



Browncroft Crier

NEWSLETTER OF THE BROWNCROFT NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

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<http://browncroftna.org>

Summer/Fall 2022

BNA Executive Committee Officers:

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Frank Fields
Vice-President
Cassy Petsos
Secretary
Sara Castro
Treasurer
John McQueen

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James Nicholson
Corwin
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Croydon
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Crier Editor -

Cassy Petsos

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BNA ANNUAL MEETING WITH THE MAYOR

The BNA Annual Meeting was held on May 26th at the Ark of Jesus Church. This was the first in-person meeting in two years. The Ark of Jesus minister and his staff were very welcoming, and because mandated covid protocols were still in effect, they had the added work of maintaining a special sign-in and taking temperatures of attendees.

The slate of candidates for BNA Officers for the year 2022 to 2023 was passed by acclamation:

Frank Fields, President
Cassy Petsos, Vice-President
John McQueen, Treasurer
Sara Castro, Secretary

To see the biographical information of the officers, please refer to the Spring Crier available on the BNA website. Thank you to these individuals for volunteering their services to keep the Browncroft Neighborhood Association moving forward.

Tom Richards, Rochester's Mayor from 2011 to 2013 and a neighborhood resident, introduced our Guest Speaker, current Mayor Malik Evans.

Mayor Evans provided those attending with some recent events that had positive implications for the fu-

QUENTIN ROAD LOSES TWO BNA CHARTER MEMBERS

It is with great sadness that we report the deaths of two residents who have served our Browncroft Community for many years.



Margaret Richter passed away on September 25, 2022 with pancreatic cancer. Margaret was BNA President in 1980 and 1981. She also had been a Street Representative on Quentin Road at various times through the years, and she was a Beautification Committee worker in the Browncroft Rose Garden from the beginning – 1972 – and for many years after. She was also an avid defender of Browncroft whenever zoning issues arose. Many of us who had worked with Margaret throughout the years on BNA issues of all kinds – including the subdivision among the neighbors of the City's land-locked empty parcel between Browncroft Boulevard,

Obituaries

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Quentin and Merchants Roads – have many humorous memories of her cheerfully forceful personality.

Margaret was very active at St. John's Catholic church on Humboldt Street (also known as Peace of Christ), singing in the choir and cooking mercy meals and luncheons for church groups.

Margaret is survived by her four children, as well as grandchildren.

She has many friends throughout the Browncroft community who will greatly miss her.



Jack Bloemendaal, a Quentin Road resident since 1970, passed away September 17, 2022 from complications due to Parkinson's disease.

Jack's wife, Sharon, has been the BNA History Committee Chairperson since 1984 and Jack was her right-hand man all those years, taking care of all the technical details needed to produce the BNA History Slide Show that has been shown many times to Browncroft residents at BNA general meetings, as well as to other history-minded community groups around Rochester.

Jack and Sharon raised two daughters on Quentin Road. They have hosted gatherings there of the

Annual Meeting

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ture, such as Rochester University talks teaching citizens to be engaged, the Clean Sweep event having been the most well-attended ever, and the City's plans to enlarge Rochester's tree cover with a goal to plant over 5,000 trees in the next five years in neighborhoods of need.

The Mayor outlined what will be his six focus items to create a safe and equitable Rochester:

- Public safety
- Economic development and empowerment
- Enhancing and strengthening neighborhoods
- Youth development
- Building toward a prosperous future
- Equity, inclusion and social justice.

Mayor Evans discussed these topics in detail, fleshing out the challenges and strategies for achieving these goals. He then gave a generous amount of his time to respond to the questions and concerns from the neighbors who attended.

Questions and concerns included city code enforcement, most particularly with regard to properties with repeated violations, and blight from zombie houses. The Mayor expressed his intent to

Photographic Historical Society (of which he was the co-founder in 1966), and the Landmark Society. Jack will be missed by many in the community. BNA's condolences go out to Sharon and the family.

provide resources to address this, which may include adding an attorney to the Corporation Council staff.

The noise issue from I-590 motorcycle traffic and whether sound barriers could be added was brought up; however, the expressway is in the purview of the State and County – not the City of Rochester. [Neighbors who would like to work on this as an initiative should contact BNA, which can put them in touch with others who will to work.]

Concern regarding the upcoming zoning code amendment was voiced, and the Mayor assured us that the City would not want to affect changes that would negatively impact the stability of neighborhoods such as Browncroft that contribute to the property values of the City.

The Police Accountability Board and the permanent appointment of a Chief of Police were discussed.

After the Mayor and his staff departed, the Treasurer's report, as well as committee reports were given. Holly Petsos encouraged everyone to stay informed about the Zoning Alignment Project (ZAP), which is the process for creating a new zoning code, and to go into the the ZAP website (<https://rochesterzap.com>) and give the City their comments. Also, BNA was still taking in the survey that was distributed in the last Crier.

It was announced that committee chairpersons were needed for the Hospitality and Membership committees, as well as street representatives from Croydon Road, Elm Drive and Ramsey Park.

CONGRATULATIONS 2022 GRADUATES BNA MEMBERSHIP - RENEW OR JOIN

Lola DeAscentiis



of Dorchester Road
High school diploma
from The Harley
School

Currently a freshman at Harvard University studying Philosophy, Politics, and Economics.

Andrew C. Goeckel



of Dorchester Road.
Bachelor of Arts, St.
John Fisher College,
May 2022.

Sophia Pomponio,



of Yarmouth Road
graduated from Our
Lady of Mercy School
for Women in May
2022. She is now a

freshman at Bucknell PA studying mathematics.

BROWNCROFT CHURCH ZONING

A group of concerned neighbors met after learning that the church property on the south east corner of Browncroft Blvd. and Winton Road has been proposed for rezoning from Residential-1 to a commercial designation known as "Neighborhood Mixed Use", on the proposed amended city zoning map under the Zoning Realignment Project (ZAP). This is the same designation as the commercial properties along Winton Road and Main Street.

The church is now the home of the Holy Name of Mary Church, which is under the auspices of the American Friends of the Society of St. Pius V, Inc. The church has a viable and devoted congregation,

The 2016 Membership Drive kicks off with this issue of the Browncroft Crier. Your membership is important to the Browncroft Neighborhood Association. It provides fiscal and moral support to your organization, which builds relationships between neighbors so that we can more effectively communicate our concerns and continue to ensure the quality of life in our area. Through the BNA, we can present a singular voice to local governments and organizations to build a cohesive, concerned and safer community.

Annual dues are \$10 per household and go directly to supporting the activities of the BNA such as: publishing this newsletter; maintaining the Rose Garden at Browncroft Blvd. and Merchants Rd.; printing flyer notices; holding general meetings; hosting social



as well as connections with its surrounding neighbors on Browncroft Boulevard, Winton and Corwin Roads.

This property is on a 100% residential block from Browncroft to Corwin and Browncroft to Newcastle and is in the Browncroft Historic District. It was built in the 1920s in the Tudor revival style, similar to many homes in the Browncroft neighborhood, includ-

events; organizing general meetings with guest speakers; and sponsoring the biennial BNA Garage Sale.

Equally important, your payment of dues is an expression of support and appreciation for the valuable personal volunteer time donated by BNA's 17 Street Representatives, 4 Officers, and 8 Committee Chairs who serve on the BNA Board of Directors, as well as the volunteers who perform their work for the betterment of this neighborhood of 672 residential households.

How to Pay Your Dues:

Please take the time to be a supporting member of BNA by enclosing your \$10 annual dues in the self addressed BNA envelope provided with this newsletter and filling in your name, address, phone, email, and demographic information. This information is kept confidential. Also, we recommend that you subscribe to the BNA-Announce list to receive notification of important neighborhood information or late breaking news. Your email will not be shared with any outside entity, social media or other neighbors, but it is a great way to stay connected with BNA between newsletters and meetings.

Thank you to all of our members!! Now is the time to renew or join and keep the traditions alive.

ing the home directly next door.

The church and neighbors would view this change to a potentially commercial use as adverse to the neighborhood and residential properties adjacent to it on all sides.

Holly Petsos

GARDEN WALK 2022 ...

Beauty, Landscaping Ideas, and Friendship

Thunderstorms were predicted on June 12th, but more than 100 intrepid garden aficionados trooped to 15 glorious gardens in Browncroft. We thank the hosts, who saw appreciative flower fanciers trek through their front and back yards. We saw hundreds of interesting varieties, from Happy Return day lilies to a fringe tree. One owner speculated that the largest London plane tree in Browncroft, and perhaps the city, was probably planted by the workers at Brown Bros. Nursery.

The water features from koi ponds to the fountains bubbled on the quiet Sunday afternoon. One yard offered no grass in the front



Original roses from 1930 in Browncroft Rose Garden (hybrid perpetuals)

snow; it had turned into an interesting shrub.

We all learned from each other, meeting old friends and new. How do you care for eight fig trees? Who raises pippin apples or crab apples?



Sign-in table in the Rose Garden



We took note of ideas for turning our small back yards into bowers of trees, shrubs, flowers and vines—especially the types of flora that flourish in shady areas.



Elmcroft yard



Beresford shade garden



Elm Drive

yard—only interesting shrubs, trees and flowers; the back yard had bamboo (both clumping and invasive) and an arbor vitae toppled by heavy

Statuary and stone sculptures adorned some yards. We saw a backyard theatre, a yard with 50 different varieties of hostas.



Yarmouth Japanese inspired (front)

We admired patios, walkways, and a 20-year-old hydrangea grow-

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BROWNCROFT SURVEY OF NEIGHBORS

Thank you to the 140 residents who completed and returned the survey insert in the spring Crier. That represents 21% of the recipients of the survey. That is a strong participation considering that the three page survey was a lot of work to fill-in. It was even more work to tally by the team of five BNA Board members.

Although almost half of the participants (46%) were residents for over 25 years, the next largest number were residents of 5 years or less (19%), 16 to 25 years (16%), 11 to 15 years (11%), then 6 to 10 years (8%). This neighborhood unquestionably has many long-time residents who have strong neighborhood sentiments; but the almost 20% of participants who are newer neighbors taking the time to answer is gratifying. All who answered question number 3 (homeowner or renter) were homeowners.

It will come as no surprise that **single family residential zoning** was overwhelmingly valued as 76% rated it very important, 18% important, 6 % somewhat important and less than 1% as not important. Of the participating homeowners, only 2 properties were multiple dwellings; however they still rated single family residential as important to very important, ironically.

Attractiveness of the neighborhood streets was appreciated as represented by the categories of streetscape and tree-lined streets. Given that the trees contribute to the streetscape, if we combine these two categories, over 60% consider them very important and over 30 % important.

Architecture is also rated as very important by 56%, important

32%, somewhat important 9%, and not by 3%.

Available schools – private or public – had very mixed ratings, which were addressed by households with school-age children as well as those without. Reporting households with children were 79% and 18% without (Note, not all categories were filled-in on the survey). Here are the percentages: Public schools – 33% very, 18% important, 25% somewhat, 24% not; Private – 24% very, 20% important, 27% somewhat, 29% not. We will need to report on the numbers in public schools, private schools, or home-school (write-in information that was not given a space on the survey) at a later date, as there are some questions.

The relatively low crime rate of the neighborhood was a highly appreciated factor: 89% very important, 8 % important, 2% somewhat, and no one said it was not important. This relates to the next categories of safe walk-ability.

Walk-ability within the neighborhood got high marks as 87% rated it very important and 10% important, 3% somewhat, and less than 1% not.

Walk-ability to nearby amenities such as shopping, the library and restaurant/bars in the early poles appeared that restaurant/bars were winning. But in the end they all had similar scores so the averages are: 48% very important, 32% important, 15% somewhat, and 5% not.

Transportation items – public transportation and expressway access – were not as interesting to residents filling out the survey. How to interpret this, if it could be

interpreted, would take additional breakdowns of the survey based on data which the survey did not collect, such as age and/or economic situation. But here is how participants rated their importance: **Public transportation** (i.e. bus) 16% very, 23% important, 29% somewhat, 32% not;

Expressway access – 6% very, 25% important, 39% somewhat, and 31% not.

Proximity to green spaces, parks and playgrounds ranked in importance: 39% very, 36% important, 21% somewhat, 3% not.

Proximity to cultural venues importance was: 50% very, 33% important, 14% somewhat, 3% not.

National Register of Historic Places listing, which only applies geographically to the area south of Merchants Road to almost Blossom Road though was included and rated by all: 26% very, 26% important, 31% somewhat, 17% not.

Existing neighborhood association: 45% very, 36% important, 13% somewhat, 4% not.

The questions related to the types of responding households provided the following information (Again, please note that not all blanks were completed in some cases and there could be a margin of error in tallying):

Permanent residents – 268,
Short term residents- 7.
Single family houses – 134
Multiple family houses - 2
Households with no children - 80%
Traditional family units – 101
Households of friends – 2
Households of both family and friends – 4

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Browncroft Survey

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No relationship – 2

Houses with home occupations – 4 included photograph, woodshop, school instruction, and unknown.

Houses without home occupations – 122

The question “Would you find it acceptable for the City/neighborhood to allow (more) multiple family units?”: Yes – 21, no – 112, question mark – 1.

The question “Do you believe it would be a good thing for neighborhood character, or the comfort of adjacent neighbors to allow more commercial activities into the residential zone?: Yes – 27, No – 111.

However, it appears that this question, which is to gauge what types of businesses might be acceptable in residential homes adjacent to other residential homes, may have been misunderstood, as when asked:

“What types of businesses would you be comfortable with as a neighbor?” there were 9 responses for restaurant, 2 responses for bank, 2 responses for grocery, and 2 responses for retail, 5 for shop, 1 bookstore – all businesses that are usually found in the commercial zones on Winton and Blossom Roads. We question that respondents really intended to indicate that they would not mind a restaurant, bank or retail store of some kind next-door to them or their neighbor.

Other responses included: Daycare – 2; private practice/law office/medical office – 4; yoga studio or personal trainer – 2, gallery – 1, insurance agency – 1, and craft studio – 2. Some of these are

already allowable home occupations under the current code.

Because the question of acceptable business operations is related to traffic generated by businesses, as well as noise associated with hours of operation, those questions were asked, though few of the respondents who indicated they would find more businesses acceptable answered them.

Here are the responses received:

Acceptable number of cars – 0 to 2 (3), 3 to 4 (1), 5 to 7 (0), write-ins were: 12 (1), 20 (2), no limit (2);

Acceptable hours of operation: 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (2), 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (1), 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (1)

Finally, the question “Do you agree with the City’s proposal to allow boarding houses, or other short term rental uses such as bed and breakfasts or AirBnB in the low density residential (currently R-1 zoned) areas? Yes – 25, No – 104

Of the “no” responses, the answer as to what district(s) do such uses belong in were: Medium Density Residential – 13, High Density Residential – 21, Boutique Mixed Use – 28, Neighborhood Mixed Use – 29, other – 7.

Those who answered “yes, allow” were asked **“What restrictions do you recommend be placed on the operation?”** Those stated were: limit 2 units per house – 1, limit number of guests – 2, limit number of such uses per street – 2, should be owner occupied – 4, provide off street parking – 1, alternate street parking – 2, quiet hours/noise control – 2, upkeep

standards – 1, no long-term boarding – 1, “City ordinance” – 1.

There is a large amount of information provided. We cannot include here the many additional comments written in the spaces provided and/or attached on additional pages. Most of these were expressions of preserving existing neighborhood character. Also, some of the answers to the qualifying questions are difficult to interpret, but we have tried to quantify them as received.

CRIME REPORT

The Browncroft Neighborhood is a quiet place but occasionally we have crime, too. A car was stolen two weeks ago from a driveway on Windemere Road in the middle of the night. It was unlocked and the key fob was left inside it.

Our monthly Police And Citizens Interaction (PCIC) meeting on October 5th came just a day or so after the arrests related to the gun violence, murder, drugs and gang activity in certain neighborhoods in the city.

The Goodman Section of the RPD, which covers our neighborhood, has been very busy in the last month due to these incidents, and they are also coping with a severe staffing shortage.

The police stated they want our citizens to be aware of good practices. First of all lock your house, garage and car doors. Remove valuables from your cars. Keep your outside lights on as a way to discourage robbers. If you are expecting deliveries make arrangements

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MORE ABOUT HEALTHY YARDS, HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS

Last year the Crier included an article entitled “Friendly Yards” about the “Healthy Yard” movement growing in the towns and villages in Monroe County and in the South Wedge and North Winton Village city neighborhoods. The word “friendly” meant friendly to the environment.

Our yards may be small patches of green around and between the houses, but collectively they can support a rich patchwork of life spreading out over the region and beyond. How we treat our yards is how we treat our farmland, woodland, streams, and on. It affects not only our agricultural productivity that depends on pollinators, but also is part of the struggle to slow and reverse global warming.

The basic strictures were outlined as 1. Refrain from planting foreign species in our yards; 2. Plant native trees, shrubs and flowers that support wildlife with food and shelter opportunities; 3. Use more of our yard space for trees, shrubs and plants instead of grass; 4. Stop using pesticides and herbicides, as they kill not only unwanted life, but also the insects that feed the birds; and they turn plants into poison distributors for the birds, butterflies and bees.

Magazines such as *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Martha Stewart's Living* and even *Architectural Digest* published articles about planting to support the pollinators – birds, bees, butterflies – by providing plant lists of native perennial flowers and trees, and advice on how to shrink the grass area in your yard in a way that does not look unkempt.

However, trees are the most

pollinator habitat supporting plants that can be incorporated into the landscape, with the added benefit of the most carbon sequestering and heat and noise reducing of all.

If we think of our yards in 3D instead of 2D – in other words, rather than garden just at ground level, garden vertically using all of our space from the ground to the air, in the same way that houses have multiple floors. The upward layers and layers of branches, leaves and flowers make trees supercharged life-supporting, environment-preserving masterpieces. They can shelter us and pedestrians from hard midday sun, and delight us with light that they capture and reflect from the sun on the horizon hitting their upper layers as the day is dimming into evening.

Fall is here, and the leaves will begin to blanket our yards. Those leaves can be a gift if you leave some of them in your garden beds and around your shrubs to compost

in place. They, too, create a healthy microbe rich soil that feeds your plants and the insects that feed the birds. Save yourself the work of scraping away every last leaf, and save money on store-bought mulch that may have harmful chemicals and dyes.

Fall is also the best time to plant a tree!!

Crime

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with your neighbors, or another responsible person to take them in for you, because there are too many porch pirates stealing packages everyday. The police suggest security cameras such as the Nest or Ring brands. They find them helpful.

Always consider that thieves are likely roaming around, especially at night, checking doors and looking for any easy opportunity. It's just a law of averages who will be the victim of theft. By being aware and careful, all can decrease the odds that they will be robbed.

Holly Petsos

NEW BOOKS FOR NEW STUDENTS

There was a surprise awaiting each new kindergarten student at **#46 School** this fall.

The BNA generously provided each student with 2 new books, which were gift wrapped and included a note indicating that they are a gift from their Browncroft neighbors to welcome them to #46 School.

The books were purchased at the Hipo Campo Children's Book Store at 638 South Ave, which has a wonderful selection of books for all ages.

This New Books for New

Students project has been coordinated by Ann Kanthor of Dorchester Road for several years.



Garden Walk

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ing at least 30 feet up the trunk of an ash tree. One homeowner was pleased with the white anenomes surrounding her fountain; these were given by a neighbor after the last Garden Walk.

Many walked the entire tour of 15 gardens. Some drove to protect their feet and give them more time to stop and talk. All were able to admire the architecture and landscaping of all of the homes. We do live in a beautiful neighborhood!



Windemere - corner path around to front yard



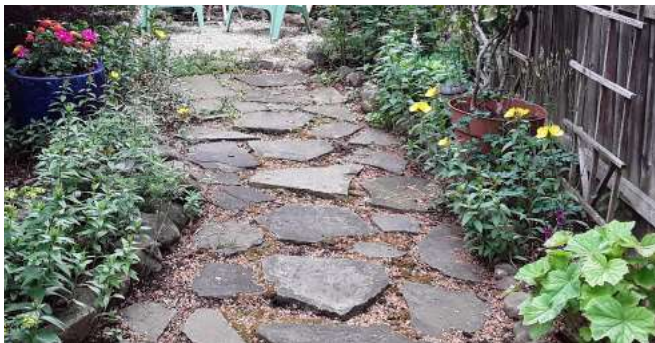
Newcastle backyard retreat



Browncroft mini-orchards and fountain

A “thank you” to volunteers Ann Kanthor, Sarah Castro, Kathy Boyle and Joyce Nagle, who manned the table at the Rose Garden, where they handed out maps and a list of tour highlights and a history of the Rose Garden; and Cassy Petsos who weeded the Rose Garden. Thank you to organizers Sharon Bloemendaal, Jim Nicholson, and Joyce Nagle.

Sharon Bloemendaal
(Photos by Cassy Petsos)



Lanark Cres. - even narrow side yard has charm

GARAGE SALE 2023

The BNA Garage Sale will return in May 2023, with a little help from volunteers. The garage sale date is on the BNA calendar for May 6th and 7th. Traditionally, the garage sale is a biennial event on the odd calendar years. It did not happen in 2021 due to covid-19, and although fans of this event expected it to come back in 2022, the BNA Board, still unsettled by covid statistics, decided to stay with the odd year schedule.

This event has been organized through the years by four people - Sharon Bloemendaal, Bob Genthner, David Kaiser, and Jim Nicholson. The basic operations-- are publicity, recording registrations, creating the directory of addresses and items for sale, and placement of signs around the neighborhood at intersections. More volunteers are needed in order to ensure this event does happen in 2023. Let BNA know if you are willing to work this event through the contact page at Browncroftna.org.