



Merle Hay Neighborhood Association
PO Box 31036
Des Moines, IA 50310

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It's Not Too Early to Renew Your MHNA Membership!

Beginning in October, any MHNA dues paid will be applied to 2021. Please don't wait to renew your dues or join for the first time! MHNA membership is open to anyone who lives or owns a business within MHNA's boundaries. Annual dues are payable at the annual meeting in January or they can be mailed to the association post office box listed on the front cover. Members may take part in MHNA decision-making on planning, development, zoning, infrastructure, streets and parks, beautification, and other community service and education projects, and social events. Associate memberships are available to those outside MHNA's boundaries, though associate members may not vote on MHNA business. Membership rates are as follows:

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- \$10 for a church, school, or other non-profit
- \$15 for an individual
- \$30 for a couple
- \$30 for a business



Upcoming SCRUB Dates

MHNA was unable to host its annual Spring Cleanup to Reduce Urban Blight (SCRUB) due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but there are still opportunities for Des Moines residents to get rid of unwanted trash and yard debris. Des Moines Public Works has two SCRUB dates scheduled for October 17 and November 21. Trash can be taken to the MWA Transfer Station at 4198 Delaware Avenue, and yard waste can be taken to the MWA Compost Center at 1601 Harriett St. Complete SCRUB details can be found online at www.dsm.city. Questions can be directed to Public Works by calling 283-4950.

Connect with your neighbors and MHNA on Facebook

Did you know that we have two Facebook pages dedicated to the Merle Hay neighborhood? The Merle Hay Neighborhood Association page (@MerleHayNeighborhood) is the official page of MHNA and provides a great way to stay up-to-date with official neighborhood news, events, resources, and city projects. The Merle Hay Neighborhood private group page allows neighbors to connect with each other, whether to help with lost and found pets, offer contractor recommendations, or as we learned during the derecho - to share information about closed streets and power outages. If you are on social media, consider giving our pages a 'like!'

Connect with Us!

Facebook: @MerleHayNeighborhood
Website: www.merlehay.org

Merle Hay Neighborhood Newsletter



Thank You, Polk County!

MHNA extends its sincere thanks to Polk County Supervisor Angela Connolly and the rest of the Board of Supervisors for awarding a \$3,000 Community Betterment Grant to our association. MHNA would not be able to fund its quarterly newsletter program without Polk County's generous support. Please drop a line to county supervisors to let them know you appreciate their annual support of MHNA!

Neighborhood Finance Corporation Lending is Back!

Planning to improve your home in the upcoming year? 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 in Des Moines via 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!



Join MHNA via Zoom on October 15

MHNA will host its next quarterly meeting on the Zoom platform at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday October 15. Please make sure your membership dues are current and we have a current email address for you so we can send you the Zoom meeting credentials.

We expect to be joined by Ward I City Councilman Bill Gray, who will share updates on city issues in our neighborhood and elsewhere in northwest Des Moines. We are also trying to line up a forester to share information and field questions about tree care and planting in the aftermath of the derecho that ripped through Iowa in August and destroyed thousands of trees.

We also expect to have public safety updates from our Neighborhood Based Service Delivery officer, along with a host of other neighborhood updates.

Please mark your calendars and join us via Zoom on October 15! We also plan to live-stream the meeting on the neighborhood Facebook page: www.facebook.com/MerleHayNeighborhood.

Help MHNA Keep the Kids Warm!

The Merle Hay Neighborhood Association is once again collecting clothing donations for elementary school children through our Keep the Kids Warm program. There is time to donate, and your help is greatly appreciated.

This year, we are collecting winter clothing for students at Hillis Elementary School. Donations of new coats, boots, stocking hats, gloves, and mittens are welcome. The following sizes are needed:

Coats (boys and girls): 6/6x, 7/8, 10/12, 16 or 18.
Boots (boys and girls): 1, 2, and 3.

For more information about the clothing drive or to make a donation, contact Kathy Battles by email at kmbattles@msn.com, or 515.865.3040. If you would like to drop your monetary or clothing donations at Kathy's home due to COVID-19, please feel free to do so. Her home address is 2729 62nd St., and she will be happy to collect everything for the kids at Hillis. Please call ahead.

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

October 2020

Make plans to VOTE!

Presidential General Election on November 3

MHNA encourages everyone to participate in the election on November 3. Please plan ahead so you can vote whichever way makes you feel most comfortable—by mail or in-person—while the pandemic continues. If you have questions, please contact the Polk County Elections Office at 286-3247. The county elections office has shared the following important dates as the election draws near:

October 5 - Absentee Ballots will be mailed to those who have requested a ballot by mail.

October 5 - First Day to Vote Early in person at the Polk County Auditor's Election Office.

October 19 – Worry free postmark deadline for mail in voter registration

October 24 – Voter preregistration deadline and deadline to request an absentee ballot by mail. Election office open until 5PM for voter registration and Absentee Voting. Voters may use Election Day registration procedures to register to vote after the Pre-Registration deadline.

October 31 - Election office open until 5 p.m. for in person absentee voting

Monday, November 2 - 5PM Last day to vote absentee in person at the Election Office. Absentee ballots by mail must be postmarked by this date

Tuesday, November 3 - General Election Day. Polls open 7AM until 9PM. Election Day Precinct Locations

Annual Holiday Lights Contest

Need a diversion while you're cooped up at home because of the pandemic? Want \$25 to buy some carryout or holiday gifts? Well then, you should decorate your house for the holidays.

The Merle Hay Neighborhood Association will sponsor its 16th annual Holiday Lights contest this winter. Judging will take place in mid-December. If you would like to ensure your house is included in judging, please contact April at 515-707-6386. Your home or your neighbor's home may be considered for a prize even if you don't contact us. Three homes will be awarded a \$25 gift card. Judges will be looking for creativity, originality, holiday spirit, neatness and theme coordination.

Checking out holiday lights is a great social-distancing activity while we wait to bid COVID-19 adieu, so we encourage as many people as possible to decorate their homes!

2021 MHNA Meeting Dates

Thankfully, perhaps mercifully, 2020 is almost over. Here's to hoping 2021 is a little more normal, whatever that is. With any luck, we'll be able to meet in person at some point in 2021. Please make plans to join us!

MHNA meets on the third Thursday in January, April, July, and October. Unless otherwise noted, the meetings start at 6:30 p.m. and are held at the Northwest Community Center, 5110 Franklin Ave. The 2021 meetings will be held on January 21, April 15, July 15, and October 21. Please mark your calendars and help spread the word!

COVID-19 Resources

MHNA knows that too many of our neighbors are hurting due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The public health crisis has made things even more difficult for people who were already struggling. Now more than ever, it is important to be a good neighbor. Please check in on each other (while social distancing) and don't underestimate the power of kindness and good deeds. Help a neighbor rake leaves when they fall. Help scoop snow. Make a grocery run for a neighbor with a pre-existing condition that makes them more susceptible to COVID-19. It all adds up and helps us get through this together.

MHNA also wants to make residents aware of support services that are available during this challenging and unprecedented time. Polk County has compiled a list of COVID-19 resources ranging from public health information to mental health, financial, and legal resources. A wealth of tips and information can be found at: <https://www.polkcountyiowa.gov/health-department/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/> The page is updated frequently.

If you have questions about Polk County's General Assistance program, you can call 286-2088, or send an email to GA.Intake@polkcountyiowa.gov. If you need to access a food pantry, you may call 286-3695.



Snow Ordinance Reminders

Ready or not, winter is coming for us on December 21. And since this is Iowa, winter weather may be here much sooner. So, limber up to scoop snow and don't forget the basics of the city's snow ordinance:

- City ordinance requires vehicles to be removed from snow routes while Public Works crews plow streets. Violators will receive a \$35 fine and can also be towed.
- Once snow routes are cleared, city crews plow residential streets.
- Front-yard parking is illegal at all times.
- Complete details on Des Moines' snow ordinances can be found at www.dmsnow.org.

Also, below are some reminders about the city's requirements for snow removal on sidewalks. As always, MHNA encourages neighbors to help each other with snow removal. Please lend a hand to elderly or disabled neighbors who may not be able to clear their own sidewalks. Thanks

- City ordinance requires sidewalks to be shoveled 48 hours after a measurable snowfall.
- Sidewalks should be shoveled full length and width, according to the City of Des Moines.
- Those who don't clear their walks could be penalized. Historically, fines for noncompliance have been \$50 for the first offense, \$75 for a second violation, and \$100 for a third.
- City ordinance prohibits snow from being blown or thrown into the street.
- Pedestrian ramps on street corners should be shoveled.



Franklin Avenue Improvements Get Underway

Work recently started on Franklin Avenue to improve the corridor west of Merle Hay Road. Construction is underway to rehabilitate the roadway from 52nd Street to Merle May Road, including new paving and the addition of curb and gutter. Pavement will also be patched from 52nd Street to 48th Street. Storm sewer improvements will be made in locations where the pavement is being reconstructed. When paving work is complete, Franklin Avenue will be restriped to provide parking on the north side of the street and incorporate buffered bike lanes in each direction. Missing sidewalk connections on the south side of the street will also be filled.

Questions about the Franklin Avenue street improvements can be directed to Matthew Becker in the City of Des Moines Engineering Department. Phone: 515-283-4026; email: MDBecker@dmgov.org.

O'Donnell ACE Hardware Home Improvement Corner

October is Fire Prevention Month!

Are your home and family protected? O'Donnell Ace Hardware carries various First Alert Smoke Alarms and Carbon Monoxide Detectors. It is recommended to have at least one smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector on each floor. You may need more depending upon your home's layout. Keep them in working order by testing them monthly and replacing batteries every 6 months. Replace smoke alarms every 8-10 years and carbon monoxide detectors every 5. Prevent fires by inspecting electrical cords regularly and discard if they are frayed. Keep portable heaters at least three feet away from furniture, curtains, bed linens, clothing and any other combustible items. Make sure to have an evacuation plan and share it with every household member. The plan should include at least two ways out of every room in your home and practice it occasionally.

Visit our local ACE Hardware for all of your home improvement needs!

DID YOU KNOW???

In Des Moines, yard waste bags and carts are collected year-round. Just make sure that you get a sticker if it's not an official "Compost It!" bag. Set yard waste out on your regular collection day.

