



## IN THIS ISSUE...

WAVELAND PARK  
❧ TROLLEY PARK ❧  
ANNOUNCEMENT

❧ NEIGHBORHOOD EVENTS ❧

SPRING 2021

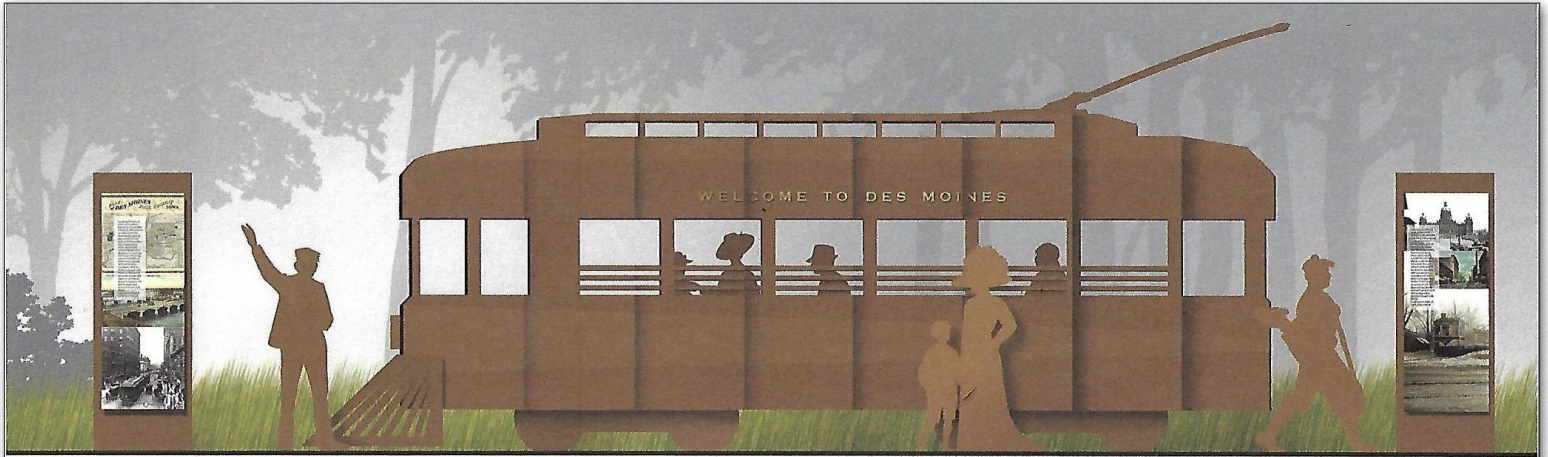
Cover image courtesy of Annick Sjobakken

# WATERBURY NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

*From the Waterbury Neighborhood Association*



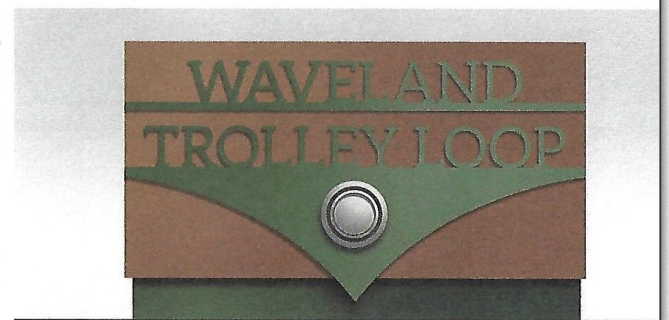
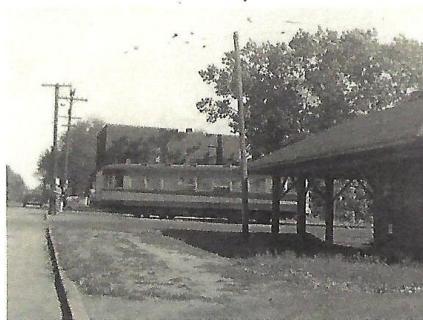
# WAVELAND PARK TROLLEY PARK ANNOUNCEMENT



STREETCAR SCULPTURE & INTERPRETATIVE EXHIBIT



HISTORIC IMAGERY



WAVELAND TROLLEY LOOP ENTRANCE SIGN

## WAVELAND TROLLEY LOOP ART INSTALLATION & EXHIBIT

UNIVERSITY AVENUE | CITY OF DES MOINES | DSM STREETCAR FRIENDS

SHIVE-HATTERY  
ARCHITECTURE+ENGINEERING

Waterbury's neighbor to the north, the Waveland Park Neighborhood Association, is partnering with the Des Moines Historical Society and the Des Moines Streetcar Friends to raise funds for construction of The Waveland Trolley Loop Monument.

The monument will be located on University Avenue immediately east of the Waveland Golf Course entrance. This long-neglected site is actually quite important historically to Des Moines. It was the western terminus of the University Avenue trolley line, which operated from 1901 to 1947 and helped spur Des Moines' western expansion in the early 20th century before automobiles came into common use.

The intent of the trolley loop project is to create a welcoming pedestrian space featuring a streetcar sculpture, interpretive information, and a place to relax along the new University Avenue multi-use recreational trail. The completed project will improve the appearance of the surrounding Des Moines west side neighborhoods and will help the entire metro area by demonstrating how important trolleys once were to Des Moines.

The designers' interactive rendering is available here: <https://www.shive-hattery.com/microsite/waveland-trolley-loop>

A donation from you will help reach the goal of \$275,000 to fund the monument's construction, and will also demonstrate community support of the project when making grant requests. A little over \$165,000 has been raised so far, so with your help construction can be under way this year. Any amount you are able to donate will be greatly appreciated!

The easiest way to donate is through the Waveland Park Neighborhood Association online at: [www.wavelandpark.org](http://www.wavelandpark.org) and click on "donate", top right of the home page. If you prefer, you can send a check to the Waveland Park Neighborhood Association, P.O. Box 30112, Des Moines, IA 50310; please write "Waveland Trolley Project" in the check memo line. The Waveland Park Neighborhood Association is a 501(c)(3) organization, and Waveland Park Neighborhood Association will provide a donation acknowledgment and receipt.

# SAVE THE DATES FOR SPRING AND SUMMER NEIGHBORHOOD EVENTS

We are hoping to be able to gather again this spring and summer, and are looking forward to seeing everyone out and about! Check Waterbury's Facebook page for event details and rain dates, as needed.

*Please wear masks and plan to socially distance at all of the following events, until CDC recommendations change.*

- Saturday, April 24 - Garden Clean-Up Day, Waterbury Garden on Polk & Ingersoll, 10am-noon
- Saturday, May 15 - Neighborhood Spring Kids' Bike Clinic & Polk Planting Day, 10am-noon, Waterbury Garden on Polk & Ingersoll
  - Families can pick up free bike helmets for the kids, courtesy of Blank Children's Hospital and the Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau, and check out a fun bike challenge course on the wavy garden sidewalk.
  - This is also our annual planting day for flowers along Polk. Any and all volunteers are welcome! Bring gloves and a trowel, and we'll head down Polk beginning at 10am.
- Thursday, July 15 - Free Flicks in the Rose Garden
  - Film and exact time TBD, see Facebook for details
- Tuesday, August 3 - National Night Out

Thanks to Waterbury neighbor, photographer Annick Sjobakken, for this issue's cover image.

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

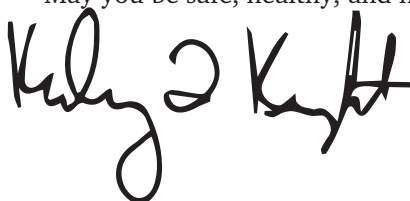
First and foremost, I would like to introduce myself as your new Waterbury Neighborhood Association president. I have only lived here for a short time (since summer 2018), but I have loved it so far, and I am excited to be more engaged with this lovely neighborhood in my new role.

It is hard to believe that just a few short weeks ago we were experiencing sub-zero temperatures. I remember sitting in my home, looking out the window at the foot of snow in my yard being topped off with another 5 inches. Vaccines had just started being shipped out, but for the most part COVID was still in full swing. Would I be stuck in my home, under 2 feet of snow, away from my friends and family forever? A lot of the last year has felt like that but friends, I am here to tell you that it is finally spring!

Slow but sure I have begun to notice the telltale signs. I walk outside every morning and hear birds singing. The sun is still up when I get home at night and I can tell its warmth is encouraging the trees to bloom. I went on a walk and saw small white crocuses poking their heads up through the brown leaves. When I look for them, there are little glimpses of spring and hope all around.

We wish to be able to see all your friendly, familiar faces this year, and maybe even host an event or two, but the future is still a bit uncertain. For now, as spring requires, we are going to focus on our beautiful gardens. We would love to connect with you and give you all an opportunity to get outside and feel the earth, so look within this newsletter, online and on Facebook for those opportunities.

May you be safe, healthy, and happy.



Kelsey L. Knight

### Volunteers Needed: Adopt an Endcap!

It's become quite a challenge to keep the Polk Boulevard endcaps weeded and watered. We're actively looking for neighborhood volunteers to "adopt" an endcap and check in with watering and weeding regularly over the growing season.

If you'd like to sign up, or have any questions, please contact our gardening co-chair, Tom McBride, at [thm3sticks@gmail.com](mailto:thm3sticks@gmail.com) or 515-771-8248



[waterburyneighbors.org](http://waterburyneighbors.org)



@waterburyneighbors



@WaterburyDSM



3



# HAPPENING IN WATERBURY

## Volunteer Opportunity & Jardinere Thanks

Many thanks to Ellen Cleveland for adopting the jardinere planter on 56th Street for the past several years. Ellen was our anonymous jardinere caretaker until a WNA board member spotted her at work. According to Ellen, "I decided to 'be the change you want to see,' and temporarily give the neighborhood a lift. That 'temporary' turned into three years." Thank you, Ellen!



If you'd like to adopt the jardinere for this summer season- or longer- please contact the WNA gardening committee co-chair, Tom McBride, at [thm3sticks@gmail.com](mailto:thm3sticks@gmail.com) or 515-771-8248 to coordinate, and for more of Ellen's tips and sources.

## Greener Gardens, Lawns, and Trees

The city of Des Moines' Stormwater Subsidy program will reimburse homeowners up to 50% of costs up to \$2000 for a variety of improvements that benefit soil retention and water management. If you're interested in rain barrels, permeable pavers, rain gardens, soil quality restoration, or would like to learn more please see:

[https://www.dsm.city/departments/public\\_works-division/stormwater\\_management.php](https://www.dsm.city/departments/public_works-division/stormwater_management.php)

**Tiny Trees Are Back!** Help to build up Des Moines' tree canopy with free tiny trees- up to 5 per household! This year's orders are due by April 23, and pickup will be May 8. Varieties include river birch, elderberry, redbud, white oak, and white pine. [https://www.dsm.city/departments/public\\_works-division/forestry/tinytrees.php](https://www.dsm.city/departments/public_works-division/forestry/tinytrees.php)

## Parks Programs

Check out the City of Des Moines' Parks and Recreation Spring and Summer Program Guide for more information about rec sports leagues, golf, swimming lessons, pool hours, nature programs, events like Yoga in the Park, Free Flicks, Nature Trail Running, and more. See [https://www.dsm.city/departments/parks\\_and\\_recreation-division/index.php](https://www.dsm.city/departments/parks_and_recreation-division/index.php)

## Neighborhood Recipes

We hope you enjoyed the Tea Room recipe shared in the Fall/Winter 2020 issue. If you have a favorite recipe you'd like to share, we would love to start featuring recipes in the newsletter regularly. Please email [news@waterburyneighbors.com](mailto:news@waterburyneighbors.com)



## 2020 Luminaries

Once again, more and more neighbors joined in to light up the streets of Waterbury with luminaries on December 24. We hope you had a chance to see the neighborhood glowing, and that they helped make the season brighter for everyone. A huge thanks to block captains, committee chairs, and everyone who brings this tradition to life every year. Information for Winter 2021 will be in our next newsletter.



**Waterbury Wildlife** Photo credit: Annick Sjobakken

# MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL



## 2021 Membership & Volunteer Form

### Waterbury Neighborhood Association

**Online Option:** Join or renew at [www.WaterburyNeighbors.org](http://www.WaterburyNeighbors.org)

#### Personal Information

First Name:	Last Name:
First Name:	Last Name:
Address:	
City:	State: ZIP:
Email:	
Home Phone:	Cell Phone:

#### Please Select

- ☐ \$30 Family/Household Membership
- ☐ \$25 Single/Senior Family Membership
- ☐ \$250 Sustaining Membership (10 years)
- ☐ \$500 Lifetime Membership
- ☐ \$20 Non-Resident Membership
- ☐ Gift to the Foundation\* of \$\_\_\_\_\_

#### Please send checks to:

**Waterbury Neighborhood Association**  
**P.O. Box 12054**  
**Des Moines, Iowa 50312**

Please make membership checks payable to the Waterbury Neighborhood Association. Membership is voluntary and follows the calendar year.

\*Foundation gifts are tax deductible; please make these checks payable to the Waterbury Neighborhood Foundation.

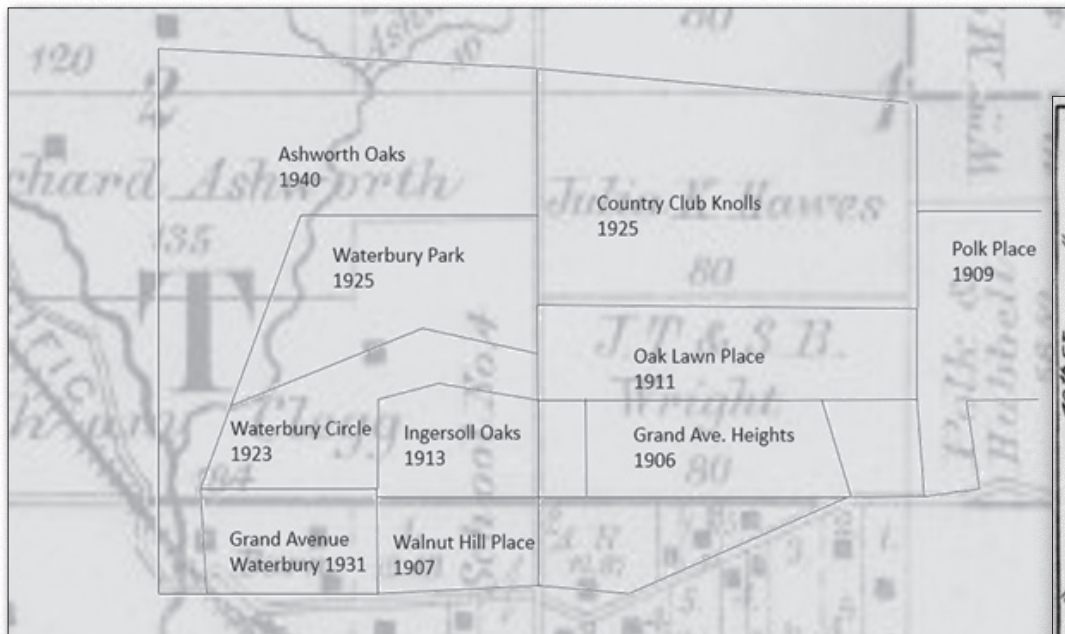
#### Volunteer Opportunities

I am also interested in the following (please check all that apply):

- |                                     |   |  |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trees      | <input type="checkbox"/> Improvement Projects | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Events                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership           | <input type="checkbox"/> One-time Project                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gardens    | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media         | <input type="checkbox"/> Board of Directors (it's easy!) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Luminaries | <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising          | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                     |

*Not sure if your membership is current? Email us to find out at [News@waterburyneighbors.org](mailto:News@waterburyneighbors.org)  
Please note "membership" in the subject line*





## Polk Place Development

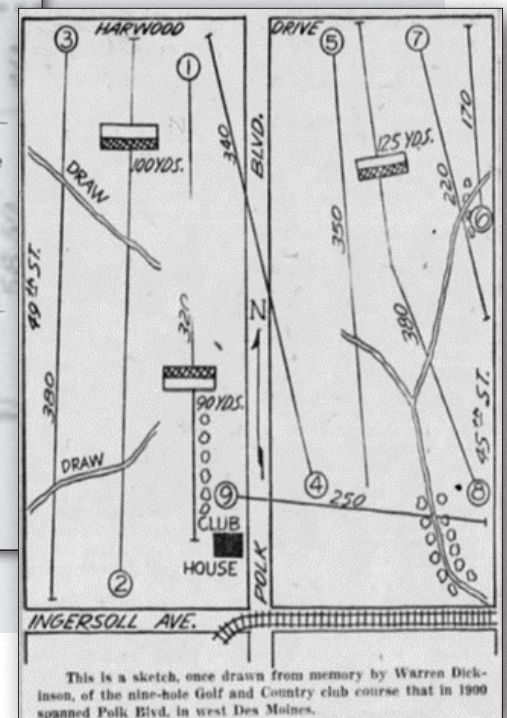
One of the earliest developments in the Waterbury Neighborhood was Polk Place. The tract is named after the former owner J.S. Polk. The Annals of Iowa (1908, Vol. 8) reported that:

Jefferson Scott Polk was born on the 18th day of February, 1831, near Georgetown, Scott, county, Kentucky; he died at Des Moines, Iowa, November 3, 1907. He was graduated from Georgetown college and... was admitted to the Kentucky bar in 1855. Mr. Polk removed to Des Moines in 1856, entering the practice of the law at a strong bar at which he early took high rank. After a few years alone, he became associated with the late General M. M. Crocker and Judge P. M. Casady under the style of Casady, Crocker & Polk and afterward with F. M. Hubbell as Polk & Hubbell which firm dissolved in 1887... The firm of Polk & Hubbell was a great, perhaps the leading, factor in Des Moines financial life as early as 1880. It operated chiefly in the fields of real estate and transportation properties. At the dissolution of the firm Mr. Polk acquired the principal part of the firm's transportation properties. Of these that of the Des Moines City Railway Company became the most significant. This he developed from several horse car lines under different managements and of indifferent effectiveness, into a single electrical urban system with universal transfer service, thorough management and popular convenience. To this he designed to attach an interurban system and before he died had carried his plans well toward establishment. He was the first to successfully experiment in collecting mails on street cars. He has been imitated in many American cities. Anywhere in the city any car stops on signal to allow a letter to be placed in the box to be removed in a few minutes at the postoffice. Mr. Polk acquired immense wealth.

The map above shows the ownership of the Polk Place land in the Waterbury neighborhood land in 1885. At that time, the land was owned by J.S. Polk and F.M. Hubbell.

J.S. Polk acquired the approximately 60 acres of land when his partnership with Hubbell dissolved. For the next decade, the land served as pastureland for cows. Around the turn of the century golf was beginning to become popular in Des Moines. On September 28, 1897 potential golf club members met to discuss a possible golf course. Harry Polk was appointed to negotiate with his father for the use of the pastureland. There were concerns that the cows would be unfenced from the course. It was negotiated that the club could use the land if it agreed to pay the \$150 a year for the taxes on the land. On October 11, 1897, the Golf and Country Club filed articles of incorporation.

The club was located at the end of the Ingersoll trolley line. The first club was a haphazard 18 hole with little definition. It later became a 9-hole golf course under the design of Warren Dickinson. The first clubhouse was built in 1899 and was located on the northwest corner of Polk Boulevard and Ingersoll Avenue. It was a rustic style building one and half stories with dimensions of 60 x 30. On August 28, 1900, the first Iowa Golf Association Championship was held on the grounds.



This is a sketch, once drawn from memory by Warren Dickinson, of the nine-hole Golf and Country club course that in 1900 spanned Polk Blvd. in west Des Moines.



**1<sup>st</sup> Clubhouse northwest corner Ingersoll & Polk**

On October 2, 1903, the Golf and Country Club announced that the present golf links would be turned back over to Polk. The club had secured a 20-year lease on a 98 acre site owned by the Gilcrest family. The new location would be adjacent to Waveland Golf Course on the north, 49th Street on the east, 56th Street on the west and on the south a line between Woodland Avenue and Waterbury Road would mark that boundary. On Saturday, June 9, 1906, the second location of Des Moines Golf was opened.

In 1907 J.S. Polk sold the approximately 60 acres of land to J.C. Mehan, real estate broker, for \$340,000. Ten Polk Place lots were auctioned in 1908 and lots were being sold by 1909 for \$600 to \$1,000. The lots were being marketed as “aristocratic surroundings, absolutely nothing to compare with the addition in the city.”

Extensive development started occurring around 1912 when Pharmer Investments acquired 40 additional acres of the land. Pharmer stated that the “houses in the addition will be modern in every respect. They will be built back from the street and plenty of room will be allowed between sites.” That year the city started paving the sidewalks and Polk Boulevard. The boulevard was designed to be 100 feet wide with 20 feet of parking in the center.



**THE MAGNIFICENT POLK BOULEVARD**

100 ft. street interesting Polk Place as it will look when paving is completed



Waterbury Neighborhood Association  
P.O. Box 12054  
Des Moines, IA 50312

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### Are You New to Waterbury?

If you are new to our lovely neighborhood, we wish you a hearty welcome! If you are looking to get involved in the neighborhood, we always have a need for the following volunteers:

- Advertising
- Assisting at Events
- Fundraising
- Gardening
- Special Projects
- Web Content Generator
- Welcome Committee



If any of these options sound interesting, please send us a note at [news@waterburyneighbors.org](mailto:news@waterburyneighbors.org)

**Please be sure to check Waterbury's Facebook and other social media for the spring and summer volunteering updates!**



Waterbury Neighborhood

[waterburyneighbors.org](http://waterburyneighbors.org)



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