

Approved

**HISTORIC BREWERS HILL ASSOCIATION
MEETING AGENDA**

Date: Tuesday, February 12th, 2019
Time: 6:00PM – Social Half Hour / 6:30PM – Meeting Start
Place: Fortress Milwaukee - Community Room.
1721 N First St.
Milwaukee, WI

Board Members Present: Rik Akey, Molly Booth, Jessica Johnson, Terry Mambu Rasch, Larry Roffers, Elizabeth Sedita, Miraj Shah-Khan

Board Members Absent: DeWayne Bishop, Dan Olson

Attendance: 44 adults (including board members and guests) 2 children

1. Call to Order – Molly booth

- Gave brief history of Historic Brewers Hill Association (HBHA), encouraged attendees to visit Association's website, www.historicbrewershill.com, for additional history, community resources, meeting minutes, membership form, etc.
- residents may contact Larry Roffers for new memberships Irrcdb@yahoo.com
- Introductions of attendees and guests

2. Treasurer's Report & Membership Update

Current HBHA account balance: \$8029, 8 households currently paid for 2019. Encouraged members to pay dues online or contact Larry Roffers at Irrcdb@yahoo.com

3. Secretary's Report

Molly reported approval of November 12th regular meeting minutes. Meeting minutes posted on website

4. 2019 Calendar of Events – Elizabeth

-Survey results reveal social events are important to residents. Planning for a casual social event such as a bar/happy hour meet up end of February and end of March. Members will be notified by email.

Additional upcoming events:

- End of march/early April – Member drive
- April 9th – next HBHA meeting, Black Holocaust Museum
- April 13th - Easter egg Hunt, 10 am
- May 4th – Spring cleanup 10am, followed by a backyard cookout
- June 11th – HBHA meeting sanger house
- August 10th – Round Robin (ticketed event)
- August 24th – Block Party, 3-8 pm
- Sept 17th – HBHA neighborhood meeting
- October 31st – Trick or treating
- November 12th – HBHA meeting at United Way Volunteer Center
- Fall Cleanup, date TBD

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5. At-Large/City-Wide MPS School Board election is April 2nd, 2019 – 2 candidates running for the At-Large MPS School Board discussed their background and platforms:

- Stefanie Dugan – <https://www.stef4mps.com>
- Bob Peterson – <https://www.bobformps.com>

6. Crime & Safety Update - MPD District 5 officers Mike Driscoll, Chauncey Harris, and Kyle provided an update on neighborhood activity:

- Increased presence in Brewers Hill, Harambee, Riverwest
- Transitioning towards moving police out of squad cars, onto bicycles, walking in assigned neighborhoods
- mobile drug dealing continues to be an issue
- officers stressed that it is critical to call with any information when suspicious activity is seen (even if it may not be immediately addressed). Information includes location, type of vehicle, plates, etc. When calling, clarify where you live vs where activity is seen.

Contact number:

414-933-4444 (select option 9 for non-emergencies)

7. Alderwoman Coggs provided an update on area initiatives/events:

-Task force in place to design and implement strategies to prevent carjacking/robberies

-Upcoming events:

- Milwaukee Public Library 29th annual Black History Month Read-In
Martin Luther King Branch, 310 W. Locust St., Wednesday, February 13, 5:30-7 p.m.
Guest readers will share stories by African American Authors

-Girls Day at City Hall – March 14th, 2019 9am-2pm

Event aimed to expose young women of high school and middle school age to strong female role models in political leadership positions as well as careers in public service. Special guests may be present. The event includes speakers, panel discussions, and workshops in addition to opportunities for active engagement and involvement with several public service-oriented organizations and entities focused on young women and led by women. Space is limited. Pre-registration is required to attend.

<https://city.milwaukee.gov/commoncouncil/District6/girlsdayreg>

8. Fortress Building: Representatives from Alexander & Company, owners of the Fortress building, and JP Cullen discussed the history of the building and restoration process. Expressed interest in developing a partnership with the community.

Fortress Representatives

Sam Orcholski – Project manager, JP Cullen

Gina – Leasing agent, Fortress

Lori – Property Manager, Fortress

Contact for inquiries, leasing: 1 414-253-1480

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9. **Brewers Hill Resident Jim Nelsen** discussed history of his home, his research journey, and helpful resources and tips to aide in your own research. Jim's document is attached with the meeting minutes.

Recommended Books:

Milwaukee Streets: The Stories Behind Their Names, Carl Baehr

Milwaukee, City of Neighborhoods, John Gurda

10. **Steve Bialk, Owner of Sanger House Gardens** discussed the history of his home. Sanger House will be featured in the April 2019 issue of Fine Gardening Magazine. Steve shared a preview of this 14-page article. Steve and his wife, Angela, are planning a ticketed open house event on July 13-14, 2019. Event is in early stages of planning but will include tours and gardening classes. Goal is to raise money for causes such as the Milwaukee Domes/Mitchell Park Horticultural conservatory, Historic Milwaukee Inc., and HBHA.

Contact Steve if you would like to volunteer or have ideas for classes or activities to incorporate in this event. <http://www.sangerhousegardens.com/milwaukee-event-venues/>

11. **Open forum** – Neighbors encouraged knowledge sharing regarding home histories

12. **Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting Date:**

Tuesday, April 9th at America's Black Holocaust Museum

13. **Adjournment** – 7:40 pm

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A HISTORY OF 203–205 WEST LLOYD STREET

The duplex at 203–205 West Lloyd Street is a historic property located in the historic neighborhood of Brewers Hill in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The property's history stretches back to at least 1846 and is a testament to the rise, fall, and rebirth of a neighborhood.

The neighborhood that is now known as Brewers Hill was inhabited by various Native Americans in the early nineteenth century. In 1835, Byron Kilbourn became the first white person to claim the land, but the neighborhood was largely unoccupied until five Chicago land speculators platted it in 1837. Those five men were Francis Sherman, Mark Beaubian, Cyrenius Beers, Isaac Harmon, and Alexander Lloyd. The neighborhood now called Brewers Hill was known as Sherman's Addition in the nineteenth century, and its streets were named after the five men. Since then, all the streets but Lloyd Street have been renamed. Lloyd, who lived from 1805 to 1872, was a lumberman and builder and was mayor of Chicago from 1840 to 1841.

Harmon's street was one block south of Lloyd Street and was renamed for Samuel Brown, who came to Milwaukee in 1834. Brown was the community's first carpenter and built Milwaukee's first courthouse. He bought the first lot sold by Byron Kilbourn in 1834 in a neighborhood near Sherman's Addition, and his family was the first white family to permanently settle in Milwaukee. Brown's house has the distinction of being the first house to catch fire in Milwaukee's recorded history. He was a promoter and director of the La Crosse and Milwaukee Railroad and was Wisconsin's first Underground Railroad conductor, helping smuggle Caroline Quarlls, a sixteen-year-old fugitive slave, from St. Louis to Canada. Samuel's son, Thomas, was the first native-born Milwaukeean to become mayor of the city.

Sherman's Addition was bustling with economic activity in the midnineteenth century. Kilbourn started digging a canal from North Avenue to the Rock River in 1838, but he made it only as far as Vliet Street before running out of funds in 1842. The short canal had twenty-five mills and factories along it by 1848 and had nearly a dozen tanneries by the mid-1860s. The canal provided water power for the industry along it. Eventually, as mechanized power became available, the canal became unnecessary. It was filled in during 1885 and named Commerce Street because of the commerce along it.

The presence of so much industry attracted settlers to Sherman's Addition. The property at 203–205 West Lloyd Street was part of a larger parcel of land that included, at a minimum, the present-day sites of 209 and 213 West Lloyd Street. The entire parcel was assessed at \$120 in 1846, the year Milwaukee was incorporated as a city. Julius Steffen, a driver for the Bradley & Metcalf Shoe Company, purchased the land in 1867. He built and lived in a house that was at the 213 location. Steffen also built at least two other houses on the property that

were probably used as rentals. The house at the 203–205 location was preceded by a one-and-a-half-story two-family side-by-side house that faced North Second Street. The front porches were at opposite

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ends of the building. Steffen sold his land to Emil Schubert in 1882. The total assessed value of the property, including the land and all the houses, was \$1,550 (about \$38,350 in 2017 dollars).

Emil Schubert was a baker. His bakery was at what is now a vacant lot at 2020 North First Street, about two blocks from 203–205 Lloyd. He lived at the bakery and probably rented out the homes on Lloyd Street. He replaced the building on the corner lot with the present 203–205 duplex in 1892, and he and his wife, Emilie, moved into the lower unit of the duplex in 1899, most likely to accommodate a growing family. He continued to own the bakery for at least two more years.

Records of tenants before 1923 are not easily available. City directories indicate that most of the Schuberts' tenants rented for only a few years at a time before moving elsewhere. Herbert and Marjorie Dennison, for example, rented the 205 unit in 1923. Herbert had just been promoted from clerk to salesman at the Plankinton Packing Company (Patrick Cudahy today), in downtown Milwaukee, and Marjorie worked as a stenographer. They lived in the upper unit for only a year and were followed by Fred and Jennie Wallace in 1925. A widow, Emma Heup, moved into the 205 unit in 1926 and stayed through 1927. Other tenants included Peter and Marie Schmid (1928), Raymond and Alma Downing (1929–30), Edgar and Anna Borchert (1931–32), and Matthew and Martha Becker (1934–36). As one can probably tell from the names of the tenants, the neighborhood was overwhelmingly German at the time.

These tenants performed skilled or unskilled labor. Fred Wallace was an engineer, Peter Schmid worked at a barbershop on the east side of Milwaukee, Raymond Downing was a machinist, Edgar Borchert was a bookkeeper, and Matthew Becker worked nearby at the Joseph Schlitz Brewing Company.

North Third Street became Milwaukee's northside shopping district and was full of German shops, bakeries, butcher shops, dry goods stores, saloons, and other retail businesses. Schuster's Department Store opened in 1884 at Third and Garfield, one block north of Lloyd, and was the shopping district's anchor. A combination livery stable and undertaker had the largest commercial footprint on 203–205's block in the 1890s. It is at the current site of Crown Plumbing. There was also a blacksmith shop across the street from 203–205, toward Third Street.

Emil died in 1929, and Emilie assumed full ownership of their house and the houses at 209 and 213 until her death in 1937. She left the properties to her three children, Ella Schubert, Edwin Schubert, and Lydia Grossman. Ella lived in the 203 unit and continued to rent out the upper unit. Edwin and his wife, Eleanor, lived in the house at 213. They sold their third of the properties to Ella and Lydia in 1937.

Brewers Hill became more ethnically diverse in the 1920s as Poles, Italians, and African Americans moved in from the Riverwest, Brady Street, and Bronzeville neighborhoods. The 203–205 property got its first non-German residents in 1936, when Gottfried and Bertha Porter arrived. They stayed until 1949 and may have rented their unit longer than anyone else in the property's history. Gottfried was a

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maintenance man at the nearby Schlitz Brewery. They were followed by Frank and Anna Koslowski in 1949.

Ella and Lydia sold the 203–205 property to Max and Marie Kargus in 1950. The Karguses rented out the upper unit to Mabel Dooley, a widow (1950–52), and rented the lower unit to Edward Skibinski, a machinist, and his wife, Stella (1950–55). The building went into foreclosure in 1953.

The 203–205 property was then sold to Frank and Emma Strickland for \$10,000 (about \$90,000 in 2017). The Stricklands lived in the upper unit until 1956, when they moved downstairs for two years, before moving back upstairs. They lived there until 1959 and rented to Alvin and Kathryn Washington (1957), Marion and Juliana Rhoten (1958), Oldhand and Annie Barnat (1960), Everett and Rochelle Armstrong (1960–63), Doris McGaughty (1961), and Mays Roselia (1962). Alvin and Everett worked at A.O. Smith, Marion performed general labor at International Harvester, and Oldhand worked at Sears.

Ella continued to live in the house at 209 until 1963. She worked as a clerk and, evidently, never married. Georgia Odie is listed in the Milwaukee city directory at the 209 house in 1966. Georgia was a factory worker at AllisChalmers at the time. Though she did not live there continuously, Georgia was still in the house in 2019.

The 203–205 property went into foreclosure again in 1963 and was purchased by Frederick and Dolly Cords. Frederick was the neighborhood's former representative to the Wisconsin Assembly. He purchased several properties in the area at inexpensive prices. The 203–205 property went into foreclosure a third time in 1970.

The Karguses, Stricklands, and Cordses were perhaps victims of the changing economy. Many of the tanneries and shoe factories that provided jobs to neighborhood residents closed after World War II because of competition from new synthetic materials and from national and foreign manufacturers. The neighborhood's German American residents moved to new neighborhoods on the city's fringes or in the suburbs when they could afford to do so. At first, the old residents returned to shop along Third Street, but their trips to the old neighborhood became less frequent in the 1960s and 1970s as shopping centers and malls opened closer to where they lived. Businesses vacated Third Street as the number of shoppers declined, and Schuster's closed in 1970.

African Americans opened what businesses they could along Third Street and had most of the street renamed Dr. Martin Luther King Drive in 1984. But the new residents did not have the job opportunities and disposable income that the old residents had. Crime rates increased. Absentee landlords allowed rentals to fall into disrepair. These homes were considered a blight, and the city responded by demolishing almost seven hundred housing units between Brown and Pleasant Streets from 1950 to 1970. The renters often were African American, and the percentage of African American residents in the neighborhood increased from 9 percent in 1950 to 42 percent in 1960 to 78 percent in 1970.

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The duplex at 203–205 fits the overall neighborhood pattern. Frederick and Dolly Cords never lived on the property, and neither did Joseph and Blanche Castrovinci (1963–90) or Joanne (also spelled Jo Ann) Murphy (1990–2004). Their tenants worked in skilled jobs in the 1960s but not in the 1990s. Ruble and Mattie Jones, for example, moved into the 205 unit in 1963. Ruble was a machinist at Ladish. The Joneses moved into the house at 213 by 1966. Later tenants—in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s—were sometimes widowed or retired. In some years, one or both units were unoccupied. City records show that repairs were not always made in a timely manner.

Fortunately, by the late 1970s, the neighborhood caught the attention of fledgling preservationists. They were white, middle-class, and in their twenties and thirties. They were attracted to the historic charm of the residences and were excited to buy low-priced homes that they could restore or remodel. In 1981, they formed an informal block club that became the Historic Brewers Hill of Sherman’s Addition. The “Sherman’s Addition” moniker was later dropped but the rest of the neighborhood name remains. The western part of Brewers Hill received national and local landmark status in 1983.

This pattern of gentrification finally reached 203–205 West Lloyd Street in 2004, when Joanne Murphy sold the property to Timothy Olson. Olson sold it to David and Michelle Rice before the end of the year. The Rices lived on the property while they rehabilitated it, and they reclassified it as the Benchmark Condominium in 2005. In 2007, they sold the lower unit to Kate Venne and the upper unit to Heather Baker and Tony Buss. James Nelsen purchased the upper unit in April 2017, and Teresa Urch purchased the lower unit in December 2018.

As the duplex was reborn, so was the rest of Brewers Hill. Homes are continually rehabilitated or remodeled, and the entire eastern part of the neighborhood has experienced new construction. Families occupy once-vacant homes, and children play in front yards. Storefronts are reopening on King Drive, and the neighborhood association sponsors community events. Brewers Hill retains its historic charm with a racially and economically diverse population. It has been part of Milwaukee since 1837 and has a bright future ahead of it.