

DRAKE NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING MEETING
PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS SUB-COMMITTEE
Thursday, May 21st, 2009 at 7:00pm

- I. Welcome and Introductions**

- II. Drake Neighborhood Beautification Efforts**
 - a) Plantings – Kingman, Triangle, Carpenter Square, etc.
 - b) Community gardens – Garden committee
 - c) Small park spaces
 - d) Right-of-way improvements & street trees
 - e) Other beautification ideas

- III. Questions, comments, or general discussion**

Next meeting will be Thursday, June 18th at 7:00pm

MEETING NOTES:

The Drake Neighborhood Association Beautification Committee has been responsible for installing and maintaining the plantings in the Kingman Boulevard median, the “Triangle” space at the intersection of Cottage Grove and Kingman at 25th Street, as well as the Carpenter Square area. Some of this has been added by the Drake Neighborhood Association (DNA) applying for and receiving a neighborhood streetscape grant from the City of Des Moines Parks Department. The plantings have been very well received by neighborhood residents, as well as the City. However, like many other neighborhoods in Des Moines, the DNA has a small number of volunteers coordinating the installation and maintenance of these plantings.

The Parks planning committee proposes that the DNA expand the number of volunteers to assist in installing and maintaining these features. This could be done by engaging neighbors along Kingman who directly benefit from the plantings, recruiting Drake University students or groups to assist, and/or installing small signs within the planter beds promoting that the plantings are provided by the DNA. Another suggestion was to have a “working” DNA board meeting where board members would meet to work on the plantings but could also take care of the necessary board agenda as well.

Because these plantings do not have immediate access to water sources, the DNA should make arrangements with Des Moines Waterworks (DMWW) for a water meter box. This meter box would allow the DNA beautification volunteers to connect to a fire hydrant for water service. The meter box would then track the usage so that DMWW could then charge the DNA for the water used.

The Parks planning committee would like to see the DNA encourage additional plantings, at appropriate locations, around the Drake neighborhood. The DNA holds a perennial plant sale in

the Spring. In addition to the plant sale, the DNA should consider providing technical assistance to anyone who needs it. This could include assistance in writing grants for larger planting/community garden project or starter kits for anyone new or interested in doing a smaller scale project. It was also mentioned that the NFC tool lending library is a great source for gardening tools that the average home owner may not have, such as a rotary tiller.

Community gardens seem to be an asset that Drake neighborhood residents are interested in. This was indicated in the survey results, as well as at the neighborhood kickoff meeting. At the last meeting Parks staff indicated that Witmer Park could accommodate a community garden space if there was enough demand from neighborhood residents. The DNA should work with Parks staff to further explore establishing a community garden at Witmer.

Other potential areas for community gardens, street tree plantings, or larger neighborhood planter beds were discussed. The committee thought it would be a good idea to organize a small group to do a neighborhood tour on bicycles. This would provide a chance to see the neighborhood from a different perspective and identify priority areas for improvements.

Because of the large size of the neighborhood it has been a challenge for the DNA to maintain representation from every portion of the neighborhood. The committee discussed establishing block captains or area captains. The captains could be a go to person for their assigned area when it comes to anything neighborhood related. An area captain could cover a four block area, for example, which would require roughly 30-35 captains across the neighborhood. This could be a way for the DNA to grow as an organization and increase the awareness of the DNA.