
ECHO

EAST CENTRAL HOMEOWNERS' ORGANIZATION

NUMBER 19

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2010

Visit the *ECHO* website at <http://www.naperville-echo.org/>

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TREE SEMINAR!!!

WHEN: SOON!!! May 11 Tuesday 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

WHERE: CLOSE!! Smith Hall, 2nd floor North Central College's Old Main Building, 30 N. Brainard St.

Can you imagine how different this city would look--and feel--without its trees? City Forester Jack Mitz will present a free seminar for residents on proper care for mature trees in older neighborhoods at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, May 11, in Smith Hall, 2nd floor of North Central College's Old Main building, 30 N. Brainard St. Mitz will cover best practices for pruning and caring for your existing trees as well as selecting and planting new trees. Mitz, who has a Bachelor's Degree in Forestry from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, joined the City of Naperville in 1988 as the Forestry Supervisor.

For more information, call the Department of Public Works at (630) 420-6095

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IMPORTANT...IMPORTANT...IMPORTANT...IMPORTANT...IMPORTANT!

RECOMMENDED REGULATIONS FOR RENTAL/LEASE OF BOARDING ROOMS AND DWELLING UNITS IN SINGLE-FAMILY ZONED DISTRICTS

--by Craig Kiefer, ECHO Board Member

Last November, city staff recommended initiating a text amendment to the municipal code that would give code enforcement the "necessary tools" to regulate uses of property in single-family zoned districts. Staff recommended an "owner occupation requirement for boarding room rentals," combined with a rental licensing program. The details of any program were to be worked out at subsequent meetings.

On February 11th, an advisory committee met to discuss rental requirements in single-family districts. I was a member of this committee. Our first meeting arrived at a consensus about the key issues:

1. Administrative process: uncertainty regarding the city's ability to respond to and achieve resolution of property concerns in a timely manner.
2. Education: the need for tenants and landlords, as well as property managers and neighbors, to be aware of their rights and responsibilities.
3. General issues: common issues associated with occupancy and nuisance problems.

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On March 12th, the advisory committee met again to “evaluate preliminary framework options to address key issues associated with rental requirements.” Staff presented a two-tier proposal: immediate action(s), and other potential requirements that could be adopted. The immediate actions included:

1. Amend municipal code: reclassify boarding houses as commercial, amortize existing boarding houses (2-5 years), revise regulations for boarding rooms (reduce allowable rooms to one per dwelling unit without the owner occupied requirement).
2. Establish internal communication between city departments: police, fire and code enforcement.
3. Adjust operating procedure to help target chronic property issues.
4. Education: landlord/tenant/neighbor rights and responsibilities.

Future policy options would include:

1. Chronic nuisance property abatement (chronic offenders could lose ability to rent)
2. Rental registration/licensing.

The committee was not pleased that staff had dropped the owner occupation requirement for boarding rooms from their recommendations. Without this requirement property owners can increase the number of dwelling units available for rent that’s outside the zoning of the property. Without the owner occupied requirement a transient uncaring environment develops and leads to degrading living conditions for surrounding neighbors. The committee strongly suggested that the owner occupation requirement be recommended.

Staff had also dropped any rental licensing program from immediate consideration. They believe they already have the necessary tools to effectively deal with chronic properties; they just haven’t used them. Under the current system, they need dedication to pursue enforcement, which requires time and effort and a little luck in terms of circumstances. And staff still faces the possibility of having to go to court and get a judgment in their favor. The result is that staff members usually don’t resolve issues with maintenance and usage until the problem is embarrassing. I don’t foresee how the same “tools” will work without a licensing program to help streamline the process and make it fair for all: owners, tenants and neighbors.

In April the Plan Commission approved staff’s recommendations to amend the municipal code regarding boarding houses and boarding rooms. As now formulated, immediate actions would include:

1. Amend municipal code: reclassify boarding houses as commercial, amortize existing boarding houses (1-2 years), revise regulations for boarding rooms (incorporate an owner-occupied condition for boarding rooms).
2. Establish internal communication between city departments: police, fire and code enforcement.
3. Adjust operating procedure to help target chronic property issues.
4. Education: landlord/tenant/neighbor rights and responsibilities.

Future policy options remained as described above.

The recommendations will now be sent to the city council for approval sometime this summer.

NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE 2010-2020 MASTER LAND USE PLAN

The first Master Land Use Plan for North Central College, incorporated into the City of Naperville's Master Land Use Plan, was adopted by the City of Naperville in 1989 along with the College and University District Ordinance. The plan was in response to a desire by the College, neighbors, and the City to anticipate and publicly document the College's projected facility needs and land use changes. A subsequent 10-year plan was adopted in 2000, and amended as further opportunities presented themselves.

This 2010-2020 Master Land Use Plan has been developed based on input from College faculty, staff and students; the City of Naperville planning staff; and the College's neighbors who were convened in three meetings to review the concepts contained in the plan and provide feedback. The College also had several meetings with the East Central Homeowners Organization (ECHO) Board to solicit their input as well. Early drafts were available for viewing on the College's website as is this document at <http://northcentralcollege.edu/x50188.xml>.

The Master Land Use Plan summarizes the College's anticipated facility needs and land use changes over the next 10 years. The documents contain parking and traffic studies, infrastructure and circulation suggestions, and a storm water management and utility support summary. The anticipated needs and recommendations contained in the plan represent the College's current thinking based on today's information and circumstances. The largest component that would affect the neighbors is probably the anticipated facility needs including a new science center, additional academic & faculty office space, student housing, a natatorium, and other future growth options. The Master Land Use Plan has since been approved by the city.

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES:

ECHO is beginning to provide a web based listing of service providers useful to its residents - from senior care to flooring and remodeling. The current list is available at <http://www.naperville-echo.org/NeighborServices.html> - ECHO would love to hear of your experience with a provider that services our neighborhood and would like to grow this listing service. We are sure that you would prefer to use someone recommended within the neighborhood than to use an unknown, right? Of course, ECHO isn't promoting one provider and is not taking any role in qualifying the work listed - it is your forum to share your experience so others can benefit.

ECHO GARAGE SALE 6/12:

The ECHO garage sale is scheduled for Saturday June 12th from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Those who wish to participate and have their address placed on a map that will be available at all registered participating homes should send their name and address to board@naperville-echo.org. ECHO will place an ad in the Naperville Sun and place signs at intersections leading to the neighborhood and deliver maps to those homes that register in advance. Individual participants should use signs and/or balloons to identify their participation in the sale. Any resident may choose to participate in the sale - even if they don't register - the more the merrier!

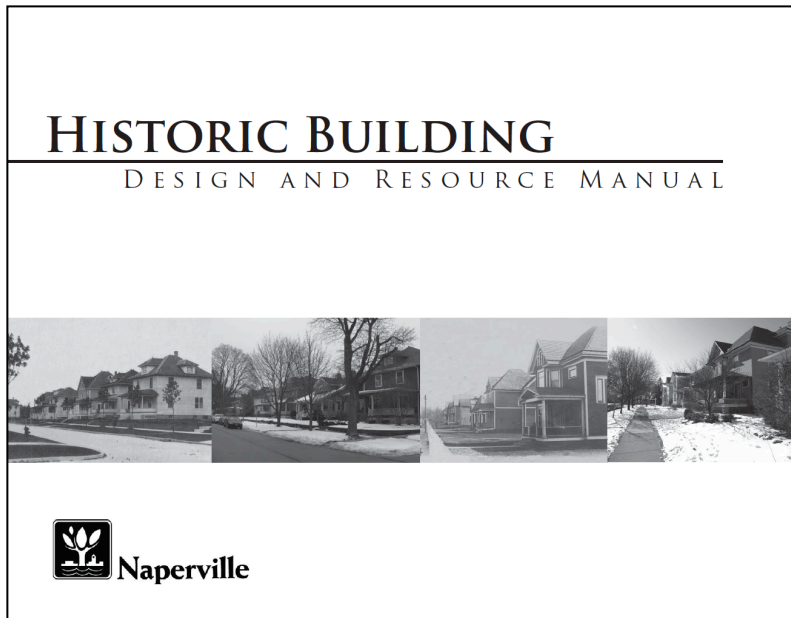
To **stay informed** and provide input on topics that interest or concern you, sign up for City of Naperville e-News by visiting www.naperville.il.us/enews.aspx and selecting the "Historic Preservation" topic.

HPC Approves Historic Building Design and Resource Manual

Following three public meetings in March and April, the Historic Preservation Commission approved the new Naperville Historic Building Design and Resource Manual at its April meeting. This manual will be an invaluable reference for property owners planning maintenance and improvements to existing structures as well as new construction in the older residential areas of Naperville - particularly the Historic District. The manual will also be a valuable reference for city staff and the HPC in evaluating COA applications. More information on the manual is available on the City of Naperville website at <http://www.naperville.il.us/preservation.aspx>

To help residents understand how to use the manual, the City is planning to hold two sessions over the summer. Historic District residents will also be able to obtain a copy of the manual for their personal use. Watch your mail for a postcard from the City of Naperville with the meeting schedule and information on how to obtain a copy of the manual.

Watch for the final version of the...



ECHO Membership Form

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____ Other Phone (optional) _____

Email _____ (To be used exclusively for ECHO business)

Dues are \$20 per household *per calendar year*. Dues for 2010 may be paid any time. Please list both husband and wife under NAME(S) if applicable. Return this form, completed, with a \$20 check (payable to ECHO) to Tim Messer, 6 N. Huffman, Naperville, IL 60540.

Your record of ECHO Membership:

Date Paid _____ For Membership Year _____ Amount _____ \$ 20.00

Check Number _____ Notes _____