

Summit News

What's happening in your neighborhood

November 2009

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Upcoming Events

Nathan Bishop Open House 11/17
SNA/MHNA History Night 11/24
Tree Planting Application Deadline 12/1

Board Meetings

Monday, Nov 16th
Monday, Dec. 21st
Monday, Jan. 18th

The meetings will take place at Summit Commons (The former Hillside Nursing facility) at 99 Hillside Ave. Meetings begin at 7:00 p.m.

SNA Events Committee: Making Things Happen

On Sunday July 19th the Summit Neighborhood Association hosted its second annual Park Party at the Ninth Street playground. Approximately 20 neighbors attended the event which included games and snacks, as well as meeting new neighbors and learning about new and ongoing projects for the Summit Neighborhood Association.

The events committee is working on its fall and winter events including "neighborhood nights" at local businesses. Event updates are posted on the website at www.sna.providence.ri.us.

We welcome new ideas for events, as well as volunteers to host and/or coordinate neighborhood events. Please contact us at events@sna.providence.ri.us to get involved.

Submitted by Sara Masri

New Nathan Bishop Middle School Opens



Newly Renovated School Promises to Help Revive Public Education on the East Side

If you drive down Elmgrove Avenue in the early morning or late afternoon, you'll see something we have not seen in three years: children streaming in and out of Nathan Bishop Middle School.

In the Spring of 2006, Nathan Bishop was closed by the school department, nearly 80 years after it was built in 1929. The closing marked the most recent chapter in the decline of public education on Providence's East Side. While it can be argued that this decline reflects the lower number of school-aged children in East Side neighborhoods, careful observers will recognize that the declining number of children also reflects growing dissatisfaction with the state of public education, as many families who would otherwise love living in the city nonetheless leave for the suburbs when their children reach school age.

Shortly after Bishop's closing, East Side parents and others interested in maintaining a vital system of public education mobilized to reopen it as a model school. More than three years later, that dream has finally come true. Now, Nathan Bishop has risen phoenix-like from its dilapidated state and has been reopened for the 2009-2010 school year.

The facility has been thoroughly renovated and restored to its original luster, and beyond. A dramatic auditorium, a two-story library and the preservation of much of the original detail work make for a beautiful building. Extensive use of advanced educational technology make it a premier educational facility, and sophisticated use of natural lighting and recycled rainwater make the school as environmentally sound as it is aesthetically pleasing.

Solid staffing matches the spectacular building. An award-winning

See "Nathan Bishop" p. 6

Tree Planting Program Comes to Summit

On a recent cool but clear Saturday afternoon, a group of Summit neighbors gathered in the middle of 12th street, shovels in hand. When they finished their work, 11th and 12th streets had ten new street trees, at no cost to the residents other than their labor.



Since 1988, the Providence Neighborhood Planting Program (PNPP) has been using Providence Parks Department funds, matched by grants from the Mary Elizabeth Sharpe Street Endowment, to provide trees to groups who can plant at least five trees in a 1-3 block area.

Once a volunteer has gathered names of residents who want trees and the application has been approved, PNPP director Liz Downing and her team prepare the planting sites by excavating the soil and replacing it with loose fill. Where necessary, they cut the sidewalk to provide more moisture for the tree, and help prevent tree roots from lifting the cement.

While they will try to honor requests for particular species when possible, PNPP chooses the trees based on a number of considerations: height and branch structure (especially where over-head wires will require eventual pruning), diversity (so that the effects of a species-specific disease will be lessened), and street conditions.

Planting day was easy and fun. We removed the loose fill from the pits before Liz arrived with a crew who unloaded the trees in front of each site. After watching a demonstration planting, the ten neighbors worked in teams and, with the help of Liz and her crew, had all the trees planted and were enjoying hot cider in about 1.5 hours.

Summit residents are fortunate to live in one of the greener areas of the city but, even here, the tree canopy can be expanded. Trees provide a number of significant benefits, to both the individual property owners and their neighbors.

Tree-lined streets are attractive to prospective home-buyers and thus increase property values, provide shade in the summer and can dramatically reduce cooling costs. They produce oxygen and lessen the effects of pollution and, of course, trees add beauty and help connect urban dwellers to the natural environment.

PNPP conducts tree plantings twice annually, in fall and spring. The deadline for the spring 2010 planting is December 1, 2009.

You can find out more about the Providence Neighborhood Planting program at www.pnpp.org.

-Tom Schmeling

Fountain News

As we move out of summer and into fall, SNA has been taking a two-pronged approach with our effort to restore the Henry Bowen Anthony fountain in Lippitt Park.

At the same time that we're working with the city to raise funds by writing grants, we've been using the SNA table at the Hope Street Farmer's Market (currently located in Lippitt Park, home of the fountain) to accept donations and obtain signatures for our petition. It's been a major success: hundreds of people have come up to us to share their love of the neighborhood they live in and the fountain that's one of its treasures.

We've been extremely happy with the overwhelming response, but maybe we shouldn't be surprised. The same people who believe in local, sustainable farming are the same ones who value the quality of life that a historic fountain provides. And those people, of course, are our neighbors.

-Jesse Polhemus

DO YOU REMEMBER....

WHERE THE EAST SIDE USED TO BE?

SNA joins with the Mt. Hope Neighborhood Association for our second annual joint neighborhood History Night on Tuesday, November 24 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Church of the Redeemer, 655 Hope Street.

This time around, we invite neighbors to create their own history of the East Side by calling on Rhode Island's most important navigational aid: our memory maps of where vanished neighborhood landmarks used to be. Do you remember the Jenkins Street or Summit Avenue Schools? Did you shop at Miller's Deli or Carl's Diggin's? Did you bowl at Down Under Duckpins (which was where Sullivan's Lanes used to be)?

Last year's event on the history of North Main Street was very well attended. One of the highlights was the wealth of memories shared by audience members. This time around, we'll devote the entire program to audience participation. Please join us on Nov. 24th for a lively exploration into remembered neighborhood stores, schools, restaurants and organizations.

-Jon Howard

Visit us online at

www.SummitNeighbors.org

North Burial Ground Exploration

The North Main Street Committee in conjunction with the Summit Neighborhood Association held an evening of exploration at the North Burial Ground on Tuesday July 28. Graveyard Historian Robert O. Jones led a short walking tour of the Burial Ground accompanied by a local naturalist.

At the end of the tour, there was ghost story telling by renowned RI Story Teller Mark Binder. Did you know that educator Horace Mann, Stephen Hopkins, signer of the Declaration of Independence (born in Providence), and artist Edward Mitchell Bannister are buried at NBG?

If you want to learn about events such as this before the fact, be sure to sign up for the Summit email listserv at www.summitneighbors.org.

-Jim Kelley

Crime and Crime Watch

SNA periodically checks in with Lt. Schiavulli, Commander of the Community Policing District 8 for current crime statistics. For sub-district 8-3 which largely captures the area north of Rochambeau, violent crime declined by 17%. So far this year there have been three robberies and two assaults with firearms; these generally take place along North Main Street.

So far this year, property crime is up 2% over last year due to a 53% increase in larcenies from vehicles. The Lt. advises that cars that are targeted if there is something of value that is visible (purses, change, GPS, etc.). If you see suspicious activity, call 272-1111 and a cruiser will be dispatched. Summit ListServ members have notified each other of occurrences, which has helped keep neighbors alert.

Because of the interest of many neighbors (including some who have been victims of property crimes) Monica Anderson, Community Liaison for Miriam Hospital has re-started a Summit Crime Watch Organization. Meetings were held in July and August and both meetings had over 40 neighbors attending. A survey of participants was conducted for the reason for the interest in a Crime Watch and "Break-ins of Neighbors" was the top reason by far.

At the August 19 meeting, the very successful North End (of Westerly) Crime Watch (www.northendcrimewatch.org) presented their history and approach which was very successful by forming a loose organization of "observers" and "reporters" to the police.

The Summit Crime Watch Organization has defined similar roles with specific types of participation as Block Captains, Block Watchers, and Other Supporting Volunteers. There will be another organizational meeting which will be announced on the Summit ListServ and on the Summit website at www.SummitNeighbors.org

-Jim Kelley

Hope Street Merchants Association

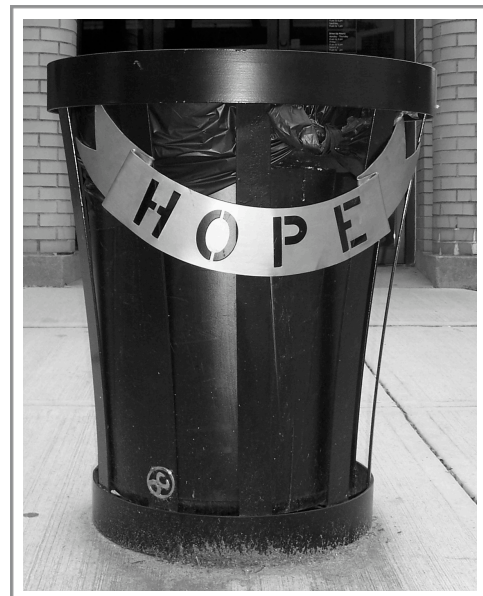
Since its establishment two years ago, the Hope Street Merchants Association has shown a serious commitment to improving our community and making Hope Street more alluring than ever. Old plastic waste receptacles have given way to new, black steel cans handmade at the Steel Yard here in Providence (see photo below) and bright red sculptural bike racks are now positioned where once there were none. Planters filled with beautiful flowers and maintained by the Groden Center mark every corner and new trees dot the sidewalks courtesy of a partnership with Providence's Trees 2020.

"We've had help along the way," says Nanda Carvalhal-Head, owner of Nanda Interiors and president of the Merchants Association. "Mayor Cicilline and Miriam Hospital have been very supportive, but it really takes a strong and committed collective of businesses to bring about this kind of growth."

In addition to a continuation of successful street festivals, future endeavors include plans for public art, more tree plantings, new bus shelters designed specifically for the neighborhood, new steel park benches, and even open-space recycling bins.

Summit neighbors can help facilitate these changes. "Shop local, folks," says Asher Schofield of Frog and Toad. "When you spend at these businesses, you can truly see it going back into your community."

Summit Neighborhood Association supports the Hope Street Merchants Association's efforts to bring greater vitality to the Hope Street business district and commends the Merchants Association for their efforts to date.



One of the new Steel Yard trash cans in the Hope Street Business District

Nominations Sought for 2010 SNA Board Members

At our annual membership meeting in February, the Summit Neighborhood Association will elect its officers and Board of Directors. The current board seeks nominations for President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary and Board of Directors.

We are soliciting nominations (and self-nominations) for the above positions. If you are interested, please contact the chair of the Nominating Committee, Tom Schmeling at TSchmeling@ric.edu or 277-0655. If you know someone who you think would be a valuable contributor to the Board, please ask them to contact us, or send us their name and we will reach out to them.

Board membership is rewarding in several ways: you will get to know many more of your neighbors than you might otherwise, learn how city government works (and fails to work) on issues from zoning to snow removal and trash collection. Most important, you have a chance to work with other civic-minded people to help make Summit and Providence a better place to live for yourself and everyone else.

Please consider serving on the SNA Board. Nominations should be received by January 1.

-Tom Schmeling

The Summit Neighborhood Association

A non-profit grassroots organization devoted to preserving, advocating for, and improving the quality of life in the Summit Neighborhood

Visit us online at
www.Summitneighbors.org
or write to us at:

Summit Neighborhood Association
PO Box 41092
Providence, RI 02940

Summit News is the newsletter of the Summit Neighborhood Association. Summit News is published three times a year and distributed to neighborhood households free of charge.

If you have ideas for future issues, please contact SNA President Jim Kelley at 453-1396 or jim-kelley2@cox.net.

Stay Connected with The Summit Listserv

Do you wonder what your neighbors are talking about? Are you looking for some advice about a mechanic/electrician/plumber/dentist? Want the latest on crime, street repairs, etc.? Join the Summit Listserv, where these and other bits of neighborhood information and opinion are shared!

1. go to <http://www.SummitNeighbors.org/>
2. Click on "mailing list".
3. Sign-up and share information with over 200 Summit neighbors!

The SNA Board of Directors

President

Jim Kelley
453-1396 jim-kelley2@cox.net

Vice-President

Thomas Schmeling
277-0655 tschmeling@ric.edu

Treasurer

Aaron Masri
524-2864 amasri1@cox.net

Secretary

Melissa Grisi
419-0239 melisgrisi@hotmail.com

Board Members:

John Bazik
Dan Cahill
Grant Dulgarian
Greg Gerritt
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Claude Goldman
Irma Gross
George Schietinger

Non-voting Board Members:

Connie Chesebrough
Liz Cameron
Sheila Perlow

Fountain Project:

Jesse Polhemus



Yes! I want to belong to the Summit Neighborhood Association

I enclose my 2010 membership contribution of ___\$15 ___\$25 ___\$50 Other \$____

Name (print)_____ email_____

Name 2 _____ email_____

Address_____

Daytime Phone_____ Evening Phone_____

I can help ☐ Deliver Newsletters ☐ Make phone calls ☐ canvas my street ☐ other

My biggest neighborhood concerns are: _____

Please enclose a check made out to: Summit Neighborhood Association

Mail to: SNA, PO Box 41092, Providence, RI, 02940

Business Scene

The good news is that all the storefronts that were empty at the time of the February newsletter are now filled, with one exception which is under construction.

WINGS OVER PROVIDENCE has opened at 725 Hope Street, filling both the old **SMALL CHANGE** and **TANNING SALON** spaces. This is the only WINGS operation in Rhode Island according to Bob Zampano, the proprietor. They offer 23 flavors of Wings, sandwiches and salads. This is primarily "take out" but will deliver or eat-in. tel. 272-WING
www.wingsover.com

HONEYDEW DONUTS has just opened at 773 Hope, corner of Burlington, where there was an ice cream shop briefly. The building permit posted at 771 Hope (the former Dunkin' Donuts space) indicates renovations for a pizza shop. At the north end of Hope Street, **BEAUTY FIRST NAIL SALON** has opened in the old Curves space at 1080 Hope, offering manicures, pedicures, artificial nails, massages, and waxing. The bad news on Hope Street is that the **CATERING COLLABORATIVE** at 729 closed abruptly on June 1st, after 20 years at that location.

Down on North Main Street, **THE ASIAN PALACE** has opened in June at 1190 where **OFF TRACK BEDDING** 'used to be'. A significant investment was made for the renovation and the interior is a beautiful place to enjoy Chinese, Japanese, and Thai cuisine.
www.asianpalacedining.com

Welcome, all, to our neighborhood!

-Judy Brown-

Neighborhood Plan Approved

The Summit Neighborhood plan, as part of the Hope, Mount Hope and Blackstone Plan, was approved at the October 20th meeting of the City Planning Commission. This is the culmination of the involvement of many people beginning in 2006 when Mayor David N. Cicilline and the City Council began a planning process called Providence Tomorrow to create more in-depth, detailed planning conducted at the neighborhood level. The height of this process included a charrette held during a full week in the fall of 2007; there was much and lively participation by residents, neighborhood groups, experts, and local officials.

Although the meeting on October 20 was the culmination of the plan approval process, the execution of the plan is just beginning. The purpose of the neighborhood plan is to help prioritize funding for projects and infrastructure improvements, as well as provide a guide for redevelopment efforts. The action plan includes specific short-, mid- and long-term goals on ten pages to address issues or conditions in the neighborhood. The plan also sets out the course for amending zoning regulations that affect our neighborhood.

The Summit Neighborhood Association has been closely involved throughout the process and provided comments at the two public hearings of the plan. Our comments included clarification of historical information and preservation of residential character. The charrette process included much discussion about North Main Street and the SNA included comments developed through its North Main Street Project, including pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development. We are pleased to see that two of the action items listed are underway: the renovation of the Henry Bowen Anthony Fountain in Lippitt Park and making Smithfield Avenue fully 2-Way

The final plan (over 37 pages) is available on the DPD website <http://www.providenceplanning.org> or on the Summit Neighborhood Association website <http://sna.providence.ri.us> There is very interesting historical and demographic information in the plan and it is well worth reading to learn about the neighborhood. It is uncertain if hard copies will be produced (we hope so).

-Jim Kelley

SNA at the Farmers Market

On Saturdays this summer, the Summit Neighborhood Association set up a table at the Hope Street Farmers Market at Lippitt Park. The SNA used the opportunity to heighten its visibility in the neighborhood, handing out information about the Association and trying to recruit new members and volunteers. Topics from visiting neighbors ranged from bike racks at Lippitt Park to the excitement of having the Farmers Market in the Summit neighborhood. The topic that generated the most interest and discussion was the fountain project, and the majority of people were supportive of its revitalization. The SNA will continue their relationship with Farm Fresh RI and the Down-City Farmers Market Association and hope to see the Farmers Market in Lippitt Park again next year.

-Melissa Grisi

Visit us online at:

www.SummitNeighbors.org

Nathan Bishop (Cont. from P. 1)

principal, Mike Lazzareschi, along with a team of teacher-leaders, were given unprecedented authority to hire the faculty.

Mr. Lazzareschi is not the only one winning awards. In October, Nathan Bishop itself won an "Adaptive Re-Use Award" from Preserve Rhode Island and the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission.

In order to establish a strong academic and social environment, the inaugural class consists of only 200 6th graders, at least fifty of whom were enticed to leave private schools and come to Nathan Bishop. A new grade will be introduced in each of the next two years, until the school houses 6-8th grades.

The Nathan Bishop PTO got off to a fast start, having been organized last spring by a group of energetic and dedicated parents. They are holding their first fundraiser on Nov. 10th, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Mills Tavern. **A community open house at Bishop is scheduled for Nov. 17th from 5:00-7:00 p.m.**

Of special interest to Summit neighbors is the attendance policy for the school. Generally, Providence Schools requires that eighty percent of the seats at a school are reserved as the first or second choice of neighborhood residents, with twenty percent reserved for "school choice" for children from other neighborhoods.

The School Department has traditionally defined neighborhoods by drawing circles around the school, without regard to geography. As a consequence, some parts of Summit were designated as part of the neighborhood of Esek Hopkins Middle School, on the other side of I-95. Fortunately, the Department has revisited this policy, and Nathan Bishop is the primary neighborhood middle school for all who live east of the highway.

With the opening of Nathan Bishop, and with two neighborhood elementaries operating as high-performing schools, Summit residents now have good reason to believe that they will be able to raise their children here and have access to good-quality public schools

-Tom Schmeling

Tar Beach/Tar Hill

The North Main Street (NMS) Steering Committee (a committee of the Summit Neighborhood Association in partnership with the Mount Hope Neighborhood Association and Miriam Hospital) is pleased to announce that Summit residents and successful developers Peter Gill Case of Truth Box Architects and Jordan Durham of D+P Real Estate Advisors (jmd@durhampolak.com) have expressed interest in transforming the eyesore at 1261 North Main (corner of Ninth and North Main Street) that is derisively known as "tar hill" or "tar beach".

The North Main Street committee and the SNA are especially excited that Peter and Jordan are actively in the process of acquiring this property from Miriam Hospital and creatively transforming it into a "green" pedestrian-friendly mixed-use development. On October 22 at Miriam's Fain building, the developers, Truth Box and D+P Real Estate, presented to interested neighbors their proposed design for this site. The developers presented a creative solution for this difficult site which included a 2,000 ft. street-level commercial space, residential apartments, parking and many green elements. The creativity is not surprising. Peter Gill Case is the developer behind the efficient use of cast-off shipping containers into office space on Harris Avenue and Jordan Durham is contributing design strategy and other support including financial expertise to this project.

Hurdles remain, including City approval and financial feasibility. The Summit Neighborhood Association is sending a strong letter of support for the November 17 City Planning Commission hearing. Is anyone interested in a 2,000 square foot commercial space for a café, artist studio collaborative, kosher deli, or something else?

It is hoped that fixing this "broken window" on North Main Street will inspire the owner (Steve Lewinstein) of the larger "broken window" (the former Sears building) to develop his building so it will be an asset and not a liability to our community.

-Jim Kelley

Two-Way Smithfield Avenue Moving Forward

Thanks to a resolution introduced in the City Council by Councilman Jackson, with input from SNA and local constituents, the project to make Smithfield Avenue two-way has been approved. On June 4th, 2009, the City Council voted to approve the resolution and authorize work to begin.

While the precise scope of work is still to be established, what is known is that the RI Department of Transportation will be responsible for modifying the traffic signal at the intersection with North Main Street, while the City of Providence will perform the necessary work on the street between North Main and Nashua Streets. One large piece of the project will involve relocating a utility pole which is currently sited in the middle of the intersection with Nashua Street.

As part of his work with SNA in working to improve North Main Street, consultant Michael Lozano will maintain constant communication with Councilman Jackson regarding the status of this project and advocate for needed pedestrian improvements.

-Aaron Masri