

Commonwealth Park

EST. 1939

August 2012

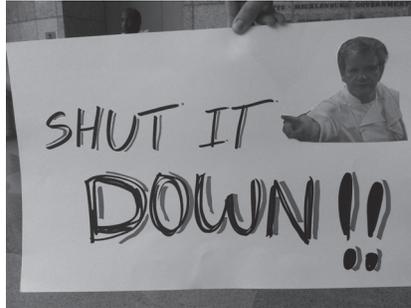
Post Office Box 18833

Charlotte, NC 28218

Charlotte Inn Update

By Allie Billings, *Commonwealth Ave.*

It has been a very exciting few months for our neighborhood in our efforts to eliminate blight in the area and make it safer for Commonwealth Park residents. After several years of hard work keeping a careful eye on the happenings at the Charlotte Inn and working with our CMPD officers, Jason Van Buren created a petition on change.org to Shut Down the Charlotte Inn. It quickly gained hundreds of signatures, and we then learned that the City of Charlotte had inked an agreement on an option to purchase the Charlotte Inn by December of this year. We were even more excited to learn that the funds to purchase the Inn were included as part of the City's initiative to redevelop the Bojangles Coliseum into an amateur sports facility. And, the funding for Bojangles redevelopment (including the purchase and demolition of the Charlotte Inn) was included in the proposed Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The stars seemed to be aligning for us, but the surprise move by City Council NOT to approve the proposed CIP at the June 11th Council meeting sent Commonwealth Park neighbors into action.



Rebecca Stoddard spoke at the Council meeting and officially delivered

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NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

**Tuesday,
August 7
7:00 p.m.**

WTVI Conference Room
3242 Commonwealth Ave.

Topics:

- Crime update/stats
- Charlotte Inn Update
- Tree Banding
- Neighborhood Watch
- Questions/Comments

Don't forget to join the neighborhood association! (see last page for details)

Charlotte Inn Update

Continued from page 1

the Charlotte Inn petition on June 25th with around 650 signatures to Mayor Foxx and members of Council. However, Council members failed to vote for a Capital Improvement Plan of any type that night. Although the funding for the redevelopment of the Bojangles Coliseum hangs in the balance, emails since late June have confirmed that the City is pursuing on other avenues to exercise the option to purchase the Charlotte Inn before the end of the year.

Commonwealth Park has great partners in the City Manager's office, with CMPD and with the media. And, we have a very committed group of active residents who are working hard to see this through. We are all hopeful that the Charlotte Inn's days are numbered and we're continuing to monitor the situation and share frequent updates on the neighborhood Facebook page (Search for "Commonwealth Park").

Here's to a safer Commonwealth Park!

Special Note from Councilwoman Patsy Kinsey

By Patsy Kinsey

It is 6:30 PM on July 18 and I am sitting at my computer looking out the window at a cloudy sky and hoping it will rain. I don't know about your gardens this year but mine has not produced as I had hoped. I also have some critter paying me visits at night and nibbling off the tops of my tomato plants. I think the combination of very hot days and very little rain has taken its toll on my vegetables.

However, I do have some good news. The city manager has told me that it appears that the city, with the help of the county, will be able to purchase the Charlotte Inn by the end of the year. I hope and believe that the city will also be able to purchase the old IHOP and the adjoining motel. My guess is that once this has happened Jimmy Cavalaris will attempt to develop his property, the old bowling alley. Once the Charlotte Coliseum is transformed into an amateur sports facility, family oriented hotels and restaurants will probably follow. I remember the days when my family traveled to Atlanta to watch our two sons compete in Little League Playoffs. We stayed in close-by hotels and frequented local restaurants. It is big business and I believe it will be a positive addition to the coliseum area of our community.

We will need, however, to continue to pursue a capital improvement program (CIP) to make this vision a reality. I am working with the mayor, the manager, and several council colleagues to produce a CIP that will accomplish that goal. I hope you will help us do that and support whatever CIP may come forward in the future.

It is now 7:59 PM – I stopped for dinner – and it still hasn't rained on my garden. Rats!

Tree Banding

By Brian Green, Commonwealth Ave.

Football Season is almost upon us. That means that Tree Banding isn't far behind. It may be 90 degrees out, but we want to get the word out as early as possible. We've been fortunate enough to have the City provide a grant to our neighborhood so that we got our supplies for free. Last year, the City allowed a grant of \$5,000 based on the amount of folks that participated in our neighborhood. Hopefully it will stay the same this year. Two years ago, we applied for our first grant. Based on the participation, we got just under \$500. Last year, we got the word out a little earlier, and we got just over \$4,000. Let's see if we can't get the max this year. It's quite easy to do (I was able to band 20 trees in my yard in under an hour), and the only thing it costs the neighborhood is volunteer hours to put up the bands and Tanglefoot.

To be part of this year's tree banding, we just need you to sign up, for volunteer hours, to band your trees (Or for others that may not be able to do so themselves). The City will count these volunteer hours as our 25% match of the overall grant. They just need your signature on your volunteer hour pledge. Outside of that, you just need a pair of gloves and something to spread the Tanglefoot. I'll be organizing everything again this year, so please be on the look out for me at the Neighborhood meetings to sign up, shoot me an e-mail (ne14usc@gmail.com) or message me on Facebook so we can get materials reserved for your trees. If you have thoughts on how I can make things work more smoothly for everyone, please let me know that as well. Thanks for keeping our trees healthy and neighborhood looking great!

Neighborhood Business Spotlight - Naturally Clean

By Janet Boschker, *Commowalth Ave.*

Earlier this year, as I was cleaning out my inbox, I came across a Groupon for a cleaning company called Naturally Clean. The company is located on Hawthorne Lane and since I had relatives coming to visit, I thought – PERFECT! I could support a neighborhood business, and get my house cleaned at the same time! I met the nicest young couple who came and did a fabulous job – Michelle Trogdon and Jesse Storc. They have been cleaning for me ever since.



I asked them how they were doing with their Groupon, and during the course of the conversation discovered that Michelle holds 2 Masters degrees – in Anthropology from the University of Georgia and in Geology from the University of Colorado in Boulder. Jesse is a Certified Air Traffic Controller – both of these bright young people remain unemployed in their chosen fields as a result of this economy, but they refused to be discouraged. The jobs available to them would not cover living expenses and student loan debt, so they launched their own business and are making a go of it despite the obstacles that we are all dealing with. I asked Michelle to describe their company philosophy.

“We started NC in January of this year. Both Jesse Storc and I have traveled around living in some interesting places, and drew from these experiences when we established NC. We both try to reduce our impact on the environment, support local communities and businesses, and use as few chemicals in our home (and food) as possible. So it made sense for us to create a cleaning service that is eco-friendly, pet and baby safe.

We are able to use cleaning tools that can be washed and reused. Our cleaning products are biodegradable, naturally derived, and free of harsh chemicals hazardous to our health. We use Mrs. Meyers products as well as vinegar, baking soda, hydrogen peroxide, olive oil, and lavender essential oils. Other common (and usually costly) cleaning supplies are hazardous to have in a household with pets and young children. If we are exposed to these chemicals for a prolonged period of time, certain chemical cleansers can be carcinogenic or potentially worsen health conditions like asthma and lupus. Scientists are even finding certain wildlife with reproductive abnormalities as a consequence of the increased amount of chemicals entering our ecosystems and water supplies. Whether for home or office, it is possible to maintain a cleanly environment with products that are naturally derived and biodegradable. Our first-time customers always remark how pleasantly surprised they are by the fragrant aroma of lavender and how clean their homes are as they book their next appointment. We serve the greater Charlotte area, and will clean your home or office from top to bottom with eco-friendly, pet and baby safe products for the health and wellness of all your family and guests”.

You might want to contact them if you find yourself needing help in the cleaning department – they have been great!

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Community Sustainability Plan for Charlotte?

By Shannon Binns, Briar Creek Rd.

In March the Charlotte City Council referred to its Environmental Committee an interest in developing a City sustainability plan. Subsequently, the City's Environmental Committee met several times to discuss this matter, and Commonwealth Park neighbor Shannon Binns, of Sustain Charlotte, gave a presentation on how other cities around the country have developed such plans and recommendations for how Charlotte should proceed.

On June 18, the City's Environmental Committee received a proposed framework, developed by City and County staff, for creating a community sustainability plan. If a sustainability plan is to be pursued, staff agreed that it should be jointly developed by the City and County along with a broad group of community stakeholders, starting with the vision and goals of the plan. The framework proposes to address sustainability broadly to incorporate a "triple bottom line" definition of environment, economy and social components.

City and county staff feel more assessment work is needed to determine what, why and how to develop a community sustainability plan. This includes determining the drivers, scope and feasibility of such a plan, researching best practices and existing plans, identifying key steps and stakeholders, determining the extent of public involvement in developing the plan, and identifying level of effort and resources needed to carry out plan development.

We anticipate the joint City-County assessment will be complete by early fall. At that time, County staff will report the results to the Board of County Commissioners and City staff will report to the City Council with a recommendation on whether or not to proceed with developing a community sustainability plan.

To stay updated on this process and voice your interest in a sustainability plan for Charlotte at the right time to city leaders, follow Sustain Charlotte on Facebook and sign up for their e-news via their website (sustaincharlotte.org). The more citizens asking for this plan, the more likely it is to happen!

NORTH LIGHT
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Commonwealth Cookin' Crusty Bread

*Submitted by Sophia Hollingsworth, Commonwealth Ave.
found on Pinterest*

3 cups unbleached all purpose flour
1 3/4 teaspoons salt
1/2 teaspoon yeast
1 1/2 cups water

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together flour, salt and yeast. Add water and mix until a shaggy mixture forms. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and set aside for 12 - 18 hours. Overnight works great. Heat oven to 450 degrees. When the oven has reached 450 degrees place a cast iron pot with a lid in the oven and heat the pot for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, pour dough onto a heavily floured surface and shape into a ball. Cover with plastic wrap and let set while the pot is heating. Remove hot pot from the oven and drop in the dough. Cover and return to oven for 30 minutes. After 30 minutes remove the lid and bake an additional 15 minutes. Remove bread from oven and place on a cooling rack to cool.

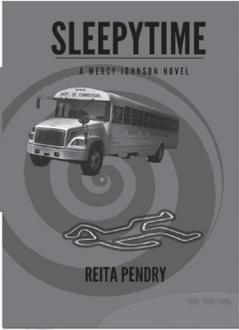
You **DO NOT** need to oil, grease or PAM your cooking pot. I have not had the bread stick yet. You're going to have to trust me on that advice. I have had many people ask what size pot I use. In this post I am using a **5.5 quart enamel cast iron pot**. This size is perfect.

NoDa Produce Now Open!

By Chuck McIntosh

Recently, NoDa Produce Marketplace opened its doors with daily local sustainable fruits and vegetables from the Carolinas. With the recent remodeling of Harris Teeter off The Plaza, local residents were scrambling for a place with fresh produce. Owners Robert and Chuck have many great ideas in store for the community that include "How to Garden" seminars and teaching you the steps to beekeeping. Their philosophy of Farm to Table freshness is evident when you explore the many varieties of local fruits and vegetables. From juicy white peaches (consider wearing a bib!) to succulent sweet Sangria watermelons, you are sure to beat this heat with these great treats. Local artists will also be able to show their work and they have partnered with the Junk Rescue crew to offer full on recycling. Batteries, light bulbs, glass, plastic, cardboard, paper, used vegetable oil, motor oil, steel, aluminum, and tailings (food waste) can all be brought to the Recycling Wall, which opened July 28.

NoDa Produce Marketplace can be found on Facebook and is located near Amelie's at 2320 N. Davidson St. 7 days a week.

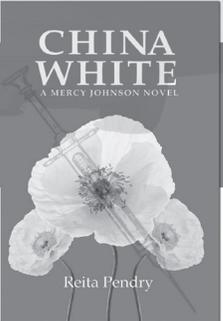


SLEEPYTIME
A MERCY JOHNSON NOVEL
by Reita Pendry

SLEEPYTIME
A MERCY JOHNSON NOVEL
by Reita Pendry

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Read about Mercy Johnson, Washington, D.C. defense attorney, as she maneuvers to free a young student accused of smuggling millions of dollars of drugs from the Orient (China White) and as she takes on the FBI and a gang of prison toughs to show that her client is not involved in the murder of a guard (Sleepytime).



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6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Featured Artist: Tim Sheaffer

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Dawn Dozier - Tim Sheaffer - Lori January - Janet Boschker - Brown Bobbitt - Diane Hopper

What is a Neighborhood Watch?

By Jason Van Buren, Shenandoah Ave.

So now we've had our first neighborhood watch meeting, are in the process of registering with the city, and are figuring out where the signs will be put up. Now what? The truth is, we as a neighborhood, have done a great job as a watch without it being official.

What is it that we are supposed to be doing as a neighborhood watch? First and foremost, if you see anything suspicious call 911. On the CMPD website they define suspicious as "any situation, object, or person that attracts your attention and is not immediately explainable". We've learned some hard lessons in this neighborhood about what can happen amidst suspicious people and activities. Do not hesitate to call 911! It is imperative to our safety that we report any illegal or possibly illegal activity. When (not if, when) word gets out of a neighborhood that's easy to victimize, it can be very difficult to restore peace and order.

Another area we need to be extra vigilant in at this time is the extraordinary amount of vacant homes in the area. Due to foreclosure, eviction, and people selling their homes there are quite a few of these properties, many right next to each other that are empty. These houses are magnets for squatters, drug dealers, prostitutes, just criminals in general. Keep an eye out on these homes in your corner of Commonwealth Park. If garbage litters the ground and the grass is unkempt, call 311 and file a code enforcement case. If criminals see that we are keeping an eye out on these properties they are less likely to use these homes for their endeavors. You can also file code enforcement complaints at www.charmeck.org, and can even download an app on your smart phone.

Friends, we have received excellent feedback from the CMPD Eastway Division, praising us for our proactive stance on fighting crime. They've noticed a rise in citizen involvement and our watch meeting was one of the highest attended neighborhood watch meetings that the officers had attended in quite some time. We've taken to the media by way of television, radio, print, and digital publication letting the city know that we will not tolerate criminal activity in Commonwealth Park. We've put pressure (and are continuing to put

pressure) on the city council to shut down The Charlotte Inn, and have shown our support and cooperation with the CMPD in working on this project that will insure a safer way of life for all of us.

These are all things a neighborhood watch does. In the next month we will be officially registered with the city and will have our signs up. One of the 27 neighbors that volunteered to be block captains will notify you of their contact info so we can all stay informed of activity in the neighborhood. Our Google group will be repurposed as a bulletin board for the neighborhood watch that our CMPD Community Coordinator, Officer Shane Strayer, will have access to, and will enable him to communicate with us, not only with CMPD news, but also to answer any questions or handle concerns on an individual basis. Lets keep up the great work neighbors, and continue to show criminals that they and their enterprise are not welcome in Commonwealth Park!



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Hot Weather Wellness Tips

By Jordan Deveix, MS, RCEP, Exercise Physiologist,
Commonwealth Ave.

I don't know if you've noticed but summer has made its presence known here in the Queen City. If you have wondered how to stay healthy and safe during these toasty months, I have a few tips for you:

- **Water:** Pop quiz – how much fluid should you strive to drink every day? Ding! – You should really try to *get at least 64* ounces of fluid in per day. If you are going to be outside in this hot weather, that number may need to go higher. The preferred beverage to indulge in is good old fashioned water, however, if the taste of water doesn't get you very motivated, here is a general rule of thumb as far as safe fluid intake – it should only count if it is caffeine free, alcohol free, and less than 10 calories per serving, so put away that Gatorade unless you are part of a summer Olympic team and quench your thirst with a lower calorie alternative.
- **Exercise Smart:** Even if you already hydrate yourself properly, you still need to be cautious of the temperature outside as well as the humidity. Both numbers play a big role in the safety of participating in outdoor activities (even things like yard work and walking your dog). If you decide to exercise outside during high humidity, it's like exercising with a big thermal blanket on, there is nowhere for the heat you create in your body to leave, increasing the risk of heat stress and heat stroke. Whenever possible, you need to schedule your outdoor physical activities/exercise during the coolest parts of the day – early morning before the humidity sets in or late in the evening once the temperature is trending back down. We still have the luxury of having a late sunset so take advantage of the extended twilight hours and exercise then. The best option – participating in indoor exercises where you can control the temperature (and crank up you're A/C).

If you decide to exercise in the middle of the day, try to break it up so that you are not outside for long periods of time. Breaking up your exercise can still be just as beneficial as doing it all at once.

- **Show Some Skin:** When exercising, especially outdoors when it's hot out, expose as much skin as socially acceptable. Sweat is your body's way of cooling off, and if you cover it with a bunch of clothing, you trap in the heat and increase the likelihood of heat stress. So choose clothing like shorts and a tank top. If possible, buy clothing that has moisture wicking technology in the fabric. Try not to wear cotton t-shirts on a hot and humid day, it holds onto a lot of heat, inhibiting your body's cool down mechanism.

Seek and Find

By Lou Galanty, Pinecrest Ave.

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Can you found these signs of Summer??

HOT WEATHER SUNSHINE NO SCHOOL
BEACH BALL PICNIC SANDALS PARTIES
VACATION COOKOUTS FUN

- **Take off the Trash Bag:** Please do not go out and by 'sweat suits'. These garments look like trash bags with sleeves and pants. Wrestlers and boxers have made them popular in movies and pop culture as a way to drop weight fast. **Reality Check** – All you are losing is water weight, these suits trap all of your heat, inhibiting your sweat and cooling process, not only do you gain the weight back as soon as you drink a bottle of water but it is VERY DANGEROUS! Many people have collapsed due to heat stress and heat stroke due to this piece of clothing that otherwise could have been easily avoided. So please, do not waste your money on this or other 'quick fixes' to lose weight and inches fast. A healthy and safe weight loss is anywhere between ½ to 2lbs per week. This may sound a little slow however, the weight you are burning off is more likely to be from fat vs. fluid or muscle if you do this the right way. Remember, you did not gain weight over night, don't expect to lose it all overnight either.

Try to keep these points in mind when participating in physical activity this summer. The most important thing to do is have fun with whatever activity you participate in, but always remember, you want to keep yourself as well as the ones you love safe as well during this extended heat wave.

Now get up and move!

Safety Reminders for Runners

By Beth Robb, ACE Certified Personal Trainer and YMCA/Corporate Run Coach, Goodwin Ave.

It is the summer season and that means trying to get a jog in whenever you can... and in the heat that might fall in the after dark or in the early morning hours. I wanted to refresh everyone on some general road running safety tips, especially since I can be caught breaking many of these on a regular basis.

Don't wear headphones (or at least be selective). *Use your ears to be aware of your surroundings. Your ears may help you avoid dangers your eyes may miss during evening or early morning runs. I rarely wear headphones at dawn and dusk, and other times the music is tuned low enough to hear traffic.*

Run (and walk) against traffic so you can observe approaching automobiles. *By facing on-coming traffic, you may be able to react quicker than if it is behind you.*

Look both ways before crossing. *Be sure the driver of a car acknowledges your right-of-way before crossing in front of a vehicle. Obey traffic signals. Sounds intuitive right... there have been many times I was zoned out and kept running through an intersection.*

Carry identification or write your name, phone number, and blood type on the inside sole of your running shoe. *Include any medical information.*

Carry a cell phone. *Consider which of your neighbors' houses you can suddenly stop in, in case of emergency*

Alter or vary your running route pattern; *run in familiar areas if possible. In unfamiliar areas, such as while traveling, contact a local RRCA club or running store. Know where open businesses or stores are located in case of emergency.*

Run with a partner or a dog. There is a group of runners just started on the community Facebook board (...And if you ever need to borrow a dog, I'm sure we have plenty in the 'hood that would love to go running!)

Write down or leave word of the direction of your run. *Tell friends and family of your favorite running routes.*

Avoid unpopulated areas, deserted streets, and overgrown trails. Avoid unlit areas, especially at night. Run clear of parked cars or bushes.

Ignore verbal harassment and do not verbally harass others. *Use discretion in acknowledging strangers. Look directly at others and be observant, but*

keep your distance and keep moving. Some people just love to honk their horns and check in with a whistle or yell...

Wear reflective material or a blinky light if you must run before dawn or after dark. *Avoid running on the street when it is dark. We have some areas without sidewalks... dress bright and be noticed.*

Some other notes: **Always stay alert and aware** of what's going on around you. *The more aware you are, the less vulnerable you are. Trust your intuition about a person or an area. React on your intuition and avoid a person or situation if you're unsure. If something tells you a situation is not "right", it isn't. Practice memorizing license tags or identifying characteristics of strangers. Carry a noisemaker. Get training in self-defense. When using multi-use trails, follow the rules of the road. If you alter your direction, look over your shoulder before crossing the trail to avoid a potential collision with an oncoming cyclist or passing runner. Call police immediately if something happens to you or someone else, or you notice anyone out of the ordinary. It is important to report incidents immediately.*

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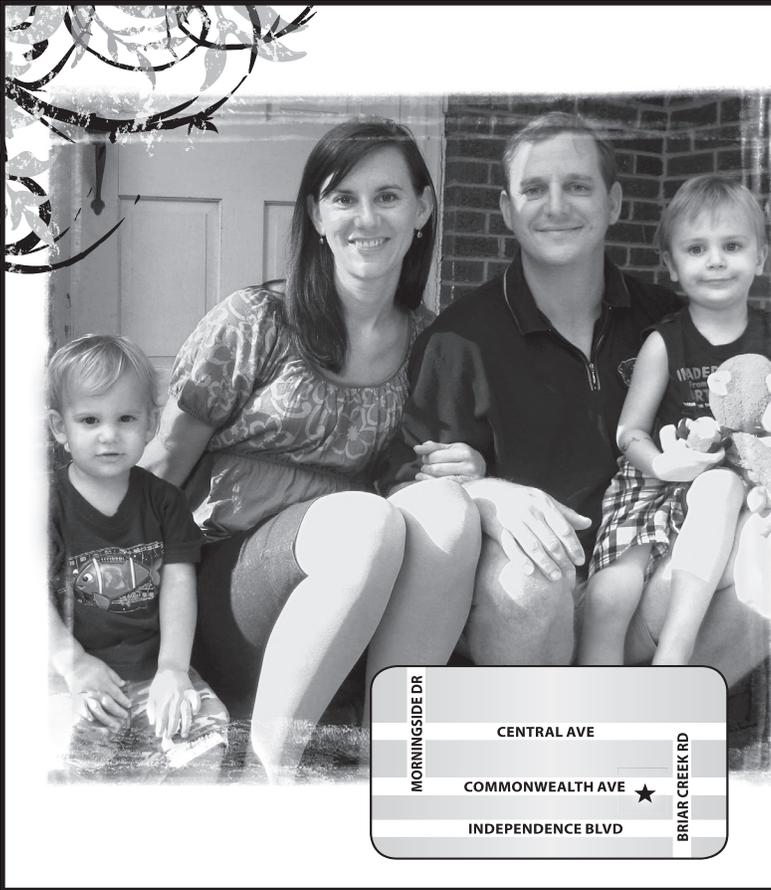




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