



DRAKE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION NEWS

Fall 2013

Neighborhood Thoughts

By Deric Gourd, DNA President

For many of us in Drake Neighborhood, the best and the worst part of our entire house is the basement. It holds this dual honor because it is the storehouse of our past. It's where we put all of those things we can't quite part with : Grandma's formal dinnerware set, childhood memories, spare pieces of woodwork that may fit some room once you finish it, the printer from 1997 you may still be convinced would still work if only you could still find ink cartridges again. All items are as precious as they are obsolete. Each year around this time, I decide I am going to clean that all out and start again. The only problem is that I have kept that stuff so long because I really like it.

It seems like the Drake Neighborhood has been going through much the same thing. This year may turn out to be one of the most productive years of development and rehabilitation we have seen in a while. After a few years of hibernation I am starting to see new construction and significant face-lifts on old gems all over the neighborhood. From the Playhouse renovations and Roosevelt Cultural District streetscaping project on the West to the new Drake University sign renovations along University, to the continuing work on Forest and Drake Park on the East of the neighborhood, and at all of the houses I walk by regularly that are putting up new paint or planting new flower beds; I see change and renovation all around. It's great living in a vibrant neighborhood.

I look forward to seeing more changes by this time next year – only what I think about each year when I am looking at the stacks of clutter in my basement, is not what else I should throw out, but what I really should keep.

As your neighborhood association, that really is our challenge. To change it all and start fresh would be tempting, but we would lose too much of what we are. Yet some things must change, and some items really do need to go. The challenge we face as a large, diverse neighborhood is where to draw that line.

What would you change in the neighborhood? What needs to be reconsidered and what needs to definitely stay?

Please like our Facebook page and let us know!

Deric

DNA Board Meetings

September 11, 7:00 pm
 October 9, 7:00 pm
 November 13, 7:00 pm
 December 11, 7:00 pm

We will no longer be meeting at the Holiday Inn. Check Facebook or www.drakeneighborhood.org for locations.

DNA Board Members

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Historic Home Rehabilitation Done Right

Erica Luna ,DNA

Anyone who spends time in the Drake Neighborhood knows there is a rich stock of historically and architecturally significant houses and buildings. Development in the area started in earnest in the early 1880s as Drake University was founded. The neighborhood prospered through the 1920s but started to decline with the stock market crash of 1929 and the draw of other fashionable neighborhoods in the city. The 1940s brought a trend of carving the large single-family homes into multi-family structures. In the next two decades, absentee ownership of these once stately homes would dramatically increase causing blight and decline in the neighborhood.

In recent years, many houses have been rehabilitated to their former stature. The Des Moines Building and Land, Inc. sets the bar high as an example of responsible and sensitive property rehabilitation. Trevor Williams and Brock Beekmann, along with a third partner, formed their partnership in 2010 and set their sights on the Drake Neighborhood. Their portfolio currently consists 17 properties in the southwest section of the neighborhood including one of the city's oldest homes on Drake Park Avenue and Trevor's lovingly restored home that was once broken into ten apartments.

Their work involves bringing structures up to current code while maintaining the period character that defined the houses in their glory days. They restore the original interior woodwork, finishes and fixtures and use period-appropriate materials salvaged from other properties. On the exterior, they maintain historically sensitive, if not original, paint schemes including sky blue porch ceilings- a Victorian practice.

The pair plans to continue their rehabilitation efforts in the neighborhood with the goal of long-term improvement in the area. The example they set with their quality of work is impressive and much needed. We look forward to seeing more of their work and welcome their enthusiasm.

Historic District Nominations

In 2010 Drake Neighborhood Association helped support a neighborhood survey of historic homes with the goal of using the information to support National Historic District Nominations in the neighborhood. We are in need of volunteers to help with the nomination process. Please contact Erica Luna (esimbro@yahoo.com) or Deric Gourd (deric.gourd@gmail.com) if you are interested in volunteering time to this project.



Plant Tulips now for Spring Bloom

By Kevin Venhaus, Beautification Chair, DNA

Want a tulip that's a great performer year after year, will naturalize in your garden and can be divided? Check out the Greigii species tulip..

For the past 7 years these are the tulips that bloom every spring on Kingman Blvd. at the intersections of 31st and 35th street . They not only have a great bloom but the foliage has burgundy stripes that are a bonus for spring interest after the flowers have gone.

This year is the first time I have tried dividing a tulip and I wish I would have done this a couple years ago. The Drake Gardeners helped dig up a couple sections of the gardens and after dividing & replanting we were left with about three hundred bulbs that I am storing in a cool, dry, dark space until October. Then we'll head out and fill in areas that don't have any bulbs planted so next spring there should be a better show of color on the boulevard.

I also added these tulips to my garden a couple years ago and they bloomed the same time the hellebores, lamium and daffodils were blooming. Add a background of early hosta foliage and the early burgundy leaves of a Japanese Maple and you have yourself the recipe for a great spring show.

If you are interested in these bulbs, or other favorites check out **BloomingBulbs.com** they have great prices and quality bulbs.



W New NBSD Officer has Drake Roots

Please welcome Mark McKinney as our neighborhood's new NBSD officer. He is a 19 year veteran of the force and although he has been working on the SWAT team for the past seven years, he is excited to be back working in our neighborhood. He has a degree from Drake, his wife went to Drake (and still works for the University) and they both spend much time and appreciate our neighborhood.

The Drake Neighborhood is one of ten Des Moines' neighborhoods that participate in the City's Neighborhood Based Service Delivery program (NBSD). The program incorporates assets from all city departments in an effort to enhance the quality of services to the designated neighborhoods. Make sure to contact them if you have a crime, suspicion, zoning or housing related problem in your neighborhood. Make sure to contact each member of the NBSD team, including the Drake Neighborhood Association NBSD Committee member by e-mail and/or phone. If you don't contact them, they may not know that there is a problem. Its e-mail address is nbsd@drakeneighborhood.org. Once you notify our entire team, the issue has a much better chance of being resolved. If we work together as neighbors and help our team out, everybody wins.

The Neighborhood Enforcement Team members for the Drake Neighborhood are:

Mark McKinney

Des Moines Police Department/NBSD
(515)778-4218
mamckinney@dmgov.org

Chris Reindl

Housing Inspector
Office (515) 283-4797 Cell (515) 208-0285
clreindl@dmgov.org

Bill Cappuccio

NBSD Committee Chair
(515) 710-7591
bill@wrc3.net

Other Helpful Numbers

Police (Non-emergency): 283-4811
City Action Center: 283-4500
Animal Control: 242-2720
Graffiti Hotline: 283-4500
Weed Control: 286-3005

42nd Streetscape Update *Jen Sayers, DNA*

Plans for Roosevelt Cultural District's 42nd Street Streetscape Project are moving forward! The concept plan is being finalized and prepped for City Council approval in early September and phase two fund raising has begun.

Total project costs are expected to come in at around \$1.7 million, with the private sector needing to raise approximately \$500,000 of the total cost. Once the project receives approval from the Council, requests for proposal will go out to construction companies for bid. Those bids will be reviewed, candidates interviewed and selected, and construction documents drawn up.

An account for the project has been opened with the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines and donations are beginning to come in. You can make a tax-deductible contribution by sending your check to the Foundation at 1915 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50309. Make checks payable to Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines and include "42nd Streetscape Fund" in the memo line.



For project updates on the RCD Streetscaping plans, check out <http://www.bolton-menk.com/city-des-moines-roosevelt-cultural-district>. For additional information or questions on the project you can contact Jennifer Sayers, co-chair, at jen@bijougrafix.com.

National Night Out *Bill Cappuccio, DNA*

Despite the thunderstorms that were forecasted for most of the day, the weather was nearly perfect for the Drake Neighborhood Association's annual National Night Out Cookout in Drake Park on August 6th. Over 250 people turned-out for a hamburger and to visit with their neighbors.

National Night Out is a nation-wide event that began in 1984 as an effort to promote police-community partnerships, crime prevention, and neighborhood unity. It now involves over 37 million people and 15,000 communities from all fifty states, U.S. Territories, Canadian cities, and military bases worldwide. 2013 is the 24th year that the City of Des Moines has participated in National Night Out. An event has been held in Drake Park almost every year since 1989.

