
THE *Old Town* GAZETTE

August 2023

What Happened to my Boxwoods?

Hearing lots of deep bass and loud music in your home late at night?

Why Historic Preservation Matters

What's Happening at Pratt Avenue and White Street with the soon-to-be-leased Stella Apartments (leasing April 2024)

What is going on downtown with new entertainment venues?



STAY IN THE KNOW!

IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU ARE INFORMED OF CHANGES HAPPENING IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD & DOWNTOWN

Whether you are an Old Town member or not, we need your email address in order to send you time-sensitive critical information like this.

The printed Gazette's come out 4 times a year and can be sent to you digitally over email, so that we can get updated information to you instantly.

To send us your updated information, please email to our info link at oldhuntsville@gmail.com

Message from the President

Greetings Old Town Neighbors!

Can you believe we are already more than half-way through the year?! I feel 2023 has flown by! The Old Town Historic Board has put a lot of time and effort so far this year into creating neighborhood events and staying in tune with Huntsville City expansion. Here are a few updates on where we are currently and a few dates to keep in mind as we plan out the rest of the year.

We are currently at 106 members in Old Town, so if you are not yet a member please consider joining so we can distribute up to date information and events about Old Town to all neighbors!

The Old Town Historic Board is planning on hosting the Second edition of Spookyfest on Saturday, October 21st from 4-8 PM. We will have costume contests, games, live music, and food trucks. We really look forward to the neighborhood getting together at Providence Classical School. We recommend bringing a chair and drink of choice!

We will also be having a front porch party on Saturday August 19th from 4-6pm. We will send out a reminder invitation with the date, time, and address to each Old Town Resident.

We would love for neighbors to come out, bring an hors d'oeuvre, drink of preference, and enjoy meeting new neighbors around Old Town. I personally love the sense of Community that the Old Town front porches bring!

The Old Town Board is working with the City of Huntsville Landscape Management regarding updating Old Town's Rice Park, which is at the end of White Street/Pratt Avenue. We are in the process of receiving hardscape/planting drawings, quotes for plants/gravel/labor from the City, and information on what exactly the City will be putting together for the entrance of the Stella (new apartment complex on Pratt). Once we are able to have those discussions, our hope is to start gradually updating Rice Park in several Phases.

With regards to the Stella Apartment Complex currently under construction, members of Old Town Community met with the Huntsville City Planning/Traffic Engineering departments in May to discuss increased traffic on White/Pratt and any plans the City had to make that intersection pedestrian friendly. The City took actions to start taking a look at traffic patterns on Pratt/White/Walker and to have meetings across all departments to find the best solution for pedestrian crossings across Pratt from Old Town. We really appreciate members of Old Town reaching out and coming to a board meeting to discuss these ideas/issues!

I also understand the number of headaches being caused from the noise that has been coming from the bands playing at Rocket Republic/Furniture Factory. We are also aware of the plans to add the Barracuda and another music venue at the Lumberyard. We have been in contact often with the City and City Council Representatives. We understand this is very frustrating. Please reach out to your City Council Representative and the Old Town Board when you hear the noise and where it is coming from. The City seems to be receiving more complaints now and have been more reactive than they have in the past. We are always open to ideas and phone calls to discuss actions we can take as a board.

The Board would also like to hear any ideas people have on ways to bring the neighborhood together for events. Please reach out to us with any ideas you have! We love seeing everyone out and about and to meet new faces. Please be careful out in the heat this summer and I look forward to running in to each and every one of you.

Cheers!

Old Town Historic District Association President

Blakely Sherrod

2nd Annual Spookyfest

Mark your calendars for our 2nd annual Spookyfest to be held on the grounds of Providence Classical School. There will be food trucks, costume contest, bounce house, games and prizes for kids, live entertainment, as well as some good refreshments all geared to the kids of our neighborhood. It really gets them in the mood for Halloween.

Date and time is Oct. 21st, Saturday, from 4-8pm. Adults - bring a chair and refreshment of choice - your kids won't be sitting down!

Look for more information via email and brochures as we get closer to this event. Another reason to make sure we have your current email address!

Your kids won't want to miss this.

CREAMY PEANUTTY PIE

1 c. corn syrup
1 c. sugar
1 t. vanilla extract

3 eggs, slightly beaten
1/3 c. peanut butter
Unbaked Pie shell



Blend the filling ingredients. Pour into unbaked pie shell and bake at 400 degrees for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 350 degrees and bake for 30 more minutes. The filling should appear slightly less set in the center than around the edges.

Can be served with a dollop of freshly whipped cream and sprinkled with chopped, salted peanuts.

Are you planning an Exterior Home Project in one of Huntsville's Historic Districts?

You'll need approval from the Huntsville Historic Preservation Commission.

I Can Help!

**See How at:
backtothebones.com**



BACK TO THE BONES

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND DESIGN



Featured Old Town Home

221 Walker Avenue - built in 1916

Courthouse records show that the house was built in 1916 and is described as a "five room frame house." The original address was 524 Walker Street, and 524-1/2 as it started as a duplex. The address changed sometime between 1953 and 1960 from 524 to 221. This renumbering of the houses may be the source of confusion on the actual age of the house in some records. It's possible that the change from Walker Street to Walker Avenue occurred at this time as well.

The house at 221 Walker Ave has undergone considerable changes over the past 100-plus years. In addition to the renumbering and renaming of the street, the house underwent a metamorphosis in the 1930s.

Currently, there are five other mission style houses on Walker Avenue. One has a historic marker giving Citrano as the original owner and is dated 1927. Though the historic marker is not present at this time, it is recalled that the neighboring house was also marked "Citrano". It is believed that several members of the same family immigrated from Sicily and had these houses built in the style of their home country. As the story goes, the last member of the Citrano family followed suit but came over after all the lots on Walker were occupied. He purchased the house currently at 221 Walker and "converted" the exterior to match that of his family member's houses in the mid 1930's.

Interestingly, a house across the street from 221 Walker has the same interior floor plan and remains a frame house built in 1908. Given the similarity, it is conceivable that the same builder constructed both.

Music has been part of the house's story in more recent years. The current owner is Huntsville musician Ricky J. Taylor who purchased the house from long-time performer Tony Mason in 1998. Shortly thereafter, it became a musical hangout with many jam sessions, often on the front porch. The local Bluegrass band "Walker Street Opry" was born in this house around 2002.



Aaron & Shannon Hase
The Hase
Team

We Are
Your
Old
Town
Neighbors!

Let us help you
with the sale or
purchase of your
next historical
property

Contact

PHONE :
202-288-0962

SOCIAL MEDIA:
@THEHASETEAM



**Sold Off
Market!**



Sold!





FROM THE DESK OF BILL KLING - CITY COUNCILMAN DISTRICT 4

THE CITY COUNCILMAN WHO MET HIS WIFE BY PLACING AN AD IN THE HUNTSVILLE TIMES

There is an old adage that it pays to keep your campaign promises, and I would like to be an elected official who says that is true.

When I first ran for city council, two of the things that I said that I would do, if elected, was to hold monthly town meetings. Additionally, I said that I would work to help start up a small scale Public Transit system, and see how it worked, before doing more expansion of routes.

In April 1991, I placed an ad in the Huntsville Times stating that I would be holding a town meeting to discuss the formation of a public transit shuttle bus system. The head of the City Transportation department sent an employee, Tanjie Lyon, to my meeting to cover it.

I had a chance to talk to Tanjie after the meeting. I discovered that she was the niece of my friend Aunt Eunice Merrill, and that she was a part-time graduate student working to get her Masters degree in the same planning program that I had received mine in.

We talked a little after the meeting, and then went out to get a pizza and donuts. We became friends and started dating. After two years, we got married.

This July 31, we will be celebrating our 30th anniversary.

Technically, we met because I placed an ad (about the town meeting) in the Huntsville Times newspaper!

Bill Kling

(ED. Note - Bill Kling is the Council representative for Old Town and much of this area, and he holds Monday meetings at the main Public Library to answer any and all questions. He invites all Old Town residents to attend some of these very casual, interesting meetings! Email Bill Kling or call for times and schedules.

Contact Me!

email: bill.kling@huntsvilleal.gov
Phone: (256) 534-7704 Cell (256) 337-3045
I Promise You - I will Respond!

2023 August Porch Party - You're Invited

Our August Porch Party will be on Aug. 19th, Saturday from 4-6. The address is 509 Clinton Ave. E, the home of Kyle and Anna Husband. Bring your beverage of choice and chairs if you like. Get to know your new neighbors and catch up with the old ones! (If you would like to host an upcoming porch party please get in touch with Dwight Wright at dwight.wright@adtran.com)

NOISE! You're Not the Only One!

The Old Town board has received more and more complaints about the noise level of the bands located in the clubs very close to Old Town. There are more entertainment venues coming to the Furniture Factory/Rocket Republic area and we understand music is a large part of that for their customers. We are also aware of the plans to add Barracuda and another music venue at the Lumberyard. However there are city ordinances limiting the noise volume and time of night that it is supposed to stop. When neighbors hear the noise into late night at a very high volume and booming bass and can't sleep it becomes very frustrating. We have been in contact often with the City and City Council Representatives. Bill Kling has been very responsive and is working with Old Town and the venues.

Please reach out to your City Council Representative and the Old Town Board when you hear the noise and it's late at night and/or very loud. The City seems to be receiving more complaints now and have been more reactive than they have in the past. Below is the Director to notify. This message is from her.

All-

Natural Resources Inspector Lance Williams went to Rocket Republic this morning to evaluate the stage placement/setup so that we could better establish a dialogue with the managers to see what could be done to lessen the impact on Walker Avenue. When Lance arrived, the stage was already actively being reoriented 180 degrees to face away from Meridian Street and Walker Avenue. An owner of The Furniture Factory and Rocket Republic (Mark Komara) was on site and stated that because of the complaints they had received, they were taking this approach and would also put up sound absorbing materials on the walls surrounding the stage to minimize the escape of sound waves from the immediate area of the establishment. In my discussion with Lance, we noted that this new orientation will likely necessitate lowering the volume of the music as well as to not blast out the crowd. I am optimistic that this will significantly improve the current situation. Mr. Komara told Lance that if after the changes the problem is not resolved, they will continue to work on sound mitigation.

It would be incredibly helpful for Natural Resources staff if you all could keep us informed on how these changes affect each of you. I will reach out after this weekend if I have not heard anything and see if the situation has improved.

Respectfully,

DARLENE DUERR, P.E.
Interim Director
Natural Resources and Environmental Management
City of Huntsville
(256) 427-5760
darlene.duerr@huntsvilleal.gov

What Happened to my Boxwoods??

In my 50 years of living at 716 E. Clinton I have never lost a boxwood, this was a first for me. Many of us saw this over the early spring and didn't know what was causing it. Thank you to Alice Lawler, who is a Master Gardener and Old Town resident, for getting this information for us. (CT Agricultural Experimental Station, Birmingham, Al - Dr. Jacobi)



A sample of a diseased Old Town boxwood was sent and this is the reply:

Volutella Blight: We found the fungus *Volutella* covering the dead and dying branches and leaves of the sample. *Volutella* is an opportunistic fungus that often invades tissues damaged by winter injury or drought stress. This disease has been very common this spring after the cold temperatures in December and March. But we also see this disease during and following a drought. So, I'm not surprised you also saw damage starting last summer. The combination of the drought last summer and the cold winter weather has made the boxwoods more susceptible to this disease.

Prune and discard dead branches, cutting back a few inches into healthy wood. Sanitize pruning tools, with alcohol or a 10% bleach solution (1 part bleach + 9 parts water) between pruning cuts. As an added precaution, we recommend applying a fungicide such as Gardentech Daconil (chlorothalonil) or Fertilome Systemic Fungicide (propiconazole) after pruning and 2 weeks later. This blight is a common fungal disease of boxwood and affects leaves and stems, which can cause extensive browning of leaves and diebacks in nurseries and landscapes. The fungus is considered a weak and opportune pathogen. So, winter injury, excessive insect feeding, or poor root conditions can make plants more vulnerable to the disease.

SYMPTOMS AND DIAGNOSTICS

On leaves, the initial symptom of the disease is chlorosis that will later turn bronze or straw color. When young shoots are infected, brown, or black streaking is noticeable on the stems. Severe damage on infected stems can result in brown patches on the canopy. In the later stages, infected stems may show loose or peeling barks. In moist conditions, orange or salmon-colored fungal fruiting structures are noticeable on stems and the lower surface of leaves. Infected leaves can be attached on affected stems for few months, and then they gradually fall off.

DISEASE DEVELOPMENT

Volutella blight of boxwood is caused by the fungus *Volutella buxi*. Most boxwood species and cultivars are susceptible to the disease. The pathogen survives on infected plants or fallen leaves on the ground. Fungal spores are dispersed by splashing water, wind, or pruning tools. Boxwood plants that are stressed from drought, excessive water, or winter injury are vulnerable to the disease. Optimal environmental conditions for disease development are warm temperature between 68 and 77 °F and high humidity (> RH 85%).

MANAGEMENT

Prune and destroy diseased and dead branches. Infected branches should be cut at few inches below the transition between healthy and symptomatic tissues. Sanitize pruning tools by dipping them in 70% alcohol between each cut. Avoid pruning or sheering boxwood when plants are wet. If necessary, provide irrigation during dry periods in the summer and before soil freezing to prevent drought stress and winter injury, respectively. Avoid overhead sprinkler irrigation to reduce humidity in the canopies.

Boxwood should be planted in well-drained areas. Avoid planting boxwood too deeply. Maintain good air circulation by adequately spacing plants and by thinning dense canopies. Mulching will maintain soil moisture and aid root development. Fungicide application: Applying fungicides may prevent the disease and reduce sporulation on infected plants, but will not cure the diseased parts. So, fungicide applications should be started early to protect new growth. Due to the dense and compact growth of boxwood, thorough spray coverage on branches and foliage is critical to achieve effective disease control.

Old Town Historic Preservation District Association

Historic Marker Policy

1. The Old Town Historic Preservation District Association (OTH-PDA) must approve all applications for Historic Markers prior to placement (or replacement of any part of an existing marker) within the defined boundaries of the OTHPDA. All applications must be made by the current property owner. Any property, whether Contributory or not, is eligible for a marker if certain other conditions are met.

2. If the application is for a replacement sign then it must still be approved in order to maintain compliance with OTHPDA guidelines for color, for height, style and placement of marker post, for dimensions of replacement marker, and for style of lettering. However, documentation of ownership does not have to be submitted with the application for replacement.

3. Documentation, such as copies of deeds or tax records, must be provided with the application for new signs. This documentation must establish/verify the original builder/owner of the property, and the year built. Documentation of the current owner as applicant must also be provided. Once verified by the OTHPDA the application will be approved and the current owner notified they may proceed with ordering and placement of their Historic Marker.

4. Acquisition of all new markers or replacement markers will be made twice yearly. Orders will generally be placed in April and October. Placement of combined orders by the OTHPDA twice a year expedites filling the orders so the vendors can set up for the signs and efficiently fill the orders at one time, rather than piecemeal. This keeps costs down for the owners. Full payment must be submitted along with application.

5. Any application must include the name (or names) to be put on the marker. No more than two names may be used. One name is preferred, being the original owner/builder of the residence. For a second name to be approved for placement on a marker there would need to be a compelling reason; for example, an owner (even if it is the current owner) who lived in the home for 25 years or more, or was well known in the community or added onto the property in such a manner as to add architectural significance to the property and which said addition added significantly to the square footage of the property (specifically, which would at least double the size of the original property). In cases where a property has been owned by a family or direct-line relatives of that family for over 30 years a second name would be considered allowable, but only if the surname of the original family owner is listed.

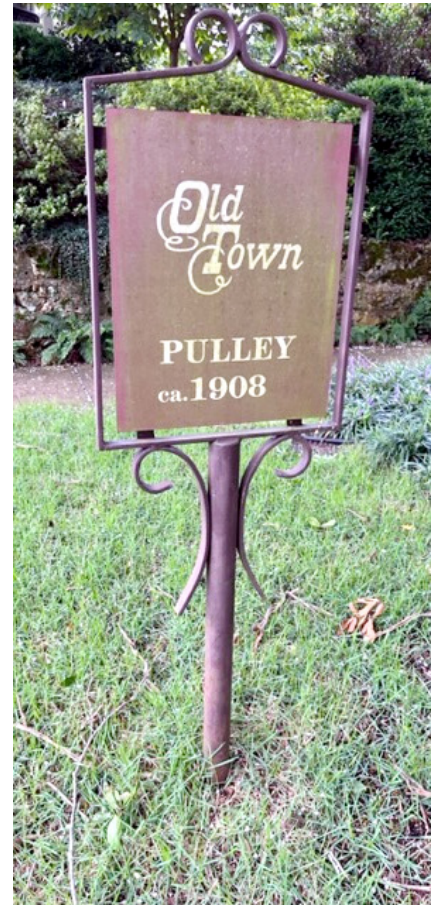
7. Where no definite construction date can be determined, CA (circa) will be added to the date determined by the information provided.

8. The responsibility for historic marker policy/procedures was assigned to each historic district by the Historic Huntsville Preservation Commission (HHPC). As such each District has established its own procedures and color choices for their signs. Twickenham's inserts are green, Old Town's are brown and Five Points are grey/black. Frame colors are either brown or black, only. For Old Town, brown posts are preferred but black is acceptable. These are the only colors approved by OTHPDA for Old Town markers.

9. OTHPDA will keep all supplied documents as a permanent record of the history of the property.

10. Markers must be placed within property lines and not on city property (e.g. Not between curb and sidewalk). Markers must be placed at a consistent height. The top of the scrolling on top of the marker post shall be 62 inches off the ground. A plot drawing showing the location of the sign must accompany the application. Owner is responsible for assuring placement of marker post does not interfere with any underground utilities.

11. Optional dedication on rear of sign is permissible for the name of the owner/purchaser only. There would be an additional charge from the vendor for any printing on the back of markers.



Any questions regarding this policy, pricing or how to research the history of your property should be addressed to Mike and Cathy Self, email 2929cathy@gmail.com or phone (256) 479-1163.

Community Watch for Old Town

We need Nosy Neighbors! Join our community watch group made up of Old Town members who walk or ride bikes frequently through our district looking for anything unusual.

You can be a daytime Community Watch member just by being watchful while walking your dog, jogging, driving, etc.

Be very observant and if you see anything out of the ordinary or just suspicious, call the non-emergency police # 256-722-7100. If it's an emergency call 911.

Common Sense Safety Tips

1. If someone calls you asking for credit card info, social security #, bank #s, etc. NEVER give out the information - you will be amazed at how persuasive these people can be, especially with older people.
2. Every night before you go to bed, remove anything of value from your car and trunk. Lock it up. Thieves are breaking into cars in record numbers, to get anything they can find. They usually work in groups.
3. A Ring doorbell or other type security camera at front and back doors will give you added security - they are affordable and many more neighbors are buying them now.
4. Don't answer the door to anyone after dark unless you are expecting them. Best to be safe and not put yourself in harm's way.
5. Try to get your shopping done in the daytime hours; parking lots are very scary places to be in the dark, especially during any holiday season.
6. NEVER leave your purse or other valuables in your car when you are going to be away from it for a while - it takes just seconds for a thief to break in. Lock all your doors to your home while away.

Good Information Links

A wealth of local historic info, historic district home photos, past digital copies of Old Huntsville magazine and historical information compiled by Deane Dayton - Huntsville History Collections - www.huntsvillehistorycollection.org/

Old Town Website link - oldtownhuntsville.org/

Huntsville Historic Foundation - historichuntsville.org/

Five Points link: fivepointshistoricdistrict.org/

WHY PRESERVATION MATTERS

In 1972, Huntsville joined the national preservation movement by establishing its first historic district in Twickenham. Old Town Historic District followed shortly after that. Since then, Huntsville has landed multiple historic districts to the National Register of Historic Places. Why is that important?

These districts are living museums of our City's history. The variety of architectural styles and streetscapes illustrate a neighborhood's development and help tell the story of individual communities. They also strengthen neighborhoods and cultivate a sense of place. Whether you're new to Huntsville's historic districts or a longtime resident, we welcome and thank you for being a part of our community.

Take a few moments to peruse our website for the latest details about historic districts, by-laws and regulations, applying to change or altering your home, or simply keep up with the Huntsville Historic Preservation Commission. Go to Huntsvilleal.gov/preservation to get started! Don't forget to also follow us on Facebook and Instagram for a deeper look at preservation efforts in Huntsville plus lots of beautiful home pictures.

Have questions? Contact City Preservation Planner Katie Stamps at Katherine.Stamps@HuntsvilleAL.gov or call 256-650-4779.

Katie Stamps is our Preservation Planner for Huntsville (since Nov. 2017) and you can find her at the monthly meetings of the Huntsville Historic Preservation Commission. If you ever want to make changes to your historic home, you will be able to interact with Katie and HHPC. She is actually very knowledgeable and great to work with.

You can contact her via email at any time and she responds right away. So for any questions regarding your historic home and changes you would like to make, please don't hesitate to call or email!

Katie Stamps

katherine.stamps@huntsvilleal.gov

256.650.4779



Making changes to your historic home? Be sure and go to this link:
huntsvilleal.gov/inspection/documents/HHPC.APPLICATION.pdf

ATTEND A MEETING!

Huntsville Historic Preservation Committee meetings take place the 2nd Monday of each month at 4:30 in the 1st Floor Conference Room of City Hall, 308 Fountain Circle. The public is always invited to attend and give input and some of the meetings get pretty interesting.

Also if you're not able to attend, but still want to watch the meetings are videotaped live via Huntsvilleal.gov/hsvtv and here you can find old archived meetings as well.

COMMUNICATION IS SO IMPORTANT RIGHT NOW!

In all of our recent district meetings, the one request we had from our residents is more communication about what is happening in our district. No one wants to be surprised about a demolition, or an apartment building going up, or crime news, or what's happening downtown and neighboring historic districts that can and WILL affect us.

We are in the process of inputting Old Town resident email addresses into a form that we can use to send you instant messages to your phone and computer.

This is a private listing and has nothing to do with the app NextDoor.

This listing will only include Old Town and no one else. This is why it's so important to add your email so that we can send out important messages that we know you'll get in a really timely manner. Send to Cathey Carney at oldhuntsville@gmail.com and put "Old Town Email" in the subject line. Your information will NOT be shared with anyone else.

Give us suggestions as to how we can better communicate with each of you!

IF YOU'RE CURRENTLY NOT A MEMBER OF OLD TOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT, USE THE FORM BELOW TO JOIN UP. YOU'LL BECOME PART OF A GROUP WHO LOVES PRESERVING THE INTEGRITY AND VALUE OF OUR HISTORIC HOMES.

Old Town Historic District Association Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Amount Enclosed:

____ \$ 25 Sponsor

____ \$ 50 and up - Patron

All membership dues and donations are tax deductible.

Comments/Concerns/Questions/Areas of Interest:

Please send to Mandy Roberts,
507 E. Clinton Ave., Huntsville, Al 35801