



PARK BEAT

The Pulse of Greater Boulevard Park

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

A Brief Report from the BPNA Board

The May 5 board meeting, held via computer, began with Jon Marshack's report on the Sacramento City Council meeting held earlier that day, at which Council members had reviewed the ordinance that would streamline the planning entitlement process. As reported elsewhere in the June newsletter (see **page 4**), the new ordinance was passed and approved a week later, at the May 12 City Council meeting. The BPNA board is considering methods for alerting neighborhood residents to proposals for new construction in their vicinity, if City Planning services do not announce these plans in a timely manner. Jon also reported on the introduction of a new City Council public comment mechanism, consisting of voicemail input from the public. It will be used for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. Next on the agenda was Sher Singh's review of her recent improvements to the [BPNA Facebook page](#). Since Sher has taken over this project, visits to the site have increased at a substantial rate.

Board members also discussed neighborhood concerns about two recent developments related to the pandemic, the increase in the city's homeless population and the release of Sacramento County Main Jail inmates into the downtown area. One situation mentioned at the meeting was a new homeless camp near 29th and "C" Streets which started small but later expanded in size. Dave agreed to reach out to Councilmember Steve Hansen for his ideas about how to address these problems. These topics also could be discussed at the next District 4 Neighborhood Association Leaders meeting. Regarding recent building projects in historic neighborhoods, progress seems to have been made on the renovation of the three former fraternity houses on 21st Street near Q Street. The plan is to preserve the outer shells of those three early 20th-century homes (which have survived intact) while turning each of the interiors into a four-plex, resulting in twelve new residences. Finally, the Board thanked Liz Edmonds for spear-heading BPNA's recent donation to Washington School for the benefit of students and their families in need.



An Invitation to All *Park Beat* Readers: Send Us Your Thoughts

Our lives have been turned upside down during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have endured losses of all kinds, and, through news reports, are constantly being reminded of the losses suffered by others throughout the country and around the world. *The Sacramento Bee* is even running a series of articles about the coronavirus crisis called "The Lost Spring." The production team of *Park Beat* would like to turn that downward perspective around and invite our readers to reflect instead upon what they have gained these last several weeks.



What new thoughts, insights, opportunities, or experiences have you had during the pandemic? Have there been good surprises or unexpected joys? If you would like to share a brief personal statement (80 words or less) on this topic for inclusion in an article in the July issue of *Park Beat*, please send it by email to the editor, Catherine Turrill-Lupi (turrillc@csus.edu) by **June 15**. For space reasons, we might not be able to include all submissions. We also reserve the right to edit material, as necessary. All statements used in the article will be kept anonymous.

Sacramento 2040 Virtual Workshop

From **May 18 until June 5**, city residents have the opportunity to participate in a virtual community workshop about the 2040 General Plan, described on the dedicated website as “the City’s blueprint for how and where Sacramento will grow over the next 20 years,” and addressing a wide range of topics (<http://www.cityofsacramento.org/Community-Development/Planning/Major-Projects/General-Plan>). Accompanying it will be an ambitious Climate Action Plan that “outlines a community-wide framework for reducing gas emissions and establishes Sacramento as a climate leader.” Topics covered in the Virtual Workshop include not only climate change, but also sustainable growth, environmental justice, economic development, livability, and mobility. Because general plan updates are the basis for project approvals city-wide, residents are strongly encouraged to participate in workshops of this type and make sure that their opinions are heard. And there also is a **special incentive for Sacramento high school students!** By promoting the Virtual Community Workshop online, or by participating in the workshop, they can earn a **\$25** gift card and be entered to win a new iPad, iPhone SE 2020, or AirPods. For more information and a copy of the instructions sheet, go to the website listed above. Please note that students need to register by **June 4** in order to be entered in the rewards program.

New and Renewing Members, BPNA

A hearty “thanks” to the several residents who have just joined the Boulevard Park Neighborhood Association or who have renewed their memberships by paying their 2020 dues. In April and May, we heard from the following neighbors (listed in alphabetical order): Rachelle Barbour and Rich Berson; Pete, Robyn, and Jesse Bramson; Thomas Braun (*a new member: **welcome** to Boulevard Park!*); Richard Cable; Brian Dahlstedt; Robert Honaker and Monica Weekes (*new members: **welcome** to Boulevard Park!*); Sarah Kerber; Mary Lunn and Stan Fureby; Catherine and Alberto Lupi; Jackie Miller; Elaine O’Brien; Andre Rehkopf (*a new member: **welcome** to Boulevard Park!*); Heather Spiegel and Ben Dufresne (*new members: **welcome** to Boulevard Park!*); and Monica Vejar.

If you have not yet joined BPNA, or if you are a continuing member in arrears with your 2020 dues, we would be delighted to hear from you. The membership payment/renewal form is on the last page of each issue of *Park Beat*. Annual dues are \$5 to \$15 per adult member per household, or whatever your income allows.

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Catherine Turrill Lupi	turrillc@csus.edu

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
Preservation, Planning, and Land Use:	Jon Marshack

Park Beat Production Team

Newsletter Designer: Pete Bramson
Newsletter Editor: Catherine Turrill Lupi
Social Media: Sher Singh
Block Captain Coordinator: Joe Cress, (916) 698-7938
cressj@saccounty.net

June 2020:

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

NOTE: As of May 20, no information had been posted about live public events on the City's 365 website. It still is possible that restrictions will be eased and opportunities may arise between now and mid-June. Check websites for updates. Below are a few events, programs, and dates to remember.

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

Anytime 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). Website: <https://anytimetours.oncell.com/en/index.html>

Local on-line and live-streamed events: The Sacramento 365 website now has information about virtual entertainment (<https://www.sacramento365.com/categories/online-streaming/>).

Tues., June 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. However, the June meeting, like those held in April and May, will be a virtual encounter, not a group meeting.

Places to Go, People To See (cont.)

Fri., June 5: Last day to participate in the Sacramento 2040 Virtual Workshop (see article on [page 2](#)).

Sat., June 6: Pops in the Park 2020 *Reimagined*: Virtual concert by Jackie Greene, 5:30-7 p.m. (see article below).

Sun., June 14: Flag Day

Sat., June 20: First day of summer—Happy Solstice!

Sun., June 21: Father's Day

... And, looking ahead to early July:

Tues., July 7: 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.

Saturday, June 6:
Jackie's Back, for a
"Pops in Place"
Virtual Concert



With nearly 30 years of history behind it, the Pops in the Park concert series is an established summer tradition in Sacramento. This year, because of the pandemic, a **"Pops in Place" Virtual Concert** is being offered instead. Benefitting Women's Empowerment, a local organization that educates and empowers women who are experiencing homelessness, the **June 6** concert will feature singer-songwriter **Jackie Greene**. It will be live-streamed via the Pops in the Park Facebook page from **5:30 to 7:00 p.m.** (www.facebook.com/eastsacpops). Watching the concert from the location of your choice is free, but donations to Women's Empowerment are encouraged (there will be "live donation" opportunities during the concert). Please consider buying your food and beverages from Sacramento eateries (a list is posted on the concert's website: <http://eastsacpopsinthepark.com/pops-in-place/453317306>). Combining live music and local food, the June 6 event will be almost like a typical Pops in the Park concert—and a good way to keep the grand old tradition going.

Making Sure Our Seniors Dine Well

The City of Sacramento has partnered with local restaurants to provide three free meals daily to seniors and high-risk individuals in that age group (sixties) during the COVID-19 stay-at-home order. Eligible Sacramento residents will receive three healthy meals a day if they meet a few requirements based on their age, income level, and inability to prepare or obtain meals. As of mid-May, this special program is scheduled to run through **June 10th**, the time frame approved by FEMA. If you or someone you know might be eligible for free meals, please check the City's "Civic Engagement" website:

<https://engagesac.org/blog-civic-engagement/2020/4/29/learn-more-about>.

City Council Streamlines Development Approvals

After deliberations by numerous city organizations over the past year, the Sacramento City Council on May 12 adopted a new ordinance aimed at streamlining the development approval process. Only Councilmember Angelique Ashby voted against the proposal, citing a lack of urgency given the COVID19 epidemic. She also expressed concern that the new procedures would “silence communities” and lessen accountability to elected officials. During public comment, former Mayor Heather Fargo agreed with Ashby’s assessment and urged the Council to delay adoption until more public outreach could occur. Since February, BPNA’s Board of Directors has submitted a total of six comment letters opposing various provisions of the proposed ordinance. But in the end, by a 7-to-1 vote, the City Council adopted the Ad Hoc Ordinance Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process, with a few notable amendments. Rationale cited by supporters included increased certainty to developers and builders and lower development costs, resulting in increased construction of housing and childcare facilities.

To approve larger development projects, the new procedures will replace Planning and Design Commission and Preservation Commission hearings with hearings by the City’s planning directors—Design Director, Preservation Director, and Zoning Administrator. Director decisions may be appealed only to the appropriate commission, not to the City Council. Provisions allow a director to elevate a controversial project to the appropriate commission for a hearing. Deviations from zoning requirements and design guidelines, tentative subdivision maps, and conditional use permits (CUPs) for veterinary clinics, kennels, cultural and religious assemblies, childcare centers, dormitories, and residential and non-residential care facilities will also be approved through director hearings. The City Council voted to exclude CUPs for off-site alcohol sales from the new ordinance, leaving those decisions to the Planning and Design Commission with appeal to the City Council. Director hearings for bigger projects will be held once per month in the evening at historic City Hall. Otherwise, director hearings are held at Community Development Department offices at 300 Richards Boulevard on Thursday afternoons. Replacing design review by the commissions, the ordinance establishes a new Design Advisory Committee (DAC), composed of licensed architects and landscape architects appointed by the Planning Director, to provide design advice to City staff early in the project review process.

New public noticing procedures were included in the ordinance, in response to comments by neighborhood organizations that the effectiveness of their input would be diminished without them. Real estate-style signs will be posed at sites of all proposed development projects shortly after proposals have been submitted to the City. The signs will include project descriptions and contact information for assigned city staff and developers. Staff will seek initial public input prior to DAC project review, so that these comments can be considered by the Committee. Public hearings will be noticed by regular mail to owners and residents of properties located within 500 feet of a proposed project, an increase from the current 300 feet noticing radius. Staff reports will now be published online with the agenda a minimum of three days in advance of all director hearings. At the discretion of any Councilmember or the Mayor, a developer would be required to attend a community meeting to discuss a controversial project proposal.

The City Council has asked that this ordinance come back to City Council for review in six months.

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Bellabluepumpkin: Sewing for Good Causes

Two young Boulevard Park residents, siblings Maren (age 14) and Quinn (age 13) Tepper, have been stitching up a storm this Spring, sewing face masks and other items for sale on the internet. In just one week, they made and sold enough fabric face masks to raise a \$1000—all of which they donated to Front Street Animal Shelter. And they did not stop there. Another round of sewing raised another thousand dollars, which they gave to the Rainforest Trust, a nonprofit organization that is dedicated to the protection of tropical rainforests and the animal species that inhabit them.



As these two generous donations show, Maren and Quinn care deeply about both animal welfare and the environment. They have vowed to donate 100% of their earnings to non-profit organizations that champion these important causes.

The on-line shop, [bellabluepumpkin](https://www.etsy.com/shop/bellabluepumpkin), takes its name from the names of three of the Tepper family’s rescue pets. Bella, a Great Pyrenees/Anatolian shepherd mix, is shown with her owners in the photo above (she also appears in the shop’s distinctive logo). To learn more about bellabluepumpkin, its wares, and its owners’ goals, go to: <https://www.etsy.com/shop/bellabluepumpkin>

Suggestions for Safer Cycling

by guest author Max Mack

As more and more people ride their own bicycles or rent shared ones, it is key for us all to be on the same page for the safest and most enjoyable trips/rides. All cyclists should be fully up-to-date on the “Rules of the Road” as set forth in the California Vehicle Code (CVC 21200-21213; see also: <https://theccc.org/usa/ca/california-vehicle-code/>). Bicycles are traffic, just like motor vehicles, and cyclists are expected to follow many of the same traffic laws and rules as car drivers. They should:

- ride in the same direction as vehicle traffic
- clearly signal their turns and lane-changes
- be visible and predictable by stopping at stop signs and red lights
- use both front and rear lights when riding at night

Though there is some debate regarding bike riders' discretion to roll through stop signs rather than coming to a full stop, those signs are there for the safety for all, not the convenience of any one road user. Another debated issue is whether or not bicycles should be ridden on city sidewalks. While this practice is alright for children or the elderly, they should remember that pedestrians always have priority on sidewalks. It is recommended that cyclists ride at a pedestrian pace and in the same direction as vehicular traffic when they are on sidewalks. They also need to come to a full stop at each intersection and check for cross traffic or turning vehicles.

Here are a few more tips for safer cycling:

- always ride to the right on the road
- for greater visibility to other vehicles and to avoid the hazardous “Door Zone,” keep at least three feet away from parked vehicles
- avoid weaving from side to side on the road
- when riding after dark, wear a reflective jacket or vest

About the author: A licensed USA Cycling competitor (1982-2016), Max Mack has co-produced an educational video about city cycling, “S.M.A.R.T.: Supporting Motorists and Riders Together” (<https://vimeo.com/39910032>). For more “Cycling 101 & Beyond” tips, send him an email (max@driventodrive.co).

Sacramento Area Trees: The Black Elderberry

The black elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*) is a shrub or small tree commonly found along the American River Parkway. It is native to our area, a fast grower with a wild appearance. In Britain the elderberry is often referred to as an instant hedge because it grows so fast and can be bent into desired shapes for fencing. The elderberry is not fussy about soil type and can grow under wet or dry conditions, as long as there is sufficient sun. New growth sprouts readily from stumps. At this time of year elderberry plants can be spotted by their small white flowers in flat top clusters 2 to 8 inches in width, as shown in the photos taken along the bike trail west of Cal Expo.

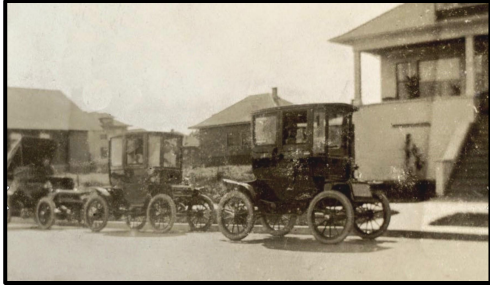


Birds love the ripe elderberries, but they can be toxic to humans, especially when uncooked. However, the fruit from certain species can be used to make jams, jellies, pies, and wine. Both syrups and wines are made from the flowerheads in some European countries. Other parts of the elderberry also are very useful. Leaves and the inner bark have been used as an insecticide and as a dye. Sticks of elderberry pith wood are used by watchmakers for cleaning their tools. Because the pith is soft and easily removed, dry elderberry sticks can be made into whistles or flutes, a practice dating back to antiquity.

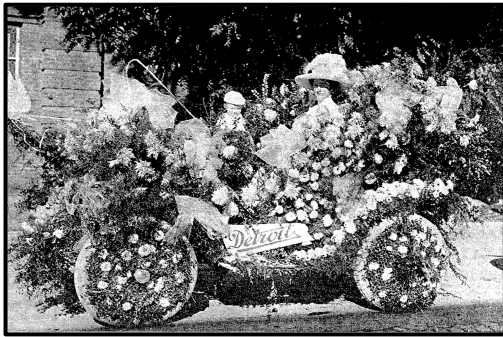
Locally, the elderberry also is associated with the Valley Elderberry Beetle, now listed as a federally threatened species due to 150 years of habitat destruction resulting from levee building, urban growth, and agriculture. One of this beetle's critical habitats in Sacramento is bounded by freeway 160, the Western Pacific railroad tracks, and Commerce Circle.

The Ingenious Mr. Kitt of Boulevard Park

Fred T. Kitt was an engineer and inventor who made his name with an automatic electric switch that was used for the tramway in Denver, Colorado in the early 1900s (a 1904 newspaper headline read: "Imitates Edison and Wins a Fortune"). In 1906, after Kitt found employment as an electrician with the Sacramento Electric, Gas & Railway Company, he and his wife Agnes bought a home in Boulevard Park. They were the first occupants of the two-story house at 431 21st Street. After about two years they moved into a more modest home at 316 22nd Street. This house, a high-water bungalow in a Colonial Revival style, was built for the Kitts in 1908. It was the second house to be erected in the 300 block of 22nd Street. Like other bungalows of this popular type, it is a five-room cottage with a full front porch and a projecting three-sided bay on one side.



Two photos from about 1912: the 22nd Street house with a line-up of autos; Agnes Kitt and her son in a city parade.



In early November 1909, Kitt announced his intention of opening a new automobile salesroom and garage in the 1900 block of Capitol Avenue (then called M Street). He specialized in electric automobiles and, according to an article printed in the *Sacramento Union* that year, his garage was then "the only one on this coast devoted exclusively to electrics." Business was brisk and by autumn of 1910 Kitt had erected a four-story reinforced concrete addition to the one-story brick garage, a towering structure that he proudly called "M Street's First Sky Scraper."

Kitt's choice of reinforced concrete for that addition may have been influenced by his acquaintance with Thomas Alva Edison, whose New Jersey facility he visited that same year. Kitt was impressed not only by Edison's "moving picture factory and battery factory" (Kitt's electric cars were powered by Edison batteries) but also by the plant where the prefabricated components of the new "Edison concrete houses" were assembled. For a Sacramento example of this innovative type of architecture, see the duplex at 2213-2215 I Street, built by Joseph E. Mayo in 1910.

Kitt sold his 22nd Street house and his M Street electric auto business in 1913. One year later he, Agnes, and their sons moved into the new residential district of Elmhurst. True to form, Kitt chose a new type of building material for the family's new home. According to a *Bee* journalist, Kitt's T Street house was a "pioneer of its kind," the first hollow clay tile dwelling to be erected in Sacramento (4526 T St.).

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