



## ALL THE NEWS THAT IS FIT TO PRINT

By Sharon Babbit

200 Park Avenue

### THE HISTORY OF PICNICS

Soon, FPNA will hold its annual Meeting in the Park. Yes, that is a picnic by some other name. The history of our picnics is varied and interesting. The first year we held it at Fairmount Park near some building that was slated for demolition, I forget what it was called. Volunteers worked on grills brought from home and got pretty overheated. Kids played with the croquet mallets in a game of their own invention involving pretending to be at war. End of Act I.

The next year we graduated to the Big Time when we held our picnic at Lookout Point and invited thousands of guests, or maybe it was only dozens. The ROTC Drill Team from Abraham Lincoln High School showed up unexpectedly and put on a show, along with our own personal flute player entertaining us with a nice rendition of patriotic songs. The Police Chief came and helped find a stolen purse, which turned out to be merely mislaid. Large tents were set up for tables, shade and protection against possible showers, which actually occurred a little before the start of the picnic but ended before guests arrived. Tons of supplies were purchased by the picnic committee; large sizes were more economical in the long run and, believe it or not, we still have some left and will not have to buy more plates or cups for a millennium or so.

Then something important happened. We applied to the IRS for a 501(c)3 nonprofit designation. We looked pretty good on our application except for the picnic. Seems that our charity nonprofit organization could NOT hold Picnics! What to do? After all, these things are fun and serve to bring us closer together, correct? A simple change of name and procedure solved the problem. We are now calling our event a Meeting and, thus, have to conduct a little business along with our food and fun.

Plans were under way to hold our next picnic (oops, don't use that word!) in 2011 at our beautiful Lookout Point once again, when our City was caught in one of the worst disasters we've known—the Flood. It just didn't seem right to be having fun in a public park when so many were suffering so. We canceled our event, or at least changed it, to Melissa's back yard, without Melissa, who was called out of town. That afternoon was so hot that nobody wanted to be outside and we nearly went home, until somebody had the bright idea to see if Melissa's back door was unlocked so we could go into her air-conditioned dining room. A miracle! It was open. We cleaned up after ourselves and contemplated not informing Melissa of our "home invasion," but in the end we did confess and she forgave us.

Continued on Pg.4

# Mayor's Neighborhood Cabinet

Ryan Willar

Neighborhood Center

Tuesday, May 8, 2012 7:00 a.m.

- State budget still not set, so don't know yet how we will be affected locally
  - If the House budget passes, there will be an expected loss of revenue of about 1.8 million in property taxes due to decreases in commercial property taxes and places such as apartment buildings paying residential property taxes as opposed to current commercial property taxes. There would be plans for the state to make up for those losses to cities, but there is skepticism that this would happen and fully compensate. (\*Note: since this meeting on May 8, the state legislature session has ended without action being taken on property taxes)
  - Tax Increment Financing now has new regulations from the state
    - ⊙ if new regulations were in place before the recent Google and WalMart deals, neither would have been done based on the changes
- New City website is being designed and will be more interactive including facebook and twitter tweets from the City, so be on the lookout and make sure to connect to it.
- Omaha symphony has five performances scheduled at River's Edge Park, and Jazz on the Green (currently in Omaha) is considering moving there as well, so there is lots of interest and excitement out there about the park
- The City now owns the grain elevators off of West Broadway, and the connecting railroads will be removed to make way for development, including a bike path
  - A next step will be demolition bids for the grain elevators
- Bids to repair the roads in Fairview Cemetery are coming in higher than anticipated, which could slow the process
- Mayor's Good Neighbor Awards nomination forms are now available, so spread the word and help to distribute.
  - Nomination forms are currently available from Ryan Willar with the Neighborhood Center. Email [rwillar@unomaha.edu](mailto:rwillar@unomaha.edu) for more information.
  - We are working to get the nomination forms online as well, including the City website and the Neighborhood Center site

## MAIN STREET FARMERS MARKET

Every Thursday 5:00 - 8:00 pm through September 27 on the corner of 9th Avenue and Main St. The Main Street Market seeks vendors who sell produce, wines, jams, jellies, baked goods, and arts and crafts (all processed food vendors must be State of Iowa certified). For more information or questions about the Main Street Market contact

Valerie Ware at 402.679.6366  
or email

[mainstreetfarmersmarket@gmail.com](mailto:mainstreetfarmersmarket@gmail.com)

**"Shoot for  
the moon. Even  
if you miss,  
you'll land  
among the  
stars"**

**Les Brown**

# The President's Corner

**Kyle Muschall**

**332 Glen Avenue**

I would like to personally thank all the FPNA volunteers who participated in the 2012 Keep Council Bluffs Beautiful (KCBB) this year. We had a fantastic turnout, which made for quick work on our tour of the neighborhood to remove the debris and detritus from the streets and right of ways.

I think it is a testament to our continued annual clean up efforts and that of our neighborhood as a whole that we did not find that much trash. Afterwards a few of us had a nice stroll down to Bayliss Park where we got to enjoy hot dogs, chips and a nice refreshing beverage while the entire City Council grilled and the official KCBB event got under way. It was refreshing to see all the folks enjoying the park.

**FPNA 2012 KCBB Clean UP Crew**



I also want to say how pleased I am with the donations that we received for the FPNA food drive, which benefits the Broadway Methodist Church food pantry and their Phillip's Corner store. Our neighborhood really stepped up this year and is evident by the amount folks gave. It is always gratifying to know that when there is someone within our community that needs a helping hand that we answered the call and gave back.

**FPNA 2012 Food Drive**



# ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO PRINT

By Sharon Babbitt

200 Park Avenue

Continued From Pg.1

Which finally brings us to our 2012 Meeting in the Park, which is scheduled for Saturday afternoon, July 14<sup>th</sup>, at Lookout Point once again. Let's hope it doesn't rain or flood, and that the heat will be bearable because there will be no alternative air-conditioned dining room available this time. Be sure to attend!

## GRANT FOR POLES

A promise was made in the last newsletter not to talk about this again until the deed was done, and here we go, breaking our promise right off the bat. We have made a slight change in our plans to install some of these poles at strategic spots throughout the neighborhood. We have learned the hard way that it is just about impossible to pry written bids out of concrete contractors for small jobs such as ours. Therefore, true to the "rogue" mentality of our NA, we realized that we have competent folks right here at home who can do this concrete work, and have decided to move forward in our application process without involving any outside contractors. One important factor making this change possible, is that our poles will be installed on private property and not City right-of-ways. Hopefully, this will send our grant along the necessary channels so we can actually make this happen! Should we promise not to write about this again until we actually have the grant(s) in hand? Better not.

## OTHER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Don't forget the volunteer opportunities awaiting us at the Dodge House, if we so choose. Their Old Fashioned Fourth of July Celebration and their Railroad Days big bash offer opportunities for simple volunteering, such as crowd control. The

**Continued On Pg.6**



445 Glen Avenue Karl and Terri Allen

Photo by Kyle Muschall

# CITY COUNCIL UPDATE

By Nate Watson

126 Park Avenue

Last year's flood event -- and its attendant costs -- are never far from any of our minds. As of May 30, 2012, of the total number of 94 worksheets of reimbursement requests sent to the federal government, 71 have been approved. Of the remainder, 19 worksheets are still in review and 4 are still listed as ineligible for reimbursement. What this means is that, through May 30th, your City has received \$7.16 million dollars in reimbursement. We are still on track to receive likely reimbursement from the federal and state governments for all but about 21% of the flood-related costs. Please know that our City is years ahead of many other places in obtaining approvals and actual monies. Your City's employees worked beyond exhaustion to keep 35,000 people above water, and they continue at this breakneck pace to document and fill out the voluminous paperwork that allows us to avoid tax increases to pay for it all.

Regarding the potential buying out of flooded-out properties on the wet side of City levees, the federal government has awarded \$2,212,196, and the state government has awarded \$2,507,155. For us to accept all of this money, we have to put up 15% (which comes to \$442,440) as a local match. The question comes down to this: If we let folks rebuild their homes in this area, every single resident of the City will become ineligible to purchase flood insurance. If we don't let folks rebuild their homes in this area, if we don't put up 15% of the costs to buy them out they won't have a place to live.

With regard to the former Holiday Inn on Nash Boulevard, we have approved the sale of 14 of the 23 lots that were created when the former hotel was demolished. The remaining lots are still for sale. We are requiring homes built on these lots to be single family, as well as to comply with stringent requirements that will ensure the area remains fully consistent with the existing neighborhood. It has required considerable taxpayer funds to clean up the abandoned mess, though by selling lots with requirements we are respecting and enhancing the area, as well as recouping as much of your money as possible.

After denying their initial development plans, we have now approved Wal-Mart's new design for its second store on

North 16th Street. Consistent with our new development requirements, the store will have trees (including within the interior of the parking lot), a better façade (with lots of glass and stone or brick), a great deal of landscaping (including ponds), and pedestrian paths. A cheap-looking strip mall, this is definitely not. Wal-Mart is to be commended for working with us to meet our relatively new standards. Incidentally, you may have noticed that all new businesses and substantially remodeled existing ones are now being required to meet the new standards.

On a 3-2 vote, we denied the County's request to vacate an alley on the block of land on the west side of 6th Street, diagonally across from the courthouse. The concern expressed was that it appears the intention was to build yet another parking lot, consisting of an entire block, which only governmental employees would be allowed to use. There is existing parking a half-block farther away from government offices, which is never full. In other words, the County has seen fit to use taxpayer money to tear down existing houses that had paid property taxes (and apparently wants to spend hundreds of thousands of your money to acquire the rest), to concrete over yet another area in the entrance to downtown, and for which the taxpayers would fully pay but not be allowed to use. And, it isn't even needed. The County has asked us to reconsider. Speaking for myself, I will not support the knocking down of taxpaying neighborhoods to build vast open expanses of free parking for the government.

We appear likely to approve the rezoning of a currently un-built portion of the Hills of Cedar Creek. This portion had been planned to be (connected) townhouses, but the developer would like to build more single-family homes, instead. Because there is not yet an existing neighborhood to consult, the developer/owner is the voice of the area.

No bids were received for the first attempt to let the improvement project for Fairview Cemetery. We are re-letting the project, after talking with several potential bidders to figure out how best to obtain at least a few reasonable bids. The timetable in this re-bid is to seek contractors to do the asphalt road-related work first, with the option to do it this fall rather than this summer. The

**Continued On Pg. 6**

# CITY COUNCIL UPDATE

By Nate Watson

126 Park Avenue

## Continued From Pg.5

concrete work (for the flumes, gates, and signage) will be re-bid after the asphalt road work is done. In other words, requiring the limited concrete work to be done at the same time, and requiring everything to be done this summer rather than this fall, was apparently keeping contractors from bidding. As we very much believe in this project, we are seeking to move it forward as quickly as possible, given this reality.

Google's new location is likely to be voluntarily annexed into the City. Google wants all of its facilities in the area within Council Bluffs.

The Council has been asked to issue a letter of support for the redeveloper of old Kirn Gym. The redeveloper is seeking the final piece of a large tax-credits pie, in order to make the project financially possible. Originally, the redeveloper sought to covert the Gym into a commercial mixed-use space, which was not well received by the neighborhood or the City. Next, the redeveloper sought to develop the property into the new 911 call center, but that was also not well received by the neighborhood or the City, either. The current proposal, which has been well received, is to redevelop the Gym into 20 housing units (which means the property will be residential in character), retaining and restoring the exterior façade. The tax credits are needed, in part, to abate quite a bit of asbestos in the building (right down to the floor tiles). If approved, the project is scheduled to be completed by January 1, 2013.

Finally, the City is in the process of creating a new Comprehensive Plan, the first since 1994. The Parks, Recreation, and Public Property Department is also creating a new Master Plan, the first in about 10 years. These Plans are the "blueprints" or "roadmap" by which we make major decisions for the next 10-20 years. Your continued input in this process will be invaluable.

As always, I have office hours from 9am to noon on the Saturdays before Council Mondays, in Suite 414 of the Park Building, 500 Willow Avenue, directly across from City Hall. I hope to continue to hear from you.

Regards, -Nate

# FIT TO PRINT

Continued From Pg.4

dates are July 4<sup>th</sup>, and July 14-15. Of course, we hope you will decide to spend July 14<sup>th</sup> with your friends at Lookout Point at our "picnic" but those other days could still use our help. Contact the Dodge House for more information.

## VICTORIAN STROLL

Preserve Council Bluffs sponsored a tour of gardens, two in each historic neighborhood, to make money to renovate the Bregant House (that house built for the little people who were spokespersons for Woodward's Candy). Latest word is that they made \$1,800 at the Bregant House itself, and sold 10-15 tickets at each of the other locations for \$10 apiece. In addition, other donations were made to PCB for this purpose. The two houses in this neighborhood belonged to Nate Watson and Terri Dowell/Karl Allen. In addition to these homeowners, several of us also volunteered at each location. Thanks to you all for helping out this worthy cause.

**"Peace begins  
with a smile"  
Mother Teresa**

## FPNA ON LINE!!

We've joined the digital age. The official Fairmount Park Neighborhood Association website is finally up and running. We've been working these last few months constructing and loading content on the site. I want to extend a very heartfelt thank you to Sarah Arnold who has been lending her Web Design expertise to this project so that we can establish a web presence. Without her generosity this endeavor would never have been realized. So visit our site, add it to your favorites, leave a comment and let us know what you think.

[www.fairmountparkna.org](http://www.fairmountparkna.org)

## **DATES TO REMEMBER**

Keep Council Bluffs Beautiful  
Free Gardening Clinic  
June 16th 9-10:30 a.m.  
Community Hall (205 S.Main)

FPNA July Meeting  
Fairmount Park  
July 14th 4:00 p.m.



**"To be yourself  
in a world that is  
constantly trying  
to make you  
something else is  
the greatest  
accomplishment"**

**Ralph Waldo  
Emerson**

## **WINNER WINNER CHICKEN DINNER**

**July 14th 4:00 pm Look Out Point**

Join us for the FPNA picnic in the park. We will be providing the Fried Chicken and Beverages. You bring your favorite side dish or dessert. Lets celebrate our Independence

**THE Fairmount Press**  
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**Have an Opinion?  
Please Share!**

**W**e welcome any submission from a member that constructively furthers a topic of current public interest. Of course, opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Association or its membership. Any submission must be received by the first day of the month for inclusion. Please Contact the Editor.

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**Yes! I want to be an active member of the Fairmount Park Neighborhood Association. Please find enclosed a check for annual dues in the amount of \$20.00 per household.**

My Name and Spouse's/Significant Other's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Children's Names and Ages: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Numer: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Remit to:** Dave Huggins, Treasurer, 150 Park Avenue Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503



**Yes! I want to purchase a Fairmount Park Neighborhood Association banner.**

Please find enclosed a check for the Banner fee of \$12.00

(Or additional amounts of \_\_\_\_\_ for additional banners totaling \_\_\_\_\_.)

You must be a paid member to purchase a banner

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Numer: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Remit to:** Kyle Muschall, President, 332 Glen Avenue Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503 or Dave Huggins, Treasurer, 150 Park Avenue Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503