

Neighborhood News

The Northfield East Side Neighborhood Association is dedicated to fostering community and improving the quality of life in our neighborhood by communicating relevant issues to residents, addressing safety and housing issues, hosting social events, and facilitating cooperative efforts between the neighborhood, the city, and our institutional neighbors.

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue #2 Spring 2011

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An update from the Northfield East Side Board of Directors

Back In 2006, a group of neighbors came together to oppose a plan by Carleton College to build a new dorm at Second and Maple Streets that, if built, would have crossed into a residential area and encroached on the College's own treasured Japanese Garden. From this initial group, a more formal neighborhood organization was formed to further community life and address issues of concern to the neighborhood. We define our neighborhood as the area from Washington Street on the west to Prairie Street on our east, and from First to Seventh Streets. Since its inception, the Northfield East Side Neighborhood Association (NESNA) has tried to focus on various issues that are important to individuals in our neighborhood. However, since the roots of our association are deeply tied to Carleton College, we often find ourselves focusing largely on issues associated with the College.

Moving forward, the NESNA Board, as your representatives, has decided that NESNA needs to better reflect the needs and wishes of the entire neighborhood. With your help, we are seeking to broaden the scope of NESNA and focus on a variety of issues important to our neighborhood. We need to hear from you about what you would like your neighborhood association to address. What needs might be met by NESNA and how might we better foster community life? For starters, the Board came up with some possible candidates:

- Open the lines of communication between the neighborhood and the downtown, including the library, which is an important neighbor to the west.
- The two parks, Central and Old Memorial Parks, are wonderful neighborhood gathering spots that need care and protection.
- Some neighbors have expressed the need for help with lawn and garden maintenance.
- Sponsor several events that would be fun for the entire family, including our annual picnic, a fall event, and a sledding party next winter.

We also plan to move our annual meeting from spring to fall when it can better correspond with fall elections and, frankly, when the weather is better! Finally, we want to communicate better with our members via our new, quarterly newsletter along with promoting more communication through our Facebook page and our Web site.

We will still follow closely any developments at Carleton that impact our neighborhood, and we will continue to work with the College to find solutions that work for both the neighborhood and the College. Recently, NESNA coordinated a meeting with Carleton on April 19 to discuss the Weitz Center for Creativity (the former Arts Union) and college parking needs. We plan to work with the College moving forward to keep this open dialogue between Carleton and the neighborhood.

In order to for us to serve our neighborhood better, we need to hear from you! Please let us know what you want from your neighborhood association. What issues are important to you? What do you want to know more about? How do you want to get involved? Additionally, we are always seeking neighbors to serve on our Board of Directors. We currently need board members who have an interest in leading initiatives involving our downtown, planning social events, or following rental and housing issues. Additionally, if you like to take pictures or communicate about interesting community events, we would love to have some "roving reporters" who can regularly post to our Facebook page and/or provide content for our newsletter and Web site.

Please contact Lisa Ash at ashxmn@yahoo.com if you have any ideas or suggestions for NESNA or if you are interested in learning more about serving on the NESNA Board.



A big catch at Carleton's Lyman Lake

Get to know your neighborhood

Joe Hargis, Carleton's Associate Vice President for External Relations, reminds us of a few of the ways neighbors can engage with the College (and he warmly invites us to take advantage of them!):

- Community members may use the Carleton library and check out (without charge) most materials (<http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/library/about/policies/>).
- Everyone is invited to attend Carleton events at no cost, including weekly convocations, musical and dramatic performances, sports, art exhibitions, and a variety of lectures. You'll also have a chance to experience events at the new Weitz Center for Creativity when it opens this fall. For a list of all Carleton events, visit: <http://apps.carleton.edu/calendar/>
- Community members are welcome to hike, bike, ski, and run in the Carleton arboretum. Bring your fishing pole, too, if you'd like to test your fishing skills.
- Community members and groups may rent College facilities, including Great Hall, Skinner Memorial Chapel and the Concert Hall for community activities and weddings when the College is not in session.
- Carleton has developed a dedicated Web site <http://apps.carleton.edu/community/> to help community members stay connected to campus activities. You can also sign up for the College's community email newsletter, Intersections, and access an on-line form to request specific information or provide feedback about any Carleton topic.

For more information, please contact Joe at jhargis@carleton.edu or at 507-222-4327



History and Central Park

Central Park is a symbol of the earliest planning for the city of Northfield and of the vision of John North, a native of Utica, New York. North, an early and influential resident of the Territory of Minnesota who first settled at the falls of St. Anthony, was drawn to the waterpower potential of the Cannon River. North's plat for Northfield was made when permanent settlement of the Upper Cannon Valley was just beginning. Invested in land and waterpower, North had much in common with the many town site developers active in Minnesota in the 1850s.

With the provision of building lots intended for mills, stores, and shops, North envisioned a civic and commercial center focused on the river and Division Street. Central Park was prominently sited as the focus of a residential area.

This early park, like others in Minnesota's first towns and cities, was of simple design and often served practical needs. In the first years of settlement, cows were sometimes allowed to graze here. Landscape improvements such as trees, walks, and benches were added incrementally. The turn-of-the-century fountain and gazebo have disappeared, but Central Park's historic appearance remains largely intact.

Today, Central Park is at the heart of one of the city's oldest residen-

tial areas. Because there was very little development outside Northfield's original plat and its early additions until well after 1900, the edges of the "old town" around the park remain distinct.

Three examples of Northfield's distinctive Gothic Revival cottages frame Central Park, along with a variety of other nineteenth and twentieth century houses. Many of the picturesque cottages built during the first decade after the Civil War have steeply pitched dormers and round, segmental, or pointed arch windows.

Reprinted from The Northfield Heritage Preservation Brochure - At Home in Northfield: A Walking and Biking Tour

Adopt A Park

Orphaned Parks Search for Adoptive parents!

The City of Northfield has launched an "Adopt a Park" program, urging groups of citizens to help organize clean-up and other projects. In the NESNA territory, Memorial Park is still in need of a group of sponsors. If you'd like to learn more about how to adopt a park, contact Northfield's Streets and Parks Supervisor at 645-3032.

Memorial Park Thirsts for Trees!

Last fall we began a fund-raising campaign to bring many more trees to Memorial Park, and we're two-thirds of the way to our goal. But we still need \$1000 to complete the campaign.

To reach our target, we need many small contributions. If you can help, please send your check (made out to "City of Northfield") to NESNA board member Scott Carpenter at 602 Prairie St., Northfield, MN 55057. Contributions are tax deductible!

Report from Ward 1 City Council Representative: Suzie Nakasian



These have been purposeful, packed and productive months for the 2011 City Council! Here are updates on a few of our key projects:

Save the Downtown Post Office: More than 40 local residents showed up at the April 5 City Council meeting where Postal representatives announced their intention to sell Northfield's downtown Post Office and relocate window services to the Postal Annex facility on the south edge of town. The community sentiment at that meeting was unequivocal and clear – we need the Post Office to stay in downtown Northfield! We have until June 1 to appeal the USPS' decision!

Following the USPS announcement, the City Council immediately asked the [Northfield Downtown Development Corporation \(NDDC\)](#) to mobilize a Save Our Post Office Task Force, which I now serve as Council Liaison. We have entered into negotiation with postal officials to try to find an alternative to their leaving the downtown. While we do that, USPS sources tell us that emails and letters from local residents and businesses are essential to reversing the intended closure! Your help is needed!

Please consider taking these four steps to help keep the post office in our downtown!

1. **Sign a SOPO petition:** on the [Northfield News](#) or [Northfield PATCH](#) websites,
2. **Write a letter** to both Natalie Sorvari, Consumer Affairs Manager, and Anthony Williams, Regional District Manager (both at this address: USPS/Northland District, 100 S. First Street, Minneapolis, MN 55401) and convey your sense of the impact of the proposed move on you/your business and on our downtown economy.
3. **Email a Customer Comment to the USPS:** go to <http://www.usps.com/> and at the top of that web page click on "Customer Service", and then click on "Send Us an Email" and convey to them why the loss of our downtown Post Office is a problem for your household/business and/or downtown Northfield.
4. Send an email by May 30 to Congressman Kline [Congressman John Kline](#) and Senators [Al Franken](#) and [Amy Klobuchar](#) urging them to support our efforts to keep our post office downtown. (Note: letters to Congress can be subject to a 2 week security delay, so in light of our June 1 deadline, emails are preferred.)

Additional information on the Save our Post Office effort (and addresses for our Congressional representatives) are available on the NDDC's [Save the Post Office!](#) website. Thank you for your consideration of support of this effort.

New Safety Center Update:

This is the largest capital improvement project Northfield will see for decades and the City Council is intent on getting it right! We have narrowed the field of potential sites, and are pursuing a plan that will serve present and future needs while staying within a budget that is realistic for these economic times. Details about the project are outlined on the [Project Website](#). I will update the Ward when a slate of final options are indentified, and as always, I encourage you to contact me via email with your comments and suggestions about this important project.

Land Development Code (or LDC):

A final draft of the LDC is under review by the City Council and approval is anticipated later this Spring. I have been active in this project since its start in 2008 when we started with the (hopeful) motto *Northfield 2030: put your fingerprints on our blueprint.* Thanks to many months of devoted work by the Northfield Planning Commission, we now have an draft LDC that reflects the land use principles that are articulated in the 2008 Northfield Comprehensive Plan. This consistency will help insure that the built environment we will see in 2030 is one we will welcome! There will no doubt be details to correct, and kinks to work out once the LDC is adopted, but overall the new code brings forward a workable *blueprint* for future land use in the community. In encourage you to explore the [Draft LDC](#) and write me with your comments and suggestions.

As always, I encourage you to email me at suzienakasian@gmail.com or call me (507-301-6756) with questions, comments or suggestions relating to community issues and the work of the City Council.

Finally, I encourage you to stay informed about the work of the City Council:

1. Access City Council Meeting Agendas and Minutes on the [Council Website](#)
2. Attend our weekly meetings, Tuesdays a 7p.m. in City Hall, 801 Washington Street
3. Tune in to our meetings via the [KYMN Online Stream](#) (and access archived meetings at www.KYMNradio.net)
4. Follow our work through the League of Women Voters' [Observer Reports](#) (which you can request be sent to your email by request), and
5. Stay in touch with me about the issues that face our community! Thank you!

Upcoming Events

Thursday, May 12th

Crazy Day at the Carleton Bookstore. Tables full of clearance and closeouts. 50-75% off on many items. Open at 9:00 a.m.

Saturday, May 14th

Thanks to residents who came to help clean up Central Park Cleanup on April 30th. Come to add plants to the garden on Saturday MAY 14TH. If questions, call Jerri Hurlbutt 507-581-6162 or Molly Woehrlin 645-9619

Saturday, May 14th

Annual Arboretum Bird Count. You don't need to be an expert birder to participate, just a willingness to look, listen and learn! Contact Nancy Braker (nbraker@carleton.edu or 507-222-4543) for more information.

Wednesday, June 15th

Books and Stars with Pop Wagner. Way Park. Booker open at 6:30. Concert begins at 7:00 pm.

Sunday, June 19th

The Northfield East Side Annual Picnic. Mark your calendars for another great neighborhood potluck.

June 22 - June 25th

Junebug Music Festival Downtown-various locations

NESNA Board of Directors

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Have an idea for an article for the
newsletter?

Have a question or concern?

Want to be added to our mailing list?

Want to write for our newsletter or website?

Interested in being on the NESNA Board?

Please Contact Us!

We'd love to hear from you!

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Neighborhood Association