



# Cascade Highlands Herald

[www.neighborhoodlink.com/vancouver/cascadehighlands](http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/vancouver/cascadehighlands)

February 2024

A little time, a little effort, makes for a better neighborhood!

## Upcoming CHNA Events

**February 10** - Green Bag Food Pick Up

**April 13** - Green Bag Food Pick Up

**June 8** - Green Bag Food Pick Up

**June 15** - Annual Cleanup with MVNA at MVHS parking lot,  
8:00 am to noon

**July 9** - Annual Dessert Meeting (Homestead Park), 7:00 p.m.

## Financial Report (January 2024)

by Maureen Humbert

The last financial report (August 2023) indicated the association's balance was \$4,485.42. Since then, \$59.00 was paid out to cover the cost of the 2023 Garage Sale ads, and a deposit of \$1,000.00 was made for the park benches. This brings the new balance to \$5,426.42.

Hope your holiday season was wonderful. May 2024 be the best year ever!

## We Have Another Tree-Planting Grant!

Plan now to participate in the Friends of Trees planting come November or December of 2024. We applied for and received another grant from the Watershed Alliance so each of your new trees will cost only \$25.00. More specific information will come in later newsletters but do start thinking about planting a tree or two now.

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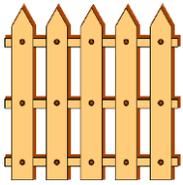
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*City of Vancouver website --*  
<https://www.cityofvancouver.us>



## **Fences, Shrubs, Sidewalks & Signs**

By Mark Crawford

Most, if not all CHNA residents live in homes that are 30-plus years old. Your home's roofing, siding, electrical, mechanical and a host of structural components are beginning to show their age; some have already failed. Ever wonder why 30-year mortgages are so common? Like your home, fencing, shrubbery and flower beds are also likely failing if you haven't already replaced them. Also, for those who have a fence along a street, it is your responsibility to maintain shrubs, flower beds and the sidewalk on the street side of those fences. That includes weeding and snow/leaf/debris removal. The city is NOT responsible for maintaining those areas.

Unfortunately, there are no active HOA's in place in CHNA. This means that there is little that can be done to coerce a neighbor to maintain those spaces on the outside of their perimeter fence, even though it is their responsibility. Only when there is a safety or hygiene issue does the city become involved.

Against that backdrop, back about 2010, a small group of like-minded neighbors here in Homestead Acres (H.A.) where I live, came together to form workgroups that met 2-3 times/year to attempt to police these perimeter areas. Unfortunately, the work was significant, and it became clear that this was unsustainable. People are busy with their lives and the work was overwhelming for so few people.

So, in 2012 another group of residents went door-to-door to solicit \$60/year from any of the 101 H.A.households in order to establish a fund to hire out the annual perimeter maintenance. We've been fortunate to have kept this going even with upping the request to \$100/year. We get about 45 donors each year – enough to hire a landscape firm to perform monthly maintenance.

Unfortunately, perimeter fence maintenance such as cleaning, painting, and repair is not wholly covered by that fund, nor are the replacement of three failing and vandalized HA monument signs. This sign replacement will require additional requests from HA residents for money to repair/replace those signs and

there is confidence that our H.A. neighbors will once again, step up.

I encourage you to walk, bike or drive through your local neighborhood and take note of 30+ years of age (and often, neglect) on fences, shrubs and signage. If you want to improve the looks of your neighborhood there are two choices: pull your neighbors together for work crews 3-4 times per year or start a fund to pay for landscape maintenance of the perimeter area. I can share my experience on how and why we've gone to a fund solution here in Homestead Acres. Feel free to contact me at hamfvan2012@gmail.com since I manage the fund.

## **Homestead Place Signs**

Here is some additional information in reference to Mark Crawford's article about the Homestead Acres periphery maintenance.

Homestead Place had two signs, one of which was removed when a tree fell on it and the other is being vandalized (the 'p-l-a-c-e' letters have been removed).

We need your opinion as to whether these signs should be replaced. The cost is basically \$1,000.00 per sign. Does the neighborhood value these signs or is it time to say they were nice in the past but it's time to move on?

We're already asking for donations for the park benches so obtaining an additional \$2K in neighborhood money for replacing the two Homestead Place signs is asking a lot.

If you have an opinion about this, please let us know. The deadline for the park bench donation is June 30.

## **Repaving in Future Years for Some CHNA Streets**

Because of its poor condition SE 159th Pl. is tentatively on the schedule to be paved in the summer of 2024 (or perhaps 2025). Also 155th Ave. between 15th St. and 12th St. is tentatively scheduled for resurfacing in the summer of 2026. I (Jean) am confused by this because the east side of town gets attention every other year and right now our area is on the odd-year rotation so 2025 or 2027 are far more likely for this work to be done.



## Friends of Trees Planting

On Saturday, November 18, CHNA participated in the SE Neighborhoods Friends of Trees (FoT) planting. 63 neighbors planted 114 trees. One of the best things about this planting is that FoT arranges for the holes to be dug. However, at least where I was planting, all but one of the holes was full of rainwater! Oh my, yes, it was muddy. Major muddy!

Fortunately, we were able to get a Watershed Alliance grant to offset the cost of the trees and pay for some mulch and a watering bag for each tree.

## Neighborhood Cleanup Scheduled

Our cleanup for 2024 is scheduled for Saturday, June 15th at Mountain View H.S.' parking lot. This is the same location as last year (and many previous years). We will be again combining with Mountain View N.A.

In a cleanup 'training' we learned that in 2023 the city scheduled 24 cleanups for 54 neighborhood associations. That's a lot of cleanups considering that most of them occur on Saturdays!

We need 4 volunteers - one greeter, one yard debris monitor, and two packer-truck loaders. Your shift will be from 7:50 until you are released when the MVNA volunteer arrives at 10:00. Please let Jean Kent know if you're willing to work a shift at this worthwhile event for the neighborhood.

## Flooding on Mill Plain Blvd. at the SE Corner with Park Crest

We received information from Daniel at the Storm Water Department City of Vancouver about the flooding situation at the SE and SW corners of Mill Plain Blvd. and Park Crest. The drain field under there has become 'tired' and 'overwhelmed' and is filled with sediment. As a result, when it rains the area becomes saturated, then the drain field can no longer accept additional water so the corner floods.

The drain field will be cleaned out, hopefully sometime this coming summer or fall, whenever work-schedules allow.

## Leaf Box Ruminations

To begin with I, Jean Kent, messed up. I neglected to be sure that the location of the leaf box was published in the last newsletter.

Secondly, for the November leaf box date I decided to not put out the sandwich boards around the neighborhood like I usually do. I wondered if only having the dates published in the newsletter would keep the bozos just driving through our neighborhood from dropping off non-leaf items in the leaf boxes.

Well, that idea worked anyway. In November, only leaves were dropped in the box despite the fact that I caught Covid and couldn't babysit the box for both days of the weekend.

But, because we didn't publish the location in the newsletter, I decided to put out the sandwich boards for the December leaf box.

I heard an excellent suggestion though and will implement it next year; I'll publish the location in the newsletter but not on the sandwich boards. :-)

There was one other hiccup in the December date - the box was not emptied on Saturday which meant that neighbors had to dump their leaves over the top of that big box while standing on a ladder (or the tailgate of their pickup). That large box was FULL by the time it was picked up.

It turns out that an early discussion topic (having neighbors dump their leaves at a location in the park rather than in the box - a 'leave the leaves' effort) was resolved to the negative - no, use the box. But Solid Waste never got that update. If people left their leaves in the park rather than in the box, the box would not need to be emptied.

At any rate, we will have this clarified for next year so no-one is left teetering on the 4th step of an aluminum ladder while wrangling a floppy, uncooperative bag of soggy leaves. Please note a huge thank you to Ed who loaned his ladder and his time to facilitate our use of the leaf box. Thanks, Ed!

## Replacement Tree for 159th Place

The city planted a ginkgo where the maple died in the center divider of 159th. Let's hope this tree is happy there and lives a long time.

## Homestead Park Area Receives More Planting and Maintenance Attention

City of Vancouver Volunteer Services has coordinated two Saturday park amenity events lately, focusing on that long strip of formerly barren land along 159th Place which was the site of the Watershed Alliance grant planting a few years ago.

The morning of November 25th found 19 volunteers (some even residents from CHNA!) planting 46 plants, distributing 5 yards of beauty bark (particularly around those baby plants), and filling 3 yard-debris bags (mostly with Bird's-foot trefoil, a nasty weed).

The 2nd effort was on December 9th in the afternoon j-u-s-t before it started raining in earnest. Six volunteers distributed 5 additional yards of beauty bark and filled 2 debris bags with sticks and such before giving up in the wet stuff.

Here's a big thank you to Volunteer Services who ordered, paid for, and delivered five 5-gal. low Oregon grape, eight 1-gal. Douglas aster, five 5-gal. spirea, and twenty 1-gal. kinnikinnick, all northwest native plants. Native plants support local pollinators and wildlife species, promote biodiversity and improve soil health. A carpet of mulch helps conserve what water is available, protects the soil from erosion, suppresses weeds, and moderates temperature extremes.

## Mazda Key Fob - Denouement

Perhaps you remember an article in our last newsletter stating that a key fob had been found dropped in a food-donation bag at the cleanup. Well, that article gleaned RESULTS. A CHNA neighbor contacted me that the fob just m-i-g-h-t be hers. But guess what, I couldn't find it! I looked in all the sensible places and in many of the ridiculous places but didn't come up with it. I had to admit to the neighbor that I'd lost it.

But then, weeks later, I was looking for string and guess what I found, all tangled in some loose cotton twine! YES! The Mazda fob! After only four months it is now happily reunited with its vehicle and family.



## Election of Chair, Treasurer, Newsletter Distributor – on EVEN numbered years

This year these three CHNA offices are up for election in the summer (the other three offices will be up for election next year). If you want to be a candidate for one of these positions, please contact any executive board member. THANKS!

## Donations to Secure Two East-side Benches for Our Park?

Perhaps you realize that we've been saving our CHNA money in order to be able to purchase and install two benches on the east side of the park (where there are no benches currently). Installing the concrete pads and purchasing and situating these benches as a stand-alone project is super expensive.

Fortunately, our 30+ year old play structure is going to be replaced this coming year and if we piggy-back the installation of the two benches along with the construction involved in replacing the play structure, it would greatly reduce the cost of the benches to about \$6,000 for the two. Our current bank balance is \$5,526.42.

We looked into applying for a grant to pay for the benches but the Clark County Parks Foundation is not giving out any grants right now. So, we decided to see if CHNA neighbors would, together, donate the \$1,000 we need, in addition to what is in our bank account, to pay for both benches. We do not want to take our account down to zero because we have financial obligations - insurance, CERT tuition, tree watering bag payments, etc.

So, if you're willing to donate so we can take advantage of the construction partnership we can get by timing the installation of the benches with the installation of the play structure, please send your money to treasurer Maureen Humbert, P.O. Box 873326, Vancouver 98687. If possible, in the memo area specify that your donation is for the park benches. The payee for the check should be CHNA (Cascade Highlands N.A.). The deadline for this donation is the end of June 2024. Thank you for considering helping support this addition to our beautiful and well-used park.



## Want to learn More About Basic Recycling?

You could attend one of these classes.

Tuesday, Feb. 13 at 5:30 p.m.  
at Bridgeview Resource Center

Saturday, March 16 at 10:30 a.m. at Cascade Park Community Library

Thursday, Apr. 18 at 5:30 p.m. at Cascade Park Community Library

## Advanced Recycling Classes

Wednesday, Feb. 28 at 5:30 p.m. at Bridgeview Resource Center

Saturday, Mar. 23 at 2 p.m. at Cascade Park Community Library

## Radon and CHNA

We have radon in our soils, people! Radon is a gas which is the decay product of radium, which itself is the decay product of uranium. We have uranium/radium/radon in our area because floods brought Montana surface dirt and rocks here and deposited them in the downstream side of the volcanic chimney in Camas (that's our location).

When you inhale those decay products, it exposes your lungs to radiation. Radiation in your lungs can cause lung cancer. You might want to test your house for radon levels. You can buy a kit at Freddie's or at Parkrose Hardware (and other places).

Do not block all your under-house vents except for very short periods of time. If all or parts of your house are on a slab of concrete you will probably need to do more to keep the radon gas from affecting your lungs.

Out of doors, radon is not a problem because it is so diluted by air. Inside your home though, in CHNA, it is a problem and can and does cause lung cancer if you leave your vents blocked 24/7.

## PET WASTE

from the Water Center's Newsletter

Unbagged pet waste greatly affects marine life. Pet poop left in parks, yards and sidewalks eventually gets into waterways. Exposed to the elements, particles (nitrogen and phosphorous) of poop get washed into storm drains which lead directly to rivers and streams.

The excess levels of nitrogen and phosphorous in the water encourages algae growth, which in turn, depletes the amount of oxygen available for fish and macro-invertebrates (like what happens in Camas and Vancouver lakes).

Pet waste can also impact human health by contaminating shared beaches and swimming areas with bacteria and parasites.

Solution? Scoop it, bag it, trash it! Learn more from Poop Smart Clark (<https://poopsmartclark.org/>) and remember to bring disposable bags when taking your pet for a walk.

Please dispose of those bags in garbage carts.

## Plastic Bags and Film - NOT in the Blue Cart

In an effort to recycle as much as possible, many people mistakenly put plastic bags into their recycling carts. Or they gather their recyclables together in a plastic bag and put the entire bag into their blue recycling carts.

Plastic bags, shrink wrap, bubble wrap and other types of "stretchy" film plastic tangle in the machinery that is meant to sort recyclables into separate categories. This slows down the efficiency of the recycling facility, as the machines have to be shut down to allow workmen to climb in and cut out the bags with box cutters. Plastic bags in the blue recycling cart account for at least a 25% reduction in efficiency.

Why should you care about this? Your garbage and recycling fees are higher because it costs more to stop the sorting machinery up to 4 times each day to cut off the plastic bags.

So, what should you do with plastic bags? Most grocery stores have a bin near the entrance where you can deposit a bag of plastic bags.

Plastic bags in the blue cart? NO!

## Tour of Vancouver's Sewage Treatment Plant East

by Jean Kent

In late July 2023 I attended a tour of the City of Vancouver's (CoV) Marine Park Wastewater Treatment Facility. I signed up on the city's website.

The class started with an inside-the-Engineering-building power point explained by very knowledgeable engineer and CoV employee Frank Dick so we could picture where the tour would take place, observe the various stations, know what was happening inside or under concrete or other infrastructure, and be introduced to the process.

Although 80% of the world's wastewater is untreated (!) Vancouver has two treatment plants to serve about 245,000 people. We have eight major pump stations including a few special food-waste pump stations. The biggest pump is located near the Burt Bridge Creek trail and NE 65th Ave. Vancouver has storm water and sewage in separate systems.

We produce 20 million gallons of sewage a day – the Marine Park facility has a capacity of 16 million gallons per day and the Westside facility 28 million gallons per day so thus we have redundancy capacity. Our sewage amount is directly related to our water use. Larger food processing and semiconductor industries in Vancouver pay monthly water bills totaling about \$800,000.

It takes about 2-4 hours for sewage to leave its source (like from our east Vancouver area) and arrive in the Marine Park facility.

There are 27,000 manholes which give access to the underground street sewage system.

Phase 1 and 2 of the east side facility were built in the 1990's and use gravity flow after one initial pumping. There is an open field area just south of SR-14 and the rail line for when the plant needs to expand in the future. The open tanks are covered - a special amenity for the residents who live on the hill overlooking the plant. [It's far more pleasant to be looking at blue roofs than open sludge basins.]

There are several 'stations' - 1) screens (screens remove stuff like paper towels, tampons, wipes, kids' toys), 2) grit removal (egg shells, seeds), 3) primary solids - uses gravity to let the solids settle out, 4) scum skimmers (removes the grease and other things

which float to the top, 5) aeration at the sludge basins (this is the heart, the work-horse, of cleaning the sewage. Selected microbes think it's fun to eat up the carbonaceous particles in the water and are able to reproduce themselves so enthusiastically that periodically some have to be removed. They're the ones which remove shampoo, maple syrup, bacteria, etc. but which live for only 5-7 days). Air is pumped into the basins for the microbes to respire, 6) secondary clarifiers – separates and thickens the microbes to return to the sludge basins, leaving clear water to overflow to the last station, 7) lastly, green UV lights for disinfection. These bulbs cost \$80.00 each and last a year. 550 bulbs are changed out each year. (That's \$44,000.00 for these bulbs each year: Your tax dollars at work!) Solids are sent via 8" and 6" pipes to the Westside facility.

Two times each week workers take intake samples and send them to the CDC which tests the samples for Covid and Monkeypox. [Covid is very low right now, in late July.] Monkeypox has not been detected in sewage in Vancouver.

Since it's not uncommon to get an electrical outage, the system has generators to keep those pumps and screens and skimmers and disinfection systems going 24/7. It takes 6 - 8 hours (that's 14,000 gallons/minute) to treat sewage to a quality to be able to outflow it the 1/8 mile to the Columbia River (about where the osprey nest is located).

This facility is manned 8 hours a day but runs 24 hours each day, is automated, and can be controlled by the west side facility if necessary.

The effluent would require more filtration to make it drinkable as it leaves the facility but as is, the water can be used for irrigation and other cleaning needs within the facility.

The city hires two full-time grease inspectors for the 800 restaurants and cafeterias in the area. Please help our sewage treatment plant do a good job by NEVER putting wipes (even if they say they are FLUSHABLE), paper towels, tampons, pads, toys, grease, pesticides, or anything but pee, poop, and toilet paper (the 3 P's) into the sewage system.

This article does not report on other topics covered briefly on the tour - incineration of solid waste, WA Dept. of Ecology, purple-pipe new construction, the need for more prominent labeling on cleaning wipes, microplastics, chlorinated or fluorinated compounds,

(continued from p.6)

ammonia, primary/secondary/tertiary treatment, washing polyester clothes, etc.

I highly recommend this excellent and very interesting tour given by a staff member with years of experience with the facility and with the topic in general.

## **Follow-up on Short-Term Rentals (Discussed at Last CHNA Meeting)**

On Dec. 18, 2023 the Vancouver City Council voted unanimously to adopt a short-term rental (STR) ordinance.

The City is currently mailing letters to known STR operators throughout Vancouver. For more information please read the city's website at: [cityofvancouver.us/str](http://cityofvancouver.us/str).



**Thank you** to all our dedicated newsletter distributors - you help make Cascade Highlands a great place to live! Thank you to *Jackie Andrewjeski, Judy and Dick Bird, Gary and Peggy*

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