



PRESERVING OUR PAST. SECURING OUR FUTURE.

President's Message

2022 is a Good Year in Old Southwest!!!

By your neighbor, Mark Hostetter



Hello neighbors! My name is Mark Hostetter, and I was recently elected president of Old Southwest, Inc., our non-profit OSW neighborhood organization. I know the last couple of years have been weird, to say the least, with only limited opportunities for us to gather as a community. Hopefully, we are turning the corner, and I can tell you right now that OSW Inc. is looking ahead to a vibrant and prosperous 2022! December's OSW Festival of Lights was a preview of what's to come. Over 70 neighbors decorated their homes and yards to make OSW cheery and bright. Thank you! And many met-up in Highland Park to gather around the firepit, ride the Star City Cycle Pub, and visit the historic Gish house. Who tasted that good old-fashioned cotton candy and fresh popcorn?

Our elections in December resulted in an 11-person board of both old and new faces, all sharing the same love for our neighborhood that I know many of you have, too. This is an all-volunteer effort of neighbors working for neighbors, and we can always use extra help with projects. Stay tuned! During the next few months, we will be reaching out for suggestions on what you want to see happen in our neighborhood, as well as what you can do to help make your suggestions a reality. Board members are already talking about family-oriented events, themed and pop-up socials, neighborhood-improvement projects, and a variety of outdoor activities. The Roanoke Valley, and our own OSW neighborhood, have so much to offer. We want your ideas! Go to <http://oldsouthwest.org> and click "Contact Us" to help us start planning.

I encourage everyone to attend our community meetings on the third Thursday each month. I'd enjoy meeting you or catching up with neighbors I already know. **Join us at the upcoming meeting February 17, 6:30 at the Alexander Gish House in Highland Park.**

pg. 1

OSW Voice

February 2022

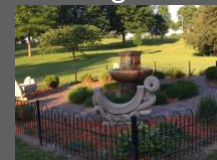
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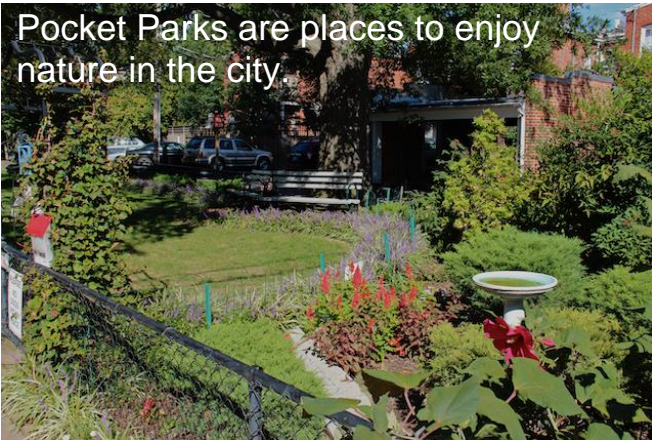
By your neighbor, Mary Anne Mather

What's a Pocket Park?

I was new to the term “pocket park,” but have become a fan of the concept! Pocket parks are small urban open spaces that provide a safe and inviting environment for surrounding community members. They meet a variety of needs and functions, including places to relax, play, and meet friends, as well as areas to plant trees and native plants that both beautify cities and improve air and water quality. They're good for property values, too. Who knew?!

The Old Southwest Inc. neighborhood association is thinking about whether a low-maintenance pocket park might add some real value to our community. OSW Inc. already owns several vacant lots, donated over the years by former residents. One parcel includes two buildable lots at the corner of 8th Street and Day Avenue SW. Currently, the lots are kept mowed, insured, and taxes are paid to the city by OSW, Inc., amounting to a modest annual expenditure of about \$750 per year, which is covered by fundraising. A small committee of interested neighbors has formed to investigate the best use for these lots going forward.

Pocket Parks are places to enjoy nature in the city.



One option, of course, is to sell the two lots. As legal buildable lots, this outcome could add two homes to the neighborhood, or possibly more, if they were combined for the development of a small apartment complex. Since Old Southwest already has the highest rental density in the city, maintaining a lovely pocket of urban green space might be a more future-thinking solution. With the addition of some simple plantings, trees, a pathway, and benches, we could create something that is attractive, enjoyable, and easily

sustainable. Roanoke Storm Water Management, the Roanoke Diversity Center, and Trees Roanoke have all shown interest in discussing the eventual use of the Day Avenue lots as green space worth preserving and are potential partners in their beautification and maintenance.

In case the concept of pocket parks is new to you, as it was to me, here are a few more facts I learned about them that made me wonder if a pocket park on Day Avenue might be perfect for OSW:

- Urban green space helps cool surrounding areas. Adding trees helps clean the air and lowers temperatures during heat waves.
- Undeveloped, permeable ground helps reduce stormwater runoff pollution into the Roanoke River. The natural slope of the lots offers a perfect situation to create a simple rain garden or bioswale where the lots meet the alley behind them to catch, absorb, and filter runoff rainwater.
- Research shows that proximity to green space boosts mood and well-being and can help lower crime in trouble spots.
- Property values increase in immediate areas around Pocket Parks.

We want to hear from you about our Day Avenue lots! A short online community survey is available from now until the end of March at <https://bit.ly/3JrjaJa>. Please share your thoughts.

And if you'd like to get more involved, go to <http://oldsouthwest.org>. Click “Contact Us.” When completing the form, add a note in the comment box that you want to join the Day Avenue lots committee.

Highland Park: Our Oldest City Park

Two Near Misses—Highland Park and the Gish House

Yesterday

By your neighbor, Julie Gale

If you're a resident of OSW, it's hard to imagine our neighborhood without Highland Park or the historic Alexander Gish House, but the future of both were at one time on very shaky ground. Both were saved by concerned citizens working together to secure their future.



The creation of Highland Park was not without controversy. The City of Roanoke acquired a 55-acre tract of land from Nannie Gish in 1901 for \$10,000. The Gish farm and woods consisted of beautiful bluff land overlooking the Roanoke River. Then-councilman J.B Fishburn realized a fast-growing city like Roanoke should plan for a park while land was cheap, and he worked to bring this about. A bond issue was proposed to underwrite the \$10,000 purchase price. However, at that time there was great need in the city for improvements such as streets, sewers, and sidewalks. A \$10,000 investment into vacant fields irked many residents. The bond issue was defeated.

A friendly conspiracy ensued. Col. James P. Woods (who had been instrumental in the purchase) offered to buy the property for \$10,000. Then J. B. Fishburn topped-up the offer at \$11,000. These offers convinced the city to preserve the land they had acquired at such a bargain price. And they were glad they did! The park became immensely popular. House lots around the park sold like hotcakes, and soon a school became a necessity. Six lots were set aside in 1906 to build Highland Park School, which opened in 1907.

Thanks to the vision of our early city planners and citizen activists, today we enjoy a 32-acre greenspace that includes a playground, tennis courts, ball fields, disc golf course, skateboard park, dog park, and walking trails. Just past the park's entrance there is an historic fountain with a lovely seating area and gardens. The park enriches us with its beauty and is a boost to our physical and mental health.

Another near loss was the Alexander Gish House, located in the rear of the park. The House is one of the oldest homes in Roanoke and was last used as the park caretaker's cottage. But by 1974 it was in grave disrepair and slated for demolition by the city. We owe a great deal of thanks to a group of concerned OSW neighbors who raised the funds to save and restore it. The house, and its adjacent gazebo and firepit, are now maintained by OSW Inc. and used as the meeting and gathering space for our OSW neighborhood organization. Additionally, The Gish house and grounds in the park offer a lovely event venue for small weddings, showers, parties and meetings. Rental information can be found on the OSW website or call 540.343.8794 to schedule your event.



OSW's Got Talent

Spotlight on talent in our neighborhood

Queenpin: A Family Wellness Resource

By your neighbor, Mary Anne Mather

Have you noticed that the old laundromat at 708 5th Street SW is sporting an intriguing new mural? That's thanks to Katie Clifton, owner of Queenpin Acupuncture, licensed acupuncturist, and OSW neighbor who lives on Walnut Avenue. Queenpin will make this its new home in the spring (currently at The Haven on 5th Street).

Talent takes many forms, and Katie's is her passion and know-how to help us live better. She discovered that East Asian Medicine is a wonderful way to blend her love of working with people, her creative spark, and her passion for community education. In addition to acupuncture, Queenpin offers support for cancer treatment side-effects, migraines and headaches, palliative care/end-of-life, women's health, immune issues, and medical marijuana certifications. Additionally, Katie is a National Acupuncture Detox Association certified practitioner and uses those treatments to facilitate recovery from all types of addictions. She is Death Doula certified through the University of Vermont.



New Mural at Queenpin on 5th

FOR MORE INFORMATION

What: Queenpin Acupuncture

Where: 708 5th Street and 808 5th Street SW

Phone: 540-685-2718 ext2

<https://queenpinroanoke.com>

Katie and her handy husband Eric recently converted an old school bus into a pink mobile acupuncture clinic! On Mondays, folks can drop in at 708 5th Street or schedule an appointment between 11 and 2 for "Mellow Monday" sessions in the mobile clinic. These sessions are performed by Mike Holcomb and include auricular (ear) acupuncture, two CBD gummies, and relaxing hot tea for \$25.

Katie also has a talent for pulling together other organizations and providers with similar interests, and like all good neighbors, she uses this talent to bring something special to OSW that provide community services that are accessible for all. It's a free "Wellness Rodeo" held on the second Friday of every month from 1 to 4 pm. Queenpin partners with multiple non-profits to offer health care services, reduced-price food, and acudetox treatments for free. Previous Rodeos have included partners such as the Girl Scouts of Roanoke Valley, Feeding Southwest Virginia, Virginia Harm Reduction, and The Bradley Free Clinic. Exact locations for upcoming Wellness Rodeos are TBD. Follow Queenpin on Facebook and Instagram for event and location updates, and for what's coming up specially for Old Southwest. We are fortunate to have such a special resource right around the corner!

CALLING ALL...

artists, musicians, gardeners, crafters, and those of other fine talents. Do you, or someone you know in OSW, have a talent or hobby you'd like to spotlight? We'd like to learn about it! <https://oldsouthwest.org/contact-us>



The Pink Mobile Acupuncture Clinic

Meet Your Neighbor

Terry McGuire

By your neighbor, Mary Anne Mather



You might remember an article in the OSW Voice newsletter (June 2021) about Terry McGuire’s native-species garden-in-the-city. (In case you missed it, go to <https://oldsouthwest.org/blog/osw-voice-newsletter-june-2021>.) Since then, Terry has joined the Old Southwest board and now serves on our **Neighborhood Preservation & Improvement** Committee. Board members have enjoyed getting to know him better and think you will, too!

Terry was born in Roanoke and raised in Franklin County. In 2016 he bought a lovely Old Southwest home on King George Avenue in Argonne Circle. For 15 years, he has worked in political advocacy and government affairs, including stints with the Human Rights Campaign and the Sierra Club. He’s currently employed by Earthjustice, a non-profit environmental law firm, where he focuses on Clean Air Act policy and air-quality issues. Terry also serves on Roanoke’s Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and Mill Mountain Advisory Board.

Lucky for us, all this good experience is now invested in our OSW community—along with Terry’s gardening interests! Terry has cultivated an OSW partnership with Trees Roanoke that creates opportunities for neighbors to help rebuild our tree canopy and educate residents about the value of urban trees. He’s also committed to working with city government to secure pedestrian and traffic safety improvements and improve neighborhood walkability and accessibility. Terry’s civic and personal interests align. His hobbies include native plant gardening, hiking and camping, and walking and biking on the Greenway. If you haven't already met Terry, come to our Old Southwest Inc. community meetings on the third Thursday of each month, or as spring arrives, you might find him cultivating the garden in front of his house in Argonne Circle. He’s always happy to trade growing tips and secrets!

And Some News: When a student at Virginia Tech, Terry discovered a passion for politics and organizing, and it has inspired him to run for Roanoke City Council in the upcoming election! If you’d like to learn more about that, or if you are interested in learning more about how to work with Trees Roanoke to get a tree planted near your property, email Terry at stephen.terry.mcguire@gmail.com

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The lights are on
at the Gish
House for our
monthly
meeting!



OSW COMMUNITY MEETING REMINDER!
2/17, 6:30pm. All OSW residents invited!
There’s a safe, warm spot waiting for you
(masks required) at the Alexander Gish
House, Highland Park, 641 Walnut Avenue
SW. The 2022 OSW Inc. Board awaits you!
We’re interested in your thoughts about
several new community-improvement efforts
in the works related safety and preservation.

OSW Voice Newsletter

Want to know more about our OSW community?
Have an idea or want to share some news?

Contact:
<https://oldsouthwest.org/contact-us>

Become a Supporting Member of OSW

Membership is free to all who reside in OSW. We welcome renters as well as homeowners to our meetings and activities. You can choose to become a supporting member. Supporting members donate toward helping all our special projects and activities come to life! Check out <https://oldsouthwest.org/contact-us> and click on BECOME A MEMBER or DONATE to learn how you can actively contribute toward preserving our amazing neighborhood and keep it a welcoming and fun place to live, work, and play. Thank you!

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Grant Opportunity: Healthy Homes Support Healthy Lives

Healthy Homes Roanoke is a public-private partnership that works to improve the health, safety, and comfort of our most vulnerable citizens through holistic home assessment that addresses energy burden, indoor air quality, and home safety. The partnership consists of the City's HUD Community Services Division and Office of Sustainability; Non-Profit Rehabilitation Organizations (Total Action for Progress, Renovation Alliance, and Blue Ridge Independent Living Center); Utilities (Roanoke Gas); and Medical Providers (Carilion Clinic).

Healthy Homes Roanoke was awarded a \$2 million grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. The grant provides funding to identify and address health and safety hazards in the homes of low-income families. The program takes a coordinated approach, rather than addressing a single hazard at a time. Home assessments comprehensively address a variety of high-priority health and safety hazards, such as mold and moisture, poor indoor air quality, pests, carbon monoxide, injury and safety hazards, and lead paint.

Healthy Homes Roanoke will begin implementing the program and make applications available for interested and eligible families soon. Special thanks to all the partner organizations that worked with the City of Roanoke to bring this support opportunity to our city. To learn more, visit

facebook.com/healthyhomesroanoke
For questions, contact Katie Kennedy at Katherine.Kennedy@roanokeva.gov

PLUS Marla Emmett, Outreach and Education Coordinator of Lead Safe Roanoke, will answer questions about the Healthy Homes grant opportunities, and Josh Johnson, Neighborhood Services Coordinator, will update about American Rescue Plan Act money and Neighborhood Development Grants.



Mark Your Calendar



All neighbors invited, encouraged, welcome!

February

17 – 6:30 p.m. OSW Safety and Neighborhood Meeting, Gish House

March

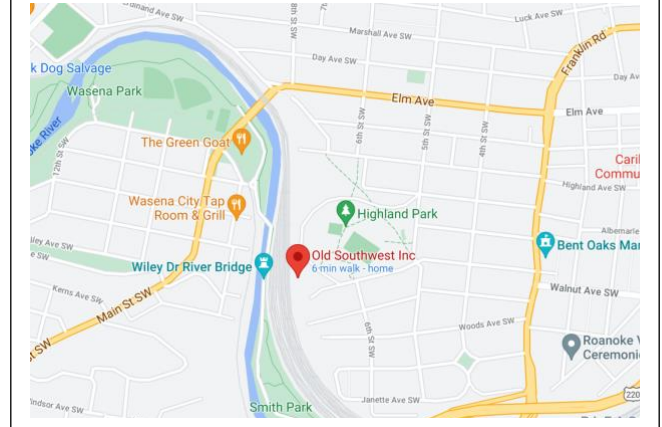
11 – 1-4 pm: Wellness Rodeo, Queenpin Family Wellness, location TBA

17 - 6:30 p.m. OSW Safety and Neighborhood Meeting, Gish House

17- midnight: OSW Day Avenue lots survey deadline

Where is the Gish House?

The Alexander Gish House is located near the dog park at the back of Highland Park, or search 641 Walnut Ave. SW, Roanoke, VA, 24016.



PRESERVING OUR PAST. SECURING OUR FUTURE.

OSW = Community - History - Diversity - Safety - Ecology - Empathy & FUN!

Our vision is to live in a community where people care about their neighbors, participate in neighborhood life, and are open to building a future together that makes Old Southwest the most desired community in the Roanoke Valley in which to live, work, and play.

Find us at

Facebook: <https://facebook.com/OldSouthwestInc>

Nextdoor: https://nextdoor.com/neighborhood_feed/

Website: <https://oldsouthwest.org>

Instagram: oldsouthwestroanoke

Meet Your 2022 OSW Board

Many interesting folks in OSW are willing to share their time and talents as your OSW Inc. board members and ensure that our OSW neighborhood is primo!

OSW Board of Directors

Officers

President: Mark Hostetter
Vice President: Erica Danko
Secretary: Stephen Bendele
Treasurer: David Jeavons, CPA

Members at Large

Elaine Fleck
Julie Gale
Mary Jo Gale
Mary Anne Mather
Terry McGuire
Phillip Morgan
Julie Mugford