

VOLLINTINE EVERGREEN

NEWS

A NEIGHBORHOOD PUBLICATION SPONSORED BY VECA, THE VOLLINTINE EVERGREEN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION / VECA.ORG / VECA901@GMAIL.COM

SPRING 2017



2017 V&E Artwalk

The V&E Greenline Committee organized another successful Artwalk event. The committee took a chance with the weather predictions, and made what turned out to be the best decision, to postpone the Artwalk to the rain date, Sunday April 23. The event went off without a hitch, vendors came, people strolled and shopped, food and beverage was consumed, and the silent auction brought in revenue for the V&E Greenline. Many thanks to the sponsors, musicians, organizers, vendors, and to all the volunteers. 🐦

Artwalk Sponsors:

Memphis Arts Collective
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Buckman
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Evergreen Historic District
Polo Liquor and Wines
Church Health
Crosstown Memphis CDC
Art Center Supply Store
Midtown Mini Mart
West Memorials
Dino's Grill
Tangles Hair Studio
VECA Youth Committee

Musicians:

Blueshift Ensemble
Justin Bloss
Billy Dove
Terry Prince and the Principles
Sound system by Caleb Sigler and
Living Hope Church



Neighborhood Preservation Clinic

By Chris Floyd

On April 27, the VECA Blight Busters Committee hosted Daniel Schaffzin and Brittany Williams from the University of Memphis Law School. They presented information about the Neighborhood Preservation Clinic, which works under the guidelines of the Neighborhood Preservation Act. That law allows any nonprofit, interested party or the City of Memphis to file a civil lawsuit in Environmental Court against property owners with unmaintained properties.

The clinic is a collaborative effort that includes two co-directors, a Neighborhood Preservation Fellow, two City attorneys, dedicated code enforcement inspectors and around ten law students. The goal of this program is to use civil litigation to ensure property owners bring their properties up to code.

Here is the path a case takes:

- The property is certified in court as a public nuisance
- The owner must present a work plan to the court for rehabbing the property
- The case is disposed either by the owner bringing the property up to code or through the receivership process. Nonprofit entity would rehab the property in the case of receivership.

Many challenges exist in locating the owners and proceeding with NPA cases. These challenges include the following:

- Deceased owners or heirs
- Bankruptcies
- Out-of-state or out-of-country owners
- Undocumented foreclosures
- Properties sold at tax sale and still in the redemption period

The clinic generally focuses on abandoned residential properties.

However, they have litigated against some commercial property owners. Blight Busters asked them to look at the old BP station at Evergreen and Jackson since this has been a long-term problem.

VECA Blight Busters was excited to learn about this program and the impact could be a game changer for our neighborhood. Currently, twenty properties in our neighborhood are in Environmental Court with lawsuits filed through the Neighborhood Preservation Act. This program gives VECA another avenue to address blighted properties in our neighborhood.

Please continue to file complaints with the City of Memphis and its 311 complaint center. If the complaint is closed and is still a problem, please file another complaint. This is the first step to getting our complaints documented.

A big thanks to Daniel and Brittany for providing us with so much useful information. VECA looks forward to partnering with the law clinic in the future as we continue our fight against blight. 🙏



UofM law students presenting cases at Environmental Court



VOLLINTINE EVERGREEN NEWS
Summer 2017

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VECA is a neighborhood organization made up of volunteers and paying members. The newsletter, VECA mail, annual meeting, and committee activities are ways in which VECA communicates with its residents, businesses, and other stakeholders.

The VECA area is bounded by Watkins on the West, Cypress Creek on the North, Springdale on the East, and North Parkway on the South.

VECA
1680 Jackson Avenue
901.276.1782

Kudos to the Blight Busters Committee!

Neighborhood Preservation Inc. honored the VECA Blight Busters Committee with the 2017 Grassroots Leadership Award at the May 17, 2017 Memphis Neighborhood Blight Elimination Summit. Mary Haynes and Chris Floyd, pictured below, attended to accept the award on the committee's behalf. Kudos Blight Busters for this well deserved honor! 🙏



Giving to VECA

In addition to being a dues paying member of VECA, there are several other ways you can contribute financially to the neighborhood:

Amazon Smile : Amazon Smile supports VECA and the V&E Greenline when you shop. You can shop at Amazon and make a donation to the Vollintine Evergreen Community Association of 0.5 percent of the purchase price. This donation is made by Amazon, with no charge to the customer. The funds will be equally split between VECA's most visible projects: The V&E Greenline and the VECA Welcome Center. If you shop at Amazon, please sign up to have a donation made to VECA. You will be shopping at AmazonSmile.com, which is the same as regular Amazon with a different screen. Here's how you sign up for the donation:

- Go to the website: smile.amazon.com and sign in to Amazon
- In the box that says "pick your own charitable organization," type in Vollintine Evergreen Community Association and search.
- Next, select Vollintine Evergreen Community Association

United Way: Donate to VECA Through United Way. The United Way campaign allows you to donate directly to VECA! United Way donations are used by many nonprofit organizations and is a great opportunity for you to give to your neighborhood! To Donate to VECA: use the back of the yellow sheet of the United Way form. The bottom of Item 3 has the following statement: "You may also support another health and human services organization in the United Way of the Mid-South service area." Enter VECA or Vollintine Evergreen as the agency name and the amount. Please contact VECA at 276-1782 or veca901@gmail.com for any questions or to let us know about your contribution!

Kroger Plus Card: Use your Kroger Plus Card and donate to VECA. Create an account on the Kroger page at: <https://www.kroger.com/communityrewards>. Once signed in, click on "My Account." In the Community Rewards section, click on "Enroll". The VECA number is 18512. Please contact us at veca901@gmail.com if you have any questions about using the Kroger Plus Card.

Neighborhood Watch

The National Neighborhood Watch program is one of the oldest and most well-known crime prevention concepts in history that stresses community awareness and teamwork. Neighborhood Watch in Memphis was officially formulated in 1984. It is an organization which empowers local citizens to take back and maintain a better quality of life in their respective neighborhoods. This program has shown that citizens help in the reduction of local crime by being vigilant and by partnering with local law enforcement to address the crime related issues and economical challenges within their community. (www.memphispolice.org/initiatives.asp)

VECA is an official member of the Neighborhood Watch program. Meetings are held at Crump Station Monthly the first Tuesday of each month at 6:00pm. You can share your concerns and ideas to help make our neighborhoods safe.

VECA holds quarterly NW meetings as well at the VECA Welcome Center.

Remaining 2017 NW Meetings at the VECA Welcome Center

- Tuesday, June 20, 2017, 6-7pm
- Tuesday, September 19, 2017, 6-7pm



Crump Station (photo left)
949 E.H. Crump
Memphis, TN 38104
Front Desk: (901) 636-4600
Traffic Violations: (901) 636-4568
GIB Local Investigations: (901) 636-4793
Neighborhood Watch: (901) 636-4625
www.memphispolice.org/crump.asp

Important Notice about Your City Government

If there is a blight problem in the neighborhood or near your house, it is important that you file a complaint with the City's 311 program so the problem can be documented.

- Dial 311 or (901) 636-6500 and an operator will take your complaint
- Or, go online at <https://seeclickfix.com/login>

If your case is closed and it is still a problem, please file another complaint. This is the first step to ensuring that the City addresses neighborhood complaints. Examples of blight include:

- Vacant and abandoned properties
- Properties in disrepair
- Grass and weeds over 12 inches high
- Accumulation of litter and debris

Join the effort to fight blight in Vollintine Evergreen by joining VECA Blight Busters. For a calendar of events, please see: veca.org/content-calendar/ for Blight Busters



Common Code Violations

- Accumulation of junk, trash, and debris
- Open storage of material and furnishings
- Parking and storing inoperable (junk) motor vehicles
- Parking too many vehicles at a property (4 is max)
- Off street parking (please don't park on your yard)
- Special use/recreational vehicles and equipment
- Substandard structures and fences
- Excessive weeds, grass, trees and shrubs
- Commercial vehicles and equipment
- Abandoned and derelict structures
- General service and repair shops

Report code violations at 311





Memphis Police Department


Help your Neighborhood
Report crime to police so they know where it is taking place

Report Drugs and Crime Anonymously

- Police Dispatch: 545-2677 (then press zero). Listen to the prompts. You can advise the dispatcher if you want to remain anonymous
- Drug Hotline: 525-3673 is anonymous
- Gang Hotline: 528-2338 is anonymous
- Crime Stoppers: 528-2274 is anonymous
- Crump Station: 636-4631- this gets you to the front desk officer. If you are calling to file a complaint only, advise the officer that you wish to remain anonymous.
- SeniorBsafe hotline: 528-0699 is anonymous

When reporting


- Be specific on the address
- Be specific on the type of crime you are seeing
- Describe the persons who are the problem in as much detail as possible



Connect with Vollintine Evergreen Neighbors via Nextdoor, a private social network for neighborhoods. Go to nextdoor.com and create an account by entering your address and email address. Once the address is verified, you can connect to other Vollintine Evergreen neighbors and talk to each other about things going on in the neighborhood, whether that's exchanging recommendations on local service providers, like a contractor, a painter, a babysitter, or talking about local restaurants. People also use the site to talk about more personal things, like lost pets. Crime and prevention is a frequent topic and Nextdoor is increasingly becoming like a virtual neighborhood watch for the neighborhood Technology is helping people become more connected, and you are invited to join the conversation.

Church of the Good Shepherd

An Episcopal Church Organized in Memphis in 1865



My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give them eternal life. -John 10:27

Church of the Good Shepherd
The Rev. William N. Fry III, Rector
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V&E Artwalk Commissions Student Art Contest



Winner, Grades 4-5, Abigail Carroll, untitled
Snowden School



Winner, Middle School, Imani Causey, untitled,
Snowden School



Winner, Grades 2-3, Nickeria Russell, "Story Quilt"
Vollentine Elementary



Winner, K-1 Category, Adriona Bell, "3-D Snake on a Branch"
Vollentine Elementary

V&E Artwalk volunteer, Joshua First, met with art teachers from Vollentine and Snowden School on March 7 to invite the students to be in an art contest. Teachers from each school selected three works from each of the categories (K-1, 2-3, 4-5, and 6-8). A panel of judges chose the winners. Prize money was sponsored by VECA's Youth Committee. Each winner received a \$50 gift certificate to the Art Center on Union Avnue. Congratulations to all the students who participated! 🐦

Thank you, Volunteers!

The V&E Greenline Committee would like to say thank you to everyone who helped make the V&E Artwalk a great success! Thank you for preparing the grounds, for passing out posters and postcards, and thank you for every single moment you gave us during the actual event. Thanks for making a difference in the Vollintine Evergreen community and for helping to keep the V&E Greenline thriving! 🐦



Photo right: KIPP Students helping prepare the grounds for the Artwalk

Evergreen-Jackson Walking Tour and Clean up

By Khara Woods

VECA neighbors and members of the Historic Committee met April 1 (photos below) to tour the Evergreen-Jackson commercial district. The initiative to incorporate the arts, improve the image of the district and its businesses, and make the district a destination is well under way.

The Evergreen-Jackson commercial district project aims to reimagine the corridor, address areas within the district that need improvement, and engage with the community to help brainstorm and find solutions for those issues. The project is being led by architect Andy Kitsinger of The Development Studio.

The walking tour started and ended at the VECA Welcome Center. District businesses and points of interest along the way included Family Dollar, the former BP site, Mapco, Mustard Seed Studio and St. Therese Little Flower Church. The Historic Committee would like to say thank you to everyone who came out and to all the volunteers who helped make the day a success.

The next event, VECA's Street Faire and Ice Cream Social, is planned for June 10 from 3-7pm (Rain date is June 17). The neighborhood is invited to attend and see what possibilities exist when we work together to re-create the Jackson-Evergreen commercial district. 🍷



Clean Memphis led a clean up on April 29 at the Evergreen-Jackson intersection. Volunteers included those in the photo above: Bill Schultz, Libby Kluge, Natasha Strong, Jim Kovarik, Breon, Andy Kitsinger, Randall Thomas and Olivia Flasdick (not pictured).



St. John the Evangelist Orthodox Church

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Speed Humps

Excerpts From the City of Memphis Website: You can make a request for speed humps online by visiting <http://www.memphistn.gov/residents/311landingpage.aspx> and providing contact information and street segment to be considered for speed humps (street between ___ and ___). You will be contacted by email or mail to confirm that your request has been received.

Speed Hump Request Procedures

- Identify the specific street segment of concern such as X Street between Y Street and Z Street. It is better to identify a specific street where there is a concern as opposed to requesting a speed hump study for every street in a neighborhood.
- All requests for speed hump studies will be addressed in the order they are received.
- Street segments that do not meet the criteria contained in the Speed Hump Installation Policy will be rejected. Rejected street segments are not eligible for reapplication for a period of 2 years from rejection date. **Street segments that do meet the criteria must be approved by at least 75 percent of the residences within an identified impact area. Approved street segments that do meet the criteria will be placed on a list for the installation of speed humps. The speed humps will be installed as funding is available.**

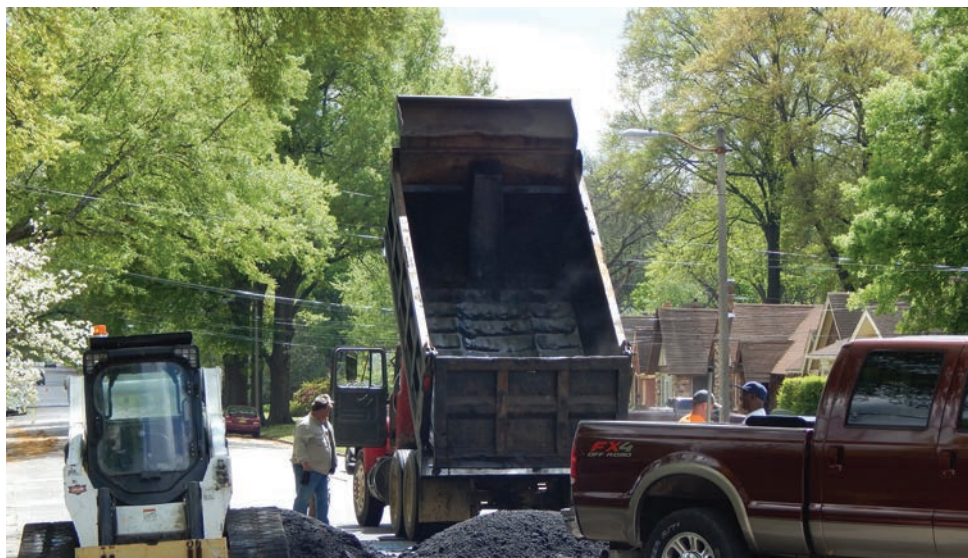
Speed Hump Criteria: Streets should be no wider than 40 feet (curb-to-curb) with a speed limit of 30 mph or less. Any street without a posted speed limit sign has a regulatory speed limit of 30 mph. Streets must be approved by the fire department prior to the installation of speed humps.

Project Approval Criteria: Speed hump projects will be evaluated on the basis of existing speeds and volumes. Once a speed hump request has been evaluated and determined to meet the City's criteria, the request will be ranked according to the date a verification statement endorsing the speed humps is received from the neighborhood association, organization, or individual. For a street to be considered for speed humps, Condition 1 (Speed) and Condition 2 (Volume) must be met.

Speed - Condition 1: The speed criterion considers the difference between the posted (or regulatory) speed limit of 30 mph or less and the measured speed of vehicles over a 24-hour period. To be considered, the 85th percentile speed along the street must exceed the speed limit by at least five mph.

Traffic Volume - Condition 2: The 24-hour volumes (two-way) must exceed 600 vehicles or 60 vehicles during a single hour. The 24-hour volumes (two-way) shall not exceed 2,750 vehicles. Streets exceeding 2,750 vehicles are considered to be collector streets and not eligible for speed humps. 🙌

Most recently, Avalon (photos below) had speed humps installed between Tutwiler and Jackson. Caley Foreman, who lives on Avalon, says that the cars are driving slower and he believes the speed humps make for a safer street for children and pets.



Green Triangles Project

By Steve Gadbois

Thanks to the generosity and efforts of many of our neighbors and to the expertise and cooperation of various city officials, the two "traffic triangles" just north of the intersection of Jackson Avenue and University Street are finally on the way to becoming green.

For as long as anyone can remember, those two triangles have been unsightly concrete-and-asphalt islands in the middle of Jackson and University, hardly an inspiration to the many people who drive, walk, or bike by every day.

In the early spring of 2016, a fundraising effort under the guise of IOBY (In Our Back Yard Inc.) met its goal very quickly, with neighbors contributing \$6,465 and thereby earning a \$1,750 match. Those funds will soon be used to buy soil, soil amendments (much needed because of underlying clay), mulch, plants, and other permanent materials. Some funds will also be set aside for several years' worth of liability insurance. Looking further ahead, there will be some ongoing expenses (including insurance) that will need to be covered through grants or other fundraising.

Donors to the IOBY fundraising effort were many (in no particular order): Katherine and Jason Paxton, Linda Nichols and Robert Burns, Brian and Alisha Boone, Renate Rosenthal, Karen Casey, Tariq Hasan, Sheryl Jackson, Emily Trenholm, Jim Kovarik, Kim Halyak, Suzan Fleischman, Kate Gilow and Trey Harrison, Sherry Henson, Eddie Hankins, Sam Powers, Emma Kessler and Gary Harris, Henry Kurtz, Chris and Brian Floyd, Steve Gadbois and André Glenn, Natasha Strong, Ann and Bill Schultz, August Marshall, Scott McDermott, Lottie Rich, Kimberly Kasper, Cathy Marcinko, Andy Saunders, Midtown Mike, KE_Love4V&E, The CatWirks, Mark L., BJK, and several anonymous individuals. BancorpSouth, the Hein Park neighborhood, and Church of the Good Shepherd also supported us.

Neighborhood residents who have been heavily involved in the planning include Cathy Marcinko, Natasha Strong, Andy Saunders, Scott McDermott, EJ Kessler, Bill Schultz, André Glenn, Steve Gadbois, and Chuck Fox.

While donors and volunteers have been, and will continue to be, vital to this project, it has also been essential to obtain various permissions from city officials, and this May, city-owned heavy equipment removed all the asphalt and concrete, a major task that volunteers could not have done easily or safely. City officials who have been instrumental in guiding us through the necessary process include Director of City Engineering Manny Belen, City Real Estate Administrator Deborah Massie, Public Works Director Robert Knecht, and Memphis City Beautiful Executive Director Eldra White. Ritchie Smith and his firm, Ritchie Smith Associates, donated time and expertise in designing the plantings.

Neighborhood residents have already demonstrated their ability and willingness to successfully undertake such work: Another triangle at the junction of Hallwood Drive and Oakmont Place (just east of the other two triangles) was completely reworked four years ago. At its center is a striking bed of various hardy flowers and other plants, including coneflowers, brown-eyed Susans (rudbeckia), Russian sage, verbena, spider plants (cleome), false indigo, yucca, and a deodara cedar that will tower magnificently over everything in a mere 80 years. AmeriCorps volunteers helped us with initial preparation of the planting bed, and since then it has been maintained and steadily improved by neighbors including Bill Schultz, André Glenn, and Steve Gadbois. That beautiful mini-park is now called Beckwith Triangle, in honor of recently-retired City Horticulturist and Park Services employee Rich Beckwith, who played a crucial role for many years in getting trees planted all over Memphis, including many in medians all over the Vollintine Evergreen neighborhood that we all enjoy every day.



Green Triangles Progress at Jackson and University

and

Annual Beds:

How to Get the Most Bang for Your Buck

By Connie Shepherd

As horticulturist for the City of Memphis, I work daily with annual beds. Through the years, I have learned some great tips for having the best beds.

Planting annuals are vegetables and other plants that will only last one season. Bed preparation is the key to a successful growing season. All my beds are prepared for spring and fall plantings. To begin, we remove the old plants, weeds and any debris such as mulch from the planting area. Then we till the beds to a depth of six to eight inches. We walk alongside the bed and do not step on it. The annuals have very tender roots and need fluffy soil in order to grow. We rake the area smooth and plant the annuals according to their eventual size. If a plant will be 18 inches high and 12 inches wide, we plant our annuals 12 inches apart. This allows air movement between the plants, which reduces disease and insect problems. After planting the annuals at the proper distance, we add a quick-release fertilizer and pre-emergent herbicide. If you can decrease the time you spend weeding, you will enjoy your garden a great deal more. The final application is mulch. You want to add at least one inch to the bed to decrease weed seed growth. Mulch also creates a beautiful manicured look and retains moisture below the surface where the roots can access it.

It is important to water your annuals weekly. If we have not received any substantial rain within a week, water your annuals at the root. Don't allow water on the foliage, as this can cause disease. There are many beautiful beds throughout the city and county. Take a moment to enjoy them. 🙌

Critical Challenge to Historic Conservation District Standards

By Dewar Vaughan

Losing this fight could set a precedent nullifying Historic Conservation Guidelines in all of Midtown. Those guidelines protect your property value and much more!

About seven acres of land at the eastern corners of Sam Cooper Boulevard and East Parkway were purchased in late 2015 by Makowsky, Ringel and Greenberg, LLC (MRG). Originally, this property had residential homes that were demolished during the state's initiative to run I-40 through the heart of Midtown. The I-40 highway project was overruled on March 2, 1971, when the U.S. Supreme Court issued a final decision on Citizens to Preserve Overton Park v. Volpe.

In 2003, Lea's Woods, comprising about 150 homes, was approved by the City Council to become the Landmarks Commission's twelfth Historic Conservation District. This area is directly across from Overton Park's bicycle arch, and it's considered a major gateway to Memphis (Rhodes is on one side and Overton Square on other, etc.).

Lea's Woods Historic Conservation District Design Guidelines state on page 6, under New Construction and Additions: "New construction should be consistent with the architecture and period-styling of the existing buildings along a street in terms of height, scale, setback and rhythm."

MRG had several meetings with Lea's Woods residents, but the firm seems to be focused only on how to maximize its profit. This is evidenced by the plans to build as many apartments as possible, within a limited space. Many homeowners in Lea's Woods expressed the desire to restore the neighborhood to its earlier state, which was primarily single family homes. Unfortunately, our Historic District standards don't mandate that. Although MRG purchased the property knowing it was zoned residential, they applied to the Land Use Control Board to change the zoning to allow building apartment complexes.

Many residential homeowners would agree that apartment complexes too often become degraded (short-term-profit mentality) and lower property values. An April 2, 2017, *Commercial Appeal* commentary stated: "Investors see enormous profits are possible because our city does not require them to have a stake in the community". "They hide behind their LLC status and say 'Catch me if you can'". (Courtesy of Lynda Whalen, Chairwoman of Southeast Memphis Neighborhood Partnership, representing 31 Neighborhood Associations.)

Problem Statements: MRG's application to the Land Use Control board is in direct conflict with Lea's Woods Historic Conservation Standards, because MRG intends to build three-, four- and five-story buildings. There are no apartment complexes or other buildings with a height over two stories within the nearby area.

The increased volume of traffic that will be added within residential neighborhoods presents safety concerns. The number of cars that will be parking on residential streets due to MRG's insistence on providing about one parking space per apartment will likely wreak havoc on nearby homeowners.

Critical Impact to All Memphis Historic District Standards: If MRG is allowed to ignore Lea's Woods Historic District standards (considering height), this will set a dangerous precedent. It could potentially mean that all Historic District standards are worthless and can no longer be relied upon to ensure that our neighborhoods maintain the value and integrity we all work hard to keep and cherish so much.

What Can You Do? VECA board members have been exceptionally supportive of assisting Lea's Woods core group. Thank you!

Please!! Send comments, thoughts or opposition letters by May 30 to the Memphis staff planner, Brian Bacchus (Brian.Bacchus@memphistn.gov) and Planning Technician, Keva Jackson (Keva.Jackson@memphistn.gov) so your voice will be included in the staff report. You may refer to Lea's Woods apartments applications, PD 17-07 (southeast corner development) and PD 17-08 (northeast corner). In the meantime, Lea's Woods core team will be doing the following:

- Generating a petition to gather signatures to preserve Historic District standards
- Gathering support from other Memphis neighborhood community organizations (similar to VECA)
- Soliciting advice and recommendations, including legal counsel
- Lobbying City Council to support preserving Historic District standards (e.g. phone calls, letter writing, etc.)


Get Involved: For Info, Advice or Status Updates, call 737-2595. A Public Hearing will be held, Thursday, June 8, 2017, 10am, 125 N. Main Street, First Floor city hall Council Chambers. 🐦




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Celebrate National Night Out
Tuesday, August 1, 2017, 6-8pm
VECA Welcome Center
1680 Jackson Ave
 NNO is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make our neighborhoods safer, more caring places to live. NNO provides a great opportunity to bring police and neighbors together under positive circumstances.

VECA STREET FAIRE

Jackson & Evergreen

J&E—the heart of Vollintine Evergreen

Saturday, June 10, 2017

3 pm to 7 pm

(rain date: Saturday, June 17)

Join the *fun* & show some *love* to our J&E commercial district.

- *Live Music*
- *Food Trucks*
- *Ice Cream Social**
- *Chalk Art*
- *Classic Cars*
- *Kids' Activities*

**A free ice cream cone for everyone who walks or rides their bike to the Faire!*

Information Stations:

History: Neighborhood Storytelling

Blight Busters: Clean & Green Initiative

Brainstorming: New Uses for Vacancies

Mobile Front Porch:

Welcome Information Sharing

Online Community Perception Survey

Images of Potential Future Improvements



The faire is part of a project that **engages businesses and community residents** in imagining a thriving commercial district, including: **desired new uses** for vacant and underutilized properties, **exterior building and site improvements, crosswalks and streetscape improvements.**