



Merle Hay Neighborhood Association
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Des Moines, IA 50310

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Merle Hay Neighborhood Newsletter

2-1-1 Info & Merle Hay TIF Update to Highlight Quarterly Meeting on April 18th

Learn about the 2-1-1 information and referral service, and get an update on how the Merle Hay Tax Increment Finance (TIF) district is performing, when the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association meets at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 18, at the Northwest Community Center, 5110 Franklin Ave. We expect to have a guest speaker from 2-1-1, followed by staff from the City of Des Moines (City).

The 2-1-1 helpline provides callers with information on tax preparation assistance, rent payment assistance, utility payment assistance, elderly care, child care programs, legal services, food pantries, and more. Questions will follow a short presentation by a 2-1-1 staff member.

MHNA has also invited staff from the City's Office of Economic Development to provide an overview of the TIF district, how it's performing, and how it's being used to aid redevelopment at Merle Hay Mall and other nearby commercial properties. Moving forward, MHNA has asked the City Council and City staff to make sure the TIF is also used to fund streetscape improvements, consistent with the 2008 Merle Hay neighborhood improvement plan. A list of public improvement priorities was formally submitted to the City Council in January 2017.

We'll have plenty of other neighborhood updates, public safety information, and more. Refreshments will be provided. Come meet your neighbors and find out how you can help improve OUR neighborhood. We look forward to a great turnout on April 18. Please invite your neighbors!

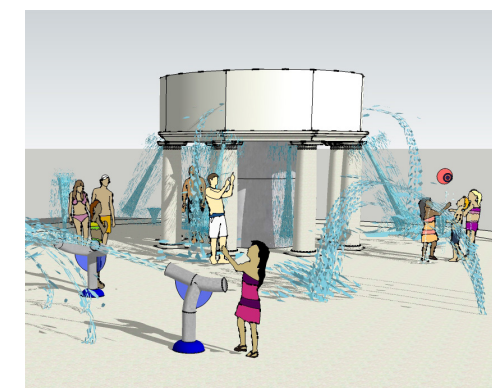
Work Continues on Tower Park Water Feature

Contractors worked through the winter on Tower Park's new water feature, which is expected to open later this summer. Last year, the City Council approved plans for a new sprayground that will feature a replica of the historic Hazen Water Tower. The new water feature will replace Tower Park's existing wading pool, which will remain in service until the new facility is operational. A new restroom facility will also be constructed.

Once the project is closer to completion, MHNA will work with the Des Moines Park and Recreation Department to host a dedication.

A new water feature was a key piece of a master plan that was created for Tower Park in 2006. It will complement other recent park improvements such as a new basketball court, resurfaced tennis courts, and upgraded shelter, and an interior trail courtesy of Polk County. Longer-term, MHNA will also explore prospects for a mural on the row of garages that line Tower Park's southern edge. The garage wall is sometimes a target for graffiti, so we might as see if we can turn it into public art!

As always, please let MHNA know if you'd like to help improve our neighborhood parks. We can be contacted at merlehayneighborhood@gmail.com.



Mega-SCRUB Set for April 20th

The Merle Hay Neighborhood Association will once again partner with Des Moines Public Works to host the annual Spring Clean Up to Reduce Urban Blight (SCRUB) from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, April 20 at Hoover High School on Aurora Avenue. SCRUB allows Des Moines residents to discard unwanted items including furniture, televisions, appliances, tires, hazardous waste, and other materials for free. Yard debris will be collected on April 20th at the MWA Compost Center at 1601 Harriett Street. For complete SCRUB program details, visit the Des Moines Public Works webpage or call 283-4950.

More Trees for Urbandale Avenue

On May 9th, volunteers from Trees Forever will be planting trees within the Urbandale Avenue right-of-way as phase two of the Urbandale Avenue beautification project. Volunteers from the neighborhood are welcome and encouraged to participate! If you would like to help plant trees, please contact Leslie Berckes, Trees Forever Coordinator, at lberckes@treesforever.org

Hillis Vendor Fair

The Hillis Elementary PTO is hosting the first annual Hillis Spring Market on Saturday, April 27th from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Local vendors and artisans will have a wide range of products and hand-made gifts on display and available for purchase. This event is open to the public. Admission is \$1. Kids 12 and under are free.

Calling All Green Thumbs!

MHNA's Beautification Committee can always use extra help with planting, watering, and weeding our neighborhood flowerbeds at the following locations:

- Merle Hay Road and Cummins Parkway
- University Avenue and Cummins Parkway
- Merle Hay Road, Hickman Road, and Merklin Way
- Urbandale Avenue and 57th Street
- Urbandale Avenue and 49th Street
- Tower park
- Tenny Standpipe at Merle Hay Road and Madison Ave.

If you would like to help us, please contact Beautification Committee Chair Kathy Battles at 255-5050 or 865-3040, or by email at kmbattles@msn.com.

MHNA thanks all of the volunteers who help tend our flowerbeds! We couldn't do it without you and we always encourage more neighbors to pitch in.



Connect with Us!

Facebook: [@MerleHayNeighborhood](https://www.facebook.com/MerleHayNeighborhood)
Website: www.merlehay.org

Merle Hay Neighborhood Association
"Working Together to Make a Difference"
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April 2019

Good Neighbor Tips

Now that all of the snow is finally gone (HOORAY!), please take a few minutes to look around your yard to find any trash or debris that might have been buried. And please lend a hand to an elderly or disabled neighbor who might need a little extra help.

Here are a few friendly reminders as spring continues and we head into summer:

>>> SUMP PUMP DISCHARGE

City ordinance requires sidewalks to be free of slipping and tripping hazards. That means sump pump hoses should not be draped across sidewalks, nor should they drain onto sidewalks and cause slipping hazards. Violations can result in a fine from the city! Please help us keep our sidewalks safe and walkable this year and every year!

>>> OVERGROWN LAWNS

Improve your curb appeal and property value by keeping your lawn and landscaping properly maintained. Apart from looking shabby, overgrown landscapes can attract unwanted critters and mosquitoes. Polk County ordinance requires grass to be less than 12 inches tall. When code enforcement is necessary, contact the Polk County Weed Commission at 286-3005, or by email at weedcommission@polkcountyia.gov.

>>> FRONT YARD PARKING

A Des Moines beautification ordinance prohibits vehicles from being parked in front yards. Please don't do it! It looks bad, damages turf, and reflects poorly on our neighborhood. Violations can result in a fine from city code inspectors or police. Infractions may be reported to the Neighborhood Inspections Division at 283-4046, or via email at nid@dmgov.org.

>>> TRASH CARTS

Please remove your trash and recycling carts from the curb as soon as you are able to after your pick-up day. Unfortunately we see many carts sitting on the curb several days after pick-up. Trash carts can block the sidewalk and negatively impact the appearance of our neighborhood. The City can also issue a violation for carts left on the curb for extended lengths of time!



Officer and Board Elections

Officers and board members were elected when the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association held its annual meeting on January 17. Here are this year's board members:

- Chris Morse, President
- April Wyss, Vice President
- Ron Stoen, Treasurer
- Jason Pulliam, Secretary
- Kathy Battles, Board Member
- Chris Janson, Board Member
- Machel Shaffer, Board Member

Thank you to everyone who volunteered to serve MHNA! We appreciate your commitment to making a difference in our neighborhood.

MHNA also wants to extend its sincere thanks to Marilyn Nizzi and Mary Keables, each of whom served in numerous capacities on the board over the years. Marilyn most recently served as secretary, and Mary was an at-large board member. Thank you, Marilyn and Mary for your countless contributions!

Please Join MHNA or Renew Your Membership

A reminder to please join or renew your MHNA membership for 2019!

By becoming a member of the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association, you help make a difference in our community. Membership dollars help support the events and activities of our all-volunteer association. Membership is open to anyone who lives, rents or owns property, and to businesses within the neighborhood boundaries. Non-residents may also join as 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 for 2019 can be paid in person at association meetings, or mailed to:

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Thank you for supporting MHNA this year and every year!



2019 MHNA Meeting Dates

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. Upcoming meetings will be held on July 18 and October 17. Please mark your calendars!

National Night Out

It's not too early to start thinking about National Night Out in August. Please make plans to join us!

This year, the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association will host its annual observance of National Night Out, America's night out against crime, from 6pm to 8pm on Tuesday, August 6th at the Northwest Community Center, 5110 Franklin Avenue. There will be food, games for kids, family-friendly entertainment, door prizes, and great tips and information from public safety personnel about how to safeguard your property against crime. Tableware, food, and drinks will be provided. National Night Out is a great way to meet your neighbors and learn more about safety within your home and while you're out and about. Please help spread the word!

O'Donnell ACE Hardware Home Improvement Corner

Get Your Lawn in Tip-Top Shape!

A well-maintained lawn, in addition to basic landscaping and foundation plantings, adds curb appeal and value to your home. Early spring is the perfect time to aerate your lawn. Aeration allows oxygen, water, and nutrients to penetrate the grass roots. This helps the roots grow deeply and produce a thicker, more vigorous lawn. Aerating is also an important first step to overseeding a thin lawn. On established lawns, mow frequently enough that you are never removing more than 1/3 of the grass blade height at a time, and water deeply and less frequently to encourage deep root growth. Spot-control weeds to prevent them from spreading. The Scotts 4-Step Program will feed your lawn 4 times a year, help prevent crabgrass in the early spring, and help kill weeds in late spring/early summer.

Ace has aerators and garden tillers available for rental! Stop into Ace and talk to our experts about your lawn care needs. In addition to all of your favorite lawn care products, be sure to check out our new line of Stihl battery-operated products to make your work even easier!



Follow us on Facebook at O'Donnell Ace Hardware Hickman Rd Des-Moines.



City of Des Moines Stormwater Best Management Practices Program

Source: City of Des Moines

The Stormwater Best Management Practices Program will provide a rebate to property owners that install stormwater best management practices that help to enhance the water quality of the stormwater runoff and/or decrease the amount of stormwater runoff that enters the stormwater drainage system. Eligible projects include rain gardens, rain barrels, streambank stabilization, and soil quality restoration. (Soil restoration combines lawn aeration with a compost topcoat to reduce soil compaction, improve soil nutrients, and increase water holding capacity).

With this program, the City will make a rebate reimbursement for 50% of the cost up to \$2,000 (\$100 maximum rebate for rainbarrels) to the property owners who meet the requirements of the program. 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. For complete program details, visit the Des Moines Public Works webpage at: <http://www.dmgov.org/Departments/PublicWorks/Pages/Stormwater.aspx> or call 283-4950.