



The Witherbee Buzz

Newsletter

Summer 2006

The Witherbee Neighborhood Association includes the area bounded by 33rd to 56th and Randolph to "O" Streets

Wills, College Planning, Council Members

Featured Topics Set for Aug., Sept., & Oct. Meetings

By Mike Fitzgerald

Responding to requests in the WNA survey earlier this year, topics of feature presentations and discussion planned for the next three WNA meetings include the essentials about traditional and living wills; finances for college; and updates from our City Council representatives.

August 3rd will feature a presentation on crucial things to know about both traditional and living wills. Ed Hoffman, a partner in the law firm of Cada, Froscheiser, Cada & Hoffman, will discuss how a will can help you maintain control of your affairs and simplify matters for your loved ones. His comments will also address a living will, a document which expresses your wishes if you are unable to participate in decisions regarding your medical care.

The September 7th presentation will be about resources available to help middle school, high school and non-traditional students finance college. Tammi Preston, director of outreach services with the EducationQuest in Lincoln, will discuss the organization's programs that provide families with free college planning services and tools. Its programs include a college funding estimator, a scholarships database and search tool; college profiles; and personal college planning assistance.

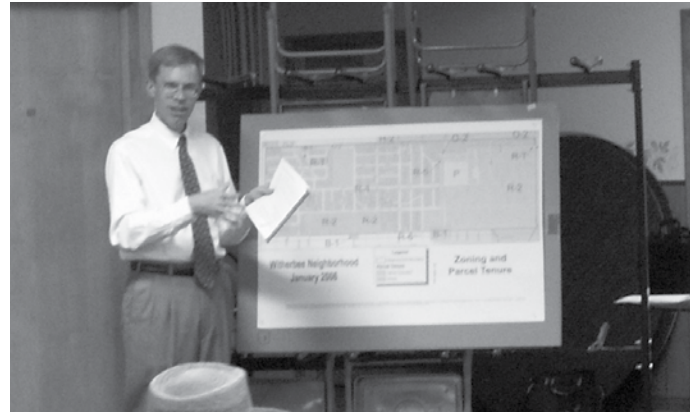
For the October 5th meeting, WNA City Council representatives Patte Newman and Jonathan Cook have been invited to provide updates on current Lincoln issues as well as to discuss their favorite cause and then answer your questions.

Remember, WNA meetings are held the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Tabitha Life Quest Center (48th & J). In addition to the featured presentations, the meetings provide updates on WNA projects and events, as well as being a great place to meet friends, new and old.

Tabitha Meeting Room Changed for Aug.

Take either one of the two elevators located at 1-LifeQuest (a.k.a. 1-North) nurses station down to the basement (push button B).

When you get off the elevator, veer to your right a few steps, then go left down the hallway that has the vending machines--you'll see the conference room at the end of this short hallway. Your meeting will be held in the largest room "A" (the first room you walk into).



Steve Henrichsen explains effects of Zoning Improvement

Public Meeting on Zoning Provides More Information

At a public meeting July 22nd at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, the Witherbee Neighborhood Association provided residents and property owners with more information about the change of zoning request it submitted to the Planning Department on July 7. The meeting was announced in a letter that WNA mailed July 7 to property owners in the affected area (generally 33rd to 48th, O to Randolph).

Special guests at the meeting were WNA City Council representatives Patte Newman and Jonathan Cook, and Planning Department staff member Steve Henrichsen.

WNA leaders explained that the request is being made in an effort to benefit home owners, property owners and tenants by preserving the desirable aspects of the neighborhood, while protecting against the conversion of single family homes to duplexes (as well as against new construction of duplexes) that do not fit the character of the neighborhood.

Both Newman and Cook spoke in favor of the request.

Steve Henrichsen discussed the specifics of R4 and R2 zoning regulations and explained that a change of zone to R2 would have a positive or neutral impact on the large majority of property owners and residents.

Next Steps

The WNA will ask that the Planning Commission address the zoning change request at its Sept. 13 meeting.

Continued on page 6

About the Witherbee Neighborhood Association

Boundaries:

33rd to 56th & 'O'
to Randolph Streets

Web Site:

www.WitherbeeNA.org
Meetings: 7:00 p.m. first Thursday
of each month at Tabitha Lifequest
Center, 48th and J.

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President's Message by Fred Freytag

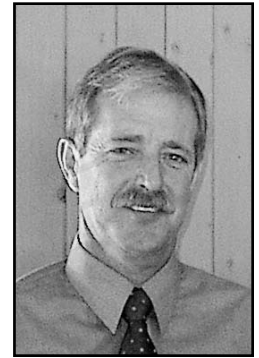
The summer edition of the best neighborhood newsletter in Lincoln has now arrived. Witherbee Neighbors work hard to make this an informative and free publication. Thanks to the volunteers and advertisers. We can always use help with delivery, ad sales and writing articles. If you have a little time to give please contact us.

Neighbors have been busy working on the zoning improvement for a large part of the Witherbee Neighborhood. As a property owner you should have received a letter explaining the project and inviting you to an informational meeting. We NEED your help and support as we move forward with the effort. How can you help? The simple ways include showing your support by attending the Planning Commission hearing or when we go before City Council. The presence of a large number of supporters will make all the difference. We further NEED letters and e-mails in support of the project. You can send them to us or directly to the Planning commission and City Council before the hearings. The proposed changes will benefit us for many years to come.

A big thanks to participants and volunteers for making the Spring Cleanup, Plant Sale and Neighborhood Garages Sales a big success. If you missed out this year we invite you to participate next year.

The O Street construction is ahead of schedule, new businesses are opening up and old ones are moving to new locations. The revitalization of the area around 48th & O Street, that I like to refer to, as 'Midtown' is exciting and the Witherbee Neighborhood will benefit in the years to come.

Come and join us at one of the next informative monthly meetings. Have a great summer.



"The presence of a large number of supporters will make all the difference"

Notice of change To Bylaws

The WNA board is proposing to change Article VIII Section 1. Annual Meeting as follows: "The Board of directors shall set an Annual Meeting of the members in October November of each year." This change will be voted on by the voting membership present at the regular monthly meeting on September 7th 2006.

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Zoning Improvement Is For Tenants Too

By Mike Fitzgerald

On July 7th, the Witherbee Neighborhood Association (WNA) submitted an application to the city seeking a change of zoning level for most properties between 33rd and 48th. On the same day, WNA mailed a letter to property owners in this area explaining the project and asking them to sign a petition to support the cause. The letter went to property owners because city officials want especially them to be aware of the proposal. But because the zoning improvement can benefit renters as well, WNA would like tenants to show their support too.

A change of zoning is being sought to preserve the desirable aspects of the neighborhood such as pleasant looking homes, adequate parking and reasonable traffic

Witherbee Lad Needs Big Brother

Last year, nearly 800 children benefited from having a caring Big Brother or Big Sister in their life. We would like to introduce you to one of the children waiting for a Big Brother or Big Sister in the Witherbee neighborhood.

Shelby is a very active 10 year-old boy who is looking for a Big Brother to share his love of sports. Shelby wrestles, plays tackle and contact flag football, and is a league cadet with the Navy Sea Cadet Corps. When he's not at practice, he enjoys playing baseball, swimming, playing pool, roller blading, playing laser tag, bowling, video games, bike riding, playing on the computer, jumping on trampolines, camping, and fishing.



Shelby

Shelby is one of hundreds of children waiting in our community for a Big Brother or Big Sister. Becoming a Big is fun, easy and for as little as one hour a week you can make a lasting difference in the life of a child. If you are interested or would like more information, please call us at (402) 464-2227 or check us out on the web at www.hbbbs.org.

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levels. Some parts of the neighborhood already have this protection and WNA wants all homeowners and tenants to have the same protection. Changing the zoning would prohibit construction of multi-unit apartments that do not blend with the character of the neighborhood. The zoning change would also prevent increased traffic and parking shortages. Changing the zoning would help keep the neighborhood more desirable to live in – which is good for tenants and homeowners alike.

To join in this effort, tenants can do any or all of five things to help: 1) Sign and return the “Change of Zoning Petition”. It doesn’t obligate you to anything, it just tells city officials that you too want the neighborhood to be preserved. 2) Volunteer to help collect petitions from others on your block or area – contact WNA, Larry, or Mike, listed below for more information on collecting petitions. 3) Write a brief letter of support to the Planning Commission and attend either the Planning Commission hearing or the City Council hearing or both. (Address it to the Lincoln Planning Commission 555 South 10th, Room 213 Lincoln, NE 68508 or e-mail a short note to plan@lincoln.ne.gov and simply say you support WNA’s zoning change request.) 4) Attend the Planning Commission hearing on Sept. 13th to show support. *You will not be asked to testify, just stand up with the rest of the supporters and be counted.* 5) Make a donation to help cover project costs that will total about \$1,500.

Support from homeowners and tenants in the 48th to 56th area would also be appreciated.

However you can help, it is important to do so soon because the request of change of zoning is tentatively scheduled to be considered by the Planning Commission on September 13th.

This is a neighborhood effort and we need your support. If you desire more information, please call WNA board members Larry Frisch at 486-9380 or Mike Fitzgerald at 486-4073 or e-mail lfrisch@alltel.net. You can also contact any of the board members listed on page 2 of this newsletter.

More information and updates on the project check out www.WitherbeeNA.org.

Witherbee NA

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Witherbee History

By Ed Zimmer

WNA has asked me to provide a history of your neighborhood. It happens to be my neighborhood too, so if I declined, it would be a case of the cobbler's children going barefoot. But as with many items of Lincoln history, my knowledge of Witherbee history is a work in progress, so I will begin with a few hints of what I know and also of what I hope to learn as we go along.

Most of the houses in our neighborhood date from the 1920s through 1950s. A few of the houses and some of the pattern of streets and houselots dates much earlier--to the 1880s. In that decade Lincoln grew tremendously--from 13,000 to over 50,000--and landowners all around the outskirts of the capitol city dreamed of growing houses instead of crops on their farms. In 1885 Lyman and Laura Frost laid out Frost's Addition between J and L Streets, from 33rd to 40th Streets. Those 80 acres were divided into just 24 lots of varying sizes. Few houses were built so far from the developed city, but the brick mansion now known as "Parkview" at 33rd and L Streets was constructed around 1890 for attorney Arnott Ricketts and his family--probably the oldest house in Witherbee. In 1885 another 80 acres were subdivided at the northeast corner of our neighborhood into eight 10-acre lots called Lemings Subdivision. Architect John Corder's handsome gambrel-roofed house of about 1910 stands on a small part of one of those lots, at 325 S. 55th.

Those houses are the fascinating exceptions to our neighborhood's general rule that the western part nearer 33rd was developed earlier--in the 'teens and 'twenties--while the eastern area nearer 56th Street includes many post-World War II houses first occupied by returning GIs and their families. Both are important parts of the fabric of our neighborhood and our city.

Our neighborhood also includes several important institutional uses, from Redeemer Lutheran Church on 33rd to St. Teresa's Church and School to Tabitha and Hawthorne School and Calvary Cemetery and.....There is much more to learn and much more to write about. If you can help me (and all of us) learn Witherbee's history with stories or photos, or just good questions, please contact me at ezimmer@lincoln.ne.gov.




Hawthorne third grade students Asmir Cavalic, Caelum Hubl, Kelly Savage, and David Stubbs, with assistance from teacher Erik Hubl gave a presentation of their study on sidewalks in a portion of the Witherbee Neighborhood at the May meeting. They explained how they used the GIS system, photos, mapping, math, computers, etc., to analyze the sidewalk situation. They found that 52% of the area had sidewalks, with 8.5 miles not having sidewalks, and presented many interesting facts about their research. The students competently answered many questions from the audience.

Tree Planting Update

Witherbee Neighborhood Association recently explored options for assisting residents with tree planting. WNA learned that Lincoln Parks & Recreation Department has no remaining funds to plant street trees, therefore any Lower Platte South NRD planting this fall in Lincoln would be a 50-50 cost-share (NRD 50% and grant applicant 50%). Also, a minimum of 10 ten trees is required for a neighborhood project to be considered.


When deciding whether or not to submit an application for tree planting assistance, WNA looked at several factors that included the neighborhood must demonstrate both the financial commitment of those who want street trees (i.e. money collected from participating residents for a 50% match) and also a commitment from volunteers to help plant the trees. As well, the neighborhood must obtain bid prices from two nurseries so residents who are interested would know their cost for each tree. Because these tasks take time to coordinate and because the association's current priority is seeking zoning improvement for much of the area from the Lincoln City Council WNA will not submit an application for a tree planting grant at this time.



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2006 WNA Neighborhood Cleanup Big Success

By Rick Bagby

Saturday, May 6th 35 neighbors gathered at Hawthorne School to share stories and food, meet new friends, and build relationships. Oh yes, we also removed 11 tons of rubbish and junk from our neighborhood.

We filled 5 dumpsters, recycling 4,200 lbs of metals and appliances and 1.5 tons of brush. We sent several pickup and trailer loads, about 3000 lbs, of still-good construction and building materials to Ecostores Nebraska to be re-used.

Thank you to all our supporters and volunteers, whether you sent junk, brought doughnuts, or unloaded dozens of loads for us. Neighbors brought rolls and juice for breakfast, snacks, and Runza brought mini-Runzas mid-morning. Keep Nebraska Beautiful and the City/County Health Department paid for the roll-off dumpsters. Neighbors collected street trash, hoisted broken console TVs, and brought pickup trucks to haul collected items.

We even continued the tradition of finding a wobbly bicycle with no tires to ride up and down the sidewalk to keep tabs on progress on filling the dumpsters.

We equaled last year's number of volunteers working, but the traffic and volume grew noticeably. We were steadily busy most of the sunny morning. Only a few of us were able to break away from unloading cars and pickups to do street trash cleanup, but we did get some of that



A few of the cleanup volunteers

project done as well. We will complete that effort in the coming months.

Thank You, and let's do it again next year!

Volunteers needed ...

We are looking for a few more volunteers to help deliver the "Witherbee Buzz" newsletter on a regular basis, once every three months. If you can help deliver one or two blocks in your area please send an e-mail or call Fred at 466-4655 or Jim at 483-4919.



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Public Meeting on Zoning Provides More Information

Continued from Page 1

And, in line with the Commission and Association's interest in providing generous public notice about the proposed change, WNA will ask the Planning Commission to mail its official notice to property owners a month before the Sept. 13 hearing.

In the meantime, WNA will work to answer questions and generate additional support from residents and property owners. Volunteers are needed to collect petitions, write brief letters of support to the Planning Commission and City Council, and to attend the Sept. 13 hearing.

Regarding letters of support, WNA suggests they may wish to address any of the following points:

A change to R2 zoning would provide the same level of protection for the neighborhood that similar areas enjoy; R2 zoning supports the City Comprehensive Plan's call for preservation of existing single-family homes for single-family use; R2 zoning would help prevent density levels that lead to parking and other infrastructure problems; Additional duplexes on my block may lower the resale value of my property.

Letters should be sent to the Lincoln Planning Commission at 555 South 10th, Room 213 Lincoln, NE 68508 or emailed to plan@lincoln.ne.gov. The Planning Commission will make a recommendation on the request to the City Council, which could rule on the request in early October. It is helpful if letters of support are also sent to the City Council at 555 S 10th St, Room 111, Lincoln, NE 68508 or emailed to council@lincoln.ne.gov.

Additional information on the project will be available before the next newsletter on the WNA website at www.WitherbenNA.org. If you have questions please contact WNA board members Larry Frisch at 486-9380 or Mike Fitzgerald at 486-4073 or e-mail lfrisch@alltel.net. You can also contact any of the board members listed on page 2 of this newsletter.



Yard of the Month Awards

By Josh Sovereign

Jeff and Patty Steffensmeier are our first winners. They live at 3353 M Street with their three children Ben, Nick and Julia. The yard is handled by a team approach. Jeff is the primary caregiver with plenty of support from Nick and Ben. The men all had interesting stories of the labor that went into the well tended yard. The story of the fish pond being brought to life after years of neglect by previous owners was hard to beat. Jeff, Nick and Ben have also been busy caring for new breeds of plants and monitoring the effects of Nebraska climates. To show the versatility of the well manicured yard it also has a sand box and play equipment that has young visitors speechless. Our May 2006 winner received the inaugural award after being nominated by a member of the neighborhood.

Barb Hibner, 727 S. 42nd, our well deserving June winner, does not have a big yard but having a nice yard is a big deal. Living less than a block away it was easy to second the nomination from other neighbors who called to nominate her. I see the sprinkler busy keeping the grass green and plants blooming. To walkers strolling past Barb's constantly manicured lawn everything seems to have it's place and seems to be unaffected by the toils that the rest of us deal with. Barb does have the same troubles but has been able to adjust after living in the neighborhood for a while. I had the opportunity to talk with a few of Barb's neighbors and they all feel fortunate to have her as neighbor, and all are happy to have Barb recognized for the award.

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Are You Being a Good Neighbor?

By Mike Fitzgerald

When you moved into your home, you likely had optimistic hopes and dreams concerning living in your neighborhood. You probably wondered what your new neighbors would be like and hoped that they would be nice, courteous and a pleasure to live by. Most residents, homeowners and tenants also desire neighbors who will take good care of the exterior of their homes, their lawn and their property in general.

A few questions to ask yourself in evaluating your neighboring skills are:

* Look at your property from your neighbor's perspective. Is it a pleasing view or are there things you could do to make your property look better (trim weeds or brush, discard old equipment, cars or supplies, or complete unfinished projects)?

* Am I keeping my lawn mowed and trimmed on a consistent basis?

* Am I considerate about the level of noise created by my household that may be affecting others (e.g. tv, radio, musical instruments, parties and entertaining, etc)?

* Do I park my car(s) appropriately, not in front of mailboxes, neighboring driveways, and not extending over the sidewalk?

* Do I keep the exterior of my home in good condition?

* Is the trim on my home painted and in good shape?

* Is the garage door down when it is not in use?

* Are the trash cans out of view of the street or adjoining properties, except on pickup days?

If you own a dog, it is important to take good care of it. Clean up after your dog on and off your property. It is good to remember that not everyone feels comfortable around dogs. You should be sensitive to how other people approach you and your dog and always keep your dog on a leash when on public property. Even on your own property, you must not allow your dog to bark and howl habitually.

Cat owners also have a responsibility in making sure their cat(s) does not become a nuisance.

National Good Neighbor Day is September 24

Good Neighbor Day was started by Mrs. Becky Mattson in Montana with Congressional correspondence to The Honorable Mike Mansfield in 1971. With Mr. Mansfield's enthusiastic support, National Good Neighbor Day (the fourth Sunday of September) was subsequently proclaimed by three United States Presidents: President Carter, President Ford and President Nixon. In addition, governors of many states also issued proclamations of Good Neighbor Day.

Being a Good Neighbor means many other things as well. Kindness shown to one another is something each of us can offer if we choose to. A few ideas of reaching out that you may want to consider are:

* Plan a block party

* Help the elderly, newcomers, and the handicapped in your neighborhood.

* Pick up litter, even if it's not yours.

* Take a plate of cookies to a neighbor - just because.

Thanks to all of you who work diligently being good neighbors and in keeping Witherbee a special place to live.

WNA June Garage Sales

By karen Vogeley

Unlike last year, we didn't experience rain on the days of the sale. This year we struggled with heat. That didn't stop people from looking over all the furniture, bicycles, clothing, toys, appliances we were selling. And they bought a bunch of it! Twenty two families had a sale, some on one or two days, some on all three.

The small fees from each participant purchased ads in the Journal Star and American Classified (aka Thrifty Nickle). Flyers were posted at various local businesses. Our web site had a map with information on what was being sold at each address. Sellers and buyers could, and did, download and print the information in order to visit all the sales that interested them.



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'Midtown' Developments Proceeding On Schedule

The repaving and widening of streets and the construction of new businesses have people referring to the business area in the 48th and O St. area as Midtown Lincoln. The reformation merits a name, they say, because the changes involve much more than just an intersection or street address. Revitalization of the properties and existing business that have endured the decline of others as well as road construction are cause to celebrate Midtown's renewal.

As work progresses on widening of O Street, new buildings are sprouting in the 48th and O Street area. The City was able to purchase the property on the south side of O Street from a willing seller on January 9 and implementation of the redevelopment project has begun. Environmental testing was completed, asbestos removed and the buildings demolished. Construction of the new Walgreens has already begun. In fact, the store plans to open yet this year. As you read this, construction of the new West Gate Bank branch office and the Runza/Braeda restaurant may have also already begun just east of Walgreens.

On the north side of O Street, a redevelopment agreement has been approved, but groundwork is still being done, including environmental assessment, rezoning, and establishment of a special assessment district. Demolition of the existing vacant auto dealership buildings should occur in early 2007, followed by construction of the Hy-Vee development. Mayor Seng announced in early July that Hy-Vee will invest \$15 million in a new 78,000-square-foot supermarket on the north side of O Street between 50th and 52nd streets. The store will employ about 400 people. Construction is expected to begin by late fall and the store will have a drive-through pharmacy, bank, restaurants and "club room" for special events. The smaller Hy-Vee at 70th and O will eventually close.

One incentive in the project is that the city will open up 50th Street between O and R streets. The owner of the building in which Office Depot is located says the developments in Midtown are having a positive impact. Office Depot wasn't planning to renew its lease until it heard about the Hy-Vee and 50th Street project, he said. The lease has been renewed

and he plans to improve the exterior of the building and Office Depot plans to improve the interior.

As part of the Hy-Vee deal, the city would create a special assessment district to open up 50th Street between O and R streets. That means property owners along the future 50th Street segment would pay for the new street, at an estimated cost of \$480,000, over 15 years, if the council approves the district later this year.

The city negotiated initially with Hy-Vee, Pinnacle Bank and McCombs Commercial Realty after choosing their redevelopment idea over one other proposal last year. But Pinnacle and McCombs eventually withdrew from the project.

Both O and 48th streets are expected to be open to traffic in late fall.

Celebrate Neighborhoods

LNA (Lincoln Neighborhood Alliance) 3rd Annual Celebrate Neighborhoods will be held Sept. 10th at Antelope Park from 1-4 pm. This event enables all neighborhoods in Lincoln to get together, share ideas, network, and have a lot of fun. There will be food, entertainment, games for children of all ages, as well as Lincoln neighborhood information and displays. It is also a time to meet and talk with city government officials. Mayor Seng, along with most of the City Council members, will attend.



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 Single – one vote; Family – two votes, one per person; Senior Family – same as Family; Additional Household Member -one vote; Sponsor – up to three votes, one per person; Benefactor – same as sponsor and listed in newsletter once
 Business – one vote as per bylaws, reduced ad costs, one free listing in newsletter, and an ad on our web site.