

normal park neighborhood



association

npna

Newsletter, Vol. XIV, No. 3, Summer 2003

NPNA ANNUAL ICE CREAM SOCIAL!

On Wednesday, August 6, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m., the NPNA will celebrate its 13th anniversary. Originally created to address local safety concerns and organize a resident voice, the NPNA has expanded over the years to include parks' improvements, recreation issues, a neighborhood yard sale, welcome wagon and social opportunities.

To celebrate, we are having the 7th annual Ice Cream Social. Please join neighbors and friends on the Rose Garden patio of the Senior Center on Wednesday, August 6th, from 6:00 pm to 7:30pm.

There will be ice cream for everyone and games for kids and kids at heart. This will be your opportunity to purchase a NPNA commemorative mug for only \$5, a must for every kitchen. This has always been a fun outing and chance to see neighbors both old and new.

If you can help with set-up, scooping or clean-up, please contact Rebecca Dunkle at 482-9330, rdunkle@umich.edu.

RECREATION PARK NEWS

Status Quo on Park

As of the writing of this article, the long awaited finish of the park project is still eluding us. As you may recall, Shannon Stumbo Bellars, the Director of Parks and Recreation, had advised the NPNA in April that the final commemorative bricks would be laid in the plaza and a park bench would be installed as soon as the frost law was lifted and the rain stopped. Ms. Bellars has been following up with Margolis Nursery to determine when the project will be completed now that we've had a substantial amount of warm, dry weather. If we're fortunate, the job will be completed by the time these newsletters are distributed.

Jogging Path

The same delays have occurred with the installation of the crushed limestone jogging path, which is designed to surround the perimeter of the park. Let's hope there will be some summer left by the time the path gets installed.

Tennis Courts

You may have noticed that the street contractors have been taking up more and more space in Recreation Park. The City of Ypsilanti negotiated with the contractors to replace the asphalt tennis courts when the street construction is

finished. At a public meeting held on May 14, the neighbors in attendance agreed that we would like to see the tennis courts replaced with fresh asphalt, with rolled edges and basketball hoops. The tennis nets and fences will not be replaced. It is quite apparent that the contractors will have a much bigger repair job than just the asphalt. The City is still in the process of negotiating the final terms with the contractors.

YPSILANTI PRIDE DAY

Rose Garden/Park Improvements

On May 17, Ypsilanti Pride Day, the NPNA sponsored a project to weed, prune, plant flowers, and clean up the rose garden next to the Senior Center. Several volunteers worked all morning and into the afternoon to spruce up the garden.

The NPNA donated \$130 to purchase rose bushes and annuals for the project. The money came from funds earned through our neighborhood yard sales. The City of Ypsilanti contributed \$200, and the DPW delivered wood chips, which volunteers spread around the flowerbeds.

Special thanks go to **Rick Leyshock** and **Diane Willis**, who have spent many hours working in the rose garden and around the Senior Center, not only on Ypsi Pride Day, but all spring and summer. Thanks also to the following volunteers whose time in the rose garden on May 17 really made a difference:

Carol Leyshock – Rose garden project organizer, **Rick Leyshock**, **Diane Willis**, **Lisa Wozniak**, **Jen Brown**, **Kristyn Spangler**, **Scott Thobe**, **Harriet Lindsay**, **Sandy Schultz**, **Krisilyn Frazier**, **Paul Schreiber** (worked in the garden afterwards, he was volunteering elsewhere on Ypsi Pride Day), **Nancy Collins** (worked in the garden prior to Ypsi Pride Day)

Edith Hefley Park/Boulevard Improvement

In addition to all the hard work at the Senior Center and Recreation Park, a large crew of volunteers put in a morning's work at Hefley Park for Ypsi Pride. We cleaned out the garden beds, cut down weeds by the play equipment and thinned out the overgrown shrub border at the back of the park.

A special thanks to **Jessica Faul, Ed McGovern, Sarah Weiss** and **Sandy Schultz** for donating annuals and perennials that we used to spruce up the ornamental beds by the park sign and peace pole. **Jenna and Henry Bacolor** assisted with the garden preparation and the substantial weed elimination.

In an arrangement with the city, volunteers emptied the digging box of the decaying wood chips in preparation for replacement with pea gravel. Herculean efforts were exhibited by **Mary Skiver, Carolyn Wines, Kelsey Wines** and **Ed McGovern**. The wood chips were re-distributed around the play equipment and at the back border. Pea stone was then delivered by the city as a new digging medium, one that is not appealing to cats but still provides fun scooping and playing opportunities. Corner reinforcements/seats will be added to the digging box by a neighborhood volunteer some time this summer.

While the road resurfacing project has overshadowed gardening efforts in the boulevards, we thank the large group of volunteers who have been watering and weeding in an effort to preserve the existing plantings. We can look forward to adding fall flowers once the road crews are gone.

Again, thank you to the above volunteers and to all of you who have worked in other parts of the neighborhood on Ypsi Pride Day and throughout the year.

YPSILANTI REZONING PROPOSAL

On May 28, the Ypsilanti Planning Commission held a public meeting at the Senior Center to discuss proposed rezoning changes in the Cross Street area. The proposed changes would update the city's Master Plan and would be used as a guide for new zoning ordinances to be passed by City Council.

The proposed changes were the result of extensive studies that revealed the following:

- The Cross Street area is generally over-zoned, with excessive high-density, multi-resident buildings.
- The city's policies and lack of enforcement over the last 3-4 decades has facilitated increased rental housing.
- As of the 2000 Census, 60.5% of Ypsilanti's housing was rental.

The heavy concentration of multiple rental units has a significant and detrimental effect on the entire city's image. The trash surrounding rental properties, the lack of

maintenance, the obvious lack of pride on the part of many landlords and rental occupants, all contribute to making our town look less attractive. Just driving down Congress Street, it is quite obvious which blocks are full of rental units and which are maintained by single family homeowners. Downsizing the acceptable number of units will help Ypsilanti to preserve and improve our neighborhoods and increase property values over time.

Higher density housing areas also create safety and quality-of-life problems. Rental housing is characterized by transient populations with fewer ties to the community. Neighborhoods composed of owner occupied housing are more stable, attractive and safe.

It is very important that the Ypsilanti Planning Commission and the City Council hear from homeowners, as they decide whether to adopt the re-zoning plans. For more information about the proposed changes, visit the City's website at <http://cityofypsilanti.com> or e-mail Nathan Voght, City Planner, at nvoght@cityofypsilanti.com.

YARD SALE GREAT SUCCESS

We were pleased to see hundreds of eager customers at our very successful annual yard sale in June. Several residents reported record-breaking sales, even with the street work being done and the threat of rain.

Thanks to **Rebecca Dunkle** maps of the neighborhood with all the registered households marked, along with a brief description of what they were featuring for sale, were distributed to participating households, and available in plastic sleeves at most of the yard sale signs and other strategic points.

Thanks to former neighbor **Jim Hetzel**, who puts out the signs every year even though he doesn't even live here any more. (Some of those signs are getting a little worse for wear, so we plan to update them for next year.)

Besides giving us all a chance to do some spring cleaning and make a little money, the sale raises funds for Recreation Park support. The proceeds from several neighbors' individual sales also went to support various causes, such as the Ypsilanti Jaycees, the Ypsilanti Historic Museum and women's scholarships, among others this year. We were able to include some of that information in the advertisements, and next year we'll make a special effort to list this information more prominently. Our two neighborhood churches also register for the event, and it's a nice outreach opportunity for them, and in one case provided free snacks for our customers!

Thanks to everyone who participated, it was a true neighborhood-wide effort with great rewards for everyone.

RECREATION BUDGET CUTS

As most of you know, the Ypsilanti City Council voted in late May to eliminate the city's recreation budget. City Manager Ed Koryzno brought the recommendation to Council when it became apparent that Ypsilanti was going to face a projected \$863,000 state funding cut.

This decision means that Parkridge Community Center, the Senior Center and Rutherford Pool will all be closing their doors at the end of the summer. The Depot Town Freighthouse is scheduled to close in July 2004. All of these places are jewels in the midst of our community, each bringing joy and constructive activities to our residents. Their closure will be a huge blow to our city.

Recreation Commission

Residents in the Normal Park neighborhood and throughout the city have voiced their deep concern with the city's budget cut decisions. In response, city council recently decided to rejuvenate the dormant "Recreation Commission", appointing representatives to this body from each part of the city. At the July 1st City Council meeting, **John Weiss** and **Lisa Zuber** were confirmed as Ward 2 representatives to the commission, Patricia Horne-McGee was asked to represent Ward 1, and Brian Filipiak and Judy Lucchetti Ward to represent Ward 3. A second Ward 1 representative will be appointed soon. This new commission will be responsible for coming up with creative solutions to the current recreation crisis, ideally ones that will allow all the commons in question to be reopened or, even better, kept open. We encourage NPNA residents to contact our Ward 2 representatives with any and all innovative ideas you may have to help make this happen.

Day of Healing

The recreation cuts are going to impact all of us, but especially the children and the seniors in our community. In recognition of this, staff at the Senior Center and Parkridge Community Center organized a "Day of Healing" on Saturday, June 21st. The "Day of Healing" was a time to gather together for a positive, supportive event in the wake of difficult times. The organizers acknowledged that residents needed some healing time and decided that there was no better way to do it than with a community cookout! Chana Hawkins of the Senior Center and Antoine Sharpless and Michael Bates of Parkridge did an amazing job of organizing the event, which included great food, a DJ, and plenty of sunshine, allowing the whole event to happen in the beautifully maintained Rose Garden. NPNA made a small donation to make the event possible, as did the Worden Gardens neighborhood and 23 other individuals/organizations. In an act of great kindness, NPNA Treasurer **Rebecca Dunkle** arrived at the event with a large bunch of helium-filled balloons for the children.

CoPAC NEWS

CoPAC is the city's Community Policing Action Council, which meets monthly and brings together representatives from all of the Ypsilanti neighborhood associations, the Police Department, and other community groups. It's our chance to hear what's going on in the city, especially related to crime prevention and related issues.

Recent agenda items included:

The City budget cuts to the Police and Recreation Departments.

A rash of car break-ins, including a few in Normal Park. Most of the break-ins were from unlocked cars and we are all reminded to keep our cars locked at night, make sure attractive and easily removed items are kept out of sight, and be sure to have adequate outside lighting to discourage thieves

Local neighborhood traffic issues, especially speeding. Police officers try to patrol regularly, but there are certainly not enough officers to monitor traffic on all the local streets all the time. Residents can note down license numbers of speeders (along with date/time/location.), and the Police Department will send the offenders a warning letter. Speed bumps can sometimes be installed, although the cost usually must be borne by the residents.

CoPAC will be at the Ypsilanti Heritage Festival. Look for their booth and in the parade) August 15-17, <http://www.ypsilantiheritagefestival.com>

2003 BOARD MEMBERS/CHAIRPERSONS

| | | |
|-------------------|----------------|----------|
| President: | Lisa Wozniak | 483-5013 |
| Treasurer: | Rebecca Dunkle | 482-9330 |
| Recreation Park: | Carol Leyshock | 481-0836 |
| Greenscape Chair: | Sarah Weiss | 480-1823 |
| Newsletter | Joe Capuano | 483-6091 |
| Website | Nick Mason | |
| At-large members: | Sue Collins | 483-6609 |

If you have anything you would like discussed at the next board meeting please contact a board member. The next board meeting is August 13.

NEIGHBORHOOD EMAIL GROUP

If you haven't already, please sign up for our neighborhood email group, which we have been using for neighborhood updates, announcements, and other local news items. It's a nice supplement to our quarterly newsletter. Send your email address to Rebecca Dunkle, rdunkle@umich.edu, to be included on the list. (If you have news items of your own that you would like to have sent out to the neighborhood, email npna@umich.edu.)

HOMES FOR SALE/HOMES RECENTLY SOLD

As of this printing, the following homes are for sale in our neighborhood:

| | |
|-------------------|-----------|
| 1215 S. Congress | \$129,900 |
| 1123 N. Congress | \$149,900 |
| 1211 N. Congress | \$159,900 |
| 1214 Sherman | \$179,000 |
| 1210 Grant | \$189,900 |
| 211 Elm | \$219,900 |
| 201 Oakwood Drive | \$219,900 |
| 308 N. Wallace | \$239,900 |
| 1212 Westmoorland | \$274,900 |
| 1014 W. Cross | \$274,900 |

The following homes have sold recently:

| | |
|-------------------|-----------|
| 917 Sherman Court | \$170,000 |
| 90 Oakwood | \$210,000 |
| 359 N. Mansfield | \$216,000 |
| 1216 Grant | \$254,900 |

Sue Collins, an NPNA resident and agent at Real Estate One provided the above information. Contact her at 483-6609 or 662-8600.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Ice Cream Social Aug 6
Senior Center Rose Garden, 6:00 – 7:30 pm
- 25th Annual Heritage Festival Aug 15-17
- Heritage Festival Parade Aug 16
Michigan Ave, 10:00 am
- NPNA General Meeting Oct 8
Senior Center, 7:30 – 9:00 pm