



NEWSLETTER

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A Note from the Cottontown Board

It is hard to believe that August is well underway. Summer will soon end, and a new school year will be underway; however, your Board has been active all summer.

- We have submitted our application to the IRS to establish Cottontown as a non-profit entity and hope to have this finalized in the fall. Thanks to Rick Pace and Lee Jennings for helping with this effort.
- Thanks to Jack Smeck and Terry Wolfer, a native plant garden is being developed on the Victoria Street diverter. Be sure to check this out and join us in thanking Terry who has shared some of his own native plants to enhance this garden.
- Special thanks to Tressy Davenport for planning our June Front Porch Roll Call and for also working with Carol Jennings, and Ginger Thrift to plan National Night Out. We had a great turnout at both events and the food and fellowship were wonderful. Neighborhood porch parties and a walk for the Alzheimer's Association have been planned for the fall. Check out pictures from our neighborhood events as well as plans for future activities in newsletters and on our Facebook page.
- Please thank Rick Pace and Daniel Machado the next time you see them as they have been working to create a new web presence for Cottontown - one that will be easier to navigate and allow e-commerce. The website is currently down as this work is done. Look for a message on Facebook soliciting feedback on our new website content.
- Thanks to Brent Baston, Rusty Sox, Julie Seel, and the entire Cottontown Art Crawl Committee who are making plans for the 2023 event.
- Zach Oyer, Patti Marinelli, and Cindy Rainey are busy thinking through how we can enlarge our National Register overlay, paving the way for more homeowners to benefit from the tax credits discussed at the spring meeting.
- Lastly, Will Thrift is helping to launch the Coalition of Columbia Historic Districts which will connect Columbia's historic districts and promote the power of preservation within our community.

There is a lot happening with the city as well. Paul Bouknight and the Cottontown Traffic Committee are closely watching the mayor's plan to calm traffic in downtown neighborhoods, and we are carefully monitoring a public City Council meeting scheduled for September 20, 2022, where they will discuss three important proposals (see additional article in this newsletter). Please also watch Facebook for messages concerning important upcoming Council meetings.

Fall Membership Meeting

Sunday, November 13, 2022, 4:00PM

Location TBD (Board elections will be held at this meeting)

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City Council Updates – Parking Requirements, Landscape Buffers, and Urban Design Corridor Overlays

Certain small businesses will no longer have to provide off-street parking, under a new rule approved by the Columbia Planning Commission on July 14. The amendment, which will go to City Council at 4pm on Tuesday, September 20, eliminates the requirement for new and existing non-residential businesses under 7500 sq. ft. to provide off-street parking in areas designated as mixed-use. This change would allow a business to expand into their parking lot or sell the lot for another development. It does not restrict businesses from putting in parking, it simply allows businesses to determine how many, if any, spaces they want. The change could mean that parking becomes scarce in popular areas that are adjacent to Cottontown, and with no city street parking in the area, we may well feel more congestion on our neighborhood streets.

City Council has also held its first reading on a proposal to eliminate street protection yards (landscaping and setbacks along main thoroughfares, like Main and Bull St.) and transitional buffer yards (landscaping and depth between different contiguous land uses - i.e. between residential and commercial parcels), should the renovation or reuse of an existing structure where a buffer and/or protection yard is/are currently required, would reduce the number of parking spaces in an existing parking lot. This proposal also eliminates landscaping in and around some vehicular surfaces for both new and the expansion of existing buildings. The second reading for this amendment was held at 4 pm on August 16, 2022, and it is anticipated that the third and final reaching will be on September 20, 2022.

Lastly, the city is proposing to eliminate 5 urban design corridor overlays, one of which is the N. Main Urban Design Corridor, bordering the entire western edge of Cottontown. Elimination of the N. Main Urban Design Corridor overlay would pave the way to remove Design/Development Review Commission (DDRC) oversight of all commercial development north of Elmwood Ave. This proposal is scheduled to have its first reading in front of City Council on September 20, 2022.

The proposals are intended to follow a national trend, where cities are promoting more walking and biking, attracting development, and reducing costs for small-business owners. The Board, joined by other downtown neighborhood & environmental organizations, is watching each proposal very closely and pushing City Council for clarification and the need to seek more public comment. Please bring your questions and/or share your thoughts on the proposals with a member of the Board.



Porch Parties

Cottontown is happy to announce the return of porch parties! For our new residents, someone donates their porch, driveway, or yard, and we gather to socialize and discuss topics pertinent to our neighborhood.

Jeanie Aull (1231 Geiger Avenue) has graciously agreed to host the next porch party on Friday, September 9th, at 7pm. Feel free to bring a snack to share, a bag chair, and your beverage of choice. Let's get out and meet some neighbors.

More details to follow on Facebook. If anyone is interested in hosting October's porch party, please contact Tressy Davenport or Ginger Thrift.

Cottontown Historic Preservation Stories

By Zach Oyer and the Historic Preservation Committee

Any conversation I have had with a neighbor over the two years since moving to Cottontown, seems to share a common theme: Cottontown is a special place to live. From our great shops and restaurants like Indah, Gardner's Outpost, and Warmouth, to the beautiful trees and houses, to the friendly neighborhood feel and great events we hold every year, I think we're very lucky to all live in a community like this one. From what I can tell, there are two major aspects that account for all the good things we have here: great leadership and our historic character. Having a collection of homes that stand out and tell a story brings people together, and I think harbors a passion in the community to stand up and fight for it. Over the next few newsletters, the Historic Preservation Committee will showcase some of the fights our neighborhood has gone through and the efforts that were pursued in the name of our community and historic preservation, attributes that help to make Cottontown a special place.

For our first story, we will celebrate a win our neighborhood had against Alltel Communications, who tried to build a 150-foot cell phone tower, which would've loomed over our neighborhood on the north end of Marion. Although the tower was legal when it was permitted in 1997, it clearly was not going to fit in with the aesthetics of our historic neighborhood.

At the time, some cellphone towers could be constructed without going to the Board of Zoning Appeals (BOZA), where the public can comment or oppose certain city projects. The tower wasn't initially noticed by residents until construction began and it became visible. Despite push-back, residents began to raise questions. An article in the local newspaper declared it too late for Cottontown to do anything about it. The writer said "Cottontown won't have say in issue", but little did they know, residents like our president at the time, Mary Denis Cauthen, take the historic character and preservation of our neighborhood very seriously.

Mary Denis spoke to City Council and made our case. A large part of her argument was citing that Cottontown had just been placed on the National Register of Historic Places (1997), and that the cell tower would not be in keeping with the historic and residential character of our neighborhood. By the summer of 1998, the tower was taken down. We believe that our placement in the National Register and Columbia's Architectural Conservation District are vital in preserving our community character, and we will continue to fight to keep it that way. Thanks to Mary Denis and look for future stories that will celebrate other neighbors who have stepped up and fought for preserving our neighborhood!

National Night Out

Tuesday, August 2, 2022, was National Night Out! Cottontown did not disappoint. We had between 40-60 neighbors in attendance. The special events Committee planned some great activities to include street drawing, face painting, hopscotch, cornhole and an awesome photo booth. We had the grill master himself, Brent Baston, grilling delicious hotdogs. There were visitors from the City of Columbia Police Department, Ladder 7, and several of our local politicians. National Night Out (NNO) started in 1984 and is another tool used to strengthen the relationship between neighborhoods and local police and fire departments. The first NNO involved 2.5 million residents across 400 communities. In addition, the school supply drive was a huge success. The supplies donated will go to Logan Elementary. We would like to thank each person who participated on National Night Out. Please check out the pictures and video on the Cottontown Facebook page, and save the date for August 2, 2023, for our next National Night Out!



Cottontown and Art Crawl merchandise (T-shirts, Koozies, etc.) is available for a small donation. Contact Ginger Thrift for additional information.



Join Your Neighborhood Association

Owners and renters, please join the
Cottontown/Bellevue Historic District Neighborhood Association

Dues are per calendar year. **Resident:** \$10.00 per person, or \$15.00 per household. **Business:** \$50 per business, or \$125 with 4 annual Newsletter advertisements. Businesses interested in newsletter advertisements may contact Denise Wellman to discuss options. Checks may be made payable to "Cottontown" and mailed to:

Lee Jennings
Cottontown Treasurer
2306 Sumter Street
Columbia SC 29201

Please contact Lee at lee@bagappraisals.com for additional payment options. Members must be in good standing to vote.

I would like to join the neighborhood association. Enclosed are my dues for \$ _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

I am interested helping, and would like to join a committee:

Traffic

Historic Preservation

Beautification

Communications

Social Events

Other (please specify)