

COMMON GROUND

A Newsletter Celebrating Neighborhoods

Building Stronger Neighborhoods

Councilwoman Linda Bennett, District 1

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It was love at first sight when I purchased my first

home in North Chattanooga over twenty years ago. The "Tree House," as it is affectionately now called because the view on the second floor overlooks the tops of several 100-year-old oak trees, has recorded the history of my life for two decades. It was my first and only home purchase and remains the place my chil-

dren and I call "home." The most fortunate part of my home purchase decision was the caring community of people that came with it. These neighbors and my family have shared parts of our lives, even if that sharing was sometimes just in passing. We have shared holidays, funerals, marriages, divorces, births, child rearing, and the joys and challenges of aging together.

We learned to organize our efforts and work together for the betterment of our neighborhood. I will forever re-

member the lessons we learned and will appreciate those individuals who cared enough to show up and invest their time and talents to make the community better for everyone.

The *Common Ground* newsletter is about building stronger neighborhoods. If you are involved in that process, I encourage you to continue the good work, because the rewards are truly priceless.

Blessings,
Linda Bennett
City Council, District 1

Letter from the Administrator

Dear Neighbor,
In this issue of *Common Ground*, we are focusing on ways to build stronger neighborhoods — through community involvement, rehabilitation of structures, and the investment of the time and efforts of residents. When we work together as a community, we can strengthen and improve the areas in which we live, to the benefit of all of Chattanooga's residents.

Please feel free to call our office at any time with questions or concerns. We appreciate your interest and involvement.

Sincerely,
Beverly P. Johnson, Administrator



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Property Transformation: 814 Snow Street

This house at 814 Snow Street in Chattanooga has undergone some major changes! Formerly condemned, it has been transformed into a fully remodeled home.

The house was condemned in May 2005. At the time, the yard was unkempt, the foundation was deteriorating, the windows and doors were not secured to City Code, and the structure was vacant and unsecured.

When a property is in



Above: 814 Snow Street, before

violation of City Code, the owner has 30 days to correct all violations and bring the structure into compliance. If the property owner does not correct the violations within 30 days, the case is brought to City Court, where fines and court costs

can be assessed. In the case of this property, the owner was a financial institution, who fully rehabilitated the structure and placed it on the market. It is now a newly renovated house, fully compliant with City Code, and ready for new owners!

Below: 814 Snow Street, after



Neighborhood Notes

Shallowford Road Exit Beautification Project

On Tuesday, January 31, Mayor Ron Littlefield, several community leaders and business owners broke ground on the first phase of the Shallowford Road exit beautification project.

Less than a month ago, this \$80,000 project was little more than an idea. But persistent public and private East Brainerd leaders met with the Mayor to discuss improving the off ramps to exit 5 on I-75 to make it more friendly and inviting. What resulted was a fast moving plan with generous contributors jumping on board.

Bill Mish, chair of the

Friends of East Brainerd Beautification Committee says that to date,



committed participants in this endeavor include the City of Chattanooga, CBL and Associates- Hamilton Place Mall, Vision Hospitality Group, Ken DeFoor, and

the Chamber of Commerce. Metro Lawn Care is donating all profits for work performed.

David Garner with Metro Lawn Care began the planting of two ramps at exit 5. Garner said, "This first planting will include approximately

130 Crepe Myrtles scattered in a triangle pattern with 650 Grey Owl Junipers planted within the triangle as ground cover."

Gene Hyde, the City's

Forester, is working with David Garner to remove all existing trees and shrubs and as Gene put it, "to clear the canvas for David Garner to create a beautiful work of art".

The Friends of East Brainerd is a 501 (c) (3) organization established to implement smart growth in East Brainerd who first had the idea for the beautification project. It is their hope that drivers will slow down, exit, shop and stay at the hotels. The non-profit has enlisted both public and private parties including TDOT.

Employee Spotlight



Dianna Blackmon provides office support to the Region 1 team in the Neighborhood Services Department. Dianna has been with the City for six years.

Dianna is the youngest member of her family and is the only girl. She has three children and two grandchildren and loves reading, particularly medical journals.

When asked what she likes about her job, Dianna says, "I like the variety that my job affords."

Office of Multicultural Affairs

The City of Chattanooga's new Office of Multicultural Affairs will serve as the primary liaison with the Chattanooga City Council, the Office of the Mayor, and the community on matters affecting the African-American, Hispanic, and other socially and economically disadvantaged groups. The office will ensure expedient and effective response to public policy and related response to issues facing these communities.

The mission of the OMA is to create and foster an environment that reflects the equal treatment and participation of all segments of the Chattanooga community in the economic, educational, and social development of Chattanooga. This will be achieved through research, advocacy, and public policy implementation.

Neighborhood TALK

**Tuesday Mornings, 9:00-9:30am
WNOO, 1260AM - Heritage Radio**

TUNE IN!!!

Upcoming Events

February:

- 8 - Board of Zoning Appeals meeting - City Council Assembly Room, 1000 Lindsay Street, 10:00 am
- 14 - Sector 2 (Echo and Fox Zones) Community/ Police Interaction Committee (CPIC) meeting - Diagnostic Center on McCallie (left of Parkridge Hospital), 6:00 pm
- 27 - CNAC meeting - Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga, 1270 Market Street, 6:00 pm

Employee Spotlight



Debbie Johnson is the Neighborhood Relations Coordinator for Region 1. She has been with the City of Chattanooga for 9 years. Prior to her employment with the City, Debbie worked in the banking industry doing installment, construction and real estate/mortgage lending. She then moved into the mortgage banking industry, where she worked in retail, wholesale, and secondary marketing and was a VA and FHA Direct Endorsement underwriter.

Debbie's hobbies include collecting Wizard of Oz, professional baseball and Mickey Mouse memorabilia, ceramic painting, Celtic music, Renaissance festivals, and reading anything to do with history, biographies, and true crime.

When asked what Debbie likes best about her job, she responded, "Working with the neighborhoods, meeting and working with the residents to make our communities the best they can be. They are my extended family."

Don't pay to file your taxes!

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The Urban League of Greater Chattanooga and the **City of Chattanooga** are providing free, accurate tax preparation to Chattanoogaans who qualify for the **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)**.

Visit any one of eight conveniently located free tax preparation sites.

Have your taxes completed and filed by IRS certified tax volunteers.

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Empowering Communities. Changing Lives.



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February 2006

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