



PARK BEAT

The Pulse of Greater Boulevard Park

Boulevard Park Neighborhood Association ■ Box 163179, Sacramento 95816 ■ July 2020

A Brief Report from the BPNA Board

Conducted virtually, the June 9th Board meeting began with a guest presentation by Sara Lebastchi, vice president of operations for D&S Development. Her company has proposed an eight-story mixed use apartment building for 1705 I Street, a site currently occupied by a vacant commercial structure. The new building would have 206 residential units (a combination of studios and one or two-bedroom apartments) renting at “market-rate” prices (i.e., from about \$1,800 to \$4,000 per month). As designed, the new building would have a full eight stories overlooking I Street and, on the rear side, overlooking Historic Alley and the residential neighborhood to the north, a descending series of outdoor terraces resulting in a four-story height (this stepped-back feature has prompted the name “Cascade” for the new building). There would be 105 parking spaces inside the first and basement levels of the structure for the use of apartment residents, as well as several bicycle corrals.

After listening to Ms. Lebastchi’s presentation, Board members expressed general support for some aspects of the project, notably the use of terracing on the north side. However, they were concerned about several issues, such as the absence of affordable housing units, the need for more articulation on the west (17th-Street) side of the building (to bring down its massing), the inadequate amount of exterior window shading (which could result in higher than necessary energy use), and the potentially insufficient space for canopy shade trees on the south and west sides of the building.

The discussion then turned to regular agenda items, including a report from Board member Sher Singh about the progress that has been made in the upgrade of the BPNA Facebook page and website. Steps are being taken to make it possible for residents to start or renew their BPNA memberships online. Finally, we talked about several issues of neighborhood concern, such as the challenges posed to residents by the ongoing pandemic, closed and/or boarded-up Midtown businesses, and a recent increase in vandalism to commercial properties.

A Message from Congresswoman Doris Matsui

The statement below is adapted from the email that Congresswoman Matsui sent to her constituents on June 9. We are grateful to the Congresswoman for her actions and her words during the difficult period that she writes about in her message:

The events of these [last few] weeks have shaken us all to our core and have sent a shockwave throughout the nation. We are a nation in pain. Pain because we have been vividly confronted with injustice and racism that continue to permeate our society. The horrifying image of George Floyd’s last breath has sent a searing cut deep into the American soul, and our communities across the country have sent a clear message back to the nation that enough is enough. Every day, there is a pervasive passive refusal to acknowledge the reality of the system we live in, and again and again we see the consequences of our inaction. Those who violate the most basic rights of the people they are trusted to serve must be brought to justice. The rest of us cannot continue to resign ourselves to complicity in a reality that systematically oppresses our black communities. That is the start of a journey in the right direction.

Right now, words are truly not enough to express the feelings that we all have. As we continue to live through a period of unprecedented uncertainty and crisis, we need to come together to support each other through this time of intense pain. Sacramento’s strength is in its unwavering dedication to each other, and we must together – all of us – demand the accountability to create lasting change for a better tomorrow.

To subscribe to Congresswoman Matsui’s email updates, go to her website: <https://matsui.house.gov/>

Trees of Midtown: The Catalpa



Also known as the “Indian bean tree” or “cigar tree,” the catalpa (or “catawba”) tree is quite attractive. A few examples have been planted in our parks and along our midtown streets, such as this mature specimen on the east side of 20th Street between G and H Streets (photographs on the left and below, in detail).

The catalpa is native to warm, temperate, and subtropical regions of North America, the Caribbean, and Southeast Asia. The two North American species, northern catalpa and southern catalpa, have been widely planted outside their native ranges, usually as ornamental trees.

The catalpa is a fast-growing species, reaching up to 20 feet in just 10 years (and ultimately ranging between 40 and 60 feet in height). Most catalpas are deciduous, losing their large heart-shaped leaves each autumn. The tree bears broad panicles of white to yellow flowers in the summer. The fruit, which resembles a cigar or a long bean (hence the tree’s nickname), appears in the fall. Measuring 8 to 20 inches long, it is full of small flat seeds which have wings to aid in wind dispersal.



Catalpa wood is quite soft but is attractive and stable, making it very suitable for wood turning and some furniture. The tree’s dense foliage provides good shelter for many species of birds. The catalpa also is the sole source of food for the catalpa sphinx moth, commonly found on the eastern seaboard and as far west as Texas. Because the caterpillars make an excellent live bait for fishing, some anglers plant catalpa trees for their own private source of “Catawba-worms.”



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Boulevard Park Neighborhood Association's purpose: The BPNA was created to support, promote, and improve the quality of life for the residents of the greater Boulevard Park neighborhood. By achieving this goal we strive to improve the quality of life for others who work and live in and around Boulevard Park, and therefore in Sacramento as a whole.

Committees

Membership:	Ellen Hunt
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July 2020:

Places to Go, People To See (Really & Virtually)

NOTE: As of June 22, no public events have been announced on the City's 365 website. It still is possible that restrictions will be eased and opportunities may arise between now and mid-July. Check websites for updates. Below are a few events, opportunities, and dates to remember.

Every Saturday: Midtown Farmers' Market (8 a.m. to 1 p.m., 20th St. between J and K Streets). Before you go, be sure to read the current health precaution guidelines posted on the Explore Midtown website (<http://exploremidtown.org/midtown-farmers-market/>).

Any time in Sacramento: "Anytime Tours" of the Historic City Cemetery and the Old Sacramento Waterfront (free, 50-minute digital tours conducted by guides in period costume). For more information, go to: <https://anytimetours.occell.com/en/index.html>

Online and streamed events in Sacramento: The Sac 365 website provides information about virtual entertainment and activities (<https://www.sacramento365.com/categories/online-streaming/>).

Sat., July 4: Independence Day. Tip: if you are bothered by unlawful fireworks, call the non-emergency police number (916-808-5471) or send an email to: fireworks@pd.cityofsacramento.org

Thur., July 9: BPNA Board Meeting (6:30-8 p.m.). Usually Board meetings are open to a limited number of BPNA members and other interested residents. The July event, like those held in April, May, and June, will be a Zoomed encounter, not an in-person meeting.

July 13-17: California Time Traveler Camp Online, Session 2 (for youth aged 6-11; fee charged; see article on page 4).

Places to Go, People To See (cont.)

July 13-24: CLARA's Performing Arts Summer Camp, Virtual Masterclass Series, Session 2 (for youth aged 10-18; fee charged; see article on page 4).

Wed., July 15: Deadline for filing 2019 income taxes (see below)

July 20-24: California Time Traveler Camp Online, Session 3 (for youth aged 6-11; fee charged; see article on page 4).

Sun., July 26: Last day to submit entries in Capital Public Radio's annual art and design contest, Print Radio (see article below).

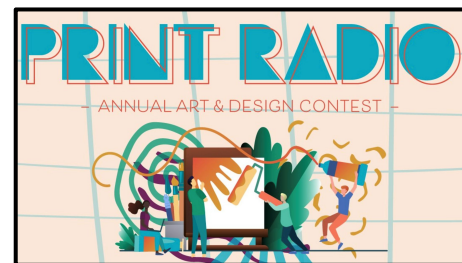
... And, looking ahead to early August:

Thur., Aug. 6: BPNA Board Meeting: open to BPNA members and other interested neighbors (6:30-8 p.m.). Contact Dave Herbert for location or to suggest agenda items.

... An annual event that won't be happening in September:

With great regret, the BPNA Board has decided that the traditional Spaghetti Dinner cannot be held this year, due to the continued health risk posed by communal gatherings during the COVID-19 pandemic

Artists and
Designers: How
Does CapRadio
Inspire, Inform, or
Engage You?



Capital Public Radio's **Print Radio 2020** contest is ending this month, with a final submission deadline at 11:59 p.m. (PDT) on **July 26**. Entries should be **original artworks** (drawing, painting, etc.) or **digital designs** that convey someone's connection to public radio (to be eligible, artists must live or work within the station's coverage area). The winning designs will be used to illustrate a 12-month calendar, and their artists will receive a \$250 stipend in addition to having a biographical statement included with their artwork in the calendar. For more information, go to <https://www.capradio.org/printradio>

Tax Day is July 15: Free Assistance with Filing Is *Still* Available!

In non-pandemic years, the City sponsors several free tax-help programs with in-person sessions for eligible residents throughout the Sacramento region. This year, those one-on-one sessions have been replaced by online sessions hosted by [GetYourRefund.org](https://www.getyourrefund.org), a non-profit service built by Code for America in partnership with IRS-certified Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites.

To be eligible for assistance from this organization, a household must have earned \$66,000 or less in 2019. VITA volunteers will prepare and double-check the tax returns to make sure they are correct before filing. For more information, go to: <https://www.getyourrefund.org/?s=UWCCR>

Virtual Camps for Real Kids

Co-existence with Covid has resulted in many adjustments this year, including the redesign of summer camps for kids. Three interesting options for the month of July were listed on the websites of the sponsoring organizations by mid-June, the California Museum (two camp sessions) and CLARA (one camp session).

This year the California Museum is operating its “Time Traveler Camp” online, with the last two sessions in July. Session 2 meets from July 13-17 and Session 3 from July 20-24 (Monday through Friday in each case). Each session is intended for youth aged 6-11 and offers a daily Zoom sessions, videos featuring visitors from historic eras, and hands-on activities. Participants will travel backward in time, moving from modern day California into the past, with Friday’s episode set in Sacramento’s Victorian past, over 150 years ago. Each session costs \$75. For more information, including instructions about how to register, go to: <https://www.californiamuseum.org/event/california-time-traveler-camp-online>

CLARA (the E. Claire Raley Studios for the Performing Arts) is also offering its Performing Arts Summer Camp in a digital format (Session 2, July 13-24). This year’s masterclass series, now redesigned for online learning and engagement, will offer local students the opportunity to learn from some of the country’s most talented artists. The two-week long camp, intended for youth aged 10-18, includes daily, live online classes in dance, music, and theatre (9 a.m.-5 p.m.); small-group discussions; activities; and access to additional high-quality pre-recorded arts instruction that students can enjoy throughout the summer. The highlight of each day will be a 90-minute masterclass (with Q&A) taught by a preeminent performing artist who works on a national level. The tuition fee is \$300 and both full and partial scholarships are available. For more information, including instructions about how to register, go to: <https://www.claramidtown.org/camp>

Be Part of the Historical Record: Share Your Pandemic Experiences

As reported in the June 16 issue of the online newsletter, *Sacramento City Express*, the Center for Sacramento History is inviting residents to “submit personal stories and coronavirus artifacts” to the CSH for possible documentation and/or preservation in its collection. The Center is accepting digital photos, videos, and audio recordings, as well as physical objects, photographs, and documents for later donation. It is especially interested in contributions from teachers, students, City and County workers, health care workers, small business owners, and historically underserved communities. Overall, the project’s focus is on Sacramentans and on Sacramento’s point of view—how this particular community has been impacted, what its members have experienced, and the ways in which they will remember this challenging period.

For further information on how to participate in this project, go to the Center’s website:

https://forms.cityofsacramento.org/f/CSH_COVID19_Stories

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Please Sort Smart!

More online shopping and take-out dining have resulted in more discarded packaging during the pandemic, and not all residents have known how to dispose of or recycle the materials correctly. The June 9 issue of *SacCounty News* had an article about the City’s effort to resolve the problem. Here are a few ways to “sort smart”:

- Make sure all recycled containers are empty and dry, with no food residue left inside.
- Cardboard boxes should be broken down before being placed in the recycling bin
- Do not put the following in the recycling bin: styrofoam, shredded paper, greasy pizza boxes
- Do not bag your recyclables—put them directly into the bin instead.

For more information, go to: www.sortsmart.org

A Few Tips for Residents Launching Home Projects

Whether you are re-shingling your roof, rebuilding your porch steps, replacing windows, or putting up new fencing (to name just a few small or moderate-scale construction projects often tackled by local homeowners), be sure to factor in the City's review and approval process. Almost all construction projects require planning review and building permits, regardless of the neighborhood. Depending on their scale, projects involving buildings in Historic Districts (both Boulevard Park and New Washington School are in that category) may be subject to Preservation Site Plan and Design Review (see also **item 4** in the list below).

Take the case of windows. The City of Sacramento has adopted the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties, which stipulates that "deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced." However, if replacement is necessary, the new feature should match the historic one in design, dimensions, materials, etc. Determining both the condition and the best solution takes time—be sure to allow for that when undertaking any kind of renovation project. The City recommends that homeowners consult with Preservation staff **early** in the application process. This can help prevent an application from going through multiple revisions later in the process (see **item 2** in the list below).

Following is a concise list of several websites and other information sources a homeowner may want to consult before embarking on a construction or renovation project.

1. "Site Plan and Design Review" (from the City's Community Development website):
<http://www.cityofsacramento.org/Community-Development/Planning/Urban-Design/Design-Review>
2. "Preservation, Step-by-Step" (from the City's Community Development website):
<https://www.cityofsacramento.org/Community-Development/Planning/Urban-Design/Preservation/Preservation-Step-by-Step> (also useful for the estimates of timelines associated with different types of projects)
3. Most construction projects need to be sent to and/or discussed with City Planning Division staff prior to initiating construction. Questions can be directed to the Planning help desk at 916-264-5011 or planning@cityofsacramento.org.
4. For properties within Historic Districts or involving Landmarks, Preservation Office staff will conduct design review of the proposal based on the City's Building and Planning and Development Codes (www.qcode.us/codes/sacramento/) and the Historic District Plans (www.cityofsacramento.org/hdp).
5. Projects outside historic districts and not involving Landmarks also are subject to City Codes and the City-wide design review process. For more information, see the City of Sacramento's Planning Division web page at www.cityofsacramento.org/Community-Development/Planning.

For a list and maps of the City's Historic Districts, go to:

<https://www.cityofsacramento.org/Community-Development/Resources/Maps/Historic-Districts-Maps>

Neighborhood Treat: Grant Park Knitting Circle

In celebration of "World Wide Knit in Public Day" (*and hosted by Boulevard Park resident Carol Greenwood*), a group of knitting and crocheting friends from around Sacramento met in Grant Park on June 13 to enjoy some crafting and socially-distanced visiting. After meeting via Zoom for the last few months, it was a treat for them to meet in person again.



A previous "yarn bomb" project by the group was re-used to provide knitted and crocheted decorations for the occasion (see the photo on the left). The members of the group have been crafting together weekly for over five years.

To learn more about the annual "Knit in Public" (KIP) celebration, which included an event at the Crocker Art Museum last year, go to: <http://www.wkipday.com/>

The O'Reilly Family of 2218 E Street

Now housing the women's facility for the River City Recovery Center, 2218 E Street originally was a single-family home. It was built for Philip Francis O'Reilly, his wife Laura, and their three sons in 1911, four years after O'Reilly purchased the lot. The O'Reilly house, one of the largest on its block, is a type called "foursquare," with both Craftsman and Colonial Revival elements. There are similar residences elsewhere in the Boulevard Park neighborhood, several of them with off-center front porches, much like this one. The Classically-inspired pillars in the front porch are typical, as are the three-sided bay (west side of the house), hipped roof, and hipped dormer window.



Philip O'Reilly was born on the Caribbean island of Saint-Croix (then under Danish rule) in 1869 and emigrated to the United States in 1890, four years before his marriage to Nevada native Laura Small. He operated a shoe-store on Eighth Street in Sacramento for many years, promising his clients "first-class work by hand and machine." He was prominent in veterans' affairs locally, as was his wife Laura. Both were actively involved with a VFW post named after their son Ernest, a WW I veteran (died in 1928). Laura O'Reilly also served as treasurer of the local chapter of the NAACP in the 1920s.



The most famous member of the family was the middle son, Philip Byron O'Reilly. After moving to Oakland, he made his name—which he changed to Reilly—as a baseball team organizer, journalist, sportscaster, and event promoter. His articles and news releases appeared not only in Bay area publications but also in African-American newspapers throughout the country. By the 1940s, he had a frequent show about auto racing on Oakland's KLX radio station. He also had come to be known as Byron "Speed" Reilly. In 1953, he called his popular KLX broadcast "Speedway News with Speed," according to a 2014 blog entry about his multifaceted career (<https://homeplatedontmove.wordpress.com/2014/10/06/speed-ing-back-to-action/>).

Both Byron and his younger brother, Robert Joseph O'Reilly (a lifelong Sacramento resident who worked for the California Highway Patrol), died in the late 1960s. Their parents had died some twenty years before, Laura in 1941 and Philip in 1949. The O'Reillys may have been the only family to fully occupy 2218 E Street. Later owners operated it as a guest house, a practice followed by the owners of many large homes in the greater Boulevard Park neighborhood.

Founded in 1964, the River City Recovery Center is a non-profit recovery program that offers residential treatment for men and women with substance use disorders. Its administration office, like the women's facility, is located in Boulevard Park.

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