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About Us:

The Sherman Hill Association, which was founded in 1977, is dedicated to the restoration and improvement of this historic neighborhood, the enhancement of its social environment, and the encouragement of civic pride.

We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Newsletters:

Newsletters are published and distributed quarterly.

Submissions of articles for inclusion in upcoming newsletters are welcome. If you would like to write about a neighborhood happening, event, development or other please submit your article to Tom Chase at chase_holland@yahoo.com



May 2007

Auction on the Hill

by Tom Chase

The Sherman Hill Association held its "Auction on the Hill" on April 14, 2007 at Hoyt Sherman Place. This auction, which was the brain-child of Hal Davis, consisted of a silent and a live auction. We had over one hundred items up for bid which were donated by local businesses and individuals. Thanks for the donations!!

We started organizing this auction only a month before the event. April 14 was one of the few and ideal dates that Hoyt had available and Hoyt expressed great interest in working with us on the event. Although it was on incredibly short notice, we managed to piece everything together, from Hal Davis and York Taenzer soliciting most all of the items to be included in the auction to the organizational planning that was done by Donna Hallstrom and me. Rochelle Burnett, although she just started her new business, Creative Leap Inc., was able to find time to put together the design used for the auction postcard and the auction brochure. We've received many compliments on her design.

The auction committee, which consisted of Hal Davis, York Taenzer, Donna Hallstrom and me, put in countless hours in the weeks before the auction making sure everything was in place and ready to go. Frankly, it was a lot of hard work but it was fun! The work was worth it as after expenses, we made a profit of almost \$8,000. This is incredible, especially considering the short timeline we had to prepare for the event. There were other events in Des Moines that competed with ours, most notably the Rod Stewart concert. Fortunately, we were able to lure some concert-goers to our event before their concert began.

Given the success of the auction, it is likely that we'll try to make it an annual event – an additional venue to the Walking Tour which will draw people to the neighborhood and showcase all of the great things that are happening here.

'What will we do with the money' is a common question we've received. As stated in the advertisements for the auction, the proceeds will go toward accomplishing some of the items in our Action Plan. These include expanding the historical street lighting to more areas of the neighborhood, restoring brick sidewalks, alleys, etc., and replacing our fire hydrants with a historically compatible Victorian style. Speaking of our Action Plan, we do need to update this as well. All of these things take money and many of the grants we're looking at to fund these improvements usually require us to put up at least fifty percent of the total cost.

On behalf of the board of directors, I would like to especially thank Ralph & Marty Gross who were major sponsors of the auction. Thank you for your generosity! Thanks also to Doug & Rochelle Burnett who were sponsors, volunteers, and winning bidders on a few items! Big thanks to Tony at Café di Scala for the awesome food! Thanks to all of you who were able to attend the "Auction on the Hill" and to the many volunteers who made sure this auction was a success! Finally, thanks to everyone who helped spread the word prior to the auction to make sure people knew about it and had the opportunity, even on short notice, to attend.

President's Letter

by Jim Quilty

**May 14th
Quarterly Meeting:
Vote for Vice
President
By-Law Changes**

During the May 14th quarterly meeting at Hoyt Sherman Place, we will vote to elect Donna Hallstrom, who has been nominated, to the role of Vice President of the Sherman Hill Association.

We'll also be voting to amend our by-laws to enable the board to make more timely decisions using 21st century technology.

So, please plan on attending the May 14th quarterly meeting. And if you haven't yet paid your dues for 2007, we'll be happy to do so prior to the meeting so that you can cast your vote!



*Hoyt Sherman Place
1501 Woodland Ave
Des Moines*

We have seen a lot of promising activity since our last newsletter and it is our hope to capitalize and build upon the momentum that has been gained. Before addressing this desire in greater detail in this letter and throughout this newsletter, I wish to address some questions generated in light of our last newsletter and the media coverage it engendered. Primarily, we were asked as a Board if the level and detail of financial information reported was necessary and whether the hurdles the Association faced then and now somehow cast the Association in a negative light. Let me address both of those issues: (1) we as your Board believe transparency is the best, if not only, way this Association should be managed (one need look no further than events that have transpired on both a national and local stage over the last year to recognize the wisdom of this position); and (2) we reject any notion that the financial issues we are confronting should be deemed a negative. Acceptance of this second proposition requires some historical context.

This neighborhood is not where it is today simply because property values are rising and restoration projects and new construction are evident throughout and adjacent to our boundaries. If one doubts that assertion, I recommend you spend sometime with our neighborhood pioneers who were there in the beginning or did some heavy lifting early along the way like Bob and Nelda Mickle, Ralph and Marti Gross, Jack Porter and Martha Green, Jack Hatch and Sonja Roberts, and the many others who were a part of the hard core revitalization efforts (no offense intended by omission – you all know who you are).

We are at the level of revitalization we enjoy today because of the passion of our residents, our ability to think big, and the grit and temerity to get the job done that is our history as an Association. The saving and reinvention of the Hillside, while a challenge and financial struggle, is a present day affirmation of that history as much, if not more, than the renovations of our own homes or effort to save and transplant historic homes within our neighborhood. While those are grand testaments to our neighborhood, they are private endeavors. Our strength has and should remain in our collective effort as a neighborhood. It is with that recognition that we ask all of you to help join us in a movement to take our next step forward as a neighborhood. Your Board lacks the massive amount of time and the resources to lead this effort unless it is an endeavor shared by all in both spirit and effort.

The vast remainder of this newsletter will discuss the outcome of a recent Board planning retreat where multiple ideas for neighborhood advancement and enhancement were discussed. What we have attempted to do was distill hundreds of ideas into several categories where collective effort can bear fruit. We ask that each of you identify at least one "task" that interests you and on which you would be willing to do your fair share of the lifting with the hope being if we all work a tad harder we will all reap a handsome return.

The neighborhood response to our last "call to arms" was tremendous and we thank each of you that has gotten current on your association dues, have held private fundraising parties or donated or participated in the auction. We were confident we would see just such a response and now we hope to keep that energy moving forward. We hope for a great turn out at the next quarterly meeting where these and other issues will be addressed. In that light, if you have neighbors you know rarely attend our meetings; encourage them to revisit that practice. We are serious about attempting large scale action towards an even better neighborhood and need a response that demonstrates a shared commitment to this goal.

SHA Board Subcommittees

by Jim Quilty

Expansion of SMID area(s) and Accounting and Utilization of Funds:

As many of you know, our historic street lights were paid for and are maintained out of a special property tax we levied on ourselves to obtain these neighborhood benefits. Portions of our historic boundaries have not yet been included into the SMIDs that serve our neighborhood. In addition, we lack clarity as to whether there have been SMID funds collected for the benefit of our neighborhood but not allocated to us yet. Hence, the task has four main components: (a) canvas the properties to the North and South of our core boundaries that are within our boundaries but have not yet been added to the SMIDs to see if there is sufficient interest and will to support doing so. We know in advance that we will encounter both resistance and positive responses. Hence, a part of this endeavor will be forging relationships with those that may be reluctant to support this effort and demonstrating to them the mutual benefits that may be gained via inclusion; (b) assuming sufficient support, move to have these areas added as new SMIDs or merged into existing ones. This effort will require both some legal input and a willingness to work with our City, County and Legislative representatives and leaders to ensure that our efforts are successful; (c) work with the City to obtain a reliable accounting of SMID money collected and determine if there are excess funds that can be allocated to other neighborhood improvement and beautification ideas that may be alluded to within this newsletter. Board Designees on these topics will be Jack Porter and Jim Quilty.

Improvement of Neighborhood Safety and Security:

This is a broad topic and by no means is this list all inclusive. Tasks to be pursued are: (a) possibility of retaining a security firm to conduct late night neighborhood patrols. The greatest opportunity for identifying an affordable means to obtain this benefit seems to be through forming cooperative cost sharing relationships with Downtown, the Ingersol Neighborhood Association and Iowa Methodist; (b) Improve traffic pattern issues: (1) relocate Center street bus route to Crocker; (2) address Center street (and other possible problem area streets and alleys) speeding issues via inclusion of a four way stop at Center and 17th and/or placement of speed bumps; (c) increase effort to improve land lord trouble spots and more aggressively pursue repeat offenders through outreach and/or legal remedies. Board Designees on these topics will be Rochelle Burnett and Jim Quilty.

by Rochelle Burnett

Membership Communication:

The objective of this effort is to increase member and non-member communication through various informational tools and resources. Volunteers needed for the following categories and/or subcommittees; a) Website & Email communication; b) Newsletter coordination; c) Block Captains to help distribute newsletter and gather or distribute information for designated area. Please consider being your block's captain; d) New Member Welcome Packet; e) Ballot voting for members only; f) Communication committee with developers and apartment landlords; g) Communication committee with apartment dwellers. Board designees on this topic will be Donna Hallstrom & Rochelle Burnett.

by Tom Chase

Social Events & Fundraising Opportunities:

The idea for an auction sprung from Hal Davis during the February quarterly meeting. The idea transformed from an opportunity for Sherman Hill residents to sell that ugly plaid chair in the basement to soliciting donations from local businesses. Because of this change, the auction was highly profitable and successful. So we'd like to make this an annual event. In addition, there are ideas brewing within the board for events such as visits to historic neighborhoods in other cities as well as reviving the progressive dinners (see Sherry's article). We can only do these if 1) there's enough interest in those who would consider attending, 2) the events are financially feasible, and 3) we have enough people to organize and produce the events. *Many of you have given much* to the neighborhood over many years. One person or a small group of people cannot do it all year after year. Consider volunteering or, if you have a great idea for a fundraiser or social event, forward it to me at chase_holland@yahoo.com – thanks!

SHA Board Subcommittees

by Sherry Jasnos

Welcome packets:

Plans are in the works for a new "Welcome Packet" for our new neighbors moving into the Sherman Hill Neighborhood. The packets are designed to inform and educate our new neighbors to the unique environment we have in Sherman Hill.

The welcome packets will include the following:

- Sherman Hill Association Information such as
 - How to join
 - Latest Newsletter
 - One Sherman Hill Directory
 - An abridged version of the current Sherman Hill Action Plan
- Historic Guidelines for Sherman Hill and how to acquire a certificate of appropriateness.
- A collective list of contractors sensitive to the guidelines of Historic neighborhoods.
- Small tokens and certificates from the local business community.

Anyone wanting to contribute to the Welcome Packets or have an idea they would like to see implemented, please contact Sherry Jasnos at 280-6691 (days), 280-6651 (evenings) or email at sherry@fireflysuits.com

Progressive Dinners:

As a resident of Sherman Hill for 5 years, I have always enjoyed sharing with folks from outside the neighborhood the wonderful uniqueness of what has been accomplished since the renaissance of Sherman Hill. When Jason and I purchased 739 20th Street and began the work on this house, I understood the true dedication and hard work it takes to bring a beautiful house back to its full potential and wanted to share our progress with anyone that knocked on the door. There was no better way to boast our accomplishments and get a good pat on the back than to volunteer our house for tour last year.

A common question from those who have been on the tour in years past was 'Any progressive Dinner this year?' Though I have never been to this event, after hearing what a wonderful time people had, I would love to see this event return. Well... guess what? It's back! All will be revealed soon, as we are still in the process of planning. The dates (December), locations, menus and entertainment are all to be determined at this time. Anyone wanting to help with planning please contact Sherry Jasnos at 280-6691 (days), 280-6651 (evenings) or email at sherry@fireflysuits.com

I am looking forward to this event as it is my favorite time of year and is a wonderful way to show off our neighborhood.

by Jeff Macomber

Physical Improvements:

Some of the items identified where a park, signage, brick/cobblestone streets, historic fire hydrants, tree planting and annual corner flower planting. Rochelle Burnett is giving focus to exploring the park idea, Rob McCammon signage and Stephanie Bruner corner flower plantings.

Treasurer's Report

by Tom Chase

Much has transpired since the last newsletter was distributed. Our checking account looks healthier **thanks to your generosity** and as a result we'll have no problem meeting our operating costs through this year's walking tour. Thank you!

As of April 25, 2007 the association's checking account had a balance just over \$16,000.

For 2007, total membership income and contributions received was just over \$5,300. Of this amount, over \$1,600 was collected during the potluck fundraiser held at Hal Davis's and York Taenzer's on March 10. I checked the financial reports for the past few years and this is the highest level of dues (i.e., excluding the funds raised during potluck) we've received since at least 2001. So thanks again for your support!

Earlier in March we paid the property taxes on the Hillside penthouse for the tax year July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006 in the amount of \$9,917. As I mentioned in the prior newsletter, an application for tax abatement was not filed in time for this tax period and there was no way to make the abatement retro-active. Believe me, I tried. But an application was finally submitted and accepted for tax abatement for 2006-2015.

Neighborhood Action Plan

by Donna Hallstrom

Please plan to attend the quarterly SHA meeting on Monday May 14th in the galleries of Hoyt Sherman Place. The business meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. following a potluck at 6:30 p.m.

Our May quarterly meeting will also serve as our kick-off meeting in analyzing and revising our current Sherman Hill neighborhood action plan. To start us on this journey Jack Porter will present "Our first 4 Action Plans and how they've changed the Hill".

Changes all around our neighborhood are happening at a fast and furious pace. Ensuring that we have an up to date neighborhood action plan for the city to refer to will help ensure that the changes proposed fit "our" vision for "our" future. Certain to be educational to all the presentation will be especially important to newcomers to the neighborhood. Please reach out to your neighbors and encourage attendance to learn about where we've been and how we can use the action plan to get where we want to go.

Following the kick-off we will set up a series of update meetings. These meetings will be facilitated by the association with the purpose of brainstorming, evaluating and editing our Sherman Hill Action Plan. Concluding this work we will ask the city and county to adopt an amended plan as the official Sherman Hill Neighborhood Action Plan

Walking Tour Planning

by Jack Porter

Last year our association celebrated our 30th annual tour of historic homes. It was a great success and as you can imagine your house tour committee has been at work already to plan this year's tour. If you would like to offer your home or know a neighbor that might be interested in having their home or garden open either weekend or both weekends, please let us know. We are especially interested in recruiting people who have decorated their apartments. This year's tour will be the last two weekends in September. We plan on having about 8-10 homes, gardens or apartments open either weekend and could use your help. If you can not have your home, garden or apartment open, we could always use volunteers. Let us know by contacting me at Sherman815@msn.com or give me a call at home at 243-7064. Thanks for your help.



*The Hillside
Condominiums at 1902
Woodland Avenue.*

Sherman Hill Association Quarterly Meeting Dates:

May 14th
• Hoyt Sherman

August 13th
• Hoyt Sherman

November 12th
• Hoyt Sherman

*The Sherman Hill
Association's Board of
Directors meets regularly
once a month, usually the
second Wednesday of
each month, in the
conference room at the
Mickle Center.*



Scrub Day

Mark your calendar, the city will be hosting a close-by Scrub Day on Saturday, May 5th. The location is the parking lot of the Central Presbyterian Church at 39th and Grand Avenue. The time will be from 7:00 a.m. to noon. Some changes have been made to items accepted at neighborhood Scrub Day. Please check out the details at www.dmgov.org or call the Public Works 24-hour Customer Service Center at 283-4950.



The New Phone Books are Here!

by Tom Chase

If all goes as planned we'll be distributing the long-awaited neighborhood directories at our quarterly meeting on May 14. A lot of work has gone into these directories, including an effort by your board to sell advertising in the directory as an additional fundraiser for the neighborhood.

As with the last published neighborhood directory, we'll have an alphabetical listing and a listing in address order. We made every effort to make the directory complete and accurate but mistakes and omissions are almost inevitable, unfortunately. When the next directory is put together, volunteers are welcome to help update the neighborhood information.

Certificates of Appropriateness

In the August 2001 newsletter, Randa LeJeune wrote an informative article about Certificates of Appropriateness and the Historic District Commission (HDC). I'd like to highlight a few points from that article that may be informative, especially for newer people in Sherman Hill.

The HDC is not part of the Sherman Hill Association. It is a city-based commission which serves as an advisory board and is charged with reviewing proposals for exterior changes to structures, including fencing, in historic neighborhoods, in addition to other responsibilities. A Certificate of Appropriateness is necessary to make exterior changes (other than paint colors) in Sherman Hill so that the historical integrity of the neighborhood will be maintained. The HDC issues these Certificates after reviewing and approving the proposed exterior changes. The HDC rarely denies a proposal, preferring instead to work with the property owner and city staff to bridge any disagreements. Denials may be appealed to the Des Moines city council.

The review process performed by the city and HDC is important, necessary and fairly painless. The standards for exteriors in historic districts can be found at <http://www.dmgov.org/departments/CD/PUD2/historicdistrictcomm.htm> or you may call Jason Van Essen with the city at 515-283-4717.

Freeway Progress Update

by Donna Hallstrom

Following is a progress update on the entrance ramp east from 19th street onto I-235 from William Lusher. Mr. Lusher is the I-235 Project Manager for the Iowa Department of Transportation.

The redesign of the freeway resulted in some fairly significant changes for this freeway section. With the redesign, the 19th St/MLK ramp will not be a direct connection to the freeway mainline as it was previously. This ramp, what you probably can see now, is routed down to an at-grade signalized intersection at Keo Way. You will then proceed through this intersection to pickup the eastbound (EB) Keo Way entrance ramp that will connect directly to I-235. This new Keo ramp will utilize a roadway section that passes underneath the new 7th Street off-ramp bridge.

Unfortunately, construction of this ramp connector roadway is tied to replacement of the eastbound mainline pavement where it will eventually reconnect. In preparation, some construction work has already begun but the actual paving work involving this particular ramp along with the new eastbound pavement will take most of this year to complete. As a result we don't expect the Keo EB on ramp to open until this fall which will then also include the EB 19th on ramp.

Spotlight on Our Neighbors

Submitted by Robin Heinemann

Editor's Note: The Spotlight on our Neighbors column, a feature which has been absent from our newsletter for some time, is intended to be a new and ongoing series for the Sherman Hill Newsletter. Thanks, Robin, for volunteering to write the column! If anyone would like to be considered for this column, or would like to recommend a particular neighbor be featured (regardless of whether or not the individual is a formal member of the Sherman Hill Neighborhood Association), just let Robin know! She is looking forward to creating an eclectic column that really highlights the diversity of all of our interesting, accomplished neighbors!

For her kick off column, Robin will be featuring Dr. Anthony Horvath, of 20th Street:

Dr. Anthony Horvath has restored several homes during his long tenure in Sherman Hill. And Anthony's current home, on 20th Street, is a particularly special place.

Due to its creative and distinctive interior design, in which the work of well-known designer and Meredith freelancer Wade Scherrer is featured, the home itself has been featured in a wide variety of photo-shoots. There is even an art and design studio in the basement!

But what this home is known for throughout the country is really its incredible garden, designed to be prominently visible from the house. The garden has been featured in national magazines and books, many published by Meredith. It has also been the site of many, many charitable fundraisers – even the occasional, sometimes impromptu wedding!

Lucky party-goers. For the garden is an urban treasure, featuring architectural stonework from the State Capital and from old Court Avenue, set around an enormous multi-tiered fountain, below an ornate iron Gazebo. Summer in the City has never been more elegant!

As amazing as the garden is in its own right, the story of the resurrection of this particular Sherman Hill house is equally astonishing. For Anthony and Wade's dedication and many talents have truly created a Phoenix, rising from the ashes – literally! Although visitors would never guess, this home was not only cut up into 8 low income apartments- it had been seriously burned in a fire!

Only the brick shell remained. But what a perfect answer to a collection of years and years worth of architectural salvage!

Anthony moved to SH in the early 80's. He recently finished his Ph.D. in Audiology. Along with his practice, Anthony is also involved in many other initiatives.

For example, Anthony's long time fascination with architectural salvage has become something of a business, thanks to his relationships with Don Short of downtown's salvage warehouse, and with the extremely prestigious and popular Pat Jones Estate Sales.

With Anthony's keen eye, these connections, plus many others across the Midwest, have resulted in a rolodex packed with names of people looking for various objects for their collections and re-habs.

Anthony explains: "Its fun to keep an eye open and track down pieces that people are looking for. It never fails to amaze me how many unusual objects turn up in this town. Iowans are definitely

collectors of all kinds of things. I get a kick out of playing detective and finding things people are looking for."

This generosity of spirit makes Anthony a terrific neighbor, and his artistic imagination has resulted in many distinctive touches on any number of different rehabs here on the Hill. Anthony specializes in mixing the historic with the cutting edge. We can't wait to see his plan for his next project, soon to be unveiled for a cottage he bought nearby. This one promises to knock our socks off!

Anthony loves living in Sherman Hill. "When I discovered Sherman Hill during the early 80's", he says "I immediately knew this was the neighborhood I wanted to live in. It's the most unique in the city. The Hill is a great example of the kind of change that can be accomplished from a grass roots level. I would never consider living anywhere else."

Sherman Hill Association, Inc.

(515) 284-5717

www.shermanhill.org

Board of Directors:

Jim Quilty, President
814 17th Street ▪ 244-5763
quiltyclf@aol.com

Gretchen Jensen, Secretary
716 19th Street ▪ 554-4461
gretchenjensen@msn.com

Donna Hallstrom, Acting Vice President
731 20th Street ▪ 697-0017
johoha@aol.com

Tom Chase, Treasurer
731 16th Street ▪ 222-1948
chase_holland@yahoo.com

Rochelle Burnett
1510 Center Street ▪ 244-3399
rochelle@creativeleapinc.com

Sherry Jasnos
756 17th Street ▪ 280-6651
sherry@fireflysuits.com

Rob McCammon
677 20th Street ▪ 277-8079
r.mccammon@mchsi.com

Jeff Macomber
673 20th Street ▪ 283-2729
jeffrey.macomber@gmail.com

Jack Porter
815 18th Street ▪ 243-7064
sherman815@msn.com

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January – December 2007

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*We strive to be accurate. If we've accidentally left out your name, or made some other error
please let us know so we can correct it by emailing Tom at chase_holland@yahoo.com*

Sherman Hill Association
1620 Pleasant St, Suite 254
Des Moines IA 50314