

HIGHLANDS DOUGLASS NEIGHBOR

PUBLISHED BY THE HIGHLANDS-DOUGLASS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

SAVING THE DOUGLASS COMMUNITY CENTER

By Barbara Ford

While Mayor Fischer and the Louisville Metro Council continue to address a \$35 million budget gap, funding for Metro community centers remained in the Mayor’s budget proposal as this newsletter went to press. However, closure of the Douglass Community Center (DCC) has been considered in the past and could be an issue in the future. Read on to learn about our efforts to save this valuable community resource and programming that could be lost if the DCC is shut down.

Metro Parks states: “Our mission, as a Nationally Accredited Parks and Recreation agency, is to connect people to places and opportunities that support and grow a sustainable community. Our vision for Louisville is a clean, green, safe and inclusive city where people love to live, work and play.” Metro Community Centers have been part of and supported this mission/vision for decades. Community Centers provide a safe and healthy hub for young people, families, senior citizens, and civic organizations. Services are often free or provided at a much lower cost than privately owned facilities and programming.

The Douglass Community Center faced its first threat in 2014 when HDNA learned that Metro Parks would be closing the Center. Neighborhood objections and proactive efforts to save the center were successful in keeping the facility open.



Examples of immediate and ongoing efforts of HDNA to save and preserve the DCC include: hosting a successful fundraiser in 2015, shortly after learning about the threat to the center; working with Councilman Tom Owen to secure \$50k to immediately install systems to meet fire codes, and a \$250k allocation from Metro government to help renovate the property; successfully nominating the entire site for designation as a National Historic Landmark in 2017; developing a multi-phase architectural renovation plan for the historic home by partnering with Metro Park architects and volunteer, private sector architects; creating a partnership with the Parks Foundation to raise funds for the restoration of the historic house.

We have faced many challenges. In 2016, Metro Parks pulled all Adaptive Leisure programming (renamed Adaptive Inclusive Recreation – AIR) from the DCC and relocated it to Berrytown. This significantly reduced usership and left a huge void in programming. The former Adaptive Leisure participants at the DCC had come from various parts of the Metro area, so although the HDNA has spearheaded efforts to save the Center, it serves all of Louisville.

As a result of the decision by Metro Parks to move the Adaptive Leisure program, the

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SAVING THE DCC *(Continued from the previous page)*

DCC had to rebuild programming amid frequent staff transfers and resignations and with limited resources. A push by current Parks staff, HDNA and community volunteers has produced new programming and increased marketing. In 2018, average daily attendance was 78 per day. In February, 2019, the Center experienced on average 102 visitors per day representing a 30% increase. Keep in mind that these numbers only reflect people who actually signed in on attendance sheets. We suspect the number might be higher if all participants signed the attendance sheets.

Many physical improvements have increased the usability of the Center. The weight room has been painted and new equipment provided. Last summer, Councilman Coan coordinated efforts and funds from HDNA, Metro Parks, and Facilities to repave the driveway and parking lot at the DCC.

The Center continues to be an integral part of Louisville and our neighborhood. The popular and long standing HDNA-sponsored Ice Cream Social is scheduled again this year at Douglass Park on August 25, and on October 6, 2019 the HDNA-sponsored Big Rock Jazz and Blues Festival will be held in Douglass Park on the grounds of DCC. Having the Fest there will address access and parking issues at Big Rock in Cherokee Park and provide more space for those attending the event. This will be the 20th anniversary of the Big Rock Jazz and Blues Fest!

There are more improvements to come. Per Councilman Coan's April 24th edition of *District 8 eNews*, the community recently voted to provide \$50k in funding for improvements to the gym and basketball court through the participatory budgeting process. Additionally, the Louisville Parks Foundation is working with HDNA to create a fundraising plan to restore the Historic Home.

People participating in Center activities represent all age groups. Youngsters in the 10-15 year age group enjoy Homeschool Archery while Silver Sneakers and Pickleball serve seniors. The following programs and activities continue at the Center:

- Book Club
- Adult and family art and ceramics
- Toddler Time
- Silver Sneakers fitness
- Yoga
- Inside and outdoor basketball, pickle ball, archery, t-ball, volley ball,
- Walking programs; health fairs; community and civic meetings and activities.
- HDNA board meetings.
- And more!

DCC is supported by a number of community partners including: Humana, Louisville Visual Arts Association, Big Brothers Big

Sisters, Louisville Fencing Center, Bloom Elementary, Highlands Middle School, Atherton High School, University of Louisville, Highland Youth Recreation, and Cherokee Park Assisted Living. The HDNA continues to work with Metro Parks, the Parks Foundation, and all other supporters to ensure a bright future for the DCC.

The Douglass Community Center is clearly a vibrant jewel in the crown of our neighborhood and we hope to see it continue serving as an invaluable resource for our residents. If you agree, please make your support known to City officials and help us ensure that the Center will be a resource for future generations of Highlands residents.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Neighbors,

Currently, branches of our local government are in the process of approving a budget for the 2019/20 fiscal year. In recent weeks, there has been some discussion among City officials of closing the Douglass Community Center. In this issue of our newsletter we attempt to make you aware of the vital role the Center plays in the Highlands-Douglass neighborhood and the importance of continuing Metro financial support for its programs, activities and facilities. Please, take the time to find out what is happening to your tax dollars, and let your elected officials know where you stand.



*Sherry Cornell,
President*

Good sources of information include:

- <https://louisvilleky.gov/government/management-budget/fy20-budget>
- <https://louisvilleky.gov/government/metro-council-district-8>
- <https://www.courier-journal.com/search/budget/>

You may contact your city representatives to make your voice heard.

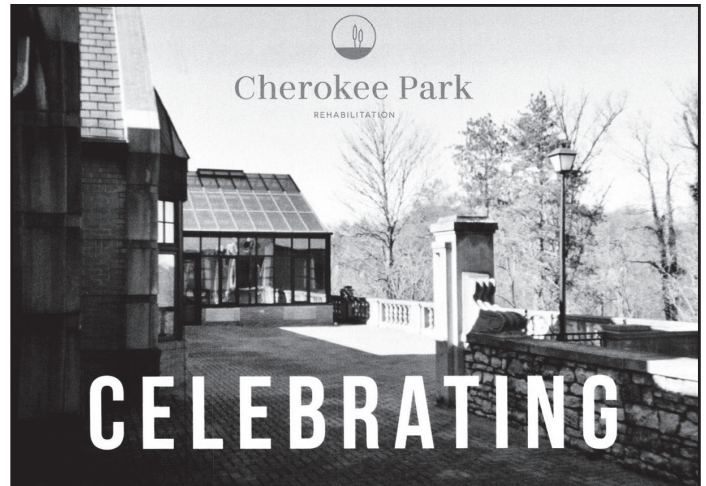
- Mayor Greg Fischer 502-574-2003, 8a - 5p, M-F
- <https://louisvilleky.gov/government/mayor-greg-fischer/contact-mayors-office>
- Councilman Brandon Coan 502-574-1108, 9a-5p, M-F
- brandon.coan@louisvilleky.gov

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20TH ANNUAL BIG ROCK JAZZ & BLUES FEST

Same Great Music, New Location
by Brandt Ford

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Big Rock Jazz & Blues Fest, and the HDNA couldn't be more excited to celebrate! This year's music lineup is fabulous, starting with the Brazilian flair of the Brazukas, and continuing on with the seasoned John Smart Quartet, incomparable Tim Whelan, and the renowned Stray Cat Blues Band. Same great music, but at a new location.



While the Fest has enjoyed its two decades at Big Rock in Cherokee Park, parking limitations and space logistics have prompted a move to Douglass Park and Community Center. The new site allows increased space for growth, the addition of vendor booths, and broader food and drink options in the future. Parking will still be at Adath Jeshurun, however, a quick walk across the street wins out over a shuttle ride to Big Rock. The new location promises to be more pedestrian friendly as well, and hopefully the playground will draw a younger crowd and spread the love of Jazz. This year's Fest will take place on October 6th from 1PM to 6:00PM. Watch for neighborhood posters and other promotional materials in coming months. Mark your calendar and don't miss it!

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Last year's Fest was a great success. The music was incredible, the food was great, the crowd was lively and fun, and the entire event proved exceptionally beneficial to HDNA as an organization. This would not have happened had we not had the support of so many area businesses and organizations. With our deepest and most sincere THANKS we list all of our generous sponsors below. We encourage all of our neighbors to patronize them at every opportunity.





HDNA REFORESTATION 2019

by Barbara Berman

HDNA will be planting up to 100 trees in the neighborhood on Saturday and Sunday October 19-20. Homeowner contribution this year will be \$35 per 7-foot tree, including the tree itself, planting it, a water bag and mulch.

We offer many varieties of trees from which to choose - mainly native canopy trees. We will help you select the best site for your new tree(s), based on your preferred location, other trees in your yard and the most likely location of utilities. We will have the utilities marked except for irrigation lines which are the homeowner's responsibility.

Unfortunately, we are losing 58,000 trees in Louisville per year due to disease, the aging of our trees and land development. Louisville is one of the fastest growing "heat islands" in the entire country. Our city is several degrees hotter than our surroundings.

In the past 4 years we have planted 768 trees in our neighborhood with the aid of MSD grants. This year HDNA will contribute up to \$6,900 if MSD decides against issuing grants.

We welcome requests from anywhere in our area, but we would especially like to add trees this year on Grasmere, Veenia, the 2200 block of Woodbourne or the 2200 block of Millvale. If you live on one of those streets and are interested in one or more trees, let Barbara Berman know at barbaraberman2@gmail.com so we can help to green your street with new trees.

We will need lots of volunteers for our tree planting project. Don't be concerned that the work might be too demanding physically for you. A significant part of our need is for people to supervise and make sure that all is done properly. We will provide a tree-planting checklist

and personal, one-on-one training as an aide in overseeing the operation.

As they say, "It takes a village!" Please mark your calendar for Oct 19-20 and contact Barbara if you are interested in a tree for your yard, or if you are willing to help us with this important project.



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- Showing your support of HDNA's activities with a business membership decal.
- Gaining exposure at HDNA events and activities.

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THE MAYOR, THE BUDGET AND DOUGLASS COMMUNITY CENTER

by Barbara Ford

Concerns for the Future of Douglass Community Center

Recently, HDNA was once again alerted to the planned closing of the Douglass Community Center. HDNA officers met with the Mayor's office prior to release of the Mayor's budget to explore whether there were alternatives to the closure. Although nothing was decided at that meeting, HDNA learned that the plan to close the community centers had been changed since the first draft of Mayor Fischer's budget. However, there are sure to be trade-offs in the budget process as it is passed back and forth between Metro Council and Mayor Fischer. The budget is not final until June 25, and the potential for closure of the Douglass Community Center remains.



Artist rendering of future DCC.

What follows is a timeline and review of communications regarding the future of Metro Community Centers.

Councilman Coan's Comments

On April 24th, Councilman Coan wrote the following in his Newsletter:

In February, Mayor Greg Fischer laid out potential reductions spanning the whole of city government from public safety to nonprofit grants, including four hard District 8 assets: Fire Station Engine 20 (1735 Bardstown Road); the Douglass Community Center; the Cherokee Golf Course; and the Highlands-Shelby Park branch location of the Louisville Free Public Library. The loss of any of these assets will be painful; the loss of all of them would be devastating. That's why I've been working to salvage what I can for the community. None of the following are done deals but I provide this status update to urge your support over the next two months and beyond:

The Douglass Community Center and Cherokee Golf Course both are located on city park properties, Douglass Park and Cherokee Park respectively. In March, the Metro Council passed an ordinance making it more difficult for the executive branch to sell or otherwise dispose of parks or golf courses. It is a good thing because I can imagine a frustrated and desperate administration thinking about testing the market for these two properties. The ordinance made it more difficult to sell them – but not impossible – so my goal is to preempt any notion the mayor might have by offering better alternatives....

The Douglass Community Center has been threatened with closure for years. The main building, which is the oldest building in the parks system, is closed. The entire restoration is a \$1 million+ project. It seems like a liability to unload. However, despite the facilities challenges, there is strong demand for recreation services at the Center among citizens

of all ages. The average daily number of visitors ticked north of 100 in February. District 8 voters selected renovation of the basketball courts and weight room to be funded through the participatory budgeting process in March. If Louisville Parks and Recreation ceases programming at the Douglass Community Center, then I support leasing the property to Highland Community Ministries to continue sports leagues, activities for seniors and teens. Highland Youth Recreation (HYR) and the Senior Outreach Program can be cornerstones of Highland Community Ministries HQ2 to serve residents on the opposite end of District 8 from its E. Breckinridge St. Highlands Community Campus. A lease agreement by and between Parks and the nonprofit youth music program AMPED provides a template for negotiations, which are ongoing. Meanwhile, a private fundraising effort is underway, in partnership with the Louisville Parks Foundation, to secure \$125,000 to restore and make fully accessible the first floor of the historic former estate house and Kentucky Home School for Girls. I am committed to this capital campaign. Please consider donating to the Douglass Community Center today. Saving the Center for the long term depends on it.

On May 8, Councilman Coan included the following in his Newsletter:

I am concerned about cuts to library hours, arts and social services non-profits, personnel at Metro Animal Services and much more, of course, but I am pleased that Fire Station Engine 20 (1735 Bardstown Road), the Douglass Community Center and the Highlands-Shelby Park Library have been spared their fate.

The Mayor's Budget

The Mayor released his proposed budget on April 25th. It did not specifically include closure of any of the City's Community Centers in the upcoming fiscal year. However, nothing is finalized until June 25th.

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If you would like to follow the latest developments on the budgetary status of Douglass Community Center as well as other Metro Community Centers, we suggest the following links:

For additional information about the Mayor's April 25th budget proposal, Metro Council's ordinance to protect parks, or how to contact Councilman Coan and the HDNA, we suggest the following links:

- <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/politics/metro-government/2019/04/25/list-louisville-budget-cuts/3563173002/>

For more on the Council's ordinance to protect parks:

- <https://louisville.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=7118238&GUID=4B3A3716-2020-42D3-8789-63F8F94A37D2>

To provide input on on this matter to Councilman Coan:

- <https://louisvilleky.gov/government/metro-council-district-8/contact-councilman-brandon-coan>

To contact HDNA: www.highlandsdouglass.org



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DOUGLASS COMMUNITY CENTER & KENTUCKY HOME SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

A Legacy of Women's Education

By Sherry Cornell

In 2017, the HDNA successfully nominated the Douglass Community Center and the onsite police substation for inclusion on the National Historic Register. The following is a summary of the significant history which qualified the entire site of the Kentucky Home School for Girls.

Kentucky Home School for Girls was established in 1863 by Belle Peers and met in the vestry of Christ Church Cathedral. In this era, it was not uncommon for a woman to start a school either in her home or a church as the system of public education was not well established. Issues of the local paper from that era are full of advertisements for such. The offerings often included English, other languages such as French, reading, and music; a curriculum which was consistent with a finishing school.

This was true of Miss Belle Peers School; however, an 1896 bulletin announced a change: "A special Course of Study is arranged for those who want to prepare for college." As the school's reputation grew, enrollment swelled from 12 little girls in 1863 more than doubling by 1866 and over triple that just ten years later. The school moved to different sites downtown jockeying for more space for boarders and a more affordable rent.

Miss Peers was forced to sell the school due to family obligations, and after a series of owners and locations, the school settled down at the end of Douglass Boulevard under the direction of Mrs. Hugh Bullitt in 1947 with 201 students, kindergarten through high school.

Kentucky Home School sought to address a growing concern, the education of young women. In the years from 1945 to 1975, girls in the United States nudged out boys in rates of graduation from high school yet in that same time period 30-50% fewer women attended or graduated from a four-year college. The implication is that girls were unprepared or unwilling to attend college. However, KHS had a long history of preparing young women for success in college. Indeed, as early as 1944 students were admonished to "use their summer vacations to acquire the arts of serving, cooking, keeping house, typewriting, filing, and bookkeeping" rather than include them in the curriculum as was common at other girls' schools.

When the prevailing model of childhood education began to shift to coeducation, the most vociferous arguments were that it would diminish the quality of education for boys. Louisville was the last city of size to implement coeducation in its public schools in 1950. The local debate began following Atlanta's transition in 1946, and became a more prominent concern with the looming construction of a new facility for Manual High School, a local boys' school. Groups such as the Highlands Men's Club argued that coeducation is "attempting to treat young men and women

as the same kind of creatures" while the Teachers Union worried that the process would turn the all-boys Male High School into "just another trade school". There was concern about the "feminization of the schools" and spoiling education for men.

Since the earliest days of public education in Louisville, girls were afforded a different education from boys, one that shunted them into the narrow span of career paths thought to be available to them. In 1875, Louisville Female High School dropped history, English, and science from its Senior curriculum and replaced it with Theory and Methods of Teaching. In contrast, Male High School offered political economy, Greek, Geometry, Geology, U.S. Constitution, and calculus to its Seniors, among other scholarly classes.

The tradition of narrowing the educational possibilities for women has a long history in Louisville. The posting of curricula in the Courier-Journal September 2, 1875, mentions that lectures



KHS girls on the lawn.

on History, English, Literature and Science "may be given occasionally," at the girls school; the article makes no mention of any math offering at all. Chemistry was offered at Female High School, and Physics was added to address the requirements of college entrance exams, but in 1912, Physics was dropped because of the mathematics "to which girls seem to have an aversion" (Kollman Stein, 1937, p. 17). In the next decade, two girls' high schools were added in Louisville, but it was determined that "The great majority of girls were no longer preparing for college," and Chemistry was adjusted. In 1924, Sanitary Chemistry consisted of "the chemistry of home, health, and sanitation" (Kollman Stein, 1937, p.21). Finally, in 1931, all sciences, excepting the three terms of general science, became purely elective.

Clearly the beginning of girls' education in Louisville was meant to train them for what was seen as "women's work." By 1948, neither chemistry nor physics were included in the curricula at Atherton Girls' High School in Louisville. The curricula of the three girls' high schools included Interior Decorating, Art History, and Nursing (Courier-Journal, 1948). This was not surprising in the post-war climate, where a construction boom required an increased labor force including women, but long-standing cultural traditions held them to specific jobs such as secretary, teacher, nurse, factory worker, or work-at-home compromises such as Tupperware sales.

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The Kentucky Home School for Girls stood as a bastion of excellence in education for women and offered its students an alternative. At no point in its history did school leaders accept less for its students because they were girls, and, in fact, expected more. From the earliest days of the school, students were expected to apply themselves diligently as illustrated by Miss Peers' response when KHS students asked her if they were to have a holiday on Washington's Birthday as were the city schools. The founder succinctly replied, "If George Washington were asked for his opinion, he would say that it would be better for them to be in school" (Dickerson, 1963).

The consistent college preparatory curriculum and exacting standards of KHS allowed many of its graduates to attend elite colleges such as Vassar, Bryn Mawr, Columbia, and Wellesley.

COMMUNITY MULCH UPDATE

By Barbara Berman



Community mulch pile.

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Highlands Douglass community mulch pile has been relocated to Ellerbe Avenue close to the Police Station. Please help yourself to whatever you need. Mulching around trees is one of the best ways to promote tree health as it prevents damage to the trunk by lawn equipment, keeps weeds at bay, holds in moisture and keeps soil temperature more even.

Unfortunately many landscape companies mulch trees so that they look like volcanoes of mulch. This can be harmful to the tree as it can cause disease around the trunk as well as suffocate the roots. The rule of thumb is mulch should be 3 inches away from the trunk, no more than 3 inches deep and 3 feet in diameter around the tree.

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HDNA BOARD MEETINGS

We welcome everyone in the neighborhood to join us at one of our monthly Board Meetings. There is no better way to keep abreast of what is happening in the neighborhood, and we invite all neighbors to participate. Meetings are held at 6:30PM on the first Wednesday of each month (EXCEPT JANUARY) at the Douglass Community Center, 2305 Douglass Blvd. You are invited to drop by anytime to help us plan neighborhood activities and to present/discuss any topics that pertain to our area.

HDNA IS ON FACEBOOK, TWITTER, NEXTDOOR, INSTAGRAM AND THE WEB

You can keep up to date with events and news from the Highlands-Douglass Neighborhood on Facebook.com/highlandsdouglass, on Twitter@HDNA40205 or Instagram www.instagram.com/highlandsdouglass. You can also find a wealth of information about our neighborhood on our web page at www.highlandsdouglass.org On our website you can find information about:



- HDNA as an Organization
- Committees and Meetings
- Our Bylaws
- Douglass Community Center
- Events and Activities
- The Neighborhood Plan
- Much More

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JOIN HDNA TODAY!

For just \$15 per household per year, you can become a member of the Highlands-Douglass Neighborhood Association. Your membership will help us serve our community by:

- Working with your Metro Council representative to improve our neighborhood.
- Promoting safety and security in our area.
- Bringing neighbors together by sponsoring events and activities such as the Big Rock Jazz & Blues Fest, Old Fashioned Ice Cream Social, Speakers Series and Reforesting the neighborhood.

To join, please mail your check for \$15 to the Highlands-Douglass Neighborhood Association, P.O. Box 5194, Louisville, KY 40255 or go on line to highlandsdouglass.org/membership and pay with PayPal.

