



A Newsletter from the Department of Neighborhood Services and Community Development



“Building Better Neighborhoods... Block By Block”

COMMON GROUND



Codes and Foreclosures

by Anjenet Brown, Code Enforcement Inspector

Foreclosure. It's a dreaded word all over the country, and Chattanooga is not immune. As reported earlier this year in the *Chattanooga Times Free Press*

well equipped to handle large REO inventories. As a result, the number of vacant homes in some neighborhoods has increased markedly. Properties left vacant for long periods have many negative effects on a community. Research indicates that foreclosures tend to reduce the value of nearby properties.”*

So when the homeowner does leave, who takes care of the property? Many mortgage

companies are out of state and don't see that the grass is overgrown, the yard is littered, or that the windows have been broken out by vandals. If the

One foreclosure can impose up to \$34,000 in direct costs on local government agencies

The Municipal Cost of Foreclosures: A Chicago Case Study

continued on page 2



newspaper, foreclosures in Chattanooga have more than doubled in the past ten years from 431 to 1,009. This of course does not affect just the individual foreclosed upon but the community as a whole. In a recent speech, Randall S. Kroszner of the Federal Reserve Board, said: “The cost of foreclosures is not limited to individual homeowners. Communities in which a high number of foreclosures have occurred are increasingly faced with large numbers of properties held by lenders or servicers as ‘real estate owned,’ or ‘REO.’ REO is costly to hold, and many lenders are not



This duplex is a typical property that is in foreclosure.

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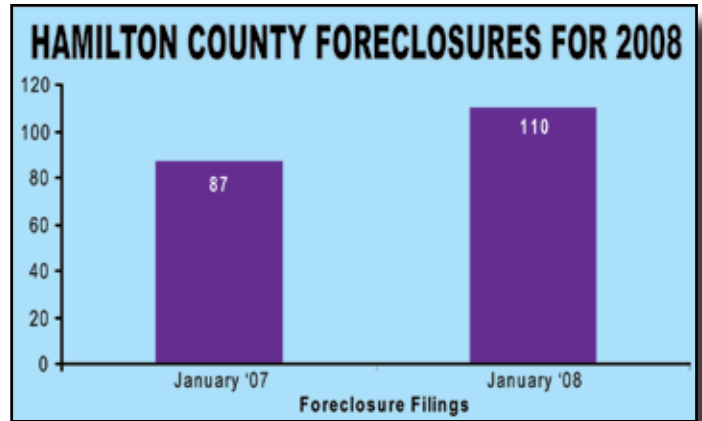
Dottie Swasey, Editor, *Common Ground*

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Foreclosures (continued from page 1)



This property at 1401 Union Avenue has extensive fire damage, and the owner is in bankruptcy. It is slated for auction. Bankruptcies and foreclosures have similar maintenance issues.



Foreclosure filings increased significantly in Hamilton county between January of last year and January of this year. Since January, the numbers have climbed even higher.

The process of getting the banks to bring foreclosed properties into compliance with city code usually takes longer because the out of town company must find someone locally to take care of the property.

While the mortgage companies are starting to realize there is a growing maintenance problem and are becoming more responsive, we still have a long way to go before foreclosures slow down. This means there are going to be many more properties sitting vacant and creating an attractive nuisance. The Department of Neighborhood Services and Community Development will continue to work with the lending institutions to maintain these properties and the integrity of the neighborhoods affected by them.

*Innerecitypress.org **William C. Apgar, Mark Duda, and Rochelle Nawrocki Gorey, "The Municipal Cost of Foreclosures: A Chicago Case Study," February 27, 2005, p. 2.

“New” Neighborhood Association Toolkits

Is there something in your community you are concerned about? Do you want to bring about change, or perhaps maintain and protect something special in your community?

Organizing a neighborhood association can build a sense of unity among the residents of your community, enhance the quality of life in your neighborhood and help make it a safer and more enriching place to live. An association increases residents’ feelings of “partnership” as well as gives your community a voice to speak to government officials, staff and developers.

The Department of Neighborhood Services and Community Development has developed a “toolkit” to assist

new neighborhood associations to get organized. The kits consists of:

- Neighborhood meeting signs
- Neighborhood meeting flyers
- Sample bylaws
- Sign in log
- Name tags



Residents interested in organizing a neighborhood association and taking advantage of the new toolkits should contact a Neighborhood Relations Specialist at 425-3700. They are a valuable resource of information on how to get started, hold meetings and much more.



Mayor Ron Littlefield

A Letter from The Mayor

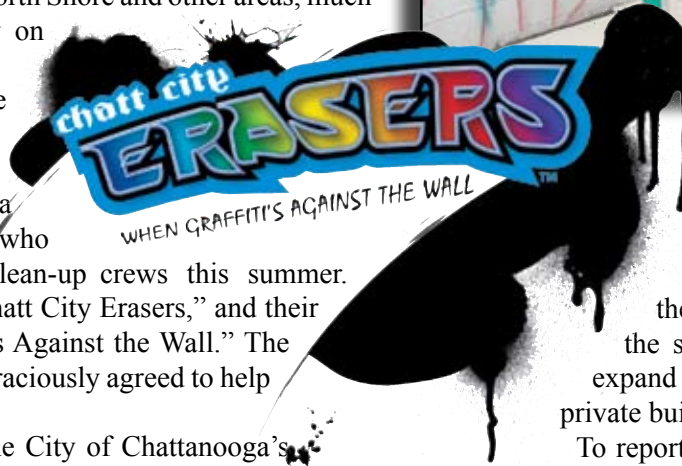
Some call it an eyesore; others call it art. But the plain fact is that painting graffiti on public or private property is against the law. Increasingly, graffiti in our City is proving to be a nuisance and in some instances it contains dangerous or offensive messages.



Although the City of Chattanooga's Public Works Department has cleaned up graffiti on public property that has been prevalent on the North Shore and other areas, much work remains – especially on privately owned property.

A new and innovative graffiti removal program supplies the elbow grease, paint and brushes for a handful of young adults who are serving as graffiti clean-up crews this summer. The group is called the "Chatt City Erasers," and their tag-line is "When Graffiti's Against the Wall." The Electric Power Board has graciously agreed to help sponsor the group.

Seven workers from the City of Chattanooga's Summer Youth Program will make up the graffiti clean-up team. The Summer Youth Program provides employment opportunities and activities for more than 600 teens and young adults. Sponsored by the office of Faith-Based and Community Partnerships, the program encourages



positive behavior through summer employment and mentoring.

Initially, the graffiti clean-up program will be limited to graffiti removal from public property. Once the team is trained and demand for the service is determined, the City may expand the program and offer the service to private building owners.

To report graffiti on public property, call 311 (425-6311) or visit www.chattanooga.gov and click on the 311 logo.

As well as being against the law, graffiti is costly and destructive. It sends a message that the community is not concerned about the appearance of its neighborhoods.

A Letter from the Administrator

Improving our neighborhoods and our city — this newsletter is full of great stories about city departments and citizens taking an active role in doing just that. Whether it is cleaning graffiti, creating recreational spaces or hosting social events, it is amazing to see everyone's efforts paying off and "Building better neighborhoods... block by block."

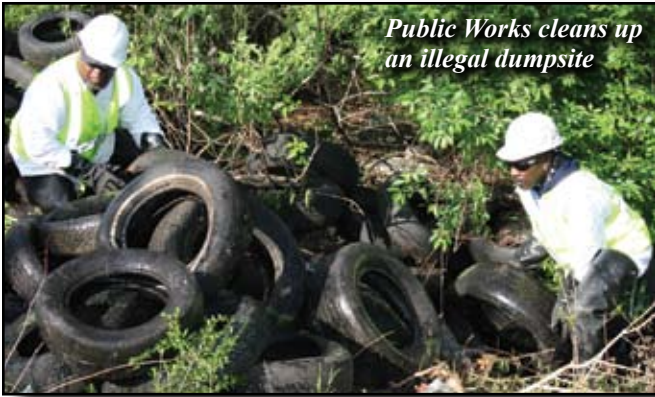
The most effective way to bring about change in your neighborhood is to organize a neighborhood association. Associations can identify challenges, support improvement efforts, provide volunteers for community projects and obtain resources for neighborhood improvements. The Department of Neighborhood Services and Community Development has put together a "toolkit" to help get new

associations started. If you are interested in organizing your neighborhood, give us a call or visit our website. If you want to find out about neighborhood associations in your area, we can assist you with that as well. We have recently updated our registry of associations.

To all of our existing neighborhood associations, we appreciate the important work you're doing... keep up the good work!



Beverly P. Johnson, Administrator



Public Works cleans up an illegal dumpsite

Public Works

Illegal Dumping

The City of Chattanooga Public Works Department recently has instituted a new deterrent in an attempt to decrease acts of vandalism and the dumping of illegal material throughout the city. The FlashCam-880, a solar powered digital camera, captures motion within a radius of 200 feet in daylight and 100 feet in pitch black darkness. It has had success in cities throughout the United States, United Kingdom and Canada, and will prove to be a valuable asset in keeping Chattanooga clean. If you hear “Stop! This is a restricted area,” smile... you’re on camera!

Brush and Recycling Schedule				
Area 1: East of Hwy 153 and West of I-75				
Recycling:	June 4	July 9	August 6	September 3
Brush: Collection begins on the first Monday of each month				
Area 2: East of I-75, West of Hwy 153, and East of Crest Road, Campbell Street, and Bonnie Oaks Drive				
Recycling:	June 11	July 16	August 13	September 10
Brush: Collection begins on the second Monday of each month				
Area 3: West of Crest Road, Campbell Street, and Bonnie Oaks Drive, West of Hwy 153, and South of the Tennessee River				
Recycling:	June 18	July 23	August 20	September 17
Brush: Collection begins on the third Monday of each month				
Area 4: North of the Tennessee River and West of Hwy 153				
Recycling:	June 25	July 30	August 27	September 24
Brush: Collection begins on the fourth Monday of each month				



The City of Chattanooga announces a new service for those who receive curbside recycling and brush pickup: an e-mail reminder! Citizens of Chattanooga may now sign-up for the e-mail reminder

by visiting www.recycleright.org and clicking the Pickup Reminder link or by calling 3-1-1. The e-mail system will send you a quick reminder on the Friday before your designated pickup week.

NLI Graduates Making A Difference

by Jill Murphy, Neighborhood Program Specialist

Since graduating from the Neighborhood Leadership Institute, many of these newly trained leaders have taken their knowledge and continue to serve the Chattanooga community and their neighborhoods.

One such group of NLI alumni is Brainerd Unity Group, a coalition of neighborhood groups and individuals in the Brainerd area. Begun as a joint NLI final project between three class members, Candy Corneliussen, Florencia Flippin and Julia Morgan-Scott, Brainerd Unity Group continues to meet. They have organized three major events since last fall, including a District 10 Senate Candidate Forum, a District 6 City Council Candidate Forum, and most recently Big Brainerd Clean Up. For more information on getting involved with Brainerd Unity Group, visit <http://brainerdunity.hobbies.homepagenow.com>.

Several NLI alumni recently participated in this year’s NLI class by teaching Session 3: Team Building for Success and Past NLI Projects. Pam Ladd of Murray Hills and Briston Smith of Hill City taught fundamental organizing techniques. Rev. Ann Weeks of South Broad, Scott Noll of St. Elmo and Linda Manning of Lookout Valley presented their work about renovating several train bridges and overpasses that join their neighborhoods. Candy Corneliussen and Julia Morgan-Scott presented their work with Brainerd Unity Group.

The alumni of NLI continue to achieve higher goals and make more progress towards a better Chattanooga. We look forward to seeing the accomplishments of this year’s class!



Julia Morgan-Scott of Brainerd Unity Group

Neighborly News from...

Hilltop Neighborhood Association

by Dennis Tate, Neighborhood Relations Specialist

The Future Belongs to Hilltop

Hilltop Neighborhood Association (HNA) is among the neighborhood groups leading the way in Chattanooga in applying technology to their outreach, leapfrogging its capacity to promote the neighborhood, activities, and connecting its members.

Being awarded Neighborhood Partners Program funding last year (2007) proved a catalyst for organizational redevelopment. Out of that effort to revitalize the association and bring in new members came much enthusiastic conversation and measurable outcomes.

Currently 48 families' addresses are identified on the interactive map posted on the Hilltop website, along with helpful, practical information for new residents (like garbage, recycling, and brush pickup, how to use 311, neighborhood boundaries, and how to become a member).

A welcome statement from site administrator and HNA vice president Trey Commander invites residents to participate in HNA forums, which include Hilltop FAQs, Hilltop Neighborhood News, and Hilltop Talk, a general discussion forum including topics as diverse as coyote sightings, social event ideas and the District 6 "Sweet



Diversity" celebration. A news list enables subscribers to participate in e-mail discussions on topics of immediate interest in the neighborhood.

Also included are a community calendar, a contacts page, and a links page connects visitors and members to the City of Chattanooga website, the City 311 page, as well as to neighborhood businesses.

One of the most engaging images on the site is a 1920s photo from Lerch Street. It shows young people on the porch of their home, with a backdrop of the virtually bare "hilltop" and what looks like an old silo, or possibly a water tank, and only two or three residences. By uniting the past and the present and one another, it is clear that the future belongs to Hilltop. Visit their website at <http://www.hilltopneighborhood.org>.

Murray Hills Neighborhood Association

by Pam Ladd, President, Murray Hills Neighborhood Association



Murray Hills is a community located between Amnicola Highway and Highway 58. The neighborhood consists of about 425 homes, green space, churches and play space within its boundaries. Sterchi Park was dedicated to protect a green space that could be maintained to enhance the beauty of the neighborhood. Many of our garden club members are founding developers of the park and help keep it pristine every year.

A pool and play area served the community for decades and is now home to the new Murray Hills Walking Track. The association recently held a ribbon cutting and dedication. Last year the Association was awarded Neighborhood Partners program funding from the Department of Neighborhood Services and Community Development for picnic tables, benches, a kiosk and plants to make improvements to the track area.

Murray Hills Neighborhood Association distributes a monthly newsletter. They are planning an event for National Night Out, as well as a Halloween celebration, Christmas Light Awards, and Tennessee River Rescue. One of our families invites the whole neighborhood over every July 4th for breakfast on the lawn. We have a small band that plays; we raise the flag; and we have a parade around the neighborhood, complete with an antique truck.

Murray Hills for over 50 years has been a premier place to live, worship and play. Homeowners seeking a safe, friendly and aesthetically pleasing neighborhood are welcome.

Neighborly News from...

Hamilton Acres Neighborhood Association *by Debbie Johnson, Neighborhood Relations Specialist*



It was community cleanup day April 19, 2008 for the community of Hamilton Acres. A celebration signaling the end of the hard working day was held providing food and refreshment for the work-weary residents. The day-long event was the result of the partnership of the Hamilton Acres Neighborhood Association, Jeanette Eigelsbach of Scenic Cities Beautiful, City of Chattanooga's Public Works, and

the Department of Neighborhood Services and Community Development. Funding was provided from donations to the Association and from the Neighborhood Partners Program through the Department of Neighborhood Services and Community Development. As an incentive to keep the neighborhood looking its best, each month a resident will be voted to have the most attractive yard and will proudly display a Hamilton Acres Yard of the Month sign.

This small community of neighbors came together as an association last year with the goal to become a more involved and healthy neighborhood. The neighborhood celebrates its diversity through various events, including National Night Out and a Thanksgiving dinner where residents bring a dish from their own kitchen. The Hamilton Acres Neighborhood Association recently underwent an updated addressing system working with the City of Chattanooga, Hamilton County GIS and 911 emergency services.

The officers of the Hamilton Acres Neighborhood Association are very proud of their community and even more proud of the fellowship that is cultivated in the community. Congratulations Hamilton Acres!

Unity In the Community – Connecting the Whole Year Long

by Laurie Shipley, Department of Education, Arts & Culture

Under a stormy Saturday May 3rd morning sky, more than 300 people came together to join forces and make a difference in the East Lake Community. The official Unity in the Community Adopt-A-Block project kicked off in conjunction with the 7th annual Comcast Cares Day.

Comcast's 200 plus employees braved the elements early Saturday to install a new playground at the Salvation Army's East Lake facility. The City's Department of Education, Arts & Culture, Office of Faith Based & Community Partnership and the Department of Neighborhood Services and Community Development were all participants. Mayor Ron Littlefield gave the charge to all those who were there, and declared that neighborhoods are the driving force in our community and that we all make a difference.

Other organizations participating were: the Boy Scouts of America, Chattanooga Housing Authority, Chattanooga Matters, Chattanooga Community Kitchen, East Lake & Forest Avenue United Methodist Churches, North River Vineyard Church, the Salvation Army and the United Way.

Will Hale, director of volunteers for the Salvation Army, and Toya Cobb from the Volunteer Center at the United Way,



led a team of more than 150 volunteers to assist in preparing meals, canvassing the local community to assess its needs and organizing child activities and entertainment.

For more information on these events and how you can become a part of them, contact the Salvation Army at (423) 756-1023 or the United Way at (423) 752-0300.

Neighborly News from...

Office of Multicultural Affairs

The Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) hosted the first Sweet Diversity event of 2008 on May 15th at the South Chattanooga Recreation Center. Attendees had the opportunity to taste various desserts from local residents, learn more about their neighbors through a game of Diversity BINGO and experience musical performances by local artists Ko Alexander and Bob Weigers. District 7 Councilman Manny Rico thanked guests for their attendance and stated that he looks forward to the growth of this event within his district.

As Sweet Diversity continues into other districts, each area has the opportunity to create their own distinctive touch on the event. The District 6 event, held on June 19th at the Shepherd Recreation Center, offered a variety of cultural and craft displays, a cake walk, numerous door prizes and a musical performance.

For more information, please visit the schedule of events link through the OMA website at www.chattanooga.gov.

Sweet Diversity A Dessert Reception

*Coming to Your
Neighborhood!*

District 5

Thursday, August 28
Brainerd Recreation Center
1010 N. Moore Rd.

District 4

Thursday, September 18
Heritage House
1428 Jenkins Rd.



Parks and Recreation

“Many Worlds — One Dream: A Summer of Olympic Proportions” program has youth at the neighborhood recreation centers engaged in a wide variety of Olympic sports and activities that compare and contrast their local neighborhoods with international Olympic countries.

Each recreation center will represent a different country. An end of the



summer ‘Celebration of Local Olympians’ is planned for each center to showcase their country and demonstrate the theme.

Two sessions remain: July 7-18 and July 21-August 1. The cost is \$50 per child for each two week session. For more information, call Kim Battle at 643-6052, Rhonda Seeber 643-6079 or visit www.chattanooga.gov/parks&recreation.

Minority Health Fair



The 2008 Minority Health Fair will be held at the Eastgate Town Center on Saturday, August 16, from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. This health fair is open to everyone and absolutely free of charge. Health screenings will include

blood pressure testing, carotid artery, dental, diabetes, lung, prostate, pre-athletic, stroke screenings, and many more. To pre-register for screenings or for more information, please call 423-778-LINK.

Chattanooga Neighborhood Association Council



CNAC recently held a retreat for neighborhood leaders at the Reflection Riding facility to discuss organizational topics which was a great success. Several new members have been welcomed to the council that will be an asset. J.C. Tower members are getting organized into a well represented group.

CNAC meets at 6 p.m. on the 4th Monday of each month. Come visit the meeting at the Community Foundation conference room at 1270 Market Street.

COMMONGROUND

July Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Division	Description	Date	Time	Division	Description	
3 Thu	10:00A	■	Environmental Court (Neighborhood Services)	15	6:00P	■	Orchard Knob Neighborhood Watch Meeting	
	6:00P	■	Glenwood Neighborhood Watch Meeting	Tue	6:00P	■	Orchard Knob Neighborhood Association Meeting	
	6:00P	■	Missionary Ridge Neighborhood Association Meeting	17 Thu	10:00A	■	Environmental Court (Neighborhood Services)	
7:00P	■	Lookout Valley Neighborhood Association Meeting	6:00P		■	Menlo Park Neighborhood Association Meeting		
6:30P	■	East Lake Neighborhood Association Meeting	7:00P		■	East Lake Community Council Meeting		
7 Mon	6:30P	■	Hill City Neighborhood Association Meeting	7:00P	■	Highland Park Neighborhood Association Meeting		
	7:00P	■	Community Association of Historic St. Elmo Meeting	21 Mon	6:00P	■	Avondale Neighborhood Association Meeting	
	7:00P	■	Murray Hills Neighborhood Association Board Meeting		6:00P	■	North Brainerd Neighborhood Association Meeting	
	6:00P	■	Sector 2 Community Policing Interactive Committee (CPIC)		6:00P	■	Washington Hills Neighborhood Association Meeting	
8 Tue	6:00P	■	Bushtown Neighborhood Association Meeting	6:00P	■	South Chattanooga Association of Neighbors Meeting		
	6:00P	■	Foxwood Heights Neighborhood Association Meeting	22	4:00P	■	Community Anti-Drug Coalition Across Hamilton County	
	6:00P	■	Lupton City Neighborhood Association Meeting	Tue	23 Wed	11:30A	■	Court Watch Partners
	6:00P	■	Glass Farms Neighborhood Association Meeting	10:00A		■	Environmental Court (Neighborhood Services)	
	7:00P	■	Lake Hills Neighborhood Association Meeting	5:30P	■	South Broad Redevelopment Group, Inc. Meeting		
9 Wed	10:00A	■	Board of Zoning Appeal Meeting	6:00P - 7:00P	■	Glenwood Neighborhood Association Meeting		
	11:00A	■	East Lake Senior Citizens Meeting	7:00P	■	Ridgedale Neighborhood Association Meeting		
10 Thu	10:00A	■	Environmental Court (Neighborhood Services)	28 Mon	6:00P	■	Chattanooga Neighborhood Association Council (CNAC)	
	6:30P	■	Clifton Hills Neighborhood Improvement Committee Meeting		6:30P	■	Sylvan Drive Neighborhood Association	
	7:00P	■	Cedar Hill Improvement League Meeting	31	10:00A	■	Environmental Court (Neighborhood Services)	
12 Sat	2:00P	■	Churchville Neighborhood Association Meeting	Thu				
14 Mon	1:00P	■	Regional Planning Agency Meeting					
	6:00P	■	Hamilton Acres Neighborhood Association					

■ Neighborhood Relations ■ Code Enforcement
■ Neighborhood Association ■ Other

Save The Date
August 14-15, 2008



Codes Conference

The Chattanooga Hotel
 1201 Broad Street • Chattanooga, Tennessee
 An outstanding opportunity for code enforcement officials to earn CEU credits
 For more information Call (423) 425-3700
 or register online at www.chattanooga.gov

Save The Date
October 9-10, 2008



Neighborhoods Conference

Chattanooga Convention Center
 1150 Carter Street • Chattanooga, Tennessee
 For more information Call (423) 425-3700
www.chattanooga.gov