

The Holly Hills *Neighborhood News Newsletter*

September, 1999

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Capital Ideas for Carondelet Park

Come learn about the past, present, and future of Carondelet Park with Daniel Skillman, the Commissioner of Parks for the City of St. Louis Parks Division. Mr. Skillman will talk at the next meeting of the Holly Hills Improvement Association on Monday, September 1999.

In recent years there has been much positive activity at Carondelet Park. The passage in 1994 of the one half cent sales tax for capital improvements has resulted in numerous changes to the park. In the first five years of the tax, the City of St. Louis has allocated more than \$1,085,000 in capital improvements for the park. Further work is planned for the future.

Mr. Skillman reports that since 1994, the City of St. Louis, working with Aldermen Fred Wessels and Matt Villa, have compiled a seemingly endless list of improvements for the park. The Parks Division continues to implement the renovations. First, it upgraded the park roadways and replaced perimeter concrete sidewalks, including those along Loughborough Boulevard. Next, the division refurbished the park picnic shelters and renovated the exterior of the park boathouse. Electrical service to the park boathouse, music pavilion and the large picnic shelter also were upgraded. The city then renovated the restroom located between Picnic Grounds 1 and 1A and brought it into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Finally, numerous trees were planted throughout the park.

Improvements currently under design and scheduled for implementation in March of 2000 include refurbishing the park tennis courts and painting the tennis court light poles. A fountain will be installed in Horseshoe Lake.

The Department will continue with improvements to the roadways and sidewalks. Finally, the Department plans eliminate the drainage problem that exists in the large sinkhole in the 3800 block of Holly Hills. The Department currently is compiling its list of tentative improvements for the next five years, which may include: installing an exercise system along the park bike path and walking path; painting the Lyle House and the park boathouse; replacing the concrete sidewalks around Boat Lake; upgrading all park restrooms to bring them into compliance with the ADA; and adding new playground equipment.

Come with your questions and ideas about the park.

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Beautification

Just like I-55 . . .

The bridge at the northeast end of Carondelet Park needs some minor touch-up repair. We really need your help. This is a good way to meet your neighbors and improve the scenery at the same time. If you can offer any help with painting, please call the hotline (569-5708) and leave a message. If everyone helps a little, there is very little to do. (This and the following volunteer opportunity could be a good way to get service hours in if you are in charge of a group, such as Boy Scouts, Youth Group, etc.)

How many people does it take to plant a bulb?

If painting is not your thing, there are other ways to assist. We have been granted funds to plant more plants at the various gardens around the area. This is the time for plant bulbs, spreading mulch, and just general cleaning. The gardens add something special to your day every time you pass. How about giving them a little TLC. Call Tim Bolt @352-0440 or MaryJo Gordon@832-2801 and leave a message. Your call will be returned with more information.

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Sewer Talk

The St. Louis Metropolitan Sewer District is considering building a tunnel to help with flooding that occurs periodically near the intersection of Grand and Bates during heavy rainstorms. The idea for the south St. Louis project was originally turned down, but a new plan is more affordable. The 1.5-mile tunnel will run from the Grand and Bates area to the Mississippi River. The Holly Hills Improvement Association will continue to report on developments in the plan and will invite a representative of the Metropolitan Sewer District to discuss the problem and proposed solution at an upcoming meeting.

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Rehab Tax Relief

On July 8, 1999, Governor Mel Carnahan signed Senate Bill 20, the Neighborhood Preservation Act, which is designed to help revitalize older neighborhoods by providing tax credits for home rehabilitation and construction of in-fill housing.

Eligibility is based on the location of the property. All owner-occupied property in the City of St. Louis is eligible for the program. The income of the taxpayer is not a factor.

There are three types of credits available:

- **Rehabilitation** -- A 25% tax credit on a minimum expenditure of \$5,000 for rehabilitation of a St. Louis City home that is at least 40 years old. There is a maximum of \$25,000 in credits per home.
- **Substantial Rehabilitation** -- A 35% tax credit on a minimum expenditure of 50% of the base value of the property, which must be in the City of St. Louis and be 50 years old. Credits cannot exceed \$70,000 per unit.
- **New Construction** -- A 15% tax credit for construction of an owner-occupied home in the City of St. Louis. No more than \$40,000 in credits can be awarded per house during a ten-year period.

Tax credits may be applied to the past three years of tax returns and to the next five years of tax returns. In addition, tax credits may be transferred, assigned or sold.

The program is limited to property that is owner-occupied or will be sold to an owner occupant within one year.

The program will start on January 1, 2000. Expenditures made before that date are not eligible for tax credits. Further, because the amount of tax credits is limited, application must be made to the Missouri Department of Economic Development. The Department is currently in the process of creating applications for the program.

Here is how the tax credit would work for a typical family with a \$4,000 state tax bill. If they spent \$10,000 renovating their home, they would get a \$2,500 tax credit. So, their state tax bill would be reduced to \$1,500. The credit can be carried back three tax years and carried forward five years if a family cannot redeem the full credit in any given year.

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Carondelet Art and Artists Exhibit

Historic scenes of Downtown St. Louis, the West End, the Soulard neighborhood will be featured in the Carondelet Art and Artists exhibit opening Friday September 10 and continuing through Friday, September 24 at the Carondelet Historic Center. The exhibit will be open each afternoon from noon to 4:00 p.m. with evening hours 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., on Tuesdays and Fridays. Admission is \$3.00 per person.

Historic works include original Hazel Lee watercolors of Carondelet streetscapes from the late 1960's and over 100 Victor Kunz paintings, charcoals and pencil sketches. Kunz created river scenes, unique views of Downtown and the West End, in addition to scores of works featuring Carondelet. Beginning in the 1920's, Kunz created street scenes of St. Louis neighborhoods. His works historically document neighborhoods before the construction of interstate highways and urban renewal.

Contemporary artists participating in the exhibit include Ken Bolte, Pat Eby, Ron Flier, Sheila M. Harris and Randy Ulrich. Some of their works depict St. Louis parks, landmark buildings and Victorian streetscapes.

The Carondelet Historic Center houses exhibits and archives pertaining to the Carondelet area. It is located in the Susan Blow School, home of the first Kindergarten in the U.S., 6803 Michigan Avenue. Carondelet, the Southernmost neighborhood of the City of St. Louis, was founded in 1767 and was annexed by the City of St. Louis in 1870.

For more information concerning the Carondelet Art and Artists exhibit or the Carondelet Historic Center call 314-481-6303.

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Charter School Votes

On Monday, June 7, 1999, the St. Louis Community College Board of Trustees voted 3-3, neither approving nor denying the plan, on a charter school proposal by United Community in Christ School. The tie vote hindered the hopes to create a charter school at St. Boniface this fall.

At the July meeting of the Holly Hills Improvement Association, a member of the audience asked if the individual votes of the trustees could be reported. According to Alderman Matt Villa, the St. Louis Community College Trustees voted as follows: President Joann L. Ordinachev, Vice President Michael P. Rohrbacher, and Trustee John S. Mikolay all voted to approve the charter school proposal; Trustees Patricia A. Moss, Janice Wells-White and John A. Wright all voted to deny the charter school proposal.

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Christmas Carol Association Info.

It's never too early to think about the holidays. This year, why not start a tradition of caroling around the neighborhood with family and/or friends. Picture this:

Outside the air is cold and crisp. You just finished making a big pot of soup and baking a loaf of bread. (Sounds delicious when can we come over?) You are anxiously awaiting the arrival of your guests while tuning up your voice. After strolling the neighborhood everyone meets back at your house for dinner and, of course, hot chocolate.

How about that for party planning?

Call Beth Murphy @352-1760 or Ann Borgmeyer @752-2528, your local caroling representatives, to get more information and instruction packets on how to add this fun event to your holiday season. HO! HO! HO!

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Please address questions or comments about this Web site, the Holly Hills neighborhood, or the Holly Hills Improvement Association to [our Webmaster](#).

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