



# Newsletter

Winter 2023

[forestparkcivicassociation@gmail.com](mailto:forestparkcivicassociation@gmail.com)

<https://www.facebook.com/forestparkcivicsoc>

## ANNUAL TREE LIGHTING AT THE “X”

More than 50 neighbors gathered for the annual lighting of the Christmas Tree on the small triangle in the “X” Business District on Wednesday, December 7, 2022. Sponsored by the FPCA, Café Christo, the Police Department’s Forest Park C-3 Unit, and the Placanica Family, children and adults celebrated the lighting with Santa Claus, elected officials, and the grand countdown to flip the switch, followed by hot chocolate and sweet treats at Café Christo on Belmont Avenue.

The lighting for the 30-foot tree was installed by the Springfield Department of Parks, Buildings, and Recreation Management. The tree stands on a triangular terrace adopted by the Placanica family in 1997, just one year after the city launched the Adopt-a-Terrace program, in memory of Jimmy and Dora Placanica, former long-time residents of Forest Park. The couple’s daughter, Maria Placanica, and many of her family members joined the celebration, as they have for many past tree lightings. While the tree is enormous, it is not the original tree planted when the triangle was first dedicated. That tree burned after being

struck by lightning many years ago and was promptly replaced by the City’s Forestry Division.

The triangle at the corner of Sumner and Belmont Avenues was the site of an unusual limousine stop in August 2001, when Maria Placanica’s daughter, Jamie Anne Murray, paused en route to her wedding at

*Continued on page 4*

*Photo to left: Santa Claus with Beate Bolen, FPCA President, in front of lit tree.*



## ABOUT US

*Forest Park is one of the largest neighborhoods in Springfield with about 25,000 residents, 6 public schools (Kensington, Washington, White Street, Sumner Avenue, Beal, and Forest Park Middle School), a public library, the largest park in Springfield, a golf course, and many diverse businesses and organizations.*

*The FPCA is the oldest civic association in the city (1964), dedicated to improving and maintaining the quality of life for Forest Park residents.*

*Membership in the FPCA is open to any resident and/or business in Forest Park. Email us for more information. All are welcome!*

## FPCA Board Members

**2022-2023**

**Officers:**

President	Beate Bolen
Vice-President	David Rosinski
Secretary/Coordinator	Jackie Pleet
Treasurer	Don Evans

**Committees:**

Community Improvement	Ron Davis Bill Malloy
Distribution Education & Library	Beverly Paige Mary Ann Maloney Jackie Pleet
Finance	Don Evans Beate Bolen Brian Sears
Historic Hospitality Membership	Harry Seymour Barbara Davis Ruth Mahoney Kathy Post
Newsletter	Kathy Post Beate Bolen
Parks	Phil Contant Amy Gustman Virginia White
Program Public Safety	-- Wayne Nelson Sandra Vella Virginia White
Zoning	Jane Hetzel Pat Markey
“X” Business Liaison	Dan Morrissey
Facebook/Website	Beate Bolen
Historian/Archivist	Pat Triggs
At-Large	Victor Davila Paul Sears Laura Walsh

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Meetings are held on the **second Tuesday** of each month, 6:30-8:00 pm, except in July & August, in the John J. Shea Bright Nights Building in Forest Park

### Upcoming Meetings:

- **February 14**
- **Sunday, March 12 – Annual Meeting**
- **April 11**
- **May 9**
- **June 13**

## FPCA President’s Letter



Happy New Year!

It has been great to see so many participants at our monthly meetings in our new home, the John J. Shea Bright Nights Building in Forest Park.

This Fall and Winter, we had a very successful Halloween Party at the Garfield/Fairfield Triangle. The children, teens and parents really got

into the spirit with costumes, games and wonderful sweet treats. We also enjoyed a wonderful Tree Lighting event at the “X”. Thank you to the many people who helped to make it successful. The Parks Department again decorated and lit the tree, and Christo again opened his Café Christo to all, offering a warm gathering place, hot chocolate and coffee, and a place for kids to meet Santa. Thank you as well to our C-3 police officers for directing traffic so that we could safely enjoy each other’s company.

We have had a busy few months reviewing permit requests and zoning variance requests impacting our Forest Park neighborhood. Our comments and suggestions do influence the decisions of our City officials, so please continue to share your ideas and your concerns. We have also submitted applications for ARPA funds for a variety of safety and beautification projects in our area, as well as raised traffic safety issues on Longhill Street along with our suggestions for ameliorating the situation.

Currently, we are in the process of gathering input on how to best utilize the Neighborhood Council Stabilization Fund designated by the Mayor to help our organization and other neighborhood councils and associations to better communicate with and serve our neighborhood. We will be scheduling meetings to hear from all of you on how we can best do that, so be on the lookout for those dates and share them with all your neighbors.

I really want to emphasize that all are welcome to our meetings. They are an opportunity to meet new neighbors, learn about issues of concern in the neighborhood, get updated on public safety, and share your opinion about upcoming permit requests, zoning issues, and other issues that potentially affect our quality of life. Here is the place to make your voice heard, and hear the thoughts of your neighbors.

Finally, “Save the Date” of Sunday, March 12, 2023 from 4 PM to 6 PM for our FPCA Annual Meeting at the ECOS Building in Forest Park.

Be well! Beate Bolen, President, FPCA

## From The Editor

I hope this Winter edition of the FPCA brightens and warms your day! Please email me with ideas for stories or pictures that you would like to contribute or see in a future issue.

Kathy Post

[katherinempost@gmail.com](mailto:katherinempost@gmail.com)

Cozy Corner resident since 1995



## Update Your Historic House Date Plaque

The FPCA is excited to offer Forest Park Heights Historic District residents the opportunity to purchase a **Historic House Date Plaque**. House date plaques are a sign of pride in your home and the neighborhood.

This is an opportunity for historic homeowners with faded/damaged signs to replace them for free, and for residents looking to purchase a date plaque for the first time. FPCA will confirm your home's build year and provide and install a plaque for \$50. If you're a first-time member of FPCA, your purchase will also include one (1) year of FPCA membership (a \$20 value).

**To order your plaque**, contact Board Member Bill Malloy with your name, address, and cash or a check payable to FPCA in the amount of \$50.

### Bill Malloy

223 Forest Park Ave  
Springfield, MA 01108  
(413) 539 - 8278

[attymalloy@gmail.com](mailto:attymalloy@gmail.com)

## We Remember: John Olmsted

By Kathy Post

In the Fall, I wrote about Justin Sackett as the original designer and builder of Forest Park – not Frederick Law Olmsted as many believe. But an Olmsted was involved, specifically John Olmsted, appointed the first Chairman of the Board of Park Commissioners on September 29, 1883. That year, the Commissioners voted to acquire the first 90 acres of land for Forest Park and hired Justin Sackett to begin its development. In 1890 Olmsted donated almost 10 acres of land to the park, matched by separate donations from three of his business colleagues and fellow commissioners: John D. McKnight, Walter H. Wesson, and James Kirkham.

Born on his father George Olmsted's farm in Enfield, CT in 1820, John Olmsted grew up with an entrepreneurial spirit and great business acumen. At 20 years old, he began peddling tinware and gathering cotton rags and paper stock, building a company that earned him a handsome fortune until his health problems retired him to the family farm in 1854. After six years of recovery, he moved to Springfield and established profitable businesses manufacturing cotton batting and twine, first with Lewis H. Taylor and later with Frank E. Tuttle. But his greatest enterprise was developing the Springfield Street Railway system, beginning as Director in 1872 and then succeeding its founder, George Atwater, as President and Treasurer in 1876. The extension of the newly electrified trolley system to the Sumner Avenue entrance to Forest Park in 1890, as well as the development of the surrounding neighborhood, boosted park attendance from just a few thousand a year to over 600,000 visits by 1898. Mayor Henry Dickinson's selection of John Olmsted as Park Commission Chairman turned out to be quite auspicious for both the City and for the Railway.

John Olmsted was recognized by many as a leader, serving as a trustee, director, board member, or officer for many institutions: the First National Bank, Hampden Savings Bank, Springfield Board of Trade, Springfield Library and Museums, and Oak Grove Cemetery. He invested his wealth in the Indian Orchard Company, United Electric Light, and the Union Newspaper and was a noted philanthropist. At the time of his death at the age of 84 in 1905, he was in poor health and had lost his wife and one of his daughters already. He was survived by his remaining daughter, Mrs. Henry J. Beebe, four grandchildren, and his son-in-law F. H. Goldthwaite.

Did John Olmsted and Frederick Law Olmsted ever meet each other? It's possible, given that their lives overlapped – John lived from 1820 to 1905 and Frederick from 1822 to 1903. And they were, in fact, distant cousins. But you would have to go back nearly 150 years to their shared great-great-grandfather Deacon Joseph Olmstead, born 1674 in Hartford, Connecticut and buried 1762 in East Hartford, to find their common line of descent. So, let's give credit for our wonderful Forest Park where it's due – to the right Olmsted!

# FARMERS MARKET @ FOREST PARK UPDATE

By Jodi-Lyn Manning. The Winter Farmers Market at Forest Park continues on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays of the month through April, 10am – 2pm. Check out our new space this Winter!

Be sure to arrive early for a hot cinnamon bun from Doce Mercer and Monsoon coffee! This year we are located in the large warehouse area in the John J. Shea Bright Nights Building – a comfortable heated space with plenty of room to visit your favorite vendors. For weekly updates about vendors and events, visit our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/farmersmarketatforestpark>.

May marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of market and we plan on celebrating all season long. But we need help! Please contact Jodi at [farmersmarketforestpark@gmail.com](mailto:farmersmarketforestpark@gmail.com) for volunteer and sponsorship opportunities.

Don't forget, if you have SNAP, then you have HIP! Learn how you can access an additional \$40-\$80 a month in fresh produce for your family by visiting [www.mass.gov/HIP](http://www.mass.gov/HIP). Also, check out the great food-finder feature on CISA's website, [www.buylocalfood.org](http://www.buylocalfood.org).



*Photo above: Customers look at CISA materials at the Farmers Market last Fall*

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## X Tree Lighting

*(Continued from page 1)*

Sacred Heart Church. She placed a yellow rose on the terrace to represent the boutonniere that Jimmy would have worn had he been present for his granddaughter's wedding.

James Placanica was born in the South End, grew up in the Six Corners neighborhood, and ran an auto body shop in the South End for many years. Jimmy served in the Air Force and met his wife Delores Martoscia in Naples while stationed in Italy during the Second World War. He brought her home to Springfield in 1946 and they settled in Forest Park, first on Johnson Street and then on Dorset, where they raised three daughters. Maria recalls walking to the "X" with her mother,



translating from Italian and back as they conducted their errands in the former A&P, Liberty Bakery, the SIS Bank, Blake's Department Store, and many other businesses. Jimmy died at age 57 in 1981, and Delores passed in 2012 at the age of 87, but their legacy lives on in the "X".

*Photo on left: James Placanica, with his war bride, Delores, at the end of World War II*

*Story contributed by Newsletter editor*

# BULB BRIGADE

By Margot Eckert

On one of those “I can’t believe how warm it is!” Sundays this Fall, a dozen or so volunteers were on their knees weeding, pruning, digging holes and planting bulbs at three high visibility locations in our Forest Park neighborhood: at the border of Springfield near the Georgetown Apartments; at the planters in front of our branch library; and at the corner of Riverview Terrace and Fort Pleasant Ave. In prior years, other locations around the neighborhood were targeted for beautification.

Under the direction of Bill Malloy, coordinator of the project, and the guidance of Beate Bolen, FPCA President and master gardener, the bulb brigade got to work and enjoyed the camaraderie of others who like to play in the dirt. Many hands make light work, and special thanks goes to the youngest gardeners: Trevor Plante, Nico Montoya, and Kaitlyn Plante. It was so successful that, with some bulbs left over, volunteers met again to plant daffodils at Avalon Park at White and Allen Streets.

The initiative to plant flowers over the years throughout the Forest Park neighborhood is in memory of Elli Dashevsky, a FP resident who contributed much to our community during her lifetime, and whose sons established the Dashevsky Fund to help maintain our beautiful neighborhood. Her spirit was present during our Fall planting bloom each spring in

## *Dashevsky Fund continues to help beautify our neighborhood*

tribute to her and to the community we call Forest Park. A beautiful neighborhood is a cared for neighborhood. And a cared for neighborhood is foundational to a safe and friendly community.



*Top photo: Beate Bolen, Bob Pellin, Ralph D'Amico, Vickie Deal, Janet Dolder, Fidele Malloy and Bill Malloy*



*Middle photo: Nico Montoya, Trevor and Kaitlyn Plante, and Liz Contant*



*Bottom photo: Al Whitehouse, Beate Bolen, and Bill Malloy*

# PLANTING TREES ON OUR TREE BELTS

By Jan Burdewik

We love our trees! I have met many wonderful people while walking in the Forest Park neighborhood who are passionate about our trees. Apparently, this enthusiasm stretches back over the last century and a half. Those who “built” this neighborhood chose to name many of our streets for trees. Appleton, Cherryvale, Firglade, Magnolia, Maplewood, Oakland, Palm, Pineywoods, and Spruceland all honor our tree neighbors. Even when a particular species is not enshrined with a street name, other explicit tree references include Cliftwood, Greenleaf, Groveland, Kenwood, Woodlawn, Woodside, and Forest Park Avenue. When a dying tree is cut down or there's a gap on a tree belt, there's a collective lament and residents want them replaced. I've heard more than a few people say, "I wish that **they** would plant a new tree." **They will** if you ask. Here's how to make a request:

Call the 311 Citizens Service Center and tell them you would like a new tree planted on your tree belt. If you call from a local landline, just dial 311; from a cell phone, call (413) 736-3111. The staff will note your request and forward it to the Forestry Division of the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Building Management. The Forestry Division will then act upon the request, though the time before the tree is actually planted depends how many requests are ahead of yours and the season of the year. It's that simple!



## Tree Belt Planting FAQs:

- Most of the trees planted on tree belts are grown in the city tree nursery in Forest Park. Native trees for native conditions is the mantra.
- The species planted depends on what is available and where it will be planted. The goal is to plant a tree that will thrive. When making a request, you may express a preference for a particular kind of tree. The selection will be made by the forestry staff who consider not only natural factors like soil, light and drainage, but also human-made factors like overhead power lines, underground utilities, and the proximity of sidewalks and streets.
- The city will fill requests for planting along tree belts but not for private property. There are sometimes grant-funded programs in Springfield that provide free trees for planting on private property, with neighborhood associations most often applying for these grants.

The Forestry Division is committed to increasing our urban tree canopy for the many benefits provided. Trees naturally sequester carbon and other pollutants, thus improving air quality. More greenery mitigates the “urban heat island” effect. Further data indicates that trees benefit both the physical and mental health of residents, and businesses benefit economically when customers linger longer in areas with trees. More information about Springfield’s Forestry Division can be found at <https://www.springfield-ma.gov/park/forestryo>.

# Support the Forest Park Civic Association

**Are you new to the Forest Park neighborhood this year?**

- New residents receive free membership to the FPCA until the end of the calendar year!

**Are you a current FPCA member?**

- Then it's time to renew! Membership fees are due by April 1 of this year.

**What did we accomplish in 2022?**

- Our monthly meetings were held the second Tuesday of each month at the Shea Bright Nights Building in Forest Park.
- Our 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Illumination Night was celebrated on Maplewood Terrace in June; our annual Halloween party with a parade, games, and prizes was held October 29 at the Garfield/Fairfield triangle; and we lit up the Christmas tree at the "X" on December 7.
- We beautified the "X" Business District with the purchase of 30 hanging flower baskets.
- Our Board members reviewed multiple Zoning variance requests and voted in support of worthwhile Parks initiatives. Most recently, we saved 10 trees on Sumner Avenue and advocated for increasing road safety by the Sumner Avenue Elementary School.

All of this work is done by volunteers – and you can help! Please show your support by sending in your membership payment and by volunteering your time. Annual Dues are \$20. Additional funds can be added to support the Dashevsky Fund for Neighborhood Beautification, Hanging Plants at the "X" Initiative, another specific area of interest (Education/Library, Parks, Programs, etc.) and/or general use by the FPCA.

-----Detach here and mail with check-----

**Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Organization or Business (if appropriate):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cell Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Home Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

*We will not release this information and will not use it for anything except FPCA business. Thanks!*

**CIRCLE ANY AREAS OF INTEREST YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP OUT IN AND/OR HEAR ABOUT:**

- Parks      • Library      • Education      • Programs      • Community Improvement
- Newsletter      • Membership      • Publicity      • Zoning      • Public Safety

Enclosed is my/our 2023 membership contribution. Please check one:    \_\_\_ Renewal    \_\_\_ New Member

<b>Annual Membership:</b>	<b>\$ 2 0 . 0 0</b>
<b>Additional Contributions:</b>	
Dashevsky Fund	\$ .
Hanging Plants at the "X" Initiative	\$ .
Specific Area (identify)	\$ .
Unrestricted	\$ .
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT OF CHECK</b>	<b>\$ .</b>

**Make your check payable to "FPCA" and send to:**  
 Don Evans, Treasurer  
 233 Forest Park Avenue  
 Springfield MA 01108

Forest Park Civic Association  
P.O. Box 80708  
Springfield, MA 01138-0708

## Don't miss the FPCA Annual meeting!

Sunday, March 12, 2023, 4:00-6:00 pm

Clifford A. Phaneuf Environmental Center Building (ECOS)

on Porter Lake in Forest Park

Potluck at 4:00 p.m.

Please bring a dish according to the first letter of your last name:

A - H: Main Course; I - S: Appetizers; T - Z: Desserts

Business Meeting begins at 4:50, and will include committee reports, election of new officers and board members, individual and business awards, and announcements and plans for the year