



The Mentelle News

The Mentelle Neighborhood Association Newsletter // Volume 7 Issue III // Fall 2015

MNA Fall Meeting and Election of Board Wednesday October 28th 7pm Ashland Elementary

By **Lewis Gardner**, MNA President, 268-8344, president@mentelle.org

And **Larry Porter**, Chairman Nominating Committee, 335-0153, larry.porter@kctcs.edu

This is the meeting where we elect officers, review the year and make plans for the next. If you want to volunteer or have items to discuss please attend. A brief agenda:

Director reports
Last year wrap up
Next year plans
Election of board

Several MNA Board members, who have served our community so well and with such passion for the past ten years have decided to step down. President Lewis Gardner, Vice President Ron Mitchell and Director Tom Lillich are leaving. Liz Reucroft our Secretary from the beginning is staying. Change is in the air! The MNA Nominating Committee (Larry Porter, Liz Reucroft, Vivian Coles, Holly Salisbury, and Beverly Fortune) have actively sought candidates for the MNA offices and committee directorships. As of October 17th candidates are:

Ann Oliges (President)
Shelley Fortune (President)
Linda Worley (Vice-President)
Liz Reucroft (Secretary)
Richard Coles (Treasurer)
Tom Eblen (director, Special Projects committee)
Caryn Huber (director, Social committee)
Shelby Reynolds (director)
Bethany Baxter (director)
Your Name Here (director, we still need one more!)

Anyone else interested in serving the community as an officer or director should contact Larry Porter at the above email address or simply self-nominate at the meeting. Some details still have to be worked out so please check www.mentelle.org for the latest information. This will be an important meeting in the direction the MNA is headed so please make plans to attend.

Identification Sign and Historic Marker Update

By Ann Olliges, MNA Director, 421-1916, annolliges@gmail.com

In January 2015, the Mentelle Neighborhood Association was awarded a Neighborhood Action Grant for our project to install identification signs at the entrances of streets leading into our neighborhood as well as an historic marker to be located in the park in the first median off Richmond Road.

The identification signs and the historic marker have been purchased. The process of getting these installed is a complicated matter. Encroachment Agreement Contracts between the property owner, neighborhood association and the city must be signed and individual sign permits must be filed. An engineer has been enlisted to help us obtain the necessary information to complete the contacts and agreements.

Once all this information is compiled it will be given to the city, and the proposal will then have to be approved by seven different city agencies before installations can begin. The neighborhood association has fronted the money to purchase the signs; however, we still need to raise money for this project so it does not deplete the association coffers.

Each identification sign costs \$250 and the historic marker cost \$2,500. It is my hope that residents of each street in our neighborhood will literally "buy in" and purchase a sign for their own street, with the residents in Mentelle Park to finance the historic marker. Please show your support by making a financial contribution today!

Sent checks with a notation of your desires in the memo line to:

MNA c/o Richard Coles
118 N. Hanover Ave.
Lexington, Ky. 40502

So long, and thanks for your patience

By Lewis Gardner, Outgoing MNA President, 268-8344 lewisg@iglou.com

Ten years! (Maybe nine, but the first and last one were LONG...)

It seems like just a short while ago, we were meeting at the Fortune, Phillips and Wilkie homes on Bullock Place planning an ice cream social to gauge interest in a neighborhood association. Since then we have planted trees, fought a zoning battle, made rain gardens, utilized various grants, kept the ball rolling and in general worked to improve our neighborhood. At the same time, we've had a lot of fun and gotten to know our neighbors better through a schedule of social events: picnics, Easter egg hunts, wine and beer tastings. We also managed to pull together a home tour that raised thousands for neighborhood improvement projects.

A lot of people have come and gone during that time. Looking back at the original board four people have been constant. Monthly dining with Secretary Liz Reucroft, Vice President Ron Mitchell and Director Tom Lillich has been a wonderful experience. Add in the past and present board members and many of those that dropped in and I usually looked forward to getting together to discuss our neighborhood and the business of running a neighborhood association. One of the original board members, Gary Logsdon, once admonished someone who thought we were having too much fun by declaring, "If this stops being fun I'm out." Unfortunately, that is the position where I find myself.

So long - continued

Since I have the platform and the space to fill, I'm going to give some "worth what you paid for it" advice on how a neighborhood association should be run and where the MNA should head.

First, the MNA is a voluntary neighborhood association. It's not a homeowners' association with mandatory dues and responsibilities. Your very nominal dues entitle you to a vote when one is called, eligibility for MNA board election, email and a directory. That is about it. The board or officers are not your employees. They are volunteers who give their time and pay their own bills, including their dinners at monthly board meetings, to try and advance the neighborhood.

Second, the board's purpose is to keep the MNA running. It is not an "execution engine" for your events or projects. If you have a great idea, taking it to a board or general meeting is the place to start. Just don't expect to drop off your idea and have the board make it happen. This does not mean that board members are not interested or think it is a bad idea. It's just that each board member already has a job. Their job is to keep the infrastructure in place to allow your idea to receive funding, permits, official blessings, legal standing, publicity and the like. If the board decides to back your project, deadlines will be set, funds appropriated and a plan will be implemented. It is VERY important that the plan be followed. Missed deadlines and deviations from the plan put stress on those whose names are on the MNA's corporate listing and are responsible for things to which the association's name has been attached. It IS NOT FUN to stay up late due to missed deadlines or have to do work you didn't agree to take on when others decide they are "too busy" or simply ignore what they agreed to do.

Third, Keep It Simple. The MNA is unusual among neighborhood associations in that it was not formed due to a crisis, like a zoning issue. It was formed to better the neighborhood, receive funding and be ready for inevitable development challenges. We have done all those tasks. With the exception of a donation the association made to the nearby Isaac Murphy Art Garden, we have restricted ourselves to our boundaries. We have stayed out of Bell Court zoning issues and the like. I believe a restricted focus of one or two projects and a like number of social events a year is enough. Going beyond that requires more effort than is likely to be available on a sustained basis. In other words, "keep your powder dry." Major issues will arise, and if your resources are tired or dissatisfied with the MNA, the questions becomes can you muster the people when it counts?

Going forward I hope the MNA will continue to plant at least 10 trees a year utilizing funds from the LFUCG. When the Patterson Office Tower at UK was completed in 1968, I got my first good aerial view of 40502. The tree cover was remarkable. Since then aging trees, ice storms and planting restrictions have decimated that tree cover. The lasting accomplishment of the MNA could be to bring the cooling, protective and beautiful tree cover back to our neighborhood. In keeping with Keep It Simple, planting trees is hard enough. Maintaining trees is a complex area and is the responsibility of the homeowner. Getting involved tree maintenance would soak up untold hours, possibly be unfair and would not have the longevity of a new tree.

Traffic has been and will always be an issue. Again Keep It Simple! While the idea of a comprehensive traffic plan for the neighborhood sounds good, it is inherently very complex. Any change to traffic patterns can cause unexpected effects. Better to address one problem at a time and succeed, than to bog down in the disagreements, lawsuits and failure that befell Bell Court's comprehensive effort.

So long – continued (certainly too long but there is still space and no other contributions to print)

The place to start is most likely a speed hump on Given Avenue. It's a short street, many homeowners are MNA members and success there will provide valuable experience and credibility.

Above all have fun! When the neighborhood isn't working on issues, like zoning, have simple social events and enjoy each other. All we really need is a bit of food, drink, tunes, some kids to watch and maybe something involving water.

I feel lucky to live here. The area improves on a daily basis and the neighbors are great!

Special thanks to past and present board members: Ron Mitchell, Liz Reucroft, Marti Sheeran, Ada Sweeney, Linda Slagel, Tom Lillich, Gary Logsdon, Vivian Coles, Theo Scripps, Melissa Wallace, Kit Andrews, Linda Angelo, Marilyn Swann, Richard Coles, Megan Smith, Ray DeBolt, Elaine Cook, Larry Porter, Ann Olliges and Caryn Huber!

Thank you for your support - Lewis Gardner MNA President 2006-2015

*** Hopefully it is obvious that the thoughts expressed above are mine and **
** may not represent the MNA going forward. (but I hope they come close) ***

Kentucky American Water Company donation

In appreciation of the patience and support the Mentelle Park neighbors and the MNA gave the water company during their year long water main replacement we received a check for \$1,500. The check is to be used for landscaping and beautification efforts on Mentelle Park. Some of the funds will be used soon to supplement normal MNA street tree funds to place three larger trees in the median. Complete text of the letter can be found at www.mentelle.org

Cardinal Valley Annual Coat Drive for Kids

By **Michelle Armstrong**, MNA Member, 269-7570, patandmichelle@twc.com

As the leaves begin to change and the weather begins to cool down, many of us start to prepare for the very cold temperatures that will follow in the winter months. At this time of year, the staff members at Cardinal Valley Elementary school begin to look for coats, hats, and gloves for our students. Our student population consists of many students who live in poverty. Ninety seven percent of Cardinal Valley's students are on free and reduced lunch. We also have many students who are learning English as a second language and, as such, face language barriers in getting resources. Currently, we have 700 students enrolled at Cardinal Valley. If you would like to donate a coat, gloves or hats for our annual coat drive, we would greatly appreciate it. Items can be dropped off on the front porch at 721 Aurora Ave (Ann Olliges) and I will pick them up and deliver them to Cardinal Valley. Coats should be sized for children ages 4-12. Thank you so much for your consideration and help in keeping our students warm during the winter months.

*Information on joining or renewing your MNA membership can always be found at:
www.mentelle.org*