

NEWS FROM NORTHSIDE

NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION • IOWA CITY, IOWA

NNA Event Introduces New Energy Partnership

THERE'S never been a better time to start making your home more energy efficient. Over the next 10 years, the federal government will provide tax credits and cash rebates to reduce energy used to heat, cool, and power homes and install renewable energy. You can save thousands on up-front costs and thousands more in future utility bills.

PLEASE COME!

Johnson Clean Energy – NNA Meeting
Wednesday, December 6 AT 6:00 PM
Iowa City Public Library, Room A

Upgrading your home's energy efficiency can seem a daunting task—learning about new technologies, knowing what's right for your house, filing for financial incentives. Helping Johnson County residents overcome these hurdles is a major goal of the Johnson Clean Energy District (JCED), a local nonprofit organization.

This winter, JCED is launching an energy coaching program designed to help homeowners 1) evaluate current energy conditions, and 2) plan for needed upgrades. The program offers DIY tools to help homeowners better understand their buildings, and professional energy audits conducted by certified home inspectors. Private coaching services and educational presentations are also available.

The Northside Neighborhood Association is partnering with JCED to pilot this program in our neighborhood. A presentation at 6:00 PM on Wednesday, December 6, in Iowa City Public Library Room A will describe how the global energy transition works at the home scale—and how Northsiders can be part of it.

If you've been wondering what and how to lower your energy bills and carbon emissions, join us! Barbara Eckstein (eckstein.barbara5228@gmail.com) or Mike Fallon (mjfjr@yahoo.com) can be reached by email if you would like more information.

RUN OR WALK 5K EVERY SATURDAY

RUNNING or walking five kilometers is great exercise and fun now that two Northside residents have organized 'PARKRUN' Saturday mornings at 9:00 AM in City Park. You'll find the starting location next to Parking lot 3. The weekly event was brought to Iowa City by Rachel & Joel Berger, who learned about the international organization while living in England. PARKRUN is an opportunity to make new friends while encouraging well being and inclusivity for all people. "It's hard to describe what a great feeling you get from participating and volunteering at PARKRUN until you try it. It's so unlike any other timed running/walking events. The exercise aspect is obviously hugely beneficial, and PARKRUN is a great motivator for getting outside and moving," Rachel said.

Newcomers are welcome and volunteer positions are open, such as "tailwalker." This person makes sure that everyone is okay and can cheer on participants as they complete the second half of the course.

"After completing a PARKRUN it's a tradition internationally to have a designated (continues on page 6)



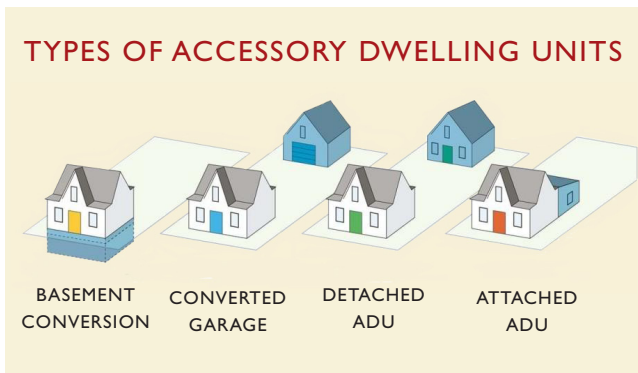
CLICK ON THE BUTTONS LEFT
to visit the Iowa City PARKRUN
website and Facebook page



Exuberance felt during the November 25 PARKRUN with snow flurries.

Zoning Amendments and ADUs

At its November 6 meeting the City Council heard the third and final reading of the “housing choice, supply, and affordability” zoning amendments package, which was passed by Council by a vote of 5 to 2. The new provisions will go into effect immediately. Our hope is that the public will be kept informed of progress toward these housing goals on a yearly basis, so that zoning adjustments can be made or new solutions proposed if needed.



At the November 21 City Council meeting, the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) provisions received their “collapsed” second and final readings. Council voted to accept the Planning & Zoning Commission’s recommendation that the ADU owner-occupancy requirement be retained.

When the ADU provisions received their first reading at Council’s November 6 meeting, there was considerable discussion of the idea presented by Jim Throgmorton and John Thomas that owner-occupancy be required only in the University Impact Area, but eliminated in the rest of the city; and further, that an exception be created for nonprofits that build and own affordable housing units with ADUs (i.e., owner occupancy would not be required in those instances). Council appeared willing to ask staff and P&Z to consider this new provision in the future. We will keep neighbors informed of further developments.

NEXT CITY COUNCIL MEETING
with the RNS-12 Height Amendment
on the agenda is December 12, 2023

RNS-12 Height Proposal Lives On

Regarding the NNA’s proposal to reduce the maximum allowable height for single-family and duplex structures in RNS-12 zones from 35 to 27 feet: After our proposal was denied by a 4 to 3 majority of the Planning & Zoning Commission in October, it was brought before City Council on November 21. Several neighbors spoke at the Council meeting to reiterate our case, and others submitted written letters in support. After discussion, a majority of Council indicated they were disinclined to accept P&Z’s recommendation that our proposal be denied. This outcome means our height-reduction proposal has one more chance to succeed.

The City Council and members of the P&Z Commission will now hold a “consultation” discussion, during which members of each body will share their views about the NNA’s proposal. Then, at the December 12 Council meeting, members of the public will be able to speak during the portion of the agenda devoted to the RNS-12 height proposal, since the Mayor did not close the public hearing on that issue during the November 21 Council meeting.

After public comment on December 12, Council will vote to either follow the P&Z recommendation to deny our proposal – which means our request will be dead – or to approve our requested amendment, which will constitute its first reading. A second and third (final) reading will then be scheduled during subsequent Council meetings in January, or those meetings may be collapsed so that both occur on January 2.

The NNA Steering Committee will contact neighbors in advance of the December 12 meeting with further updates. Our thanks to the Northsiders and nearby neighborhood residents who’ve taken time to advocate for our RNS-12 height proposal. Your voices made a difference!



Houses in the RNS-12 zone are typically 1.5 to 2.5 stories or less than 27 feet tall. The NNA requests that this be written into the zoning code to prevent 35 foot tall houses from blocking sunlight and changing the scale of homes in the neighborhood.

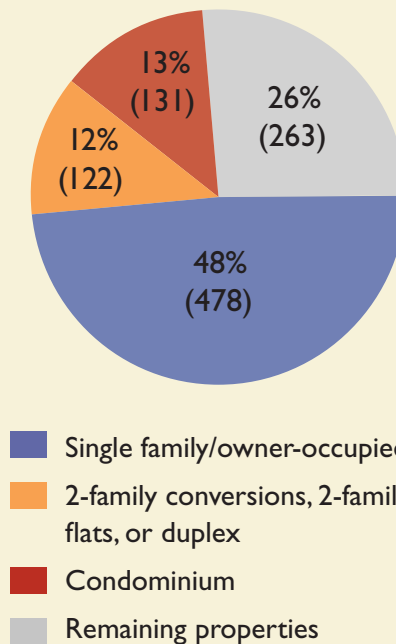
KNOWING OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

EARLIER this year, as part of the Northside Neighborhood Association’s ongoing efforts related to residential zoning and to gain a greater understanding of Northside housing overall, NNA Chair Jim Throgmorton began to assemble a comprehensive inventory of the nearly 1,000 properties within the Northside’s boundaries. The data he collected from the City Assessor’s website included the owner(s) of each property, occupancy type (e.g., single-family, apartment, etc.), assessed value, year built, how many stories, and zoning district.

The inventory paints a fascinating picture of the Northside’s built environment, with reminders of our history (the oldest homes date to the 1840s), the diversity of building types and values, and an equally diverse range of ownership. Jim points out these and other highlights of his inventory in a summary document called “Knowing Our Neighborhood,” which we’ve posted on the NNA website. We encourage neighbors to read Jim’s summary and think about what conclusions might be drawn about the Northside’s future – a future that neighbors can continue to shape through NNA involvement and advocacy.

Northside Neighborhood as Housing Types, Quantity and Percentage

994 Properties in total



The chart above, additional graphics and more can be found in the document “Knowing Our Neighborhood” on the NNA website. Follow [this link](#).

NNA TO ELECT NEW OFFICIERS IN MARCH 2024

WHEN THE NNA holds its Annual Meeting in March, neighbors will elect a new slate of Steering Committee officers for 2024: chair, co-chair, secretary, and treasurer. Current Steering Committee chair Jim Throgmorton and secretary Susan Shullaw will be stepping down, so those two positions, and possibly others, will need to be filled for the coming year.

We’re alerting neighbors to these openings now, so you can be thinking about whether you or other Northsiders you know would like to play a role in NNA leadership. It’s a great opportunity to spark

meaningful progress toward the many Northside priorities that neighbors identified in our 2022 organizing meetings: the *green environment* (parks, trees, gardens), the *built environment* (land use, energy conservation, safe streets), and the *human environment* (neighborhood outreach, picnics and block parties, etc.).

If you would like to know more about NNA Steering Committee responsibilities or would like to suggest officer nominees, please contact us at info@northsideiowacity.org. Stay tuned for more information on the next NNA meeting in 2024.

GET THE LEAD OUT!


The City has just announced a Lead Reduction Program to make residents aware of the lead exposure risk presented by their home’s plumbing, and to provide information and resources to enable property owners to mitigate their risk.

The Lead Reduction Program has three components: a ban on repairing broken lead water pipes, an optional insurance program starting in late December for service pipes and plumbing through HomeServe, and a cost-share program, which can help defer 50% (not to exceed \$5,000) of the replacement of a verified lead water service pipe.


A quick look at the City’s Lead Service Inventory map indicates that most of the Northside falls within two categories: Lead Service Unknown (LSU): “Homes and buildings with characteristics indicating a risk for lead or lead contaminated materials without evidence proving lead or leaded materials are not present”; and Tier 4, “Single Family Structure with Copper Pipes with Lead Solder Installed Before 1988.”

More information on these categories can be found in the City website’s Lead [FAQs document](#).

Residents concerned about lead exposure are encouraged to contact the Iowa City Water Division at 319-356-5160 to schedule an appointment to have your water tested.

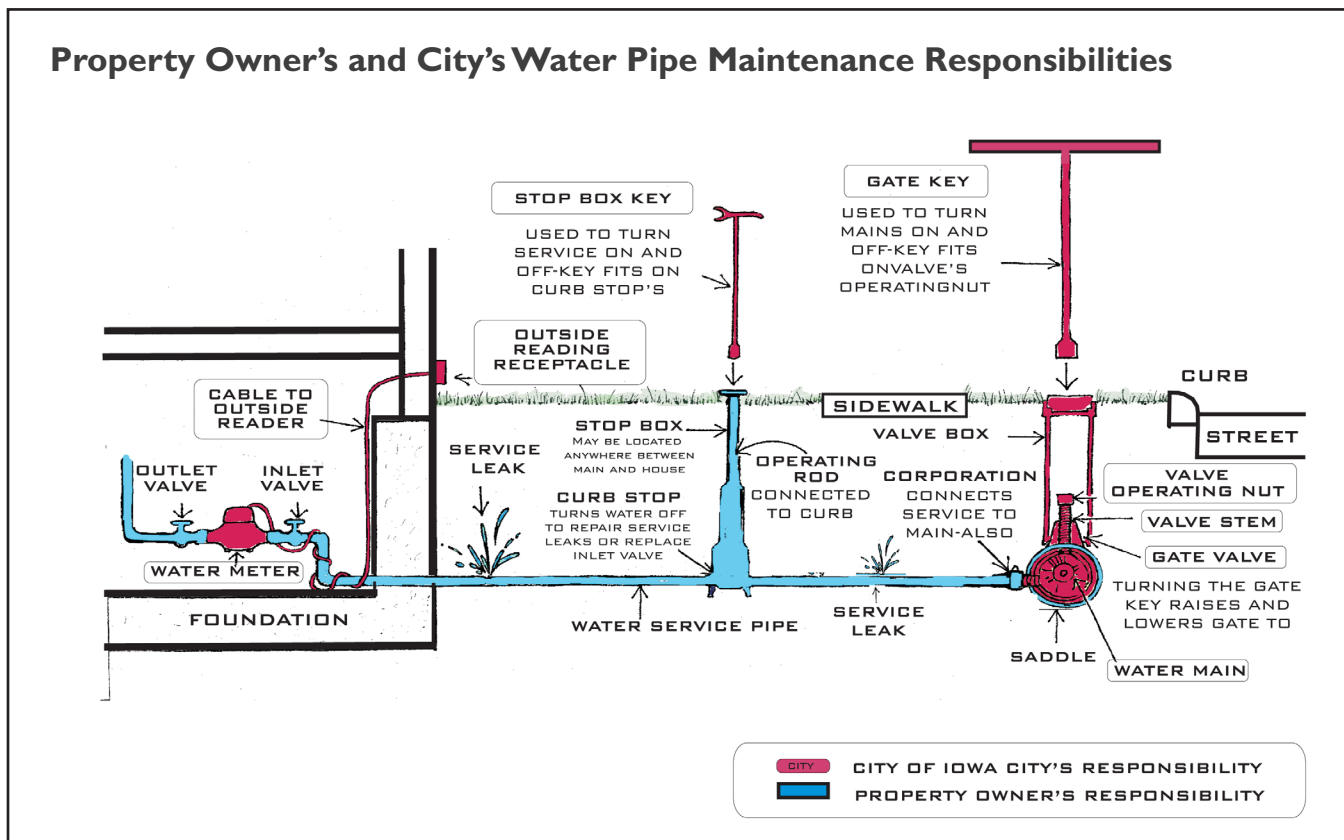


LINK TO HOMESERVE WEBSITE



LINK TO IOWA CITY WATER PIPE MAP

DID YOU KNOW that property owners pay for the cost of most water pipe breaks occurring between the City’s water main and the property owner’s dwelling? Underground repairs are expensive and breaks are likely when pipes are over 75 years old. Be aware that aging clay-tile sewer line pipes are susceptible to breaks too.



Sign Up to be a Project GREEN Host Gardener

Mark your calendars: Open Gardens Weekend will be Saturday & Sunday, July 13-14, 2024

Several years ago my husband and I decided to join our neighbors on North Linn and in Bella Vista to include our garden in the annual Project GREEN summer garden tour. Admittedly, we did not fit what I thought at the time was the mold for a tour-worthy garden. We were fairly new to gardening; I had recently dug up all the grass in our front yard and was experimenting with a motley mix of natives, vegetables, and traditional perennials. As part of the larger Project GREEN tour, it worked. Some visitors loved the chaos; others preferred the more manicured gardens elsewhere on the tour. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting the dozens of garden-lovers from around the county who chose to spend their afternoon coming through the neighborhood. I came away from the experience with all sorts of ideas on how to improve the layout of our outdoor space.

Project GREEN has announced the dates of next summer's annual Open Gardens Weekend, and the group is hoping for record numbers of gardeners to sign up. If you have questions about what it's like to host, please feel free to contact using the NNA email address. — Jen Wagner (info@northsideiowacity.org)

FROM THE PROJECT GREEN WEBSITE:

We offer numerous gardens of differing styles and sizes. There are no qualifications regarding size, design, or perfect weed-free maintenance. Flowers, vegetables, whatever. If you are proud of your gardening efforts and are located within Iowa City or Coralville, we would love to include your garden in our Open Gardens Weekend. Thanks for sharing your garden for a good cause! See the Project GREEN website at this [link](#).

“Outsiders” Deserve Thanks

ON BEHALF OF the Iowa City Downtown District and the NNA, we'd like to give a big shout-out to the Northsiders who volunteered on the “Northside Outside” clean-up crew this past summer. One day a week, from May through October, each of these neighbors took a half-hour or so out of their day to pick up trash, wipe down picnic tables, and water plants in this popular half-block of N. Linn Street.

Says ICDD Director Betsy Potter, “Support from the community, Northside volunteers, and local sponsorships played a crucial role in enhancing the area, allowing for investments in lighting and seating, which undoubtedly contributed to the appeal and functionality of the space. It's wonderful to see such positive changes and upgrades, making the outside area more welcoming for everyone.

“These collaborative efforts and the May 7 neighborhood fundraiser reflect the strong sense of community and collective support for such amenities,” she continues. “It's exciting to anticipate the return of the Northside Outside in 2024!”

SHOVEL SEASON

With winter just around the corner, it's time to remind neighbors about the City's snow ordinance: After a snowfall of 1 inch or more or any accumulation of ice, the entire width of a public sidewalk must be cleared down to the concrete within 24 hours after the precipitation has stopped.

Property owners are responsible for snow removal from all sidewalks that abut their properties. Renters should check their lease to see if landlords have transferred snow and ice removal duties to them. Neighbors living at or near corners should keep curb ramps clear; also remove snow accumulation around nearby fire hydrants.

Property owners failing to remove ice and snow are subject to a fine of \$100 and the cost of having outside contractors clear their sidewalks. Need help clearing your sidewalks? Many Northsiders may be willing to pitch in. You can contact the NNA at info@northsideiowacity.org and we'll try to connect you with a few helping hands.

Congratulations to Andrew Dunn for being elected to District C, and to Laura Bergus, Josh Moe, and Mazahir Salih for their success in winning seats on City Council during the November 2023 election!

Thank You, John!

John Thomas has represented the Northside as a member of City Council since January 2016. He'll end his current term in December of this year, with our thanks for his strong support of our local parks (especially the plantings at North Market Square and restoration of the Happy Hollow ballfield), renovation of Mann Elementary School, safe and walkable neighborhoods, human-scaled development, affordable housing, and the green environment, including his push for treating trees for emerald ash borer instead of cutting them all down. John, we deeply appreciate your many years of public service. Welcome back to private citizenship!



NORTH MARKET SQUARE PARK SEES NEW MURAL

During the NNA Gathering in North Market Square Park on September 10, residents were pleasantly surprised to see the bright pavement mural painted by Thomas Agran, Drew Etienne, Ezra Edgerton, and Max Biger. The images in the mural draw from the historic Northside Neighborhood. Special thanks to the City of Iowa City and to Northside art patrons for providing the funding to make this mural happen. Warm thanks to Heather Blatt for her grant writing skills!

NEWS FROM NORTHSIDE is happy to share information about neighborhood businesses & organizations, theater, art, and music events or recent book releases by local authors. Let us know if you have a story for the newsletter or announcement for the NNA website. www.northsideiowacity.org

(PARKRUN 5K continued from page 1) post-event meeting place,” Rachel said. The Iowa City group meets at Tru Coffee for a warm up coffee, tea or hot chocolate. Rachel and Joel said that they offer the fitness event throughout the year – check their FaceBook page for inclement weather announcements. Rachel added, “The great thing about PARK-RUN is that you don’t ‘have’ to go every week. You can come and go as you like and know that we will always be pleased to see you!”

