



# NEIGHBOR NEWS

DISPLAY MARCH 1 – MAY 1, 2020

## DRAKE REVITALIZATION EFFORT TAKES SHAPE

By Lori Calhoun

Last year, the city of Des Moines selected a portion of the Drake Neighborhood as one of four pilot areas. It designated each area a Special Investment District (SID) where a unique mix of public and private resources can be focused to spur revitalization. The Drake SID extends from Interstate 235 to University Avenue between 24th and 35th Streets.

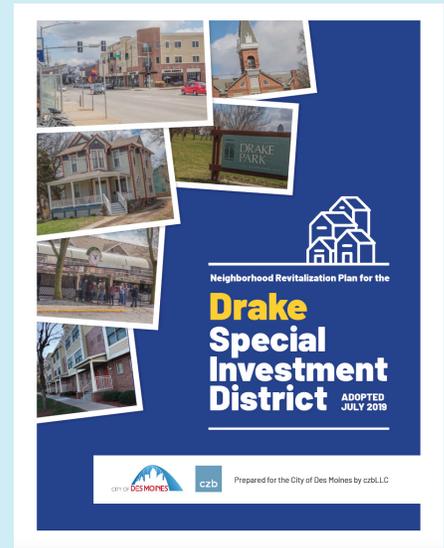
City leaders and a steering committee of local residents from each SID worked to develop plans to spur home investment. At the same time, the city and Polk County committed funds to create a new non-profit called Invest DSM that will provide programs and incentives to homeowners, home-builders, and landlords in the SIDs—as well as commercial investments for business developers and owners.

DNA board member and Drake resident Jennifer Sayers led Drake's revitalization steering committee, which also included: Ryan Arnold (resident and Drake University rep),

Lori Calhoun (resident and DNA board member), Seth Crouch (rehabber and landlord), Alec Davis (Drake business owner), Deric Gourd (resident and housing non-profit rep), Jason Stuyvesant (resident, DNA board member, and realtor), and Adam White (resident and Cottage Grove Church rep). The committee assessed the neighborhood, reviewed the housing market and housing stock, created a brand and vision statement, and developed an action plan to achieve key outcomes through investment.

The committee is now starting to activate that plan, with initial efforts focused on:

- **Revitalizing the Cottage Grove triangle**, a small memorial garden located at Kingman Boulevard, 25th Street, and Cottage Grove. Plans have been designed, and the city is providing \$15,000 toward the project, if used by June 2020.
- **Branding the Dogtown Business District** just east of Drake University as a more identifiable destination.



Read the full plan at [dsm.city](http://dsm.city). Watch for incentive program details at [InvestDSM.org](http://InvestDSM.org).

Invest DSM is also finalizing details on several incentive programs, including two outlined in February that should be available later this spring for properties within the SIDs:

- **A block-challenge grant** would provide a dollar-for-dollar match of \$1,000 to \$2,500 per neighbor for groups of five to 10 neighbors who work together to make home and landscaping improvements that boost curb appeal on their block.
- **A home renovation program** would provide forgivable loans for 25 to 50 percent of the cost of major renovations at owner-occupied homes. Watch for details at [InvestDSM.org](http://InvestDSM.org) in March and April.

# DEVELOPMENTS

## WITMER PARK PROJECT ON THE UPSWING

By Jennifer Sayers

A half-million-dollar upgrade begun last summer at Witmer Park is on track for completion in spring 2021.

Already complete are a new concrete trail system, two open-air shelters, a fishing pier, and the rehabilitation (including dredging and re-stocking) of Witmer Park's signature pond. Because of funding constraints tied to



*This is the playground concept we're raising funds for in Witmer Park. Neighbors and kids of all ages helped choose this design through public input meetings and dot-sticker voting on desired amenities.*

a major grant toward the project, the initial plans did not include restrooms or replacement of Witmer's aging playground equipment.

Park neighbors and members of the Beaverdale and Drake Neighborhood Associations organized the Witmer Park Project to raise money for these additional amenities last

year. Working with the city and Polk County, the Witmer Park Project has secured all the necessary funds for the restroom. Fundraising for a new playground continues, however, and you can help us reach our goal. See the site plan, project details, and a link to donate to the Witmer Park Project GoFundMe account at [witmerparkproject.com](http://witmerparkproject.com).

## HOPE MOVING IN, BY THE HUNDREDS

By Mary Christopher

Lutheran Church of Hope, new owner of the former First Christian Church at 2500 University Ave., hopes to bring its services and approximately 700 worshippers to the Drake Neighborhood landmark this spring.

Chartered in 1994, Hope has six campuses where more than 12,000 people worship every weekend. Hope Des Moines Campus Pastor Jon Anenson said his campus will move to Drake from its current location on Ingersoll Avenue after completing some work on the historic building.

Anenson said the church's goal is to "be a part of the neighborhood—spiritually, physically, and emotionally." That means connecting with businesses, organizations, and other churches to understand needs, and help with the great things already happening in the neighborhood.

*This is a conceptual drawing of a planned new sprayground and open-air shelter northwest of the existing wading pool and shelter at Drake Park.*



## DRAKE PARK GETTING SPRAYGROUND

By Jennifer Sayers

Kids who love splashing in the wading pool at Drake Park will have more ways to get wet there after this summer. Plans are moving ahead for a park upgrade that includes a new sprayground and shelter renovation.

The sprayground design is nearly complete and will soon enter the process for City Council approval and public bidding. The city's Parks and Recreation Department hopes to hire a contractor by early spring, start

work in the summer and continue into the fall, with the sprayground opening to the public in spring of 2021. The existing open-air limestone shelter will be renovated into a rentable four-season shelter with restrooms.

An open-air shelter will be added near the tennis courts for park users who have not rented the building.

Parks and Recreation has hired an architect to work on the shelter design and hopes the renovated shelter will also open in the spring of 2021.



## WORK CONTINUES ALONG UNIVERSITY

As the weather warms, the city of Des Moines and Drake University will recommence street work on University Avenue from 25th to 31st Streets. The project began last summer with sewer separation work and is expected to be complete this July.

Drake University has begun removing houses it owns on the 2900 block of University Avenue to make way for an as-yet undisclosed development. At least three of the homes were moved to Sherman Hill in February.

A new five-story 124-room hotel on University Avenue between 26th and 27th Streets is now clad in brick and mostly enclosed. The \$28 million Nelson Construction development is expected to open as a Hilton Home2Suites with a restaurant and other retail spaces later this year.

Nelson also anticipates breaking ground this spring on the southeast corner of 26th and University for an

L-shaped four-story apartment building with up to 136 units, mostly studios and two-bedrooms, plus ground-floor retail space along University Avenue and 50 parking spots behind.

Construction also continues on Drake University's Harkin Institute. The \$8.75 million, 16,000-square-foot structure at 28th Street and University Avenue is expected to be complete late this fall.

Kum & Go is gearing up to redevelop the southwest corner of 31st and University, replacing the existing store and apartment building with a larger, modern store and a new footprint that puts the building nearer the intersection and moves the pumps, parking, and driveways farther from the intersection for better traffic flow.

## CHAMBER ADDS DOGTOWN FOCUS

The Des Moines West Side Chamber of Commerce has hired Drake University public relations student Seherzada Salkanovic as an intern assigned specifically to focus on

the business area bordering Drake University. She's tasked with building a coalition of Drake-area business leaders to help define and brand the Dogtown business district.

## DRAKE HOME TOUR RETURNS!

The Drake Neighborhood Association is pleased to announce the long-awaited return of its popular Drake home tour this fall!

A committee of neighbors has set the dates—Oct. 10-11—and is working on points of interest and volunteer and sponsorship opportunities.

The 2020 tour will focus on the south-central part of the neighborhood which aligns with the Drake SID revitalization zone (between 24th and 35th Streets, from University Avenue to I-235).

The aim is to celebrate the neighborhood and showcase its wonderful opportunities. Interested in volunteering or having your home featured on the tour? Please contact Lori Calhoun at [zotlc@aol.com](mailto:zotlc@aol.com).

# HOME CAMERAS, THE NEW NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH?

By Mary Christopher

We asked Des Moines Police Sgt. Mark McKinney about a new program that helps police find relevant home security footage to help fight neighborhood crime.

### What is WatchDSM exactly?

It is another way that citizens can take an active role in keeping our neighborhoods safe with their own security cameras. These cameras

are a great crime deterrent and are now also becoming helpful for police.

### What about privacy? I might not want to share everything that my doorbell cam captures.

Authorized officers will only have access to your contact info—never to your videos without your permission. For example: Let's say your neighbor's house gets broken into. The police would run that address in the WatchDSM database. If your

address has been registered as having a camera, and the police believe the video might aid their investigation, they will contact you to ask your permission to review video from around the time the crime occurred.

### How do neighbors who have home security cameras enroll?

Go to the [WatchDSM web page](#) and sign up with your name, address, and contact information.

# MEMBER NEWS

## FONG'S SPREADS ITS PIZZA LOVE TO DRAKE

By Jennifer Sayers

Fong's Pizza opened a new location near 31st Street and Forest Avenue last March and has thrown its support behind the Drake Neighborhood ever since. You might recall enjoying some of Fong's tasty thin-crust pizza at last summer's Free Flicks event in Witmer Park. But you might not know that Fong's has been partnering with local businesses—delivering pizza to patrons who order from Peggy's, the bar next door; offering free pizza when you buy an oil change at the Drake Garage, a gift certificate at Friederich's Coffee, or a tattoo at Sacred Diamond; and even launching a "Pizza Ninja" program that surprises local businesses with a free delivered pizza.

Fong's is part of the Full Court Press family of local restaurants, which includes University Library Cafe and



Jeff Bruning at the Drake Fong's location. PHOTO BY JENNIFER SAYERS

the soon-to-open Crazy Horse Burgers and Beer in the Drake area. Co-owner Jeff Bruning says crab rangoon pizza is a top seller, but students also love the honey-garlic at the Drake Fong's, where you can get two slices and a soda for \$7.50 or \$2 slices from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays. Fong's also offers salads, appetizers, and a kids' menu; takes online takeout orders; and is working to launch home delivery in the Drake Neighborhood.

### CENSUS SMARTS

The U.S. Census happens just once every 10 years. And accurate head counts help determine bus routes and school district boundaries, where funds and resources are spent, and your representation in Congress. So it only makes sense to be sure you are counted during the 2020 Census this April. Census workers will be in every neighborhood to note how many people live at each address. Please help your neighbors understand the importance of being counted. And if you need a job, the Census is hiring! Find details at [2020census.gov](https://2020census.gov).

## GROW FOOD, FRIENDS AT GARDEN

By Jessica Crawford

Want to test your green thumb this year? All out of garden space in your yard? Want to meet and learn from other gardeners? Consider joining your neighbors at the Drake Neighborhood Community Garden!

Located on 27th Street a few houses south of University Avenue, the garden has a rich history in the neighborhood. It has hosted gardeners since the mid-1990s. There is no charge to cultivate one of its roughly thirty 12-foot-square plots. But gardeners are expected to participate in community work days at the garden to help maintain its beauty and functionality.

Eddie V. Robinson, Jr., master gardener, and Rose Scott have been managing the garden since 1999.

They plan to host the first community work day in mid-April, or as soon as the weather allows.

If you have questions or are interested in cultivating a plot at the Drake Neighborhood Community Garden, call Eddie (515-664-5779) or Rose (515-343-0845).

Returning gardeners get priority in choosing size and location of plots. Remaining plots are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.





# SPRING EVENTS

Check Facebook ([@DrakeNeighborhoodAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/DrakeNeighborhoodAssociation)) for updates and additional happenings.

## MARCH

- 11** DNA Board Meeting, 7 p.m. at Polk County Central Senior Center, 2008 Forest Ave.
- 17** AfroPuff Lederhosen (A Comically Critical Investigation of Race), 6 p.m. at Drake University, free with registration at [www.bit.ly/afropuffLH](http://www.bit.ly/afropuffLH)
- 21** SCRUB day. Yard waste, trash, and bulk items accepted free, 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. at MWA Transfer Station, 4198 Delaware Ave. and MWA Compost Center, 1601 Harriett St.

## APRIL

- 2** Bucksbaum Lecture: An Evening with Cary Fowler, (co-founder of the Global Seed Vault in Norway), free, at Drake University.
- 8** DNA Board meeting, 7 p.m. at Polk County Central Senior Center, 2008 Forest Ave.
- 15** Spring Spruce-Up, neighborhood trash cleanup, 5:30 p.m. at Walgreen's parking lot. Also: Tiny Trees registration deadline.
- 18** Mega SCRUB day. Yard waste, trash, and bulk items accepted free, 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. at MWA Transfer Station and MWA Compost Center, and 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Hoover High School.
- 19** Drake Relays Road Races (5k, 10k, and half-marathon courses through the neighborhood from 7:30 a.m.) See maps at: [www.drakeroadraces.org/drake-road-races-course](http://www.drakeroadraces.org/drake-road-races-course)
- 22-25** Drake Relays, an event that draws thousands of runners, fans, and alumni.

## MAY

- 13** DNA Board meeting, 7 p.m. at Polk County Central Senior Center, 2008 Forest Ave.
- 16** SCRUB day. Yard waste, trash, and bulk items accepted free, 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. at MWA Transfer Station and MWA Compost Center
- 23** Neighborhood Volunteer Day with Walnut Creek Church. Details to come.

## JULY

- 16** Free Flicks at dusk at Witmer Park. We will be revealing the movie selection soon! But please save the date for this free movie in the park!

### GOT NEWS TO SHARE?

Please send details (including time, date, and location) to [info@drakeneighborhood.org](mailto:info@drakeneighborhood.org) by **May 15** for consideration in our next newsletter. Produced entirely by volunteers, it publishes March 1, June 1, Sep. 1, and Dec. 1, 2020.

### CALLING ALL BUSINESSES!

Email [jen@bijougrafix.com](mailto:jen@bijougrafix.com) to learn how you can become a 2020 Drake Neighborhood Association business partner and advertise in the newsletter.

# LARGE



# ITEM TO GET RID OF?

By Nichole Aksamit Purcell

**DON'T DUMP IT!** Dumping furniture, mattresses, tires, branches, and other large items near dumpsters, on curbs, or along alleyways is not only prohibited in Des Moines. It's also unneighborly, unsightly, and unsafe. It attracts pests, invites more dumping, and impedes traffic. **INSTEAD, YOU CAN...**

**SELL IT:** Post it for sale or for free on Craigslist, Facebook Marketplace, or Nextdoor. Someone might happily haul it away—and even pay you for it. Just don't leave items on the curb for pickup without a sticker, which can get you a ticket.

**RECYCLE IT:** MidAmerican Energy has an appliance recycling program that picks up and pays \$50 for working stoves and fridges and \$25 for working AC units. Call 800-621-2757.

**DONATE IT:** Many charities will accept and even arrange to pick up good used furniture, working electronics, building materials, and appliances. (Note: Mattresses are typically not accepted.)

**SCRUB IT:** Drop it at a designated drop-off site during city SCRUB (Spring Cleanup to Reduce Urban Blight) events, held the third Saturday March through November.

During SCRUB events, disposal is free with proof of residency in Des Moines. Visit the Public Works SCRUB calendar at [dsm.city](http://dsm.city) or our calendar (p. 6) for upcoming dates.

**STICKER IT:** Buy and apply extra-trash, compost, or large-item pickup stickers (available at the service counter at local grocery stores) and place stickered items on the curb on your usual collection day. A \$1 extra-trash sticker covers smaller items like small TVs and computer monitors, a \$1.25 compost-it sticker covers Christmas trees, a \$5 sticker covers most furniture items and twin/full-sized mattresses, two \$5 stickers cover larger mattresses, and you'll need seven \$5 stickers (and a call to Public Works) for appliances.

**HAUL IT:** Take it to one of the metro area's landfills. Unless it's during a SCRUB event, this is usually your most expensive option, as there's typically a per-vehicle load fee, plus per-item fees for electronics and larger items that can be disassembled and recycled. Visit [mwatoday.com](http://mwatoday.com) for more information.

**SEE DUMPING? REPORT IT!** Use the My DSM Mobile app or the My DSM function at [dsm.city](http://dsm.city) to report illegal dumping.

## NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES? HERE'S WHO TO CALL

### DRAKE NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED SERVICE DELIVERY TEAM MEMBERS

**Des Moines Police Sgt. Mark McKinney:** 515-778-4218, [mamckinney@dmgov.org](mailto:mamckinney@dmgov.org)

**Des Moines Housing Inspector Eric Barker:** 515-283-4980, [ejbarker@dmgov.org](mailto:ejbarker@dmgov.org)

**NBSD Committee Chair Bill Cappuccio:** 515-710-7591, [bill@wrc3.net](mailto:bill@wrc3.net)

### OTHER HELPFUL NUMBERS

**Police (non-emergency):** 515-283-4811

**DSM Public Schools Security:** 515-242-7621

**Drake University Security:** 515-271-2222

**City of Des Moines Information Center:** 515-283-4500

**Animal Control & Shelter:** 515-242-2720

**Graffiti Hotline:** 515-248-6331

**Weed Control:** 515-286-3005

### DNA BOARD OFFICERS

**President Lori Calhoun:** 515-240-6090, [zotlc@aol.com](mailto:zotlc@aol.com)

**Vice President Jason Stuyvesant:** 515-778-9669,

[jasons@realestateconcepts.net](mailto:jasons@realestateconcepts.net)

**Treasurer Mark Schneider:** 515-277-4268,

[marks1809@aol.com](mailto:marks1809@aol.com)

**Secretary Tom Biedenfeld:** 515-402-7534,

[thomasbiedenfeld@gmail.com](mailto:thomasbiedenfeld@gmail.com)

**FOR EMERGENCIES, ALWAYS CALL 911 FIRST!**

# WAYS TO ENGAGE

## 1 BECOME A MEMBER

You can join or renew as a member of the Drake Neighborhood Association three ways: by credit card at [drakeneighborhood.org/membership-signup](http://drakeneighborhood.org/membership-signup); with cash or check at one of our meetings; or with your name, address, telephone number, email, and a check mailed to Drake Neighborhood Association, PO Box 41128, Des Moines, IA 50311. Membership is \$20 a year or \$80 for five years. Benefits include access to our quarterly newsletter and email blasts, invitations to events, the ability to vote for and be nominated to board seats, plus opportunities to meet neighbors and get involved in making our neighborhood even better. Membership dollars help support our all-volunteer association.

## 2 COME TO A MEETING

The Drake Neighborhood Association board generally meets at 7 p.m. the second Wednesday of each month, at the Polk County Central Senior Center, 2008 Forest Ave., unless otherwise noted. (Check for updates on our Facebook page, on the Nextdoor app, and on the [drakeneighborhood.org](http://drakeneighborhood.org) website.) Our next meeting is March 11.

## 3 FIND AND FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

It's a great way to stay in the loop about what's happening in the neighborhood, find volunteer opportunities, and connect with other neighbors. So please find, like, and follow us on Facebook ([@DrakeNeighborhoodAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/DrakeNeighborhoodAssociation)).

## 4 VOLUNTEER

Drake is a great big neighborhood, full of diverse people, talents, and needs. Why not match your passions and skills with a neighborhood project? Whether it's for a single event or an ongoing issue (like marketing, beautification, safety, development, or neighbor outreach), tell us what you're interested in or good at, and we'll find a project for you.

We need LOTS of people to help out (even just a little) throughout the year to help things go smoothly. Just email your name, address, and a sentence or two about yourself and the things you'd like to help with to [into@drakeneighborhood.org](mailto:into@drakeneighborhood.org).

Many hands make light work!



**FONG'S DRAKE SPECIAL:**  
Buy ANY large pizza  
**GET A FREE**  
Garlic 4-Cheese Bread  
or  
Small Single Topping Pizza

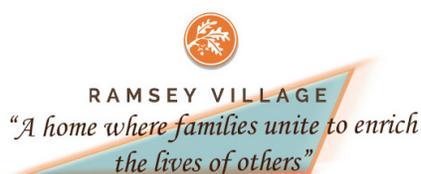
3018 Forest Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50311

Expires April 30, 2020

## GOT DRAKE HISTORY?

Do you have pictures of the Drake Neighborhood from earlier days? Buildings that have changed or no longer exist? Stories of famous people or happenings in the neighborhood? Please email photos and details to DNA board member Jessica Crawford at [jesslcrawf@gmail.com](mailto:jesslcrawf@gmail.com). We want to celebrate and share our rich, diverse history with neighbors in future newsletters and on social media!

THESE LOCAL BUSINESSES ARE PROUD SUPPORTERS  
OF THE DRAKE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION!



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