



"I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver." — MAYA ANGELOU

CELEBRATE NIGHT OF LIGHTS ON SUNDAY, DEC. 15

FRED PETERSON

FOR NEARLY 40 YEARS we have celebrated the winter holidays by lining the streets with luminaries and brightening our neighborhood with the warming glow of candlelight. This year, Old West and Watts-Hillandale are celebrating Night of Lights together on Sunday, Dec. 15. In the unlikely event that we get rain, we'll celebrate on Wednesday, Dec. 18.

For residents of both neighborhoods, luminaria supplies will be on sale at the southern end of Oval Park at the picnic shelter on Dec. 14 and 15 from noon to 5 p.m. On Sunday, we might close early if we sell out. Luminaries are sold in sets of 10 candles with bags and sand for \$5, or you may purchase materials for one luminaria for 50 cents. To help reduce waste, please bring a bucket, pail, or reusable bag to carry your sand home.

Help Feed Neighbors in Need

As is our tradition, we will collect donations for our neighbors in need at the Urban Ministries of Durham Community Café. It is fitting that those of us who have warm homes and plenty to eat share our bounty. The Community Café at the Urban Ministries Center provides three meals a day, seven days a week, to anyone who is homeless or hungry. The Community Café has requested pantry items for the holiday season, such as flour, sugar, cake mixes, canned hams, and boxed stuffing. And they can always use peanut butter, canned meats, chili, beans, pastas, mac and cheese, canned fruits and vegetables, breakfast supplies, coffee, and tea.

Urban Ministries also accepts donations of gloves, hats, and coats in excellent condition. You can find a full list of the best items to donate at umdurham.org/give-stuff/. We usually collect between \$8,000 and \$10,000 in monetary donations for the Community Café and we'd love to reach \$10,000 this year. Help us!

Urban Ministries
Donation QR Code



There are a couple of ways you can donate. If you would like to contribute from the comfort of your own home — scan the QR code. You can also donate when you stop by Oval Park for luminary supplies. There you can drop off canned goods and money for the Community Café. Watts-Hillandale residents can renew memberships, too, getting one extra candle and bag for each membership. This offer, of course, also applies to those who have renewed already.

Volunteer to Help

To make this year's event successful, we need lots of volunteers — setting up, selling luminaria, distributing sand, and dropping off old plastic bags for sand. If the weather is chilly enough, we might seek out volunteers to swing by with hot chocolate, or to lend us some thermoses. You can sign up to volunteer at bit.ly/NOLvolunteer2024. If you want to volunteer without dealing with the web or if you have any questions about Night of Lights, please email Fred.Peterson@whhna.org. Look for more information and follow up on the neighborhood email lists and on whhna.org.

Neighborhood Tees Make Perfect Gifts

DON'T KNOW WHAT TO GIVE Mom or Dad? Need to have something in case the neighbor next door surprises you with holiday cookies? We've got something cheap and easy that is sure to please! That's right: It's a genuine neighborhood T-shirt. Think about it; everybody wants one. Admit it; you want one too. Now that you are thinking about it, you're probably going to make cookies to surprise your neighbors just hoping that one of them will run to the spare bedroom closet and come back with a T-shirt saying, "and we got this just for you!"

Watts-Hillandale and Old West Durham T-shirts are all-cotton (somewhat) and come in a wide variety of designs, colors, and sizes. From junior to gramps, there is something for everyone in the family. Watts-Hillandale has ballcaps, too! All shirts and hats are just \$15 each.

To order an Old West shirt, visit www.oldwestdurham.org and hit the "T-shirt Order Form" button. You can also text Beth Dray at (919) 923-1339 if you prefer to pay by cash or Venmo and she will fix you up.

Send your Watts-Hillandale shirt and hat orders to orders to Tom Miller at miller.tom2022@nc.rr.com.

Comings & Goings

Are you a new neighbor or do you have good news to share?
Email Lucy Harris at lucy.harris@whhna.org.

SUSAN SCHEWEL moved to Maryland Avenue from Philadelphia in August. Some may already know her family members who live in the neighborhood on Maryland and Club. Susan is pleased to be near family and appreciates the friendliness and sense of community here, as well as the trees, Ellerbe Creek, and the plethora of rainbow flags. She is enjoying her retirement after working as a nurse practitioner in women's health and as the executive director of a Philadelphia-based abortion access fund. After spending some time exploring Durham, she will be looking for volunteer opportunities in the area.

PARISA KALIUSH and her husband GREG HARDING recently moved into a home on Club Boulevard with their dog Penny and cat Bodie. They moved from Salt Lake City so Parisa could begin a fellowship at UNC. She and Greg both grew up in Baltimore and are excited to be back on the East Coast and closer to family. They enjoy being outside, walking around the neighborhood, running and hiking on local trails, playing soccer, and paddleboarding. They have felt very welcomed by their neighbors and look forward to meeting more folks.

ELIZABETH SAADY EVANS and her husband COREY EVANS welcomed a son, WILLIAM, on Aug. 1. They have lived on Englewood for about two years with their dog Maddie. Welcome to the neighborhood, William!

ZANETA REID and ROBERT GIBSON recently relocated to Rutherford Street from Brooklyn with their two cats Nori and Miso. Zaneta is a marketing executive who is pursuing a master's degree in social justice from Tufts University; Robert works in hospitality and workplace experience. The couple enjoys fine dining, the arts, wine, and European football (soccer). They are excited to meet their neighbors.

There was a small exodus from Watts-Hillandale to Asheville over Labor Day weekend, just a few weeks before Hurricane Helene, for the wedding of another of the "Club Boulevard gang." ELI STEIN, son of DAVID STEIN and DEBORAH HORVITZ, wed OLIVIA SNYDER-SPAK on Sept. 1, surrounded by friends from Durham, New York, Connecticut, and even from Brazil. Former Watts-Hillandaler Sammy Feldblum flew in from California to do a fine job of officiating. Eli and Olivia live in Brooklyn.

Obituary

BETTY BAKER REITER died on Oct. 16. She was born in Durham in 1943 and grew up in her family's home on West Club near Virginia Avenue. In 1950, Betty and her elder brother Jack Baker were among the handful of kids that marched in the neighborhood's first Fourth of July parade. Betty was a mathematician and a teacher. She obtained her undergraduate degree from UNC Greensboro and obtained advanced degrees from Clemson and the University of South Carolina. She taught mathematics and computer science at UNC Charlotte, Clemson, the University of Hawaii, and other colleges and universities. She and her husband Dr. Harold Reiter traveled extensively, visiting all the states of the U.S. and 50 countries. Betty is remembered fondly by her many Durham friends and her students and teaching colleagues everywhere. She is survived by her husband and their daughter and grandchildren. A resident of Charlotte for many years, Betty never lost interest in her Durham neighborhood and followed its newsletter closely. She will be interred at Maplewood Cemetery in Durham.



Parade is the newsletter of the Watts Hospital-Hillandale and Old West Durham Neighborhood Associations. It is delivered quarterly to 2,000 households in the neighborhoods. Membership is open to every adult who owns property or resides in the neighborhoods. To subscribe to your neighborhood association's mailing list, please go to whhna.org/list or to oldwestdurham.org/connect.

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Community News

TAKE CARE OF STREET TREES THIS WINTER

GINGER BLUBAUGH

WE HAVE SO MANY NEW NEIGHBORS in our neighborhood — the abundance of trees planted earlier this year by the city. What a gift!

Most are young trees banded with a white identifying name tag planted on the small public strip of grass between street and sidewalk. A few outliers are scattered here and there also. There are ginkgo, serviceberry, maple, river birch, Yoshino cherry, and European hornbeams.

Some of these trees did not survive the summer. The unvanquished ones could use some loving attention to remain healthy over the upcoming period of dormancy, keeping them ready for next growing season.

Give them a little help. Clear out any grass or weeds that might have grown around their feet, then provide a comfy mulch blanket for their winter sleep. And a good drink during dry weather. Weed, mulch, and water. That's all that is needed. Name them after a grandparent or child or long-ago sweetheart. Treat them as such.

TRICK-OR-TREATING BACK TO NORMAL

TRICK-OR-TREATERS WERE OUT IN FORCE on Halloween this year. The night got off to an early start with a very robust Toddler trick-or-treat. The map of homes welcoming toddlers was organized by Bev Tucker and Colleen McLoughlin and showed dozens of places throughout Old West Durham and Watts-Hillandale where little dragons, ghosts, and ballerinas could get treats.

Later in the evening, the action moved to West Club where the counts ran over 1,000. At the east end of the street, April Henry reported the most trick-or-treaters at 1,609. Rae Jean and Scott Proeschold-Bell, counted 1,140 toward the western end of Club. People on the side streets also experienced an increase of visitors, with some reporting as many as 200 trick-or-treaters. A neighbor on West Knox counted nearly 150 trick-or-treaters.

It has taken a couple of years for trick-or-treating to recover from Covid restrictions, but this year's numbers show that Halloween is returning to normal. The perfect weather helped. With the Club Boulevard sidewalk replacement project almost finished, the walkways were free of broken concrete and other trip hazards. Thanks to Dot Doyle and Fred Peterson for alerting construction crews about the event and to all the workers for making the sidewalks as tidy as possible.

Thanks also go to the neighborhood "coneheads" who put out 120 traffic cones along Club to slow traffic and mark the crosswalks. This year's team included Ron Grunwald and Lorisa Seibel, Doyle, Kevin Crofton, Paul Mason, Kathy Shuart and Bob Burns, Tom Miller, and Michael Axelrod. Durham police officer Jesse Green guarded the crosswalk at Oakland and Club to keep everyone safe.

It is a compliment to the neighborhood that so many of our neighbors from across Durham bring their children to celebrate Halloween with us. Thanks to every neighbor who volunteered, carved a pumpkin, handed out candy, and made the night memorable, safe, and fun.

Upcoming Neighborhood Meetings and Events

- Dec. 14-15** Night of Lights luminaria sale, 12-5 p.m., Oval Park picnic shelter
- Dec. 15** Neighborhood Night of Lights, from dusk until the candles burn out (rain date Dec. 18)
- Jan. 6** WHHNA Board Meeting, 7 p.m., 109 Bryan, N.C. School of Science and Math
- Jan. 23** OWDNA Board Meeting, 7 p.m., location to be announced
- Feb. 3** WHHNA Board Meeting, 7 p.m., 109 Bryan, N.C. School of Science and Math
- Mar. 3** WHHNA Board Meeting, 7 p.m., 109 Bryan, N.C. School of Science and Math

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT FUN

EVEN THOUGH THE GROUND was pretty soggy from a week's worth of rain, the neighborhood's National Night Out Beer Garden on Oct. 1 was huge fun. About 200 people gathered at the tent on Virginia Avenue for a beer and a pretzel. Many got into the spirit of the thing by wearing their lederhosen and dirndl skirts. Durham's Vince Simonetti and his famous Tuba Trio played beer hall favorites and many party-goers joined him at the mic to sing "Edelweiss" and "Lili Marlene." Durham police officers came and mixed with the crowd.

Many people brought generous gifts of food and money for Durham's PORCH program. In all, several hundred pounds of food were collected for school kids who face food insecurity. National Night Out used to be held on the first Tuesday in August, but was moved to the first Tuesday in October last year. The shift moved the event out of the summer heat and makes our neighborhood event a real Oktoberfest.

WHHNA DONATES TO BROGDEN

THE WHHNA BOARD VOTED at the November meeting to donate \$500 to Brogden Middle School's holiday gift card fundraiser. This PTA fundraiser will support 50 students and their families who are experiencing food and housing insecurity. The PTA has met its goal to make the holidays a little brighter for Brogden families, thanks to our neighborhood association as well as Watts Street Baptist Church, Mount Bethel Presbyterian Church, and individual parents who have donated.

(continued on page 4)

DONATE TO PORCH DURHAM

PORCH Durham has two food collections a month which include shelf-stable foods as well as fresh produce. Monthly newsletters are shared on the WHH listserv to provide neighbors with information on collection dates, specific food needs, and volunteer opportunities. Donations can be dropped off on the porch of the WHH neighborhood coordinator (Kathy Carter) located at 2321 W. Club Blvd. Anyone with interest in receiving the newsletter directly each month can send an email to kathycarter323@gmail.com.

ARTWALK WAS EXTRAORDINARY

PERRY WHITTED

WE LIVE IN ABSOLUTELY special neighborhoods. ArtWalk on Sunday, Nov. 10, was a day with beautiful fall weather, highlighting an impressive number of artists, creating the perfect time to connect with neighbors, and fostering the most important aspects of community. The quality of artists among us continues to amaze with fine craft and quality expressive work.

It was so satisfying to have such a large number of artists participating this year (more than 40 exhibiting in 26 locations) and to hear that significantly large numbers of ArtWalking neighbors visited host sites. Many artists reported having very good sales for the day. There was also a happy tone from very tired neighbors, who reported visiting all of the locations and other satisfying stories where neighbors could not complete the quest because of meaningful time spent in conversations with others.

We're sending much thanks to the artists, volunteers, and neighbors who made this such a lovely and exceptional event. Let's do this next year.



WHHNA TURNS 40

THE WATTS HOSPITAL-HILLANDALE Neighborhood Association (WHHNA) marked its 40th anniversary in October. The organization was formed in 1984 in the midst of a succession of contentious zoning and traffic issues. During 1983, neighbors formed ad hoc committees to resist an attempt to rezone properties along Ellerbe Creek for office buildings. More than 1,000 signatures were collected on a petition asking the city council to turn down the proposal. Before that fight ended, the city announced a plan to turn Broad Street and Ninth Street into parallel one-way streets between Main Street and Guess Road. To accomplish this, engineers planned to join Ninth Street and Maryland Avenue, cutting the corner off the campus of the still new School of Science and Math. The old Maryland Avenue bridge over Ellerbe Creek would be replaced with a new three-lane facility.

While these fights ended successfully — the rezoning was stopped and the parallel streets scheme was abandoned — the leaders that emerged from both efforts realized that a disjointed ad hoc approach was not the best way to tackle neighborhood concerns. During the fall of 1984, a series of neighborhood-wide meetings was held at Westwood Baptist Church (now Revolve Church) to hammer out a more effective way of dealing with the cascade of issues that confronted the neighborhood. Woodrow Street neighbor Shannon St. John first proposed the idea of establishing a standing neighborhood organization. In this she had the support of acknowledged neighborhood elders Tom and Alice Walker and Tom and Hilda Coble and younger leaders fresh from success in recent zoning battles, Jeffrey and Louisa Soleau, Albert and Nancy Dailey, and Tom and Kim Miller.

Drawing on examples provided by established neighborhood groups like Trinity Park and Morehead Hill, a steering committee led by St. John drew up proposed bylaws, pondered proposed boundaries, and called together a neighborhood meeting at the church to vote on the creation of a permanent neighborhood group. Attendance was gratifyingly large. At the meeting, some argued that the neighborhood, like much of Durham's core, was in decline and could not be saved. Others saw much worth saving and, pointing to recent successes, argued that an association of dedicated neighbor-volunteers could make the neighborhood thrive. In the end, this argument won the day.

What to call the neighborhood was the subject of some debate. The eastern part of the neighborhood had been called "Watts Hospital" informally for years. The new historical inventory suggested "Oval Park" as a name. These names left out neighbors to the west and north. Eventually, the somewhat prosaic "Watts Hospital-Hillandale" was adopted as a name. It was inclusive, if not easy to say, and it ended the argument. The name has stuck. Where to draw the boundaries was also difficult. Proposals to include parts of Old West Durham and Walltown were rejected as these areas had established identities of their own. Including vulnerable pods of homes like Forest and Hillcrest and at the western end of Sprunt was approved. In the end, the boundaries were settled where they are today and the bylaws were adopted. The first board of directors of the new association was elected — Tom Coble and Jeffrey Soleau were chosen to be president and vice president. Tom Miller and Sarah Woodard were elected secretary and treasurer. At-large board members were H. J. Dennis, Sam Markham, Lucille McCall, Ted Minah, and Shannon St. John.

The new organization immediately took on new issues — the extension

of the freeway west from Erwin Road and new zoning battles on Hillandale Road and Broad Street. Committees were formed. This newsletter was begun with Marilyn Helms as its editor and Andrea Mason as distribution chair. Neighbor George Brett suggested calling it “Parade” after the neighborhood’s July 4 event. The name was perfect. It called upon community history and suggested working together, continuity, and progress. Although it’s original dot-matrix printing looks quaint today, the newsletter kept the neighbors informed and brought the neighborhood together.

The first issue of the newsletter in March 1985 ended with this quote from Jeffrey Soleau: “I am excited by the formation of the Watts Hospital-Hillandale Neighborhood Association. Older and younger residents now have a way to join together to accomplish goals which benefit everyone. By sharing our ideas and working together, we can keep our neighborhood healthy and strong.” He was right. Now, 40 years later, the association, your association, has kept the neighborhood healthy and strong.

HOW ITALIAN STONECUTTERS HELPED BUILD DUKE’S WEST CAMPUS

BY DEBORA ANTIGA, ROME. REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION.
TRANSLATED FROM ITALIAN BY GIULIA VICO, WHILE AN
ENGINEERING GRADUATE STUDENT AT DUKE.

GIOVANNI MARZOCCHI WAS BORN IN SUCCISA, Italy, on April 15, 1891, the second of three brothers. In February 1913, he married Zita Tonelli, a woman of the same age and coming from the same city.

According to the archive of Ellis Island, he reached New York on April 4, 1914. His wife remained in Succisa, pregnant with their first child whom they will name Gino (he was known by the nickname Amelio).

Giovanni Marzocchi worked first in the Montana mines then served in the U.S. Army in World War I. He returned to Italy, then to the United States to work in Ohio.

It is not clear when the Marzocchis left Ohio. They probably moved from Ohio to Schenley, Pennsylvania, where Giovanni was able to keep working as a miner. After a couple of years, they left Schenley for Durham.

During those years, masonry companies across the United States were looking for building workers and skilled stonecutters, to be employed in the numerous construction sites active in many cities. Many building projects required skilled and creative workers. At the time, in Durham, Duke University’s West Campus was under construction and in continuous expansion. Giovanni moved to the city to work in the construction of neo-gothic Duke Chapel and Duke Hospital.

At the time, Durham was a pleasant town, with a high quality of life. Rina looks back on afternoons spent along with some Italian friends and the house she used to live in: “It was really pretty, the outside of a light color, in a residential area where houses were alike, two by two”, she recalls. The house was at 1206 6th Street, which is now Clarendon Street. The house is still there, and it does not seem to have changed significantly in a recent picture.

Giovanni was paying a rent of \$34 per month, in part paid by two other Italians that were subleasing one room in the house. Giovanni (John) and Zita first appeared in the list of Durham residents in 1929, the year in which their fourth child, a boy named Pino, was born.

It was not by chance that Giovanni came to Durham after spending

some time in the Pennsylvanian mines. A significant fraction of stonecutters working on Duke University campus were recruited in that area. Durham was then known as a boom town, a quickly expanding city, as clear also from the growing West Campus of Duke University. A reputation that drew people from poor areas in Virginia and around Pittsburgh.

Giovanni was already a skilled worker, thanks to his experiences with his father Marco and in the Engineer Corps. The possibility to work on Duke Chapel was the end of a tiresome mining job and a beginning of a career more architecture-oriented.

The Duke project lasted around 10 years: The most prominent part of West Campus, including Duke Hospital, was completed in 1930, while the chapel was finished in 1935. Around 100 stone masons and 12 stone setters were working at the construction site. The former built the bigger walls, executed the simpler jobs, and cut and assembled the blue stone, from the nearby Hillsborough quarry.

The latter, selected among the best stone masons, worked on more difficult jobs, such as arch and tower building, and used Indiana limestone. The 12 chosen stone setters were mainly Italians, under the supervision of two Scots; their workday was 10 hours for six days a week, and their hourly wage varied between \$1.25 and \$2.50; conversely, stone masons were paid around 65 cents per hour.

Moving from Pennsylvania mines to the Gothicism of Duke University significantly improved the life quality of the “emigrant” Marzocchis. Somebody conjectured that the choice of having pictures taken in Durham only is not casual, but rather represents the pride of being a skilled worker and having reached the status of an almost well-off family.

In these pictures, the Marzocchis seem content and fashionable: Rina and Mary wear the latest fashion dresses, Giovanni enjoys smoking his pipe, and Zita shows off a patterned dress while chatting with her neighbor, Mrs. Ferrettino. Zita is very different from the person portrayed in a 15-year-old photo, taken during one of Giovanni’s leaves; in such photos she is youthful, unsophisticated, and spontaneous.

Right after moving to Durham, Amelio was ready to start high school: He was already 15 years old and he could enter in the workforce, if he so desired. Rina recalls that he was a ‘bocia’ (kid), but he was also involved in small jobs like a milkman and paperboy.

Louis Berini, a contemporary of Amelio, recounts that at the time some neighbor kids were enjoying making some money as a caddy at the nearby golf course along Hillandale Road. Others, like Louis himself, preferred to spend their free time at the Erwin Auditorium, playing table tennis with the kids of the mill workers.

At the time, Erwin Cotton Mill along with the Duke University construction site was one of the most important employers in Durham. The settlement around Erwin Mill housed the workers’ families, and Erwin Auditorium had a recreational center for after work. Berini also recalled that Rina and Mary attended West Durham School on 9th Street, the nearest to their house and the school attended by the majority of Italian stonemasons’ kids. Rina attended that school till sixth grade.

The Marzocchis’ new life in Durham transformed them into “true Americans,” as they were well integrated in Durham life. Everything was going in the best way, but was bound to change because of the Great Depression,

(continued on page 12)



The Heart of the

VISIT WATTS HOSPITAL-HILLANDALE ON THE WEB AT WWW.WHHNA.ORG

Development Round-Up

AFTER NEARLY 30 YEARS in the little building on Hillsborough Road, the beloved **STITCHES TAILOR SHOP** has moved. The owner, Linda Laws, cites rising rents as the reason. The shop's new location is Suite B1 on the third floor of the First Horizon Bank building at 1530 N. Gregson St., across from the now-defunct Northgate Mall. Laws has a loyal following in the neighborhood and business will surely follow to her new spot. The Hillsborough Road site and the lot next to it to the east are controlled by the same commercial real estate company. Signs on the properties indicate that they are available for lease.

Further west on Hillsborough, at the Festival shopping center, the old Millenium Sports Club space has been refitted as a new **MICHAELS** craft supply store. The official opening date posted on the store window is Nov. 22 — just in time for the holidays.

Jumping over to the Blue Light apartment complex where Ninth Street becomes Erwin Road, the commercial space on the ground floor of the building is now home to **NAN XIANG EXPRESS** and **TSAOCAA**. It's a sort of two-for-one arrangement joining the soup and dumpling menu of the former with the tea selections of the latter. There is also a full bar. The space is very modern and is decorated with vibrant continuous video displays. Both Nan Xiang Express and Tsaocaa are national chains.

On 9th Street proper, the space that was home to Yoga Off East has now become **YOGA DISTRICT**. Yoga District is a Washington, D.C.-based yoga studio offering a full range of classes and instructor training. Yoga Off East refitted the 9th Street space a few years ago, but recently moved from 9th to new digs at the American Tobacco Campus.

Chapel Hill Tire Rezoning Gets Nod

AT ITS MEETING ON OCT. 8, the Durham Planning Commission voted to send a proposed rezoning of Chapel Hill Tire's property on Hillsborough Road to the city council with a favorable recommendation. The owners are asking that

their property be rezoned from Support 2 in the Ninth Street Design District to Commercial Infill with a Development Plan (CI(D)).

The tire company's property is an oddly shaped parcel consisting of two parts. The main portion is a rectangle containing 0.5 acres at the corner of Hillsborough Road and Rosehill Avenue. The second part is a smaller triangle located behind the Hillsborough Road portion. The rezoning only concerns the main portion of the property, which is occupied by a one-story commercial building where the company conducts its tire sales and auto service business.

The owners want to make changes to how they use the building and to reorganize access to the property in ways that cannot be accommodated under the current S-2 zoning. The current zoning favors more intense development of the site with an emphasis on taller structures and residential uses. CI generally favors commercial (restaurant, retail, etc.) development of the property, but would allow some limited residential use, too. The development plan the owners have appended to their rezoning request would prevent the property from being used as a bar, nightclub, or payday lending business. The plan includes no commitments about buffers or building size that might make it a more agreeable neighbor to nearby homes.

The Durham City-County Planning Department resisted the rezoning because, in their view, the requested CI zoning is inconsistent with the property's Transportation Opportunity Area designation in the newly adopted Durham Comprehensive Plan. This designation creates a policy preference for higher-density residential uses in areas like Ninth Street that may one day be served by public transit services such as light or commuter rail. City planners also noted that the property owner declined the city's request to include a bus stop pull out and bus shelter on Hillsborough Road.

At the hearing before the Planning Commission, five people spoke in support of the rezoning and four against. The commission voted 7-3 in favor of the change. The commission's role in rezonings is advisory. The case is on city council's Dec. 2 agenda for another public hearing and a final decision.

Water Main Replacement to Come

FRED PETERSON

THE LONG-AWAITED PROJECT to replace the water main and related infrastructure in our neighborhood is set to begin possibly in March 2025. Approximately 13,000 linear feet of water mains will be replaced within West Club Boulevard, Carolina Avenue, Oakland Avenue, Oval Drive, Englewood Avenue, and Ninth Street. The project also includes approximately 1,300 linear feet of storm drainage replacement and 7,500 feet of sanitary sewer main rehabilitation/replacement. Some of this work will occur in and around Oval Park.

Work will begin on Club at Hillandale Road and progress eastward to finish at 9th and Markham near Barnes Supply. The engineer for the project expects the work to take 18 months. You can see a map of the project at bit.ly/WaterMainMapDurham.

Crews will occupy two blocks at a time, one for staging and one for the work. As crews connect the water main to residential meters, water to a few homes will be shut off for a few hours. This will occur only once for affected residences. Residents will be notified ahead of time as to when water will be shut off.

Traffic will be restricted, of course, as these water mains run under the affected streets. We are hoping that one lane will be open as much as possible. Detours, when necessary, will be easy to navigate.

The water mains are being replaced due to their age. There is currently nothing wrong with how they function. It is better to replace them now instead of waiting until there are problems due to deterioration.

We are hoping that the work on the storm drains produces a noticeable improvement in how water drains from our streets during heavy rain. Some work will disturb our new sidewalks in places where the water meter is between the sidewalk and residences rather than by the street.

The city will hold a public meeting before work begins. Notices will be posted to the list-serv when we know the exact date when work will begin.

Forest Rd. Lot Cut Into Five

EARLIER THIS YEAR, the 1950 brick ranch at 1842 Forest Road was demolished and in a quick succession of subdivisions, the 1-acre property was cut into five narrow lots using the new “small lot option” in Durham’s zoning rules. Three houses are currently under construction on the middle three lots.

According to public records, Chapel Hill developer Aakash Patel bought the little ranch house in June 2023 for \$222,500. In July this year, after the house was demolished, the property was divided into three lots. Under state law, a subdivision of property into three parcels or fewer is exempt from local subdivision review — an extra layer of scrutiny that makes sure the new subdivision complies with local requirements, including stormwater runoff controls.

About two weeks later, the developer applied to divide one of the three new lots into two lots. This subdivision, even though it involved the original property and was close in time to the previous subdivision, was also exempt from subdivision requirements. Then, in a third subdivision, the developer cut another of the three lots into two. In a matter of weeks, a property that had held one home was cut into five lots ready for new construction. All of the new lots abut Ellerbe Creek, but none of them are required to include stormwater runoff control measures. Had the five lots been created in one subdivision of the original property, such measures may have been required.

The property is zoned RU-5, a residential zone that normally requires lots to be at least 45 feet wide. Under this rule, the Forest Road property could be divided into just three lots. An exception to the base rule, however, is the “small lot option” adopted in 2019 as a part of the “Expanding Housing Choices” initiative. Under the small lot option, a standard-sized lot may be cut into smaller lots as long as each resulting “small” lot is at least 25 feet wide and contains 2,000 square feet in area. By using the small lot option and by staging the subdivision of the property into three subdivision applications instead of one, the Forest Road developer legally created five lots while avoiding the usual requirements of subdivision review by local authorities.

Houses built on “small lots” must contain no

more than 1,200 square feet and must be no more than two stories tall. Under the recent SCAD changes to the zoning rules, garages and “below grade” living areas do not count toward the 1,200-square-foot cap. Just how the houses are measured is unclear. There have been cases where approved houses have been advertised on the market as containing 1,300 or more square feet in area.

Three houses are under construction on Forest Road now. Whether this will blossom into five is unknown. The Forest Road developer may also control the property next door at 1840 Forest. Plans for this property are also unknown.

Coca-Cola Redevelopment Delayed

DOT DOYLE

A NEIGHBORHOOD REPRESENTATIVE communicated with Jay Douglas of The Ardent Companies regarding progress on the development of the property that is currently the Coca-Cola building on Hillsborough Road. In the email exchange, Douglas reported that the closing on the property and the beginning of demolition were delayed until 2025.

Hagar Rand, the current owner of the Coca-Cola property, is building a new site in Chatham County.

“Our current plan, that is subject to change, is to move to our new facility during February/March 2025,” he recently stated in an email. Once that has been completed, The Ardent Companies will be able to close on the Hillsborough Road property. Demolition and the start of construction are not likely to begin until late March or in April. Rand also said that he will know his calendar more precisely after the holidays and he will keep us informed.

As was reported earlier (see the December 2023 Parade on whhna.org under Newsletters), when this project is complete it will consist of 72,000 square feet of retail space facing Hillsborough Road, including a grocery store, restaurants, and some other businesses. Further north on the property, there will be 405 residential units that are mostly apartments, but with about 35 townhomes that will front Winters Lane and Bellevue Avenue. There will be a parking deck in the middle of the apartments to serve those

residents and there will be surface parking along Hillsborough to support retail customers.

Douglas also reported that although he cannot yet reveal the specifics of the tenants of the retail spaces, he is pleased that they have contracts for about 70% of the available space. Douglas submitted what he hopes is the final site plan to the Planning Department on Oct. 15. He awaits approval of the document.

Neighbors, Planner Discuss Walltown

DOT DOYLE

IN OCTOBER, SEVERAL WHHNA board members met with leaders of the Walltown Community Association as well as representatives from Trinity Park and Northgate Park to discuss the redevelopment of Northgate Mall. They were joined by Carl Kolosna, a senior planner in the Durham City-County Planning Department who is responsible for the Walltown Small Area Plan. The purpose of the meeting was to review a draft of the Walltown Small Area Plan to ensure that the most important components were included before proceeding.

The plan was described in some detail in the September issue of *Parade* (which can be found under Newsletters at whhna.org.) The complete Small Area Plan is many months from being finalized, but city staff have been working with Walltown and Northwood Investors, which owns the former Northgate Mall, to finalize the chapter known as Policy Guidance for the Former Northgate Mall Site. Many of the ideas in this chapter are comparable to what Walltown leaders have been promoting for more than five years.

The draft policy includes items such as affordable retail, in particular an affordable grocery store; increased tree canopy and a reduction in impervious surfaces; improved connectivity with Walltown Park and a safe means of crossing Guess Road; improved walkability and access to public transportation; community meeting spaces and public green space; and a mix of housing types with 30% of the housing affordable at 30% to 80% of Area Median Income.

This draft will be presented at the Dec. 4 meeting of the Joint City-County Planning

(continued on page 8)

The Heart of the Neighborhood (continued from page 7)

Committee (JCCPC), which includes three city council members, three county commissioners, and the chair of the Planning Commission. This committee meeting is not a public hearing, but rather works to facilitate consensus between the two bodies that are the final authority for planning decisions. If the ideas are approved at JCCPC, one can assume planning staff will proceed in developing the final policy. In the interim, neighbors hope that given the blessing of the JCCPC, the developer will incorporate these ideas into any development requests that they bring forward for approval by city council.

At the October meeting, there were strong indications the developer does not plan to construct any building over seven stories (and more likely at most five stories). There were also indications that a Target likely would be built on the Northgate property near the former movie theater. Walltown is still pressing Duke University, which owns the Macy's building, to incorporate a clinic similar to the Lincoln Community Health Center. The WHHNA is happy to support the Walltown Community Association as they continue to promote their vision for this prime property in Durham.

UDO Re-Write Suggests Big Changes

AS REPORTED IN THE LAST PARADE, the Durham City-County Planning Department is now engaged in a complete re-write of Durham's zoning and development regulations — the Unified Development Ordinance, or UDO. An initial draft of the new code was released at the end of September that portends big changes — especially for traditional neighborhoods.

The draft code would place Old West Durham, Watts-Hillandale, and almost every other neighborhood in the city into a single zone called "Residential District" or RD. In the current UDO, most Old West Durham property is zoned RU for smaller lots. In Watts-Hillandale, some property is zoned RU, but other lots are zoned RS-8 and RS-10 requiring incrementally larger lots. All of these zoning designations now allow single-family homes, duplexes, and accessory dwelling units. Under the "small lot option," all of these lots can be subdivided and redeveloped into 25-foot lots as small as 2,000 square feet.

Under the proposed RD zone, three different development scenarios are envisioned. The first would allow a traditional single-family home

with one or two units and an accessory dwelling unit. The buildings on the lot could cover 50% of the lot's surface area and could be three stories high. The second development pattern proposed for RD would allow a separate dwelling unit of up to 1,200 sq. ft. for every 1,250 sq. ft. of lot area. Like the "small lot option" allowed in current rules, the maximum footprint for a house under this scenario would be 800 sq. ft., but unlike the current rules, each house could be three stories tall and there could be more of them. For a typical 50-foot neighborhood lot, this means the traditional home on the lot might be replaced with four or more separate units depending on lot depth, building layout, and setbacks. The third development scenario allowed in RD would allow a traditional neighborhood lot to be redeveloped with apartment buildings containing one unit for every 625 square feet of lot area. That might result in more than 10 apartment units on a typical Old West Durham or Watts-Hillandale lot. Up to 70% of the lot area could be covered by buildings. The buildings could be three stories tall. Things like setbacks and street, side and rear yard requirements for development in all three RD development patterns are generally less than those imposed by today's rules.

So far, only the regulatory outlines of RD and other zoning categories contained in the proposed UDO have been roughed in. Things like parking, open space, tree requirements, stormwater controls, and lighting rules have yet to be laid out. Questions abound. What will become of development plans negotiated between developers and the public? What about historic preservation and protecting neighborhood character? What about affordable housing? Will the new UDO require developers to build small, market entry homes in new developments? State law allows this, but Durham has never discussed it. Some critics are worried that the new rules favor redevelopment of existing affordable neighborhoods with more expensive new dwellings accelerating gentrification and displacement. Still others perceive that the new code favors rental housing over homeownership and worry about the consequences that will have for wealth distribution in Durham. For most Americans, intergenerational family wealth depends upon owning a home. Once a lot that held an affordable single-family home is redeveloped into an apartment building, the property is forever unavailable for families reaching for the bottom rung of the wealth ladder.

The draft rules can be reviewed on the city's Engage Durham website. A schedule of engagement meetings is also posted there. A final draft of the new code is supposed to be ready after the first of the year. Visit engagedurham.com to learn more.

Magnolia Tree Once Lit Each Xmas

ONCE UPON A TIME, there was a huge magnolia tree in the front yard of the bungalow at 2209 Woodrow St. Actually, it was a cluster of about five magnolia trees and together they soared into the sky, dwarfing the trees around them. For a few years in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Woodrow Street neighbors turned the trees into a magnificent lighted Christmas tree. It was a feat of amateur engineering requiring the cooperation of many hands.

Just who planted the tree is not known, but by the time Tom Evans and Annie Naismith bought the house, the tree consumed the whole front yard. When it bloomed in the early spring, the scent was heavenly. With their numerous stiff branches forming a natural ladder, magnolias are pretty easy to climb. Evans got to thinking that he could dress the tree in holiday splendor with strings of lights. The tree was so big that it took a lot of strings of lights and a lot of extension cords. The results were spectacular and so was the power bill — this was before low-energy LEDs. To prevent the whole thing from being a fire risk, Evans and Naismith had an electrician install multiple outdoor outlets just for the holiday display.

Each year, the project became more elaborate. It took the better part of a day to get the tree rigged and the lights to work. They got help from neighbors Jim and Elaine Truckner, Jerry Trott, and George Brett. More lights were added. It was too hard to take them down so when a string burnt out, they left it on the tree and replaced it with new lights. It was either Brett or Trott who rigged a giant star made of rods for the top of the tree. Once it was at the top, however, it shone out over west Durham like a beacon. Commuters remember that they could see the star at the top of the tree from Swift Avenue when they returned home from work in the December twilight.

In time, neighbors moved away. Evans and Naismith sold the house and the tree project came to an end. The old magnolia grew so large it encroached on the house and was removed. For a time, it cheered a neighborhood and made happy memories.

Neighborhood Annual Meetings

OWDNA ELECTS NEW BOARD

FRED BROADWELL

AT ITS ANNUAL MEETING ON OCT. 24, the Old West Durham Neighborhood Association (OWDNA) elected a new board of directors. Members will take office in January. The new board consists of ERIC BERG, BETH DRAY, EMMET ELLIS-FORLONG, CHARLES KACIR, SAM KIM, CONOR MCDONOUGH, ROB MCKINNIE, DAN SINGER, ANNA SMITH, and JOHN WOOD. Officers will be elected in January.

Anyone interested in serving on the board is encouraged to come to a board meeting to see how the board functions. Board elections are held each fall at the annual meeting. The association is a friends of the neighborhood group, has no dues or membership roster, and is not a homeowners association. Anyone who resides in or owns property in the neighborhood is invited to participate, and can vote for and serve on the board. More information and our bylaws can be found at our website: www.oldwestdurham.org.

Old West Meeting Features 'Nature in the Hood'

This year, Old West's annual meeting had a theme of "nature in the neighborhood." Our guest speaker was noted naturalist Barbara Driscoll from the New Hope Bird Alliance, the local Audubon Society chapter.

Driscoll offered a fascinating presentation about how we might be better friends to birds, butterflies, and other critters. She started by showing photos of the many beautiful native plants, birds, and insects that live in her yard. She doesn't have to travel far to be in a diverse and wonderful natural place. To learn more about birds, she recommended the Merlin app from Cornell, which can identify birds by their calls. The app is surprisingly accurate and lots of fun.

Of course, all is not well with birds and insects in the city. She talked about the decline of bird and insect species as a result of pesticides, bright lights, and monoculture lawns. Birds need water, shelter, nesting habitats, and specific plants and bugs. So, native plants, bird baths, and birdhouses are important. Be careful when purchasing native plants; not all plants labeled as native actually are. She also noted that while adult birds may eat a variety of things, baby birds eat almost exclusively insects, and thousands of them. Driscoll strongly discouraged the use of mosquito sprays, natural or otherwise, because they kill all insects and not just mosquitoes. She recommended using other proven methods of mosquito control, especially getting rid of standing water.

In addition to the birds that we see every day, huge numbers of migrating birds pass over us at night on their way to South America. Others are coming to the Southeast to overwinter here. To learn more about these migrations, Driscoll recommended a cool app called BirdCast that shows which birds are passing over at any moment. And don't forget to turn off unnecessary lights at night.

What else can we do? Driscoll encouraged us, whenever possible, to "Leave Our Leaves." You may have seen these signs around the neighborhood and they are part of a major national effort. Leaving leaves on the ground in the fall, rather than raking or blowing them, really helps our avian friends and is less work/expense for us. Just let the leaves fall and turn into mulch in the non-lawn spots. On the lawn, we can also choose to

leave leaves, either intact or chewed up by a mower. The leaves fertilize the soil and, if not too heavy, will disintegrate into nothing after a few months. Similarly, we can make a pile of sticks and garden clippings, and leave that for all sorts of bugs and critters to make a home. A slightly messy yard can be of great benefit.

Driscoll also encouraged us to think of our gardens from top to bottom. Different birds live at different heights. For example, pine warblers live at the tops of pine trees, while other birds are adapted to live in the mid-range, in small trees, in bushes, and on the ground. More variety in our plants is good.

Last, but not least, remember that Old West Durham is relaxed when it comes to how our yards look. We do not have a picky homeowners association that mandates pristine lawns, and the city is mostly hands-off. We do suggest that when doing alternative landscaping, it is good to make it look intentional. Natural habitats are not neglected spaces; they are just being managed differently. Signs and/or mowed borders can help to signal that.

A big thank you to Barbara Driscoll for joining us. For more information, see www.newhopebirdalliance.org. To get your garden certified as bird-friendly, contact the Bird Alliance. They will come out to visit for a small fee.

WHHNA WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

FRED PETERSON

ON OCT. 22, ABOUT 60 NEIGHBORS attended the Watts Hospital-Hillandale Neighborhood Association (WHHNA) annual meeting via Zoom. City employees informed neighbors about the bond referenda regarding streets/sidewalks and parks and about property tax assessments to be updated in 2025. Members voted in a new slate for the board officers and directors.

A slate of 13 board members, including four new members, was voted on and approved for the 2024-2025 year. FRED PETERSON continues as president, DOT DOYLE as vice president, KEVIN CROFTON as treasurer, and LUCY HARRIS as secretary. JAMIE GRUENER, TOM MILLER, ZAB JOHNSON, ALI SHOENFELT, and TINA ZAYAS continue to serve as directors, and AE BÜGGER, BETSI PUCKETT DESSAUER, TOM GREY and KURT PIVKO are new members of the board.

We thank JULIE MANCUSO CRAIG and BRIAN PICKARD who rotated off the board. We appreciate them and their effort serving on the board. Thanks to all the neighbors who attended and helped fulfill the quorum requirement for the vote at the annual meeting. WHHNA needs and appreciates your interest and support.

Members approved changes to the bylaws of WHHNA. The two most significant changes were to define the boundaries of the neighborhood by reference to a map instead of text descriptions and to reduce the quorum for the annual membership meeting from 40 to 35. You can find a map and the new bylaws at whhna.org at the Documents page under "Boards/Committees."

If any resident, member or non-member of WHHNA, has questions or ideas about neighborhood issues, wants to help in any way, wants to offer advice or expertise, reach out to a board member or attend our monthly meetings which are generally held on the first Monday of the month at 7 p.m.

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HOW ITALIAN STONECUTTERS HELPED BUILD DUKE'S WEST CAMPUS

(continued from page 5)

which did not spare North Carolina.

In Durham several families were forced out of their houses looking for others with lower rents, or to split it with other tenants to save a few dollars.

Some people recalled the times in which flour sacks were chosen on the basis of their decoration, to reuse the fabric to make shirts, towels, and handkerchiefs; others told stories about when, in absence of the 10 cents necessary to provide a new shoe sole, a piece of cardboard was used instead, even if it would last just for a single day.

Even if the Marzocchis were not yet having troubles at this time, the Duke Chapel project was reaching an end and Giovanni was already among many others on the list of those whose salary would be reduced soon.

In the meanwhile, the New Deal was financing building projects nearby, at which many masons would have easily found a job. Among others, the New Deal was financing the tunnels along the Blue Ridge Parkway, a 496-mile long highway connecting the Shenandoah National Park, in Virginia, to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina.

Giovanni could not stand this situation of uncertainty and decided to go back home, in Succisa. He had some savings and a strong wish to see again his aging parents. Zita did not agree to leave, but she knew that her husband already had decided: For this reason, she accepted leaving under the promise that they would not come back to the USA, to avoid a second move of their kids. During fall of 1932 they got ready to leave. Rina said goodbye to her 39 schoolmates, and happily took their present and the one from her teacher, a bone comb with a silver decoration and a note: "We shall miss you."

Then they left Durham by train to New York, where they embarked on "Roma" to Genoa, from which another train brought them to Pontremoli. The train in Italy was the first contact of the young Marzocchis to the great differences between the American and Italian societies. In

fact, it was an old and ugly train, and the seats were not padded, something unbelievable to them. After reaching Pontremoli, they stopped by the "Osteria di Parodi."

Later on, on a Balilla car they traveled to Succisa, along a twisty road, covered in stones and potholes, running among woods, stone buildings, and precipices. In Villavecchia, their relatives were waiting for them, looking forward to seeing them and meeting Mary and Pino, the youngest kids.

It was the beginning of a new life in a very different environment. In the U.S. they were living in a single-family house, rather small but with all the comforts, such as the ice box, a large bathroom, a dining room, a living room with the radio, three bedrooms, a nice front porch and a small back yard.

Now in Succisa they lived in a house without running water and electric energy. "Coming back to Italy was a shock," Rina frequently said. Giovanni went back to his work as mason, working on a day-to-day basis; his elder son, Amelio, worked with him, perfecting the techniques he previously learned in Durham. Rina was back to school, and she sometimes helped her grandmother put cows out to pasture. Mary too went to school.

Zita and Giovanni's fifth child, Serafino, was born in January 1933. Since it was less than a year after leaving the US, Serafino could get American citizenship as well. Giovanni's father, Marco, died in January 1935, and Giovanni inherited the family business, a cooperative with other people of Succisa, that gave rise to modest profits.

Excerpted from Going Far Away — Leaving Succisa Looking to Make a Fortune by Debora Antiga (Pontremoli, 2005). The author reached out to neighbor John Schelp to help with her chapter on the Marzocchis in West Durham. See some of the photographs discussed at history.oldwestdurham.org/duke-stonecutters.html.