood Market's new designation as an official "Farmer's Market". For the first time, GPNM has been required to purchase a "Farmer's Market Umbrella Permit" for \$413 from the Douglas County Health Department which in the past we only had to have a City of Omaha's "Peddlers Permit". This new designation and permit will now cover up to 25 vendors who can sell fresh, uncut produce at our market.



The change is bittersweet for us who put on this volunteer-run market. This new cost burden and additional regulations will not hold the Gifford Park Neighborhood Market Management Team back from continuing to put on this wonderful summer event, which is entering its 12th year. Rest assured, the wonderful atmosphere and sense of community will continue and our place as the neighborhoods "Living Room" will be even better every Friday evening this summer.

If you know anyone who's interested in being a vendor at our Gifford Park Neighborhood Market, please send them our way. Our email—gpnmarket@gmail.com—is the best way to reach us.

Due to this new designation there comes some new requirements, our upcoming vendor meeting on Saturday, April 27, from 3–4 p.m. at Big Muddy's yellow house (3320 Burt Street) is especially important for all vendors to attend, whether you're new or experienced. We will have a presentation from a representative of the DCHD, which will explain what our official farmer's market status means for vendors, answer questions, and what things will have to be done for vendors to sell produce and food at the market this season.

The Gifford Park Neighborhood Market Management Team wishes everyone a wonderful Spring and hope to see you when the GPNM opens Friday, May 31, from 5–8 p.m.

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Gifford Park Neighborhood Association
 PO Box 31462
 Omaha, NE 68131

Place
 Stamp
 Here

**Gifford Park Neighborhood Association
 Membership Application**

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

Type of membership: Single (\$10) Family (\$15) Business (\$25)
 Today's Date: _____

Business Name (if applicable): _____

Business Phone (if applicable): _____

Name (1): _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name (2): _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name (3): _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name (4): _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name (5): _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Call committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday Banquet | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Watch | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleanup/Beautification | <input type="checkbox"/> Landlord/Tenant Issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter Distribution | <input type="checkbox"/> Tool Lending |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Memberships | <input type="checkbox"/> School Liason | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Planting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Easter Egg Hunt | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Market | <input type="checkbox"/> School Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Garden |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Walks | <input type="checkbox"/> Soccer | |

Return completed form along with check or money order to:
 Gifford Park Neighborhood Association, PO Box 31462, Omaha, NE 68131.