



Trolley Times

North Slope Historic District Inc. February 2024
YOUR HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD Volume 109

February 22nd NSHD Meeting on "Waking Up Our Gardens"

The NSHD's February 22nd program will be about "Waking Up Your Garden," presented by three Pierce County Master Gardeners. They maintain that winter is a fine time to visualize what changes and new plants you might like in your garden in the spring. So, take pencil and paper and stroll around and imagine what possible plants you'd like to see in your garden.



More native plants? More perennials or habitat for bees? Think and write down your ideas.

You might work with your homeowner neighbors to submit a "group" application to the City for free parking-strip trees; the city will deliver to a designated area with instructions on how to plant and care for them.

Join three master gardeners on Feb. 22nd at Immanuel Presbyterian Church's Basement

Feb. 22nd Immanuel Presbyterian Church
901 N J St. Enter on N 9th St.
Social begins at 6:30, Program at 7 pm

Meeting Room for a program that will discuss
" Waking Up Our Gardens for Spring."

Want to Serve on the NSHD, Inc. Board of Directors?

Do you have ideas you feel our neighborhood could use? Do you have a yen to help out your neighborhood?

If you do, this is your chance! It's time to select new members of the Board of Directors for the North Slope Historic District, Inc. Here is how you apply:

Simply indicate your interest in serving on the Board to the Secretary, Julie Turner; give her a little idea of who you are and what you'd like to work on, then come to the meeting and participate in the election. The election will be held immediately before the speaker talks at the meeting planned for February 22, 2024.

The Board meets quarterly to discuss issues and ideas that have come to the attention of the members. The Committee Chairs announce actions from their committees, and detail any support they may need. Discussion follows of issues the neighborhood is facing, and any action the Board is considering also occurs. A vote is taken on any action proposed by a Board member.

Here is how to apply: Write to or call Julie Turner, NSHD, Inc. Secretary. Tell her you want to run for a Board position. Julie Turner's contact information: 253-383-2329 juliejayturner@gmail.com

Tacoma's Tree Canopy - You Can Help

By Tom Giske

Tacoma Urban Forest Friends (TUFF)



Tacoma Tree Foundation Founder Sarah Low highlights different oak tree leaves with newly planted trees at Wheelock Library, as City Council member Sarah Rumbaugh looks on.

Before Christmas, the City Council of Tacoma passed TMC 9.20, the *first update to our municipal code related to our tree canopy in nearly 100 years*. It protects trees in public right-of-ways and creates the start of a Heritage Tree Program intended to identify our most unique and valuable trees. It is a very important first step, but a long way from what we need to resurrect our tree canopy after years of neglect.

At less than 20%, Tacoma has the smallest canopy of any town in the Puget Sound Basin. In 2009, and again in 2019 when the city's comprehensive urban forest plan was adopted, our City Council committed to achieving a 30% canopy by 2030. *There has been no progress toward that goal, and in fact, we continue to fall back.*

The Tacoma Tree Foundation (TTF) was created as a nonprofit organization with a community-based approach to growing our urban forest. They educate, empower, and support community members in neighborhood-based greening projects. For example, this past fall they led an effort to plant several hundred new trees in McKinley Hill. They now have a truck designed to deliver water to trees they plant. They train volunteers from Tacoma neighborhoods who are willing to serve as Tree Stewards in support of our urban forest. They are a strong, energetic group with whom the city can work to achieve 30% by 2030.

Unfortunately, the city's focus on increasing housing density will likely cause additional deterioration of our urban forest. Housing developers naturally see trees as in their way. Landscape plans for new developments tend to focus on grass and bushes, not trees.

Bottom-line: our City Council must take further action now. We cannot let them believe passing TMC 9.20 will solve our problem. We cannot let developers influence their decisions.

We are confident the people of Tacoma want more trees to shade them from the increasing summer heat, to produce incremental oxygen that freshens our air, to reduce the run-off of toxic surface water into Puget Sound, to muffle the noise in our city, to offer homes to our birds and wildlife, to buffer the cold of winter, and to just add beauty and value to our neighborhoods.

To sign our petition and support Tacoma's tree canopy, go to: <https://www.30by30tacoma.com/petition>, or QR Code:



And if you are inclined, pass this link on to family, friends, organization members, and social media followers who live in Pierce County. We have better than 1,200 signatures and want to get to 2,000!



Nearly 100 years old, this Pin Oak Tree in front of Wheelock Library, offers space underneath for visitors to snack or just read in the shade. It also reduces temperatures inside the building.

HISTORIC DISTRICT MORATORIUM STILL PENDING BEFORE CITY COUNCIL

By Deborah Cade

The Planning Commission voted in November to recommend to the City Council that it enact a "moratorium" temporarily prohibiting consideration of any new historic district or expansion of existing historic districts. The Landmarks Preservation Commission recommended against the adoption of the moratorium and provided a lengthy written explanation of its opposition.

Nearly all the written comments submitted to LPC also opposed the moratorium. However, the Planning Commission did not address the LPC position or the public comments and voted to recommend that the Council adopt the moratorium.

Under the Growth Management Act, a moratorium can be put in effect for up to 180 days but can be extended by additional Council action.

A moratorium on new historic districts does not affect existing historic districts, nor would it change any of the applicable zoning. However, an adoption of this moratorium, *which is totally unnecessary for discretionary decisions like approving historic districts*, would signal a serious opposition to historic preservation on the part of the Council. This could come up again in future actions to update the city comprehensive plan and to rewrite the zoning code to implement Home in Tacoma.

We keep getting reassurances from the City planning staff not to "worry" about the effects of Home in Tacoma, which the planners admit will require significant demolition of existing housing in order to fully implement. Right now, our neighborhood's *only* protection against demolition and redevelopment with large apartment buildings is the fact that a demolition permit is difficult to obtain in a historic district.

LPC's response to this proposal can be found on the Planning Commission's website,

https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/committees_boards_commissions/planning_commission. Under Agendas and Minutes, scroll to the November 15, 2023 full packet and go to pages 23-26.

At this writing, the moratorium is scheduled to be considered by the City Council in a "study session" on January 16. No action can be taken by the Council at that time; it is an opportunity for a presentation by planning staff. The Council could set this issue for consideration at a meeting shortly after that.

Please send any comments or feedback you have to:

cityclerk@cityoftacoma.org

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EIGHTEEN WORDS

From Washington State Law

In the Growth Management Planning section of State's RCW 36.70A.020, you will find "Planning Goals." This section talks about Urban growth and Economic development, where it encourages more development.

Hidden in this section are 18 very important words that talk about historic preservation:

Historic preservation. Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures, that have historical or archaeological significance.

No wonder historic preservation has such a hard time in cities in Washington. In a document of 75,000 words, *eighteen* words is only 0.02 percent.

FROM THE ARCHIVES ...

Taken from the archives of the NSHD National Register District Nomination

The home of Peter and Molly Voorhees, who arrived in Tacoma from Detroit, Michigan, was built at 517 North Sheridan Street in 1890. The house was estimated to cost \$3,500 and would be "...finished in redwood."

Peter Voorhees was born in Hartington, Somerset county, New Jersey in 1832. He married Molly Lloyd and they settled in Detroit, Michigan. He was involved in the grocery business initially, which would lead to the founding of Henkel & Voorhees, a flour mill.

When Voorhees arrived in Tacoma, he decided to build a mill and elevator right away. However, the economic depression forced him to put a hold on his plans. He died in 1902, at age 70, having never established a business in Tacoma.

Description: Ernest L. Sawyer, builder. O. P. Dennis, architect. 1892



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LIVING IN THE NORTH SLOPE

By Kathryn Longwell, Past Landmarks Preservation Commissioner

Edited from *THE TROLLEY TIMES*, JUNE 2008

Congratulations! You own a home in a unique neighborhood. Not only is the North Slope Historic District a city, state, and national historic district, it is also one of the largest residential historic districts west of the Mississippi. You enjoy such perks as prestige and higher property values as a result of residing in the NSHD.



With perks, however, come some responsibilities. *You are a steward of an historic structure.* The NSHD wouldn't be an historic district if homeowners were replacing original siding with aluminum, original windows with the wrong style, or tearing off original porches to add decks. These are a few examples of why we have a design review process through the Landmarks Commission. The focus is on preserving our existing historic homes. **As a homeowner in a historic district, you give up some of your individual rights for the collective good of the community.**



Creation of the NSHD was a grassroots effort by the residents who live here, not something imposed upon us by the City of Tacoma. Our residents fought long and hard, and put in countless hours of documenting, testifying,

meeting, and working the political process to get our historic status and historic zoning, too.

It has been my experience as a Landmarks commissioner that retroactive applications are always a result of neighbors reporting violations. Thus, it seems that most of us would like to preserve the original historic fabric of our homes even though it may restrict what individuals are allowed to do to the exterior of their houses. As homeowners who benefit



from living in a historic district, let's protect the historic materials we have left in our community

- the original things that make it such a special place. You can start by reviewing the NSHD design guidelines available on the district's web page, on the front page:

tacomanorthslope.org.

EARLY BLACK FAMILIES IN THE NSHD

By Marshall McClintock

In the December 2022 newsletter I discussed the 1937 Tacoma Home Owners Loan Corp. (HOLC) map and the designation it shows for some 100 houses between N. 7th and N. 9th St. and N. M and N. Ainsworth St. that are labeled "D" (red) or "Hazardous." The map's notes say this area is "identical" to the surrounding "C" (yellow) or "Definitely Declining" area - what is today the North Slope Historic District - except that "...several Negro families (three known) own property here."

Using city directories and census records, my research found only two Black homeowners in that area. The earlier article told of the Arnettes who lived at 914 N. Cushman from 1918 to 1959. This article is about Margarette and Napoleon Simon, who lived at 718 North M Street from 1905 to 1937.

Napoleon Bonaparte Simon was born in 1875 in Mississippi to Ferdinand and Elvira Simon. His parents, both born in Mississippi, were likely enslaved prior to the Civil War. Ferdinand, however, had enlisted in the Union army where he served as a corporal in the 86th Colored Infantry. Following the war, Ferdinand and Elvira farmed near Adams, MS.

Margarette Clark was born in 1875 in Kansas to John and Liza Clark, who were both born in Texas, and likely into slavery.

Margarette and Napoleon married in 1898 and appear not to have had any children. They arrived in Tacoma in 1899, and from 1901 to 1903, Napoleon managed the Natchez Lodging House at 1140 ½ Commerce Street. He would have a varied work history over the years as a porter, waiter, cook, carpenter and building contractor, but he quickly showed a penchant for politics.

In 1901 he organized Tacoma's bootblacks, the men and boys who polished shoes on the street and in hotels and barbershops, and he was elected vice-president of the group.

He was a founding member of the Cassia #5 Masonic Lodge and served as its Worshipful Master in 1908. He was also a founding member of Puget Sound Lodge No. 3211 of the Odd Fellows and

served as its permanent secretary. In 1907 he was a member and secretary of the Defiance Investment Company, a largely black-owned real estate company. In 1916 he was a founding member of the Colored Citizen's Republican Club.

While Margarette wasn't as socially active as Napoleon, she did have her own house-cleaning business.



Napoleon and Margarette were living at 718 North M by 1905, and purchased the house in 1906. At that time, the house was one-story and is said to have been built in 1884. It was among the houses in this block that were moved in 1910 when the current street grid was established. By then Napoleon and Margarette owned the house outright, and in 1911 Napoleon made major changes to it, likely adding the second story and the Craftsman details that we see today.

On August 31, 1918, Napoleon's life was tragically cut short when he fell to his death while working on a roof. At age of 43, he was buried in Tacoma Cemetery.

After Napoleon's death, Margarette, like many widows, made ends meet by taking in boarders, usually black or mixed-race, working-class couples, based on city directories.

On July 10, 1936, at the age of 61, Margarette suffered a stroke; she died in September 1937. That is the same year the Federal HOLC map came out, designating her as "hazardous" - because of the color of her skin.

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Contact us at:

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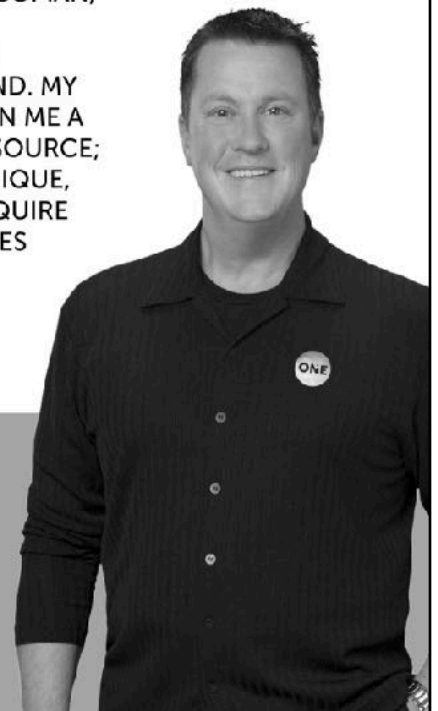
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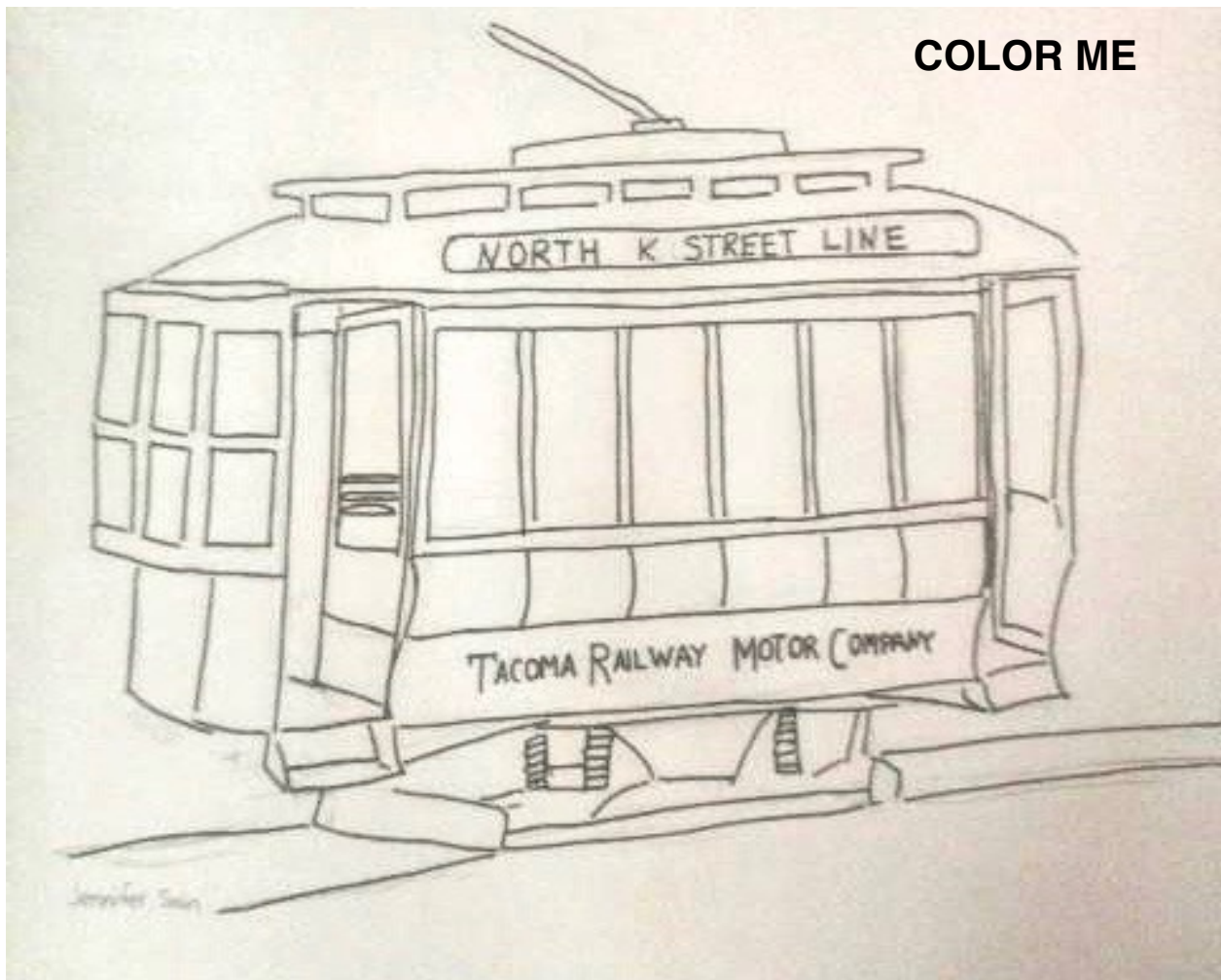
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