

Merle Hay Neighborhood Newsletter



Newsletter Note

We are moving to an electronic version of our quarterly newsletter for at least the July edition. Historically, our newsletter program has primarily been funded through Polk County's Community Betterment Grant program. County officials announced in mid-March that their grant programs would be put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so no funds are being disbursed until further notice. We hope to resume normal publication of our newsletters in the future and will update the MHNA membership as soon as possible.

Neighborhood Finance Corporation Lending is Back!

The Neighborhood Finance Corporation has been in the process of expanding its lending programs in the Merle Hay area and MHNA was informed in June that NFC lending is back in the **ENTIRE** neighborhood!

NFC provides unique lending programs to support homeownership and neighborhood revitalization via first mortgages, forgivable home repair loans, low interest exterior improvement loans, and more. To view their lending map or learn more about their programs, visit NeighborhoodFinance.org, or call 515-246-0010. The program enjoyed great success the last time it was available in the whole neighborhood. Please help spread the word!



July 16 Quarterly Meeting Moves to Zoom

MHNA will attempt to host its first-ever virtual meeting on the Zoom platform at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 16. Management at the Northwest Community Center recently informed the MHNA board that rentals for meetings and other events are canceled at least through the end of August. To avoid missing another quarterly meeting, we will try to move online.

We plan to have At-Large City Councilwoman Connie Boesen as our primary guest speaker. One or more candidates for the Broadlawns Hospital Board of Trustees are also expected to introduce themselves.

Details are still being fleshed out and we ask for everyone's patience and understanding if there are technical difficulties. Please check the MHNA website (www.merlehay.org) and MHNA Facebook page for updates. We also plan to live-stream the meeting on the neighborhood Facebook page: www.facebook.com/MerleHayNeighborhood

National Night Out Update

MHNA still hopes to host our annual National Night Out celebration, but plans remain fluid due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Des Moines Police Department contacted neighborhood associations in April to advise that the city's National Night Out observance will be held on Tuesday, October 6, instead of the traditional date in August. We also do not know if we will be able to host the gathering at the Northwest Community Center. Please check MHNA's website and Facebook page, as we expect things may change between now and October.

Beaverdale Fall Festival Canceled

We were saddened to learn about the recent cancellation of the Beaverdale Fall Festival, much as we understand the decision. That means MHNA will not have its annual entry in the festival parade. We will keep the membership posted when future plans for the festival are announced.

Merle Hay Neighborhood Association
"Working Together to Make a Difference"
PO Box 31036 Des Moines, IA 50310

July 2020



Upcoming SCRUB Events

The Des Moines Public Works Department presently plans to host SCRUB events monthly from July through November. So even though the April SCRUB at Hoover High School was canceled due to COVID-19, there are still opportunities for Des Moines residents to get rid of unwanted trash, junk, hazardous waste and yard debris free of charge.

SCRUB stands for Spring Clean Up to Reduce Urban Blight (SCRUB). The next event is scheduled from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, July 18, at Polk County River Place, 2309 Euclid Ave. For complete SCRUB program details and an event calendar, visit the Des Moines Public Works page at DSM.city, or call 283-4950.

Efforts Continue to Reinvigorate Merle Hay Commercial Corridors

In addition to longstanding efforts to support affordable housing and improve our neighborhood's housing stock, MHNA has been persistently advocated for formal planning efforts to revitalize our neighborhood's commercial corridors.

MHNA members have had positive discussions in recent years with business leaders and city officials on how we can work together on plans to continually improve commercial areas on Merle Hay Road, Hickman Road, and Douglas Avenue. A series of stakeholder meetings held between 2015-2016 culminated with a formal request for planning assistance that was submitted to the Des Moines City Council in January 2017. Priorities highlighted in the request included:

- Storm water infrastructure improvements in the vicinity of Merle Hay Road and Douglas Avenue.
- Median improvements, including brick inlays, stamped concrete, or other decorative elements.
- Sidewalk installation and reconstruction to improve pedestrian safety and access to commercial areas.
- Improved traffic flow and pavement restoration.
- Targeted beautification and opportunities for public art where practical.
- "Welcome to Des Moines" signage at key entry points.

MHNA members reaffirmed their commitment to improving our commercial areas by passing a supportive resolution at our annual meeting in January 2020. The resolution urged city leaders to budget accordingly so we can formalize planning efforts, which are critical not just to the Merle Hay neighborhood, but the Des Moines metropolitan area as a whole.

We have been fortunate to see some key improvements and commercial redevelopment projects in our area over the past decade. A focused and organized approach to planning what comes next will benefit residents and businesses alike. MHNA will continue to do its part to further this effort, and we encourage everyone to support us and get involved.



Pet Reminders

MHNA occasionally hears from residents who have questions and concerns about their neighbors and their pets. While some of us think of our four-legged friends as family members, it is important to remember that not everyone feels the same way. After listening to some differing perspectives and reviewing the city code, we want to share these quick reminders.

- All cats and dogs residing in the city limits must be licensed
- When walking a dog in public, your leash cannot be longer than six feet
- When a pet goes "No. 2," owners are required to clean up after them, even on their own property.

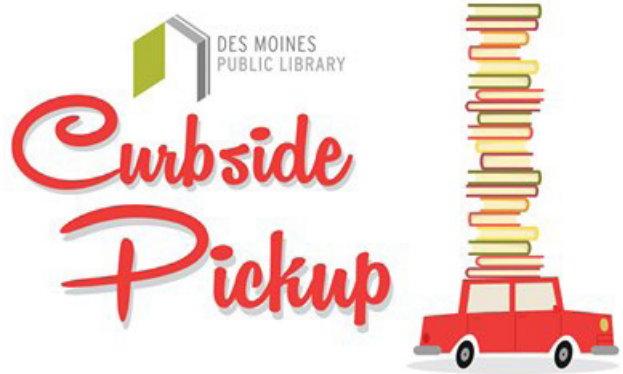
Also, while the latest info from the CDC says the risk of a pet spreading COVID-19 is "low," it is still good to practice healthy habits around pets. Remember to wash your hands and maintain good hygiene around both people and pets.

City of Des Moines Stormwater Best Management Practices Program

Source: City of Des Moines

Many of us still remember the helpless feeling of having our properties inundated with stormwater during the historic flood of June 2018. If you still wonder what else you can do to help protect your property and support broader flood mitigation efforts, we encourage everyone to check out the City of Des Moines' Stormwater Best Management Practices Program. Under the program, the City provides recommendations that residents can implement to help improve the water quality of stormwater runoff and/or decrease the amount of stormwater runoff that enters the City's stormwater drainage system.

Through the program, the City will reimburse 50% of the cost (up to \$2,000) to the property owners who meet program requirements. The reimbursement for approved work will be by direct payment to the property owner in the amount of the qualifying work. The work must have been performed and completed between the dates of January 1, 2017, and June 30, 2023, to be eligible for the subsidy program.



Check out Curbside Pickup at the Franklin Library!

The Des Moines Public Library recently expanded hours that contactless curbside pickup is available at their East Side, Forest Avenue, Franklin Avenue, North Side, and South Side branches, along with the pickup window at Central Library. Here are the new hours at Franklin:

- Monday: 10 AM - 7 PM
- Tuesday: 10 AM - 7 PM
- Wednesday: 10 AM - 7 PM
- Thursday: 10 AM - 7 PM
- Friday: 10 AM - 4 PM
- Saturday: 10 AM - 4 PM

Thank you to DMPL for taking a creative approach to providing library services during the pandemic. Please visit www.dmpl.org for complete details.

MHNA Membership - Join the Cause!

Becoming a member of the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association helps you make a difference in our community. Membership dollars help support the events and activities of our all-volunteer association. Joining also helps you lend your voice to any number of civic issues such as public safety, neighborhood revitalization, park improvements, commercial corridor redevelopment, and more.

Anyone who lives, rents or owns property, or has a business within the neighborhood boundaries may join. Non-residents may also join as associate, non-voting members. As a 501(c)(3) organization, all dues and donations are tax-deductible.

Membership dues are as follows:

- Individual: \$15
- Couple: \$30
- Business: \$30
- Church, School, or other Non-profit: \$10

Dues can be paid in person at association meetings or mailed to: Merle Hay Neighborhood Association PO Box 31036 Des Moines, IA 50310. Thank you for supporting MHNA this year and every year!