



Merle Hay Neighborhood Association

"Working Together to Make a Difference"

P.O. Box 31036 Des Moines, IA 50310

Web: www.merlehay.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/MerleHayNeighborhood

Twitter: @MerleHay

January 2015 Newsletter

MHNA Annual Meeting on Thursday, January 15

The Merle Hay Neighborhood Association will host its annual meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 15 at the Northwest Community Center, 5110 Franklin Ave. Refreshments will be provided.

Guest speakers will include staff from O'Donnell ACE Hardware on Hickman Road. We will also hear from Windsor Elementary School staff, who will share details of a tree planting project they recently worked on with MHNA.

As always, there will be public safety updates and the latest neighborhood news. We also welcome discussion about neighborhood goals for 2015. Lastly, the 2014 annual report will be given, and officer and board elections will be held.

We look forward to seeing lots of neighbors on January 15. Please spread the word!

2015 Membership Dues

MHNA membership dues for 2015 are payable in January. Costs for membership are as follows:

- Individual: \$15
- Couple: \$30
- Business: \$30
- Church or School: \$10

MHNA membership is open to anyone who lives, rents, or owns property, and to businesses within the neighborhood boundaries. Non-residents may join, though they may not vote. MHNA is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. Dues and donations are tax-deductible, and can be paid in person at association meetings, or mailed to our post office box, which is listed on the newsletter masthead.

Officer and Board Elections

A member-approved change to MHNA's bylaws in early 2014 shifted most routine association business to a calendar-year model. That includes having MHNA's annual meeting, and officer and board elections in January. This year, our annual meeting falls on Thursday, January 15. (Details above) Elections will be held for president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and three board members.

If you are interested in running for an officer or board position, please send an email to billjane@q.com, mmnizzi@outlook.com, and jason.pulliam@gmail.com.

Nominations will also be accepted from the floor when we meet on Thursday, January 15.

Resolve in 2015 to Get Involved In Your Neighborhood!

Making 2015 an even better year in the Merle Hay neighborhood depends on all of us working together. MHNA has great opportunities for volunteers to make a difference in our community. Consider getting involved in any of the following MHNA committees:

- **Advertising**
- **Special Projects/Civic**
- **Newsletter & Communications**
- **Flower Planting, Trees, & Beautification**
- **Social — National Night Out, Merle HayDay, Special Events**
- **SCRUB Day**
- **Holiday Lights**
- **Parks: Tower Park & Riley Park**

Interested? Contact MHNA President Jason Pulliam at jason.pulliam@gmail.com

Traffic Safety Updates

56th Street The speed limit on 56th Street between Franklin and University avenues was recently lowered to 25 mph by the Des Moines City Council. The council made the change in response to a request from the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association, which followed a resolution of support that MHNA's general membership approved in October. MHNA also asked city traffic engineers to assess prospects for adding a four-way stop somewhere along this stretch of 56th Street, in hopes it would help cut down on speeding. The necessary traffic studies are expected to occur in the spring. MHNA would like to thank Ward 1 City Councilman Bill Gray for helping get the speed limit lowered.

50th Street MHNA fielded concerns at its October quarterly meeting about speeding and illegal parking along 50th Street between Hickman Road and Franklin Avenue. A resident reported that in addition to frequent speeding, some Tower Park-users parked vehicles on the grass at the park, sometimes blocking the sidewalk that runs along 50th Street.

In response to the resident concerns, MHNA contacted Des Moines Police and the Park and Recreation Department. Within a week or two of MHNA's request, police set up a speed trailer on 50th Street. Park and Recreation staff contacted recreational sports leagues that use the park and instructed them NOT to park in the grass or on the wrong side of the street. Please call police at 283-4811 if any of these problems are observed in the future. MHNA would like to thank police and parks staff for their help on these issues.

Merle Hay Neighborhood Association

PO Box 31036

Des Moines, IA 50310

NON-PROFIT ORG.

US POSTAGE

PAID

PERMIT NO. 762

DES MOINES, IA

MHNA's 2015 Meeting Dates

MHNA holds its quarterly membership meetings on the third Thursday of January, April, July, and October. Meetings are generally held at 6:30 p.m. at the Northwest Community Center, 5110 Franklin Ave., unless otherwise noted. Please save the following dates:

- Thursday, January 15
- Thursday, April 16
- Thursday, July 16
- Thursday, October 15

Questions about MHNA meetings can be directed by email to jason.pulliam@gmail.com.

Holiday Lights Contest Winners

Thank you to everyone who decorated their homes for the holiday season! You really made the Merle Hay neighborhood shine! The following residents received \$25 gift certificates to Merle Hay Mall:

- Jeremy & Erica at 1819 61st Street
- Lonnie & Diane at 3421 50th Street
- Tony at 2731 50th Street

Honorable mention went to residents at 2719 Westover Blvd, and 2901 54th Street. Our judges had some tough decisions to make because so many homes were so nicely decorated. We look forward to next year's contest. (Recent winners are not eligible for prizes.) Thanks again to all who participated.

2014 in Review—A GREAT Year for the Merle Hay Neighborhood

How can it be 2015 already? It hardly seems possible that a year has passed since about 20 hardy souls braved a frigid night of snowsqualls to attend MHNA's first meeting of 2014. Keep your fingers crossed that Mother Nature will be kinder to us for this year's January meeting. Just remember: Think warm thoughts!

We cannot say enough about all of the great things that MHNA volunteers did for our neighborhood in 2014. Whether it was planting flowers or trees, attending city and school district meetings, collecting food and clothing donations for the less fortunate, improving our parks, or countless other things, our volunteers really made a difference for our neighborhood, and Des Moines as a whole. Our thanks go out to so many of you for your time, hard work, and generosity. Our neighborhood would not be what it is without you.

Great as 2014 certainly was in the Merle Hay neighborhood, there is no reason 2015 cannot be even better. Please take a moment to think about something new or improved you'd like to see in our neighborhood. With enough commitment and the right number of helping hands, we can accomplish almost anything.

MHNA's motto is "Working Together to Make a Difference." There is always work to do, and opportunities to make a difference. In 2015, MHNA will continue its work to revitalize Tower Park, beautify and reforest our neighborhood, improve our commercial streetscapes, strengthen our relationships with neighborhood schools, and do our part to help lift neighbors in need. If you have been thinking about getting involved, 2015 will be a great year to do so. We'll do a lot of great things this year, and hope you will take part. Thank you.

-*Jason Pulliam*, MHNA president

MHNA Leads Successful Food and Clothing Drive

MHNA held its first-ever food and clothing drive on December 15 at the Northwest Community Center. We are pleased to report that MHNA collected over 250 food items, which were donated to the Des Moines Area Religious Council's (DMARC) Food Pantry program. A few dozen winter clothing items—stocking hats, gloves, scarfs, coats, and snow boots—were also collected and donated to Hillis Elementary School.

The need for food donations in particular goes year-round. MHNA will gladly accept food donations at each of our quarterly membership meetings. **Simply bring food donations to MHNA meetings, and our volunteers will deliver them to DMARC. Details about preferred food items are listed on the DMARC website: www.dmreligious.org.**

Cell Tower Project at 4800 Douglas Avenue

A proposed cell tower on the grounds of the Des Moines Fire Station at 4800 Douglas Ave. has recently generated a lot of discussion and some media coverage. Here are some key details:

- MHNA's general membership had a lengthy discussion about the matter at our October meeting. Members voted that the site was inappropriate for a standard cell tower with spread antenna arrays. That is because the fire station is almost nine acres less than what city ordinance requires for cell towers, and the site is surrounded by single-family residential property. If a tower was built at the site, members voted that it should be a "stealth" monopole with antenna equipment hidden inside the pole.
- MHNA members also voted that if a cell tower is built quality fencing and landscaping should surround its base. Members expressed a preference for a cell tower in a more predominately commercial area, such as the proposed Hy-Vee near Douglas and Beaver. (A cell tower is already located there.)
- Late in 2014, the Des Moines Zoning Board of Adjustment approved a roughly 178-ft tower with "flush-mounted" antennas. The City Council still has to approve a lease with the cell company.