



# West Hills Neighbors



MARCH/APRIL 2026 Edition

West Hills Community Association **Neighbors Helping Neighbors**

## Here Comes Spring

### President's Corner

Spring in West Hills is a wonderful time of year. Yards and gardens come to life, the air is fresher, the sun is warmer, and everyone welcomes the end of winter.

Be sure to take advantage of the special events sponsored by WHCA over the next couple of months: the annual Easter Egg Hunt on March 28, the West Hills Dogwood Pickleball Tournament on April 11, and the West Hills Spring Dogwood Celebration hosted by WHCA and the Dogwood Arts Festival on April 18, and of course, the West Hills Dogwood Trail opening 1.

This year's Spring Dogwood Celebration will be bigger and better than ever. Thanks to West Hills DAF team leaders Christine Martin and Michael Moore a variety of artists, vendors and performers will be at the 4-hour event starting at 10 AM in the field adjacent to the Sheffield Drive WH Park parking lot.

Additionally, the event will start with the recognition of this year's Outstanding Volunteer Leader honorees, Clara and Cap Hardin and Larry Silverstein. WHCA will again acknowledge their many unselfish contributions to the West Hills community by dedicating the planting of dogwood trees and accom-

panying plaques along the Jean Teague Greenway.

All of these events offer something for everyone and I encourage you to enjoy each one and the fellowship of your neighbors.

The other news I want to share is to give you an update on the proposed 32-townhouse development on the site of the old Walker family home at the corner of North Gallaher View and Middlebrook Pike.

WHCA and the neighbors in the immediate vicinity remain concerned and skeptical about this proposed project for several reasons.

The most glaring among these is how close the eight structures will be to two adjacent homes and the loss of privacy our neighbors current have.

Also, there are real concerns about the proposed sole access to the property via a single driveway from Gallaher View which will be less than 100' from the Mars Hill intersection and only a few hundred feet south of the Gallaher View/Middlebrook intersection. That intersection is also home to a Weigle's store, the old Middlebrook Pike behind the store, and a large apartment complex that uses the old roadway. Traffic there is always heavy and the ability to make a left turn leaving the town-

*Continued next page*

### WHCA SPONSORED EVENTS

EASTER  
EGG HUNT



9AM SATURDAY

MAR 28

WEST HILLS PARK PAVILION

PICKLEBALL

Tournament

APR 11

WEST HILLS PARK  
PICKLEBALL COURTS



WEST HILLS

SPRING  
DOGWOOD

CELEBRATION

10AM-1PM\* SATURDAY

APR 18

WEST HILLS PARK FIELDS  
SHEFFIELD DRIVE

\* CORRECTED CLOSING TIME

house site during any time of day and especially at rush hour is dangerous and practically impossible.

As I write this column, we are working with our neighbors to prepare our presentation why the Special Use request by the developer should be denied by the Planning Commission.

If unsuccessful, we have one final course of action. That will be to go to Chancery Court and appeal the variance granted by BZA and approved by City Council. The deadline to file is Friday, April 3.

If neighbors decide to file an appeal, I will ask

you to help by donating to the legal fund necessary to file and present our neighborhood's concerns not only about this project, but perhaps more importantly, the nonchalant way members of the Board of Zoning Appeals and City Council ignored the existing laws and protocols pertinent to this project.

We expect responsible representation from our elected representatives and should never settle for less.

We'll keep you posted on how it goes.

In the meantime enjoy spring in West Hills! *LH*




### Volunteer Leaders Honored

Clara and the late Cap Hardin and Larry Silverstein were honored with Volunteer Leadership Awards at last month's WHCA meeting.

The Hardins moved to West Hills in 1972 and quickly became active in

the original neighborhood association in myriad ways, including Clara's chairing the bylaws committee. Silverstein, who grew up in West Hills, has been instrumental in preserving the character of the neighborhood, tirelessly researching legal avenues to advocate for the neighborhood's in-



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terests in development, construction, traffic, codes, and other areas.

## Honeycutt, Jackson, Bike Speak to WHCA

Second District City Council Rep. Nathan Honeycutt was guest speaker at the February WHCA meeting — joined by 4th District County Commissioner Shane Jackson and School Board Rep. Katherine Bike.

About 40 neighbors came to hear the three speak Feb. 16 at Church of the Nazarene.

Honeycutt began by talking about his affinity for West Hills, where his brother’s family lived for 20 years.

“I love this neighborhood and cherish it,” he said. “It’s a great community you have here, and I plan to do everything in my power to help it.”

He had a few updates for the community:

- A new paved path to be built in spring at West Hills Elementary will make emergency response plans easier and safer, particularly for children with accessibility issues, such as wheelchairs. A previous evacuation route

required going through the woods and field and took roughly 25 minutes; the new path can be traveled in 3-5 minutes. An organization of young families advocated for the path and for a sidewalk extension between the school and Bennington, a request Honeycutt will take to the mayor.

- Requests for city traffic calming features now can be made only during January. Applications can be downloaded online. (Honeycutt heard many audience comments on traffic calming.)

- Parks and Rec seeks public input for its master

plan, through March 31..

- The city is updating its comprehensive “road map” for development and growth, which also addresses issues like homelessness and public safety. Feedback can be given during meetings this summer.


“The beautiful thing about this process is that it’s going to be generated by you, the community, and not by the state,” Honeycutt said. “It’s going to be a great time to be engaged.”

Next, Bike discussed the school board’s legislative priorities, struggles with facilities and fund-

*Continued next page*

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ing, and academic retention, including the controversial state policy of holding back third-graders who don't achieve a minimum standardized test score.

Jackson explained an effort to improve AMR's ambulance service. He said increasing the pay, staff and number of vehicles has taken AMR from a 50% failure rate to none in 2025.

He also encouraged residents to familiarize themselves with Knox County's Advance Knox, a comprehensive, data-driven, long-range land use and transportation plan approved in early

2024 to guide development, directing growth to specific areas while preserving rural land and creating more housing.

### **Planning Commission to consider developer plan March 5**

WHCA appealed the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) ruling to City Council at the February 3 council meeting.

Larry Silverstein prepared and presented WHCA's opposition to the granting of a variance to Mainland by the BZA

that allowed 32 townhomes to be built on the Old Walker property. Although a very strong argument was presented, City Council decided the Board of Appeals had ruled properly and denied the appeal.

The variance will allow Mainland to proceed with plans for the construction of 32 townhomes on the property.

The Knoxville Planning Commission will consider Mainland's proposed development plan (9A-25-SU) at the March 5 meeting. WHCA will review the plan and provide comments to the

Planning Commission and at the meeting.

### **HEALTHY WEST HILLS Volunteer Kickball Coach Opening**

The Annual Neighborhood Kickball Tournament will be on Saturday, March 28 ... and we need a coach!

Help our West Hills kickball team take the 2-foot trophy at the tourney at Ridley Helton Field, 300 Jessamine St. in East Knoxville.

Our team needs between 9 and 11 players. At least two players on



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each team must be female.

**The deadline for entry is March 23.**

So, dust off your sneakers, chill the drinks, and let's make this year's Kickball Tournament one for the books. May the best block win!

If you're interested in coaching or playing kickball, contact Healthy West Hills Chair Anne Crais, [anneccrais@gmail.com](mailto:anneccrais@gmail.com).

**DOGWOOD ARTS FEATURED  
PEN GARDEN:**

# The Gardens of West Hills Baptist Church

*Editor's note: This ar-*

*ticle first appeared in the July 2008 edition of the West Hills Neighbors.*

In recent years, our church has developed three "garden rooms" on our campus. We were inspired to create quiet places of harmony for relaxation, meditation, refreshment of the spirit, and prayer. Our gardens follow the cycles of the year, from spring bulbs to winter colors. In particular, we wanted to include perennial flowers in bright color combinations. It has not been an easy task to select and maintain good plantings of shrubs, trees,

and lawns; but, we feel that the results were well worth the effort.

The first garden room is a curving perennial border sited in the meadow at the base of our front parking area. It contains flowers, shrubs,

and grasses that thrive in sunshine from spring to frost. This garden is visually appealing from a distance, with many forms like spikes and clouds. Up close, interesting colors and textures

*Continued next page*



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Our second garden room is located on the north side of the chapel. The well-manicured lawn is anchored with three Forest Pansy redbuds. Here, the evergreen trees and shrubs form a soothing border in various shades of green

which follow the walls of the chapel.

Our third garden room features large stones nestled into the landscape. It is in the English garden style, and sited at our main entrance. Thanks to the mature oak trees, the light levels change every few hours from full shade, to partial shade, to bright sunlight. The curving flagstone path leads to a quiet circle with benches where you can sit and view the rainbow-colored border. The unusual trees, dwarf Japanese maples, lilac trees, weeping redbud, and graceful blue spruce give this garden its structure.

This welcoming space provides a sanctuary for birds, bees, butterflies, Baptists, and of course, for many visitors!

**West Hills History: 1976 Persistence Pays**

In March 1976 Jim Wardley, a developer presented to the executive committee [*currently known as the WHCA officers and board*] his plans for construction of apartments, which would surround the existing Colonial Townhouses, just to the west of Broome Road.

In attendance was Reuben Pelot, president, and the following members;

Deloris Smith, Paul Haas, Dick Lewis, George Eckard, Barbara Pelot, Brian Pickens, Charlie Burchett, and Jean Teague.

Because Broome Road provided the most western entrance to West Hills, the committee felt that the construction of apartments at the proposed site would greatly increase traffic through West Hills, and would potentially and effectively slice off a portion of West Hills which lay west and north of Broome.

Wardley however, was prepared to negotiate. Although his request for re-zoning was already

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**ELECTION DAY  
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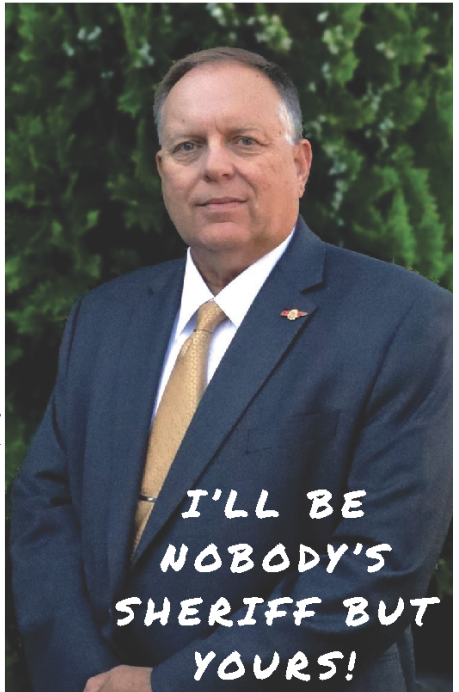
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submitted, he agreed to request a postponement pending more extensive talks with the community. For the next several months the members of the executive committee met almost every other week to discuss development plans and options with developer, his attorney, and at times the MPC director and his staff.

Negotiations centered on the time frame for construction, type, and density of the dwelling units, and access points from the apartments to adjacent roads. George Eckard, in particular en-

couraged the developer to consider a development of single family homes. Wardley countered that this was not financially feasible because of the high price of the land (\$150,000). Wardley was however, willing to support plans for creation of a Kingston Pike to Middlebrook Pike connector, and actively supported the concept with representatives of various agencies. The state Transportation Planning Organization had already endorsed the concept of a connector, but issues of cost and right of way were seen to delay the creation of the new roadway.

Eventually, the construction of the new connector would prove to be the necessary piece to resolve the disagreements between developers and the community.

Author's Note: At the present, more than 30 years after the discussions above were held,

construction has begun on the condos west of Broome road. As agreed to many years ago, access to the construction site is restricted to an entrance from Gallaher, and residences will have no direct link to Broome.

—Joe Fuhr  
*Past President of WHCA*



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