

Whitehills Neighborhood Association of East Lansing

Spring 2010 Newsletter

President's Message

I hope this newsletter finds you all in a good place. Let me introduce myself as your new President for Whitehills Neighborhood Association. My name is Roberta M. McElmurry. I live on Hillwood Circle in Subdivision #12. I moved to my current home 20 years ago and enrolled my children in East Lansing Schools. From the west side of Lansing, where I lived previously for eighteen years, I had watched Whitehills evolve and become more beautiful each year. I am married to L. Robert McElmurry, M.D. and we have 2 grown sons who graduated from East Lansing High School.

I love everything about our neighborhood - it reminds me of areas where I was born and then lived as a student nurse in southern California. I am a retired nurse and I love to garden. I have been on multiple committees, boards, and city commissions for the city during my years here, and have previously been on the neighborhood board about 10 years ago under the presidency of Dick Northrup. I have spent many an hour on my knees weeding and planting at the north end of Foxcroft to make the neighborhood entrance inviting. I have always tried to make East Lansing a better place to live.

Now about you - I have served as a member at large for about 2 years on the board, and when Mea Denagelis had to retire from the Association presidency, I volunteered to take the helm until someone is willing to take over. So, for now, I am happy to lead the Association. I will gladly step aside when another enthusiastic member of our neighborhood comes forward to serve as president. There is room on the board for new members of all ages and backgrounds who are willing to help our neighborhood in any number of capacities. Our Association is also the best way to communicate with the city. In my years on the planning commission for East Lansing I rarely saw input from our neighborhood, and I wished at times that we had been more involved.

I have a "wish list" for the neighborhood and I have given it to the board members to ponder over our next meetings, which are usually held the 3rd Wednesday of each month, excluding July and August. Please contact our Secretary, Karen Wallace, for time and place. Members of our board may ask you to step up and become a localized neighborhood leader. We have thirteen neighborhood subdivision within our association boundaries. Each sub-unit has its own unique set of deed restrictions known as covenants, which the WNA enforces pursuant to the grantor rights delegated to it. We hope to establish localized groups that can hold smaller meetings, as needed, devoted to the needs of each "mini" neighborhood.

Pay attention to our WNAEL signs when we put them up. It's our best way of letting you know we have something to tell you that involves your neighborhood!

The board has decided to keep dues at \$40 this year. For just an idea of the many ways your dues benefit the neighborhood, read the rest of this newsletter. We also actively update our website: WNAEL.org. Within time constraints, we do our best to keep it current. Look for items like: budget, activities, proposed improvements to the neighborhood, etc.

I am always available by email: wnael@wnael.com. You can check the WNA website at <http://www.wnael.com> to reach any of the board members. I hope to serve you well.

'Till next time,

Roberta McElmurry, President WNAEL

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Rental Overlay District Established in Whitehills

Last autumn, the East Lansing City Council approved petitions, signed by a two-thirds majority of homeowners, to establish a residential rental overlay district in Whitehills pursuant to city ordinance 1035C. Your WNAEL led this important effort, organizing teams to visit homeowners and solicit support. The overlay district established for the Whitehills neighborhood provides the highest level of protection: new rental licenses are prohibited entirely. Existing rental properties are “grandfathered” and may continue to issue leases. Many neighborhood property owners spent precious free time on the petition drive, and sincere thanks are owed to each and every one. A tip of the hat is due to Mia Danigelis, Jim and Cheryl Little, Thomas Jones, Dick and Barb Fenech, Dave Zygmuntowicz, and Scott and Sara Murray for extraordinary contributions to this project.

News from our Neighborhood/City Liaison

Board member Mike Kreutziger, our liaison to the Mayor’s meeting with the Council of Neighborhood Presidents, reports the following:

The Snow and Ice Removal Ordinance is being revised. For more information, and to provide your input, contact Marie McKenna, assistant city manager, at 517/319 6881.

The Saginaw Pathways project will install sidewalks along Saginaw from Harrison to Stonegate. Construction will last through August. For more information, visit the city website: <http://www.cityofeastlansing.com>

White Park, near Whitehills Elementary School, has had substantial improvements, thanks in part to a grant from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. If you have not recently visited this natural setting in our backyard, you owe it to yourself to do so soon.

The City of East Lansing budget recommendations for fiscal year 2011 have been sent to the East Lansing City Council. For more information contact the city manager’s or the finance director’s office.

Landscaping Update from Elizabeth Vanis

All of our entrances continue to be maintained by LandMark Landscaping Company. LandMark will weed, fertilize and mow all entrances this Summer. After Memorial Day, annuals will be planted at all the entrances by neighborhood volunteers (clear your weekend calendar, dust off those rakes and spades, and grab your gardening gloves!). This will help us stay within our landscaping budget and the savings will allow us to plant additional foliage at the Foxcroft entrance and proceed with Phase III of our long-term landscaping plan. All annuals will be purchased from the Christians Greenhouse Fundraiser for Donley School.

We would like to thank Mr. and Mrs. Doug Roberts who, for a second year in a row, have made a generous landscaping donation for improvements to the Northgate entrance.

Shedding Light on the Shade Tree Situation

With the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) in the Lansing area over the past few years, you are probably noticing less shady streets around the community and the Whitehills neighborhood. In an effort to help reduce the impacts of EAB, we encourage you to consider planting a tree in your yard this spring or fall. There are plenty of great resources to help you select the right tree for the right place, including one from MSU Extension found online at: <http://www.emeraldashborer.info/files/e2925.pdf> .

If you have a tree question, or would like to be placed on a list to have a new tree planted (as funds are available) in the city-owned right of way near your home, please contact Kevin Sayers (our neighborhood urban forester) at sayersk@mi.gov. By the way, Arbor Day in Michigan is always celebrated on the last Friday in April. This year the date is Friday, April 30th. Happy planting!"

East Lansing Public Schools Update

For information about East Lansing Public Schools and their current budget reductions and the possible consolidation of the nine existing facilities in the district, visit the district's website: <http://www.elps.k12.mi.us>

Dues News

Your dues are essential for funding neighborhood projects, from landscaping to the newsletter, from get-togethers to covenant enforcement, from interaction with the City of East Lansing to special items that crop up from time to time, such as the restructuring of the brickwork, lamps and lettering at the Stonegate entrance. Below, you will find acknowledgment of those property owners who have paid their 2010 dues as of April 10. If you have not paid your dues, please send a check made out to the "Whitehills Neighborhood Association," P.O. Box 1213, East Lansing, MI 48826. If you paid your dues, but your name is missing, contact Kathy Daugherty at 517/336 4321. We'll add your name and make certain you are listed in our next newsletter.

Abbott, Abood, Adams, Adcock, Andary, Anderton, Atkins, Bails, Baril, Beachler, Benca, Berg, Bertsch, Bollen, Branoff, Breslin, Brogan, Broughan, Burnett, Bustamonte, Carr, Casey, Chapin, Clark, Close, Contreras, Curry, Damer, Danigelis, Daugherty, Davis, Dean, Deliyanne, Desjardins, Dice, Dotto, Dunn, Eicher, Endres, Evangelista, Faruqi, Fenech, Fletcher, Floden, Foote, Forman, Foster, Frangos, Ganakas-Dalebout, Garrett, Gillespie, Greenbaum, Greene, Gregory-Hoyt, Hagan, Hale, Hammond, Hardies, Harrison, Hickman, Hidlay, Horowitz, Hulse, Hunt, Isenga, Issacs Jr., James, K.Jennings, G.Jennings, M.Johnson, R.Johnson, J.Jones, M.Jones, T.Jones-Stowe, Joseph, Kaplowitz, Karabatsos, Kindlund, King, Knake, Kong, Krause, Kreutziger, Kritselis, Lanigan, Lark, Larkin, Lashbrook, Last, Lebeda, Levy, Leyden, Liebler, Little, M.Loomis, V.Loomis, Mack, Maguire, Markakis, Mauro, Mayhew, McElmurry, McKeel, McKenna, Meska, Messerschmidt, Meyer, Miller, Mittleman, Moody, D.Mosholder, J.Mosholder, Moulton, Neal, Northup, Nwankwo, Nystrom, Oetzel, O'Leary, Paris, Parker, Pearce, Penn, Penner, Pollack, Poston, Powers, Pressley, Preston, Radway, Regalbuto, Rimpau, Roberts, Rogerson, Rundquist, Sakamoto, Saker, Sanders, Saper, Sayers, Schluckebier, Schmid, Seitz, Shaheen, Shea, Sheets, Sinder, Smith, Stathopoulos, Staton, Stilwill, Stocker, Straub, Suits, Talbott, Taylor, Terrazas, Tesseris, Test, Thornton, Timmer, Topping, Vanis, Villarruel, Wakulsky, Wallace, Walton, Watters, Weiland, S.Wellman, W. Wellman, Wey, Whitmer, Wilcox, Wilhelm, Wilkinson, Winder, Wirtz, Young, Zand, Zoeller, Zumbrink.

Keep Your Trash Stashed, Your Boat Inside the Moat

Both City of East Lansing ordinances, and Whitehills deed restrictions, (covenants), require all trash containers to be kept out of sight and in closed structures when not placed at the curb for weekly pick-up. No, not in front of your garage, not under the apple tree, not on your driveway! Please cooperate and keep your trash containers safely stowed away. Most homeowners in our neighborhood are very conscientious about this, because they know it keeps our streets orderly and attractive. However, there are a few owners who consistently ignore this ordinance/restriction. Be a good neighbor, and place your trash containers inside an enclosed structure.

The same applies to all those other appendages of modern life that seem to materialize out of nowhere as summer approaches. Boats, RVs, trailers, wave runners, commercial vehicles---all must be maintained in completely enclosed structures or stored somewhere other than your property.

Kudos! Thank You! Hurrah!

To Kevin Sayers for membership spreadsheet work and WNAEL email compendium for board members.

To LandMark Landscaping for going above and beyond in their efforts directed at improving and maintaining our entrances.

To the Jerry Jennings, the Oetzels, the Penners and the Roberts for contributions in excess of their yearly dues. These generous gifts make possible things that otherwise would be beyond our reach.

STOP!!! Have You Chatted With the Pride/Covenants Committee Lately?

With springtime well underway, the nesting instinct is in full force, and that includes humans! Some of you will start dreaming about, and planning, improvements to your property, whether a swimming pool or pool house, an addition to your house or garage, a new fence or perhaps a deck or patio. In addition to meeting city set-back requirements and obtaining city permits, remember that each of the above proposed projects also must pass muster under the terms of the covenants (deed restrictions) that apply to your particular property. These include additional set-back requirements, size limitations, material specifications, etc. As soon as you contemplate an improvement project and have plans drawn accordingly, submit them for review to the WNA Pride Committee, c/o Thomas Jones, 1625 Hitching Post Road, 332-1683; thomasjones@tajones.com. The sooner your plans are submitted, the sooner your project will be up and on its way, assuming it meets all the factors contained in your covenants.