



HISTORIC
BELLE GROVE
SQUARE

HISTORIC
BELLE GROVE SQUARE
NEIGHBORHOOD

VOLUME 2 ~ ISSUE 4 ~ 2009 APRIL

*Highlights of
What's Inside:*

Neighborhood **2** News

April Gardening **3**

Neighborhood Spotlight **4**
National Register District

**Be sure to join us
for the next**

**Belle Grove Square
Neighborhood
Meeting**

**Thursday, April
16th, 2009**

**7:00pm at St.
Paul's UCC, Bond
and Green Streets!**

See you There!

City Arbor Day Celebration

by Mitchell Edmondson

Spring has officially arrived and the crocuses in the park are a welcome reminder that warm Summer days are just around the corner. All throughout our neighborhood, tulips and daffodils will soon be heralding the fact that

another winter has passed and our cherry and dogwood trees will be coming to full bloom. We have several flowering trees in Belle Grove Square park - one of the dogwoods is at the corner of Park Avenue and Green Street, and another is along Bond Street, in addition to the flowering cherries.

As you have probably seen these past few weeks, there has been a lot of activity in Belle Grove Square park. Members of our neighborhood gathered March 12, 2009 for a presentation by city representatives and the city's arborist to explain which trees were being removed and where the new trees will be planted and get input from the neighborhood on the plan. During the last two weeks, several older or damaged trees have been removed and the stumps have been ground down. The city did leave two of the older flowering cherry trees in the park. They were planted in 1976 and may be able to live on for another year or two.



City arborist Eric Schlitzer and city staff meet with Belle Grove Square neighbors March 12, 2009 to discuss the city's plans for tree removal and new trees to be planted for Arbor Day 2009.

On April 1, 2009 city officials and residents will gather in our Belle Grove Square Park to celebrate Arbor Day. At 3:30 pm on Wednesday, April 1, the City of Westminster Tree Commission and the neighbors of Belle Grove Square will be planting three

...continued on page 2

...continued from page 1

cherry trees following a proclamation by the City's Mayor, Thomas Ferguson. This program will satisfy one of the requirements for Tree City USA City recertification for 2009. Residents of Historic Belle Grove Square are encouraged to attend the event and help if they like with the sprucing up in our park that day.

The tree planting and proclamation fulfill some of the requirements for our city to continue to participate in the Tree City USA program. The Tree City USA is a program that provides direction, assistance, attention, and national recognition for urban and community forestry programs in thousands of towns and cities that more than 120 million Americans call home.

It is quite an honor for our neighborhood to be chosen for this celebration. The City of Westminster has spent more than \$10,000.00 in our park this year and this goes to show how our city has remained committed to the historic Belle Grove Square neighborhood and recognizes its unique and special relationship with the city itself - the park's unique role as a public square means the improvements to the city park will be enjoyed by all city residents for many years to come.

Neighborhood News

Neighborhood Recognized by City

On Monday, March 9, 2009 the Mayor and Common Council honored the Historic Belle Grove Square Neighborhood Association with an official proclamation recognizing our neighborhood group. We were one of two neighborhoods that received this proclamation - the other neighborhood honored was the Tri-Street area near McDaniel College.



Bruce DeVault accepts city Mayor Thomas Ferguson's proclamation recognizing Historic Belle Grove Square Neighborhood Association on behalf of the group March 9, 2009.

Park Benches Being Repainted For Season

You may have noticed that some of the benches have been missing from the park. The city is currently in the process of painting and repairing the benches a few at a time. Repainted benches will soon be reappearing and the four remaining unpainted benches will be removed for much needed spring revitalization. We very

much appreciate the effort of the City of Westminster to continue to invest resources into maintaining one of Westminster's' earliest green spaces.

officials in pursuit of street signs identifying our neighborhood. At our last neighborhood association meeting a committee was formed to look into the expense and requirements for placing signs in our neighborhood. The logo for our neighborhood signs was chosen last fall based on the neighborhood survey that was conducted late last summer. The logo is the same one that is on the front page of this newsletter. We have identified about five or six entrances to our neighborhood where we would like to have a neighborhood sign installed.

Neighborhood Signs

We continue to work with city



Neighborhood signs like these are common around the country.



Local contractor Bartlett Tree Experts and City of Westminster Public Works staff worked together in March 2009 to safely remove several old

Mitchell Edmondson with Historic Belle Grove Square Neighborhood Association has met with local city officials and it is hoped that by late summer the city will have rules in place that will govern the installation of neighborhood signs. It is believed our neighborhood will be the first in Westminster to install neighborhood signs. The group hopes to reduce the cost of installing the signs by adding the new markers to existing city street sign poles, and this should also hopefully help speed the process.

If are interested in helping with our neighborhood sign project, please come to our April neighborhood association meeting April 16 at 7:00 p.m. or call us at 443.293.7203.

Neighborhood Association Meeting

We will hold our next neighborhood Association meeting on April 16, 2009 at 7:00 at St. Paul's United Church of Christ at the corner of Bond and Green Streets on Belle Grove Square.

Special Thank you

A special thank you goes out to our neighbors who decorate their houses for each holiday/season. Holiday and seasonal decorations brighten up our neighborhood and make our lives a little richer by

highlighting special times during the year. The neighborhood was especially pleased to note that some folks even decorated for St. Patrick's Day. Your decorations were much appreciated during the cool dark days of March.

April Gardening

by Mitchell Edmondson

If you are like me, you have been anxious for the temperatures to rise so you can venture out into the garden and start getting your hands dirty planting flowers and vegetables. While it is still too soon to sow most seeds, April is a good month for me and other fellow gardeners in Maryland. April brings tulips, daffodils, crocuses and other blooming bulbs. Nothing signals the arrival of spring like a brilliant yellow daffodil or a blooming forsythia bush.

In addition to observing Arbor Day and Earth Day by planting a tree, now is the time to fertilize trees and shrubs. You can also plant pansies for early spring color. Bulbs can be fertilized with a slow release fertilizer.

April is also a great time to prune roses and cut back ornamental grasses. Forsythia bushes can be pruned after they have finished blooming. You should also prune



Mayoral Proclamation read at the city council meeting March 9.

shrubs that bloom on new wood such as buddleia and hydrangea. Crape myrtles can be pruned at the first part of the month. We have one crape myrtle in our park along Park Avenue.

Even though it is too soon to

have to worry about mowing the yard, now is a great time to clean up the yard and remove downed limbs and twigs from winter ice and snowstorms. On days too cool to be out in the garden, April is a great time to repot indoor houseplants.



er or damaged trees in Belle Grove Square park in preparation for three new flowering cherry trees to be planted April 1, 2009 for Arbor Day.

Neighborhood Spotlight

For the past few months we have been highlighting the houses in our neighborhood that are on Green Street. Last month we highlighted St Paul's UCC at the corner of Bond and Green Street. This month we are moving down Bond Street toward Main Street and the spotlight is on a house that is no longer present. In the past there used to be a house at 15 Bond Street. Unfortunately the house had to be torn down due to mold and other structural problems, but it was once a building that served as the Old German Reformed Church parsonage. The Redemptionists, that group of Catholics that laid out much of the business district of downtown Westminster leased lots 5 and 6 of Matthew's Addition to David Shriver and others, trustees of St. Paul's Reformed church. They built their church on the southern half of the lot, close to Belle Grove Square and used the northern half

for the parsonage. They must have built both buildings soon after they purchased the lot because both are clearly shown on the 1876 plat of the city. The church has since been torn down and replaced by a much larger building at the corner of Bond and Green Street. The building remained in church hands until trustees sold the place to James D. Allison on February 18, 1896 for \$1550.00. Harry Gorsuch, heir of James D. Allison, then sold the place to Charles W. Stambaugh for \$5025.00 on May 17, 1924. His widow, Maggie sold to Harry F. Feeser on October 17, 1934. The place remained in the Feeser family for many years but eventually Roland E Feeser sold the property to Mark Miller in October 1995. Mark Miller sold the property to St. Paul's United Church of Christ in July 1999.

In the parking lot of the bank at the corner of Main Street and Bond Street, there used to be two structures. One was across the alley from 15 Bond Street and



15 Bond Street is depicted in this undated file photograph.

the other on the corner of Bond and Main Street. Both these structures have been torn down. The Richardson Building, pictured

below, occupied the corner of West Main Street and Bond Street - it was torn down for a bank expansion and parking.

National Register District

Did you know that our neighborhood is included in the National Register of Historic Places? Belle Grove Square along with much of downtown was nominated to be a part of the National Register District in 1980. Part of the documentation

submitted with the nomination mentioned our neighborhood:

"A special feature of Westminster is the frequent occurrence of open spaces which relieve the feeling of density. The incremental 'Additions' to Westminster accomplished in rectangular plots of land historically left open space in the midst of development. Belle Grove Square, the extensive lawn at City Hall, and the municipal park between Willis and Main Streets are notable examples."

Inclusion of the Westminster Historic District in the National Register allows property owners to apply for tax credits for maintenance and improvements. There are no restrictions on the renovation of structures by private property owners beyond the requirements of the Building Code and other City regulations.

We'll be featuring more on the National Register District, how it came about, and what it means for the city's future in coming issues.



The Richardson Building on the corner of West Main Street and Bond Streets, Westminster, is pictured in the early 1970s. The building was torn down for a bank expansion and parking lot.

How to reach us:

Historic Belle Grove
Square Neighborhood

443.293.7203

1 Park Avenue
Westminster, MD 21157

email: newsletter@
bellegrovesquare.org

www.bellegrovesquare.org

Letters to the editor
are welcomed. Letters
submitted may be edited
for space or clarity.

Entire contents
copyright © 2009
All rights reserved.

