



Walnut Grove Homes Association

News in a Nutshell! March 2013

WGHA President's Message... Eric Lewandowski

To everyone looking out at our snow-covered neighborhood and wondering when the shoveling, salting and snow-blowing will end, I can only extend the hopeful reminder that spring officially arrives at 7:02 a.m. (EDT) on Wednesday, March 20. So, all of us can celebrate the waning days of the short daylight season, take comfort in surviving the brunt of the harshest elements, and look forward to the bright prospect of an extended period of warmth, productivity, relaxation and fun. This winter, by and large, has been good to Walnut Grove. While we've certainly had our share of the white stuff, it has come in manageable doses, at happily infrequent intervals, and largely without serious incidents – although I have noticed a few whopper-jawed mailboxes and did see someone take out the fireplug in front of our house a few weeks back. (A City crew came out and fixed it shortly afterward.)

I'm also happy to report that our Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 27th, at Stark Realty Company was very well attended, with nearly twice our normal turn out. And, I would like to again thank Katherine Bidwell and Stark for their generosity and neighborhood spirit, our indefatigable Social Chair, Kathy McComb for handling all the hospitality arrangements, and indeed, all of our stalwart WGHA board members, Mary Kay Battaglia, Denise Clearwood, Eileen Goode, Mary Nellis and Tom Wall for their conscientious service and close attention to the details of their respective charges – without which our operations would not run as smoothly as they have this year. I also would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest Board members, Greenways Committee Chair, Gabe Anibas, and Vice President Erica Healy whose names were placed in nomination at the Annual Meeting, and whose election was confirmed at our February 12th, board meeting. We now are at a full complement of members.

Additionally, I would be remiss in not recognizing the presence of our special guests, District 9 Alder Paul Skidmore, Chris Pedretti and Josh Schmitt from the City of Madison Parks Division, and our neighborhood presenters, Joan and Allen Liegel, all of whom, along with folks from the audience, contributed to a spirited conversation about the dog park, currently under consideration at Walnut Grove Park. As a follow-up, a subcommittee of the Board, consisting of Erica Healy, Kathy McComb, and members ad limina Joan and Allen Liegel, will continue to monitor the decision-making process and provide timely reports on the conduct of the City's deliberations.

The now full-strength Board is eager to begin tackling some issues and needs that have been deferred pending better understanding of their nature and operational implications. Among these are near-term improvements to ailing lighting fixtures along the Greenways paths, the forward rolling need to address our aging electrical supply system, securing a quality tree service to handle arboreal needs more effectively, ensuring that our administrative, legal and insurance compliances relative to ongoing operations are fully in place, and maintaining a cost-effective annual fee structure to address all of the above, including limiting fees this year to a nominal five dollar increase to deal with necessary improvements associated with the greenways, liability insurance, and other operations-related expenditures.

visit us on the web <http://www.walnutgrovemadison.org>

Meet Your Board

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Beyond these considerations, I would like to reiterate the Board's determination to continue emphasizing neighborhood community-building through enhanced electronic and personal, direct communications, reliance on, and support for, a vibrant, fully-engaged corps of Block Captains, continuation of benefits such as the neighborhood circle improvement grant program, the historically well-received regular social activities calendar, as well as the introduction of new opportunities for neighborhood interaction, especially those targeting maintenance of safety, security and stable (and hopefully soon to be increasing) property values.

Oh, and, before we realize it, the crocuses, daffodils and tulips soon will be here.

Architectural Review

Are you considering making additions or modification to the Exterior of you home, such as a new three-season porch or new siding? Don't forget to contact your WGHA Architectural Control Committee with any questions concerning changes that must comply with the covenants and deed restrictions of WGHA. **The architectural review guidelines have been updated and are available for your review on our website www.walnutgrovemadison.org.** Please contact Denise Clearwood 833-7446 for approval of any plans to alter your property.

New Board Member

Thanks to Erica Healy and Gabe Anibas for joining the Walnut Grove Board of Directors. We are excited to have new members that can provide new vision and perhaps reduce the average age of our Board!!

FROM THE SECRETARY.....

All board of directors' meetings will be posted on the website as well as on the list-serve. The proposed minutes of these meetings can also be found on the website.

The proposed minutes of the annual membership meeting, January, 2013, are available now on the website. Please visit us on the web at

<http://www.walnutgrovemadison.org>.

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WGHA Greenway Committee Guidelines for Circle Maintenance and Improvements

Any pruning or removal of dead trees/shrubs will be done as needed and paid for from the regular greenways budget. Please notify the Greenways Chairperson of any circle maintenance needs.

Circles grass cutting is a shared responsibility of the circle residents. It is recommended that circle residents be sensitive to special circumstances that might prohibit some of the homeowners from participating in this joint effort (age/illness).

The standard \$40 per year minor maintenance allocation is available to all circles for flower plantings, mulch, fertilizer, or other beautification efforts. Please submit itemized receipts to the WGHA Treasurer (Tom Wall) for reimbursement.

For major improvements; Residents of the circle will develop a written plan for improvements and present this plan to the WGHA board for approval. The plan must include a thorough description of the work being proposed, a formal bid, and a "growth" plan to ensure that any new planting will receive appropriate watering and other maintenance to ensure that they thrive.

Residents are encouraged to utilize a licensed and bonded contractor for circle improvements. If you choose to do any improvements that require digging below the frost line without the use of a contractor, you must call Digger's Hotline to ensure that all gas, power, cable and telephone lines are marked.

Trees and large shrubs installed without a contractor must be purchased from a reputable nursery with a minimum one year growth guarantee.

The plan must include the names of circle residents that will participate in the growth phase care. There must be multiple households willing to take responsibility for watering and tending of new plants.

Plans for improvements should be submitted to the WGHA board by May of the year in which the work is to be completed.



Walnut Grove Social Events!

We have had a wonderful year of social gatherings and we hope to continue with several events in 2013. However, we have nothing ready for publication at this time. PLEASE join the List-Serv (see following page) to receive notices and news concerning neighborhood social events. If you do not have a computer and would like to hear about social events please contact Kathy McComb @ 829-3446. Hope to see ya soon!

Walnut Grove Book Club

If you enjoy reading a variety of books and discussing the text in a fun and social atmosphere, please consider joining the **WNG Book Club**. Meetings occur the first Monday of each month at 7 p.m. Call Colette Krueser at 827-8563 for more information.

Walnut Grove Garden Club

Spring is on the way and if enjoy learning about plants and discussing plants in a fun social atmosphere then we invite you to join the Garden Club. As spring is approaching fast we will start meeting again in April, contact Carolyn Coffey @ 833-2056 or Kathy McComb @829-3446.

New Neighbor's Packet

If you're a Block Captain and have a new neighbor, contact Eileen Goode eileen@goodesolutions.com for a "New Neighbor Packet" chock full of good info to welcome folks into our community.

Dog Park Subcommittee Formed

At the February WGHA Board Meeting, a subcommittee was established and will be directly responsible for fielding questions from members, obtaining information from the Parks Department, and presenting the results back to the Board. The subcommittee scheduled and met with a Parks representative on Wednesday, February 20th, and their report will be presented at the next board of director meeting. Of note: the Parks Dept., in coordination with the various Neighborhood Associations involved, will be scheduling a social to announce the results of the survey and research, and informally address any remaining questions about the dog park process. So, stay tuned for a meeting notice!

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School News!

Memorial High Rummage and Bake Sale!

Memorail Field House
Saturday, April 13th, 2013
8 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Sponsored by the Memorial High PTO preceeds will support the "JMM Clothing Closet" and Student educational opportunities.

In addition to shopping at our sale, we encourage donations of items for sale. The PTO will accept gently used clothing, household itmes, books, toys, and games. We will **NOT** accept electronics, computers, appliances, or baby beds or child car seats.

Drop off times are Thurs. April 11, noon - 6:30 p.m.
Friday April 12: 7:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Items to be dropped at Memorial Field House
201 S Gammon Road.

Walnut Youth for Hire

Hire these ready and willing youth for babysitting and pet sitting:

Please contact these neighborhood youth directly to inquire about availability.

Many may be willing to rake, mow, and shovel snow as well. If you would like to have your name added to this list please email editor at marybattaglia@tds.net.

DIRECTIONS FOR WGHA LISTSERVE SIGNUP

Stay connected to our neighborhood!

It's very easy to do. Go to WG HOA website at <http://walnutgrovemadison.org/listserv.html>.

Type in your EMAIL ADDRESS TWICE. No one can do this except you!

Secondly, you **MUST** respond to the email that is subsequently sent to you that asks you to click on a link. **Only then** is the process complete.

Anyone in the neighborhood can post to the WG Listserv by composing an email with the address neighbors@walnutgrovemadison.org. When you post to the Listserv be sure to include YOUR PERSONAL EMAIL ADDRESS IN THE BODY OF THE EMAIL so a reply can be sent directly to you.

If you're not comfortable posting to the Listserv, please email Eileen Goode (eileen@goodesolutions.com) the content and she can post for you.

If your Email Address has changed please repeat the above process to add your new email.

General Guidelines about posting to the Listserv.

The purpose of the mailing list is to foster useful communication between WG HOA members (i.e. the neighborhood). The content of the email should focus on the broad audience and the interests of Walnut Grove residents. Specific issues, limited to a few interested parties, are best discussed directly, not via the mailing list.

Here are some simple guidelines to follow for appropriate posting etiquette:

- *Garage sales should only be posted for WG HOA neighbors.
- *Advertising for business purposes should NOT BE posted.
- *Self-promotion, consulting offers, etc. should NOT BE posted.
- *Political campaign messages and/or issue advocacy messages should NOT BE posted. This is not intended to exclude non-campaign, city government related, informational messages.
- *Religious messages should NOT BE posted.
- *Postings that could be construed as defamatory, libelous, obscene or offensive by individuals, organizations, or institutions should NOT BE posted.
- *Complaints about a neighbor/neighbors should NOT BE posted.

REPLIES TO THE LISTSERVE, VERY IMPORTANT, PLEASE READ

When you "reply all" to a message that is posted to the WG HOA Listserv, EVERYONE ON THE LISTSERVE (approx. 150 HOUSEHOLDS) will read that message.

Slow down, pause and READ the email.

Carefully respond to the SENDER OF THE EMAIL ADDRESS.

You need to INCLUDE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS IN THE BODY OF THE EMAIL SO THAT FOLKS CAN REPLY BACK TO YOU (and not all the neighbors). Think of it in this scenario: You can gather everyone on your street to discuss something or you can go and knock on a neighbor's door to get your point across.
Get it??

GOOD EXAMPLE OF HOW TO PROPERLY RESPOND TO EMAIL ON THE LISTSERVE BELOW (thanks to Jim Howard:)



WALNUT GROVE HOMES ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING – JANUARY 27, 2013 *Draft Minutes Proposed for Approval at the 2014 Annual Meeting*

The meeting was called to order by President Eric Lewandowski and a quorum was established. Fifty-five residents attended representing 43 households. There were also 9 proxy votes. The minutes of the 2012 annual meeting were reviewed and there were no questions, comments or additions.

The current board of directors was introduced and Eric thanked those individuals who had previously served on the board since the last annual meeting including Kathy Raab, Greg Peterson and Jim Howard. There are two open positions on the board and Gabe Anibas and Erica Healey have indicated an interest. Eric asked for nominations from the floor but there were none.

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Reports from committee chairs:

Architectural Control: Eric acknowledged the expertise of Denise Clearwood who heads this committee but who was out of town.

Block Captains: Eileen Goode explained the contents of the Welcome Packets that are distributed to new homeowners by their block captain. A winter meeting and social for the block captains is being planned. There was also an explanation of "list-serve etiquette" and there will be another attempt to explain this concept in the next newsletter.

Communications: Mary Kay Battaglia asked if residents like the information about citywide activities that she posts on the list-serve. A resident suggested that the WGHA website also post this information as well as the information about the annual meeting date, place and time and all board meetings. The minutes can also be placed on the website. Eileen Goode will work with Ann Moser regarding these requests.

Greenways: Since this position has been vacant, Eric Lewandowski has been overseeing the responsibilities and working with the Walnut Grove Garden Club, the Madison Parks Department and other Madison City Departments to look at ways to manage the greenways and other space in our neighborhood. He submitted a proposal for a green space improvement grant that was accepted but not funded by the city. There has been an inspection of our walkway light system (36 fixtures) and there will be a need to replace the transformers in the future. There will also be a need to keep tabs on invasive species such as the emerald ash borer.

Social: Kathy McComb is providing many opportunities throughout the year for residents to develop a sense of community by meeting and socializing with neighbors. She welcomes your suggestions for future events.

Treasurer: A copy of the proposed budget was distributed. Eric explained that there is a need to increase the dues by \$5 to \$65 per household. There is a need to start the work on the transformers this year and to keep a reserve. There is no need to vote on the proposed budget as the by-laws were amended to increase the annual dues up to \$75 without a need for a vote.

A resident raised a concern that neighbors on some circles are putting their yard waste on the landscaping at the top of the circle. All yard waste will be picked up from in front of the owners home. It is a violation of a city ordinance to dump yard waste on other property. There will be a mention of this in the next newsletter.

President's Report: Eric reported on his various contacts and meetings with City departments and with the local fire, police and alder person. He would like to see a future social activity involve the opportunity for other residents to meet and speak to these people. Eric has also had contacts with other neighborhood association leaders after attending the yearly Mayor's Neighborhood Conference. There are three activities that will occupy the board this year; decision about the need for liability insurance for

board members, the WGHA's legal status with the IRS as a 501c4 and process improvement to maintain written documents of roles, responsibilities and activities of the board.

Alderson Report: Paul Skidmore reported that he has been the alder for the past 12 years and he is running again for that position in the spring. He wants to know if there are any problems with residents seeking city services. People can call him to help with problems. He reported that construction of an overpass will begin soon for Junction Road at Mineral Point Road. Completion is set for November 2013. There is also a sound barrier being constructed along the beltline for residents of Sauk Creek that will also benefit our neighborhood. Paul briefly touched on the dog park issue. He encouraged residents to vote on the matter as well as attend the hearings on the selection of dog parks on the west side. He said there are very few complaints about the city dog parks. A resident asked about the closure of the west side yard waste station off of Mineral Point Road. Paul acknowledged it is due to funding. He said residents should send him emails to restore funding at district9@cityofmadison.com

Dog Park at Walnut Grove Park: Joan and Al Liegel presented information they had gathered by visiting some of the city dog parks. Their information is available in a packet they have provided at the Alicia Ashman Library. The Liegel's expressed their concerns in the areas of traffic/parking, sanitation and safety. They are not opposed to dogs or dog parks, but don't feel that Walnut Grove is a good place for a dog park.

Chris Pedretti, Community Services Manager for the City of Madison Parks Division, and Josh Schmit, Manager of Park Rangers, brought a map of the Walnut Grove Park to illustrate where the proposed dog park would be. They also provided a flow chart of the process the Parks Department uses to reach a decision about creating a dog park. Part of the process is completing a survey that is on-line or available at the library. They addressed the issues of traffic/parking, safety and sanitation and said that there would be more neighborhood meetings for people to address the issues and learn more.

The Liegels and the Parks employees continued to answer questions after the meeting adjourned.

Submitted by:

Mary Nellis, Secretary

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