

# THE BEACON

YOUR VISION, YOUR VOICE

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3

## GOODNESS BREWING IN

## BEARWATER



Grind City Brewery President, Hopper Sealy with CRA President, Rosalyn Willis

Not many 15 year olds lay awake thinking about opening their own brewery, but Hopper Seely did. His father, Bill Seely, introduced the craft to him as a way to spend quality time together. Bill was unwittingly cultivating a deep passion within Hopper that would one day become Grind City Brewing Company. The father and son duo opened the brewery in the Bearwater community this past fall and business has been booming ever since. Some loosely call the neighborhood Uptown (just across the street from Washington Park), but a true North Memphian will proudly let you know, this is Bearwater!

When Hopper began looking for spaces to build this lifelong dream, he hoped for a location that placed him on the border of need and influence. He wanted to be immersed in a neighborhood he could serve while also engaging with the massive growth and development occurring in Downtown Memphis.



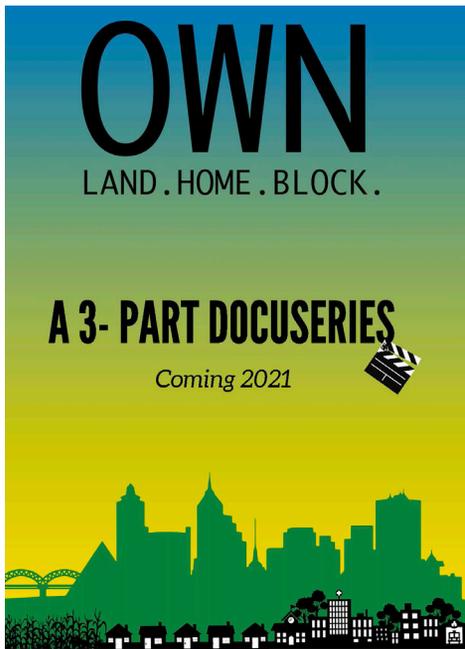
Before the patio

That's where the CRA came in. "Partnership with the CRA has allowed us to have a relationship with the neighborhood," says Hopper. From getting permission from the community to build in Bearwater to strategically giving to neighborhood organizations like St. Jude and Angel Street, its part of the Grind City mission to, "build a thriving Memphis by committing a portion of the proceeds (10% to be exact, \$6 million by 2030) to organizations that serve Memphis communities in need." For this reason, the CRA's involvement was a no-brainer. Not only did the CRA intentionally connect the brewery with the community, it also contributed the stand- out patio that serves as the grand foyer to the brewery. "This relationship has been a blessing and I'm looking forward to growing and growing with the CRA," Hopper commented.



Completed patio

Grind City is investing a total of \$16 million in the project and plans to hire 50 full time workers by 2023. They estimate almost \$200,000 in local sales taxes annually, \$1.2 million in TN sales taxes, generating \$5 million in real estate taxes by 2030. All of these tax dollars will go to support City and County services and the Shelby County School District.



# HEADED IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

On November 14, 2020, we held a small premiere of Own the Land, part 1 of our docuseries at Grind City Brewing Company. It was an inspiring event bringing together farmers and agricultural enthusiasts. Own is a 3- part series about the Community Redevelopment Agency's efforts to address food security, neighborhood empowerment and community reinvestment in North Memphis. In 2021, we will replay Part 1 and host a social distance, in-person and virtual premiere of Part 2 and 3, Own the Home and Own the Block.

A special thanks to those who appeared in the documentary: Black Seeds Urban Farm, Mary Wainwright (CRA Uptown Committee-Smokey City Rep), Betty Jones (Smokey City resident), Theo Davies (Farm Manager at Green Leaf Learning Farm at Knowledge Quest), Mia Madison (Executive Director of Memphis Tilth), Valerie Peavy and Jeff Harrison (Uptown Advisory Committee and former owners of the Office @ Uptown), and CRA staff. Stay tuned and enjoy these highlights from Own the Land!



# THE LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER



Mary Warren sighed as she lamented not being able to host her annual North Parkway neighborhood barbeque in 2020 due to Covid-19. “Oh it was a good time,” she said, “I used to marinate the meat the night before and we’d feed anyone who came through our gates.” Warren started the event as a way to get to know her neighbors. She and her husband, Thomas, would even feed the homeless at her home, “I just wanted my home to be a place where people come and just feel like normal people, not judged.” They were happy to host their annual community chili & baked goods contest this past October.

Its the countless stories like this that makes Mary Warren this month’s Lighthouse Keeper. She is a 32 year resident of the diverse North Parkway community (East of Downtown and adjacent to Smokey City).

“North Memphis carries a stigma for a lot of people, but I wouldn’t want to live anywhere else.” As a long time community advocate, Warren volunteered herself to serve on the Uptown TIF Advisory Board and has been a community builder alongside CRA for the past year. Her end game is making sure people know they can ask for what they need. “People around here carry a lot of pride and that’s okay, but no one should allow pride to get in the way of getting basic needs for their home and neighborhood met” said Warren, “no one should suffer in silence.” She hopes to continue elevating the value of home ownership and be a connector for her neighbors for years to come.

## Home for the Holidays!

The last newsletter featured an interview with our Dwayne Spencer, CEO and Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity, a truly extraordinary partnership.

This year, the CRA granted Habitat 2.4 million dollars to fund the building of 18 homes in the Uptown TIF while Habitat funded 9 in the district. We’re excited to share that most homes will be occupied by their new families early into 2021, if not by Christmas.

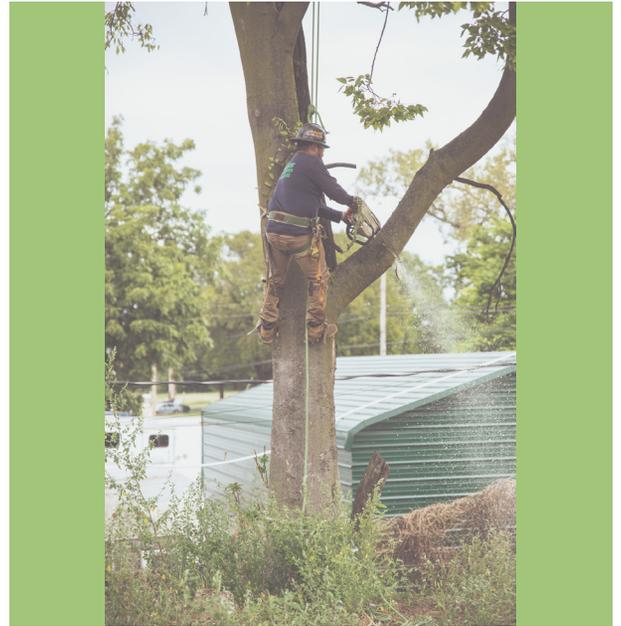
What a wonderful way to end or begin the year!



“THE GREATNESS OF  
A  
COMMUNITY IS MOST  
ACCURATELY  
MEASURED BY THE  
COMPASSION OF ITS  
MEMBERS.”

-CORETTA SCOTT KING

# MAN ON FIRE **RUDY RAMIREZ**



## HAWKS TREE SERVICES LIFTS HEAVY LOAD FOR NORTH MEMPHIS RESIDENTS

If you're driving around North Memphis one day with an unsightly view of overgrown lots, weathered and fallen trees, and then the next day the same lots are open and trees are removed or trimmed, you may have Rudy Ramirez and crew to thank. CRA Senior Community Builder, Kimani Shotwell, has been working with Rudy Ramirez's company, Hawk's Tree Services for the last 18 months to transform long overlooked parts of the TIF district.

In 2020 alone, 172 homeowners had trees removed, trees were trimmed/ removed from 49 streets, making sidewalks walkable and 5 overgrown alleys have been cleaned. To put it lightly, these men are on fire! "A lot of these places were in bad shape," Rudy commented, "some places have been overrun with rodent nests, overgrowth and trash for over a decade because there is no money to fix it."

And while most might shy away from that type of labor, Rudy has welcomed it with gratitude, not just because it's his business but because of the impact. "People have actually cried when we come out to help because they could not otherwise afford these services."

Rudy only asks for one thing, "Maintain your property and the surrounding neighborhood." Rudy says people seem to be doing just that once they get help with the major tree work. Not only has the work saved residents more than \$500,000 in tree services and potential property damage, residents are now able to enjoy safe, leisure walks through alleys for exercise.

If you are in need of tree service please contact Kimani Shotwell at 901-636-7288 or email [kimani.shotwell@memphistn.gov](mailto:kimani.shotwell@memphistn.gov).





Neighbors and community leaders gathered with anticipation last Fall for the demolition of Tilman Cove. It was the new beginning that many residents welcomed as the property sat vacant for years.

The CRA will work alongside Binghampton Development Corporation (BDC) to implement the priorities of the Binghampton TIF. This TIF was created at the request of the BDC. Because substantial reinvestment has occurred, the TIF will use the increase in property tax to invest into the neighborhood.



The CRA, with assistance from the BDC, Center for Transforming Communities (CTC) and Development Studio, led a community engagement process to determine the priorities for roughly \$26 million in TIF funding over the next 30 years.

180 one-on-one interviews were held with residents and stakeholders. Also included were six focus groups, a community open house, and input from Broad Avenue representatives.

The following priorities were determined by these groups.



1. Strong community spaces, which support increased community activities as well as more recreational and employment opportunities for youth.
2. Clean, activated, and attractive neighborhood, beautified through gardens, art, and community clean-ups.
3. Affordable opportunities, affordable housing, and affordable commercial space.
4. Safe and connected neighborhood with new pathways and improved transportation infrastructure.



## PROGRAMMING WORK COMPLETED IN 2020

### BLOCK WELLNESS

OUR STREET BY STREET, BLOCK BY BLOCK APPROACH TO ADDRESS INFRASTRUCTURE REPAIRS, ORGANIC OVERGROWTH, SAFETY ADDITIONS, VACANT LOTS AND ABANDONED/ UNUSED STRUCTURES.



A total of **688** dead, dying or fallen trees were mitigated or removed at homes, alleys or vacant spaces

**172** Homeowners had dead, dying, or fallen trees mitigated or removed.

**49** North Memphis streets and sidewalks have been trimmed or cleared of overgrowth that made them impossible to walk or drive.



**5** overgrown alleys have been cleared of poisonous plants, insects and trash

**6** Sanctuary **Lots** are in development. These lots will be transformed into the the following community assets: an outdoor arts gallery, a basketball oasis, a reading garden, Camp Bickford and an Uptown Cultural Kiosk.

### LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION



AN EXTENSION OF THE BLOCK WELLNESS PROGRAM TO RE-ESTABLISH WELL LIT STREETS, WITH CAMERAS APPROPRIATELY PLACED FOR NEIGHBORHOOD SECURITY.

Phase I Organic Obstruction complete in order to begin proper lighting of streets.

Phase 1 Lighting Analysis 85% complete and strategy for adequate lighting underway for completion in 2021.



### BREAKING THE BOX FOOD DISTRIBUTION

IN RESPONSE TO FOOD ACCESSIBILITY DURING COVID 19, THE CRA PARTNERED WITH THE 275 FOOD PROJECT, GIRLS, INC., WHOLE CHILD STRATEGIES AND MEMBERS OF THE UPTOWN ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO PROVIDE FRESH GROCERIES.

70 TIF District families were provided fresh, local fruits, vegetables and grains for 8 weeks during the pandemic.

### SINGLE FAMILY HOMES

ADMINISTERS FUNDING FOR RENOVATIONS TO KEEP HOMES SAFE, WARM AND DRY.

\*DUE TO COVID-19, ONLY OUTDOOR WORK IS BEING COMPLETED OR INDOOR WORK FOR FAMILIES WHO CAN MOVE OUT OF THEIR HOME DURING RENOVATION.

**30** homes completed in Phase I

**7** homes currently being processed in Phase II

**27** homes are currently being scheduled for assessment in Phase II

**87** homeowners are on the waiting list

**3** homes in cue for work due to dire need



### LOTS REIMAGINED

ALLOWS INDIVIDUALS WITH THE PASSION, PLANS AND LONG-TERM COMMITMENT TO INVEST IN THE REVITALIZATION OF A VACANT LOT OR LOTS.

Several lots have been transferred to neighboring property owners for long-term care

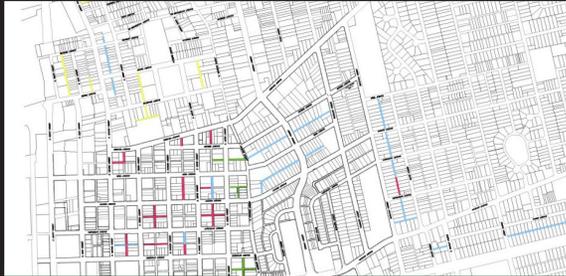
Black Seeds Urban Farm is in development for 2021

Kool Foods for Kids Community Garden is in development for 2021



# 2020 PROJECT PROGRESS AND A LOOK FORWARD TO 2021 PROJECTS

The following documents the percentage of progress per project in 2020 and the anticipated completion date.



**100%** ROUND 2 OF ALLEY IMPROVEMENTS

Anticipated completion by 3/30/21



**68%** CHELSEA GREENLINE (DESIGN ONLY) STARTING AT GRIND CITY BREWERY, CONNECTING TO SHELBY FARMS

Anticipated design completion by 6/30/21



**38%** SIDEWALK PROJECT PHASE 1

Anticipated completion by 12/31/21



**37%** 299 CHELSEA STABILIZATION

Anticipated completion by 3/1/21

The following projects are in the beginning phase and also projected for anticipated completion in 2021.



The following projects will begin and anticipate completion in 2021.

- MORRIS PARK IMPROVEMENTS
- SIDEWALK CONSTRUCTION FROM 311 REQUESTS
- COLLINS CHAPEL REHABILITATION PROJECT
- CHELSEA GREENLINE EXTENSION CONSTRUCTION

The Beacon

**Community Redevelopment Agency**  
**170 N. Main Street**  
**6th Floor**  
**Memphis, TN 38103**



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS

From the CRA

**For more information or to receive The Beacon**

**electronically visit [www.cramemphis.org](http://www.cramemphis.org).**

**Follow us on social media @cramemphis**

**Email us at [info@cramemphis.org](mailto:info@cramemphis.org)**