

WHAT'S GOING ON IN....

Greenbrier

The newsletter for the Greenbrier Neighborhood Association

Spring 2007

Website: gnaweb.org

SIGN UP TO BE INFORMED!

Everybody with an e-mail address should sign up for our neighborhood group e-mail list. It does NOT cost anything and does NOT result in commercial spam. Joining does result in a valuable exchange of information and interesting news about our neighborhood. For instance, we learned important details from each other about the group home for recovering addicts that had been planned for a house on Kenwood Lane. (Ultimately, the homeowner decided against renting the home to the group.) In addition, every month I send out a crime report from the police department listing each verified incident from our neighborhood.

The full "Use Policy" for our e-mail group can be found on our website, but in summary it allows members to report lost and found pets and items, get recommendations for contractors/service providers, announce the formation of neighborhood clubs/groups, and discuss neighborhood news. Our policy does not allow commercial or political e-mails, and every e-mail must have a clear description in the title so you can decide if you want to open it. We currently have about 140 Greenbrier residents on the list. **So sign up now! Go to groups.yahoo.com/group/GNA_mail.** (You can remove your name at any time.) Our ultimate goal is to stop the burden and cost of distributing the hard copies of the newsletter.

GENERAL ASSOCIATION MEETING

A message from GNA president Ned Michie:
We will have our annual spring meeting on Wednesday, **March 28, 2007, at 7:30 p.m.** in the Greenbrier School auditorium. The main topic of conversation will be the city's new procedure for disbursing capital improvement project (CIP) money to the neighborhoods. In the last CIP cycle,

the city had set aside \$30,000 for each neighborhood to spend over a three-year period, and city planners had a meeting in each neighborhood to decide what project(s) were to be funded. (We spent our money on the new section of sidewalk on Kenwood, leading from Melbourne Road.) Under the new system, however, the city is setting aside \$360,000 total for all neighborhood-identified projects, to be spent over the next three years; to get any of the money, each neighborhood must submit grant proposals for their desired project(s).

There are 18 designated neighborhoods in the city, so there is about \$20,000 for each neighborhood. But there is no limit to how much can be sought by each neighborhood, and some may end up failing to submit any grants by the April 30 deadline. Let's not have our neighborhood be one that loses the opportunity to improve itself by failing to submit a grant. We need to decide what project(s) we want to put forth in a grant, and then designate someone to write up each (the city has provided forms). A committee made up of citizens and city staff will then pick from among the proposals.

The money set aside for these grants is not designed to be used for significant sidewalk projects, because they are so expensive (see below for the separate big-project CIP process). Nor is the money to be used for traffic calming, as there is apparently a separate procedure for that through the traffic-engineering department. Examples the city gives for grant proposals are "neighborhood entry signs [e.g., the one on Rose Hill Drive], community bulletin boards, benches for bus stops or other public places, street trees and landscaping, etc." The projects "must be located on public property."

Visit the Greenbrier Neighborhood Association website at www.gnaweb.org!

So start thinking about potential projects, and come share your thoughts with us at the meeting. I note that those of us on the group e-mail list may start discussing ideas even before the meeting, but no decisions will be made.

Some possibilities that come to mind are:

- (1) paving the path into Greenbrier Park leading from Greenbrier Drive at Kerry Lane down to the foot bridge over creek (the path is already paved from Jamestown Road to the foot bridge), and possibly add a railing and/or stairs on the side of the steepest part;
- (2) adding small sections of sidewalk that would be meaningful (e.g., the skinny pinch point of Meadowbrook Heights—each side is privately owned, however—and the shorter sections near CHS on Kenwood that would allow safe passage for students as well as residents);
- (3) erecting entrance signs on public land at our neighborhood entranceways at Meadowbrook Heights, Melbourne, and/or Brandywine; and
- (4) X—your ideas.

As referenced above, the city has a separate big-project CIP list (basically sidewalks and drainage) and plans to set aside \$400,000 to \$600,000 per year for that purpose. Unfortunately, the starting point for sidewalks is a priority list developed years ago that does not match our neighborhood needs. For instance, the first priority sidewalk listed for our neighborhood is a tiny section at the intersection of St. Annes and Grove (apparently leading from the intersection to the top of the staircase down to the 250 Bypass). The third ranked sidewalk project for our neighborhood is Jamestown Drive and up Bunker Hill. While it would be nice to have a sidewalk there (and on every road in the neighborhood), when we walked our elementary student that way every day for five years, we never felt threatened by the few vehicles that passed by.

So we need to decide whether to advocate for a change in our neighborhood's sidewalk priorities. The city folks have indicated that they would be most impressed if any big-project CIP request came with a petition signed by those affected, indicating their support for the project.

To me, the top sidewalk need in the neighborhood is Meadowbrook Heights, from Grove to Kenwood (and preferably through to the other side of the pinch point, if possible). This is a skinny, busy artery that leads to Walker Upper Elementary School. Other big and needy sidewalk projects are (1) the entire length of Brandywine and (2) Yorktown from Bunker Hill through to Brandywine.

So those interested in getting more sidewalks in our neighborhood should come to the meeting on March 28. Also at the meeting, we will try to adopt a constitution (hopefully this won't take long) and elect (or reelect) a few officers and executive committee members. The proposed constitution draft can be found on our website (www.gnaweb.org), or if you want a copy snail-mailed to you, contact Ned Michie at 296-6961 (NedMichie@aol.com). Finally, the police department also plans to send a representative to the meeting to hear our thoughts and concerns regarding crime and law enforcement.

UPDATE ON THE HILLSDALE DRIVE CONNECTOR PROJECT

As you may recall, the city is undertaking a project to create a connector road from Pepsi Place through the Seminole Square Shopping Center to Hydraulic Road. This will allow continuous travel from Rio Road to Hydraulic Road along Hillsdale Drive. The location portion of the project is complete and the route has been approved by the City Council, County Board of Supervisors, and the Commonwealth Transportation Board. The project is now entering the design phase.

Over the next few months there will be citizen information meetings, which will be open to the public. Information on the project is available on the web at www.hillsdaledrive.org. This website will be updated as the project progresses.

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

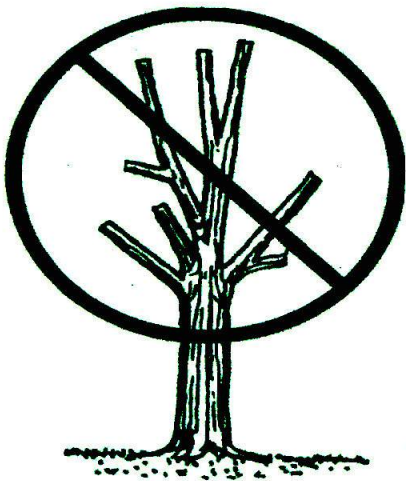
For children who will be 5 years old by September 30, 2007, kindergarten registration will take place on **Thursday, April 26, from 3:30 to 6:00**

p.m. at Greenbrier Elementary. Please bring your child with you, as well as the following documentation:

- A certified birth certificate for the child or, for non-U.S. citizens, other substantiating documentation (such as a passport or an I-94 form).
- The child's social security card.
- Proof of city residency, which can be... deed/mortgage/lease papers; a notarized letter confirming residency when living with another household; receipts for taxes or a utility bill or deposit; a voter registration card; or a recent payroll stub with your address.
- A copy of a comprehensive physical examination by a qualified, licensed physician within 12 months prior to the date the child begins school.
- Evidence of immunizations as required by Virginia law.

You can get more information about kindergarten registration at www.ccs.k12.va.us or by calling Greenbrier Elementary at 245-2415.

ENVIRONMENTAL NOTES



“Tree Topping” ≠ Tree Pruning!

by Lise Dobrin and Julia Weissman

Tree topping is when the trunk and branches of mature trees are cut back to stubs. Tree topping damages trees and the natural beauty of our neighborhood. It injures the bark and leaves large

wounds that make a tree vulnerable to insects and disease. It weakens the tree, making it susceptible to damage in high winds and storms. And it is disfiguring, reducing the tree's value by 20 percent to 100 percent. The National Arborist Association considers topping an unacceptable practice and advises against it. Unfortunately, our neighborhood has had a number of unprofessional “tree pruners” offering their services door to door to unwitting homeowners. Neighbors should be aware of the many downsides to tree topping, and make sure any tree pruners they hire have the long-term interest of our neighborhood's trees in mind—not just their own wallets!

For more information on the problem of tree topping, see the Virginia Cooperative Extension's “Guide to Successful Pruning” at www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/nursery/430-458/430-458.html.

Chemical Runoff from Neighborhood Lawns into Meadow Creek

by Lise Dobrin and Julia Weissman

Overfertilizing is a waste of time and money, and can do serious harm to the plants you intend to help. What's more, excess fertilizer poses a serious threat to our water quality. When fertilizer and weedkiller get carried into streams and lakes with rainwater runoff, they become harmful pollutants. These pollutants can harm fish and wildlife populations, kill native vegetation, foul drinking-water supplies, and make recreational areas like our section of the Rivanna Trail unsafe and unpleasant.

For more information about what you can do to prevent yard chemical runoff, go to www.rivanna-stormwater.org/stormbrochure.pdf or www.rivanna-stormwater.org/yardcare.pdf.

BANBURY-TARLETON BLOCK PARTY

Please save the date for the third-annual Banbury-Tarleton block party! It'll be **Saturday, May 26, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.** We will be at the south end of Banbury Street again, which will be partially blocked off. The event will include a

potluck lunch, games, and a chance to meet your neighbors. Watch for informational flyers as we get closer to the event. Please contact Julia Weissman at juliaweissman@earthlink.net to assist in planning or for more information.

Note: If you are interested in organizing a similar block party for your own street, you can contact Julia at the above address to get some helpful tips.

PERSONAL SERVICES

Selling your home? Here's a simple way to do it yourself: Visit www.c-villebyowner.com or call Beth at 227-2512.

Do you have a service (e.g., babysitting, yard maintenance, pet care) to offer the neighborhood? Put an ad in the next newsletter. Children under 18 living at home in our neighborhood can place an ad for free. For the rest of us, the cost is \$5 per word, not including contact information. Send your text to Natalie Russell (nermann@yahoo.com), and your check (made payable to Greenbrier Neighborhood Association) to Lise Dobrin at 2101 Tarleton Drive, Charlottesville, VA 22901.

GREENBRIER GRIPES

"As I walk and drive through the Greenbrier neighborhood, I get a sense that some homeowners just don't care what others see from the curb. With spring coming, it is a perfect time for every family to look at their home and yard to see:

- Are bushes creeping up to windowsills or roofs and in need of pruning?
- Are there tree limbs, bushes, or ivy hanging over the sidewalks?
- Are limbs, brush, bags of leaves, etc., simply lying about in the front yard or curb area and in need of a city large-item pickup? (If you don't have enough for a pickup, get together with a couple of your neighbors and have a joint pickup.)"

Got a gripe? Email the newsletter editor (nermann@yahoo.com) and let the neighborhood know

what's on your mind. Comments may be edited for clarity and space.

DUES FOR MEMBERSHIP

Dues are \$10 per year (January 1–December 31). They will primarily go to pay for newsletter printing, but will also be available for other purposes, such as small CIP projects and neighborhood picnic supplies. Please support our efforts to have an active and useful neighborhood association by sending your check (made payable to the Greenbrier Neighborhood Association) to our treasurer, Lise Dobrin, at 2101 Tarleton Drive, Charlottesville, VA 22901. Note that you are **not** required to pay dues to join the neighborhood group e-mail list.

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

- The first Hillsdale Citizen Information Meeting will be on May 8 from 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Senior Center.
- The Art In Place whale tail on the hill at the 250 Bypass and Grove is slated to be finished by the beginning of April. The artist, Tom Givens, plans to host a little celebration onsite. No date or time has been set, but if you see the festivities as you pass by, stop and say hello.

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