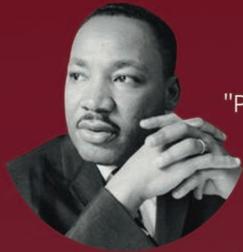


# THE BEACON

YOUR VISION, YOUR VOICE

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4

## THE LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS



"Power without love is reckless and abusive.  
Love without power is sentimental and anemic.  
Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice. Justice at its best is love correcting everything that stands against love.  
I have decided to stick with love, for I know that love is ultimately the only answer to mankind's problems."

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Dr. King stated, "Our ultimate end must be the creation of the beloved community," a non-violent space, upholding economic and social justice. This month we honor two Lighthouse Keepers who have been guideposts for the 'beloved community' in North Memphis, Rev. Henry Spark and Dr. JoeAnn Ballard.

**Dr. JoeAnn Ballard** founded The Neighborhood Christian Center (NCC) with her late husband Monroe Ballard, Sr. in 1978. While the mission of NCC is to guide those in need to stability and sustainability, JoeAnn has reached beyond the confines of formal mission, faithfully and willfully extending herself to meet the needs of others. With four children of their own, the Ballards also fostered 75 children in the community. JoeAnn is a living legend, etched within the fabric of North Memphis. Her contributions have tilled the ground and paved the way to success for many community non-profits and agencies. JoeAnn's work has been recognized by countless media outlets, most notably, USA Today, The Washington Post, The Tennessean and now, The Beacon. We salute you Dr. JoeAnn Ballard, our Lighthouse Keeper.



**Rev. Henry L. Starks** was the Pastor of St. James A.M.E church in the Greenlaw community of North Memphis. He was the first African American professor at Memphis Theological Seminary<sup>1</sup>. On the frontlines of the Sanitation Strike of 1968, he advocated for equitable pay and treatment for Black sanitation workers. In a 1983 interview at Rhodes College, Starks said, "We started out thinking that integration was the answer to our problem. We soon learned that this was an illusion... [We] developed Community on the Move for Equality, C.O.M.E, to liberate impoverished Blacks through community development, home renovation and things like that. It was never effective as it could have been because of the lack of funding."<sup>2</sup> Starks died in 1985 but his legacy lives on. We can only hope to provide space and resources for communities of North Memphis to continue this type of development that Starks and other ministers in C.O.M.E envisioned seeing.



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Rev. Henry Stark, pictured to the far left of Dr. King

# HEADED IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

*Jones Urban* DEVELOPMENT Co.

## Diamonds Under Our Feet

The Jones brothers may sound like the name of some fancy band, but make no mistake, these brothers are builders. Well, at least one of them is, Andre Jones considers his brother Curtis the builder and himself the dreamer. Andre and Curtis Jones are partners at Jones Urban Development and they are laying the foundation for something amazing, one block at a time. Malone Park Commons is a pocket neighborhood situated in the heart of the Uptown community, Greenlaw. A pocket neighborhood marries the best of single family home living with the communal feel and camaraderie unique to traditional housing to create an entirely new community. “Our vision is to offer diverse housing types the way it was done nearly one-hundred years ago, so that people at different stages of life can live, work and play in the same neighborhood” says Andre.

Jones Urban Development purchased the land from the CRA to build Malone Park Commons. The upcoming neighborhood (pictured below) will feature fourplexes, neighborhood corner commercial buildings and 11 detached cottages. The cottages are uniquely situated not ‘across the street’ from one another, but across the grass. While communities were traditionally built compact, in pocket neighborhoods pre- World War II, the Malone Park Commons will be the first of its kind in Memphis in the last 80 years!

Jones got the idea for the neighborhood whilst he and his wife drove their daughter 60+ miles from Collierville to Downtown everyday in order for her to attend the school of their choosing. He started thinking, “What would it look like to live [Downtown], what would it look like to live with less space?”



Brothers, Andre and Curtis Jones, Principals of Jones Urban Development, with their niece, Taquita Jones, Site Supervisor at new housing development, Malone Park Commons



# MALONE PARK COMMONS



After some thought Jones, along with his wife Dorothy, decided to move to the neighborhood and rent a home in Uptown while they built their new small home, “It took some adjusting, but ultimately, we loved it,” said Jones.

Since moving to Uptown in 2006, Andre and his family enjoy biking around the neighborhood, or a few blocks down the road to Downtown Memphis. “Since 1950 the American family has decreased in size from 3.14 people per household to 2.6 people per household, but the size of the average home has increased from 1,000 sq ft to 2,500 sq ft. [As a society], we are using more than we need and I’m personally moving towards a minimalist mindset in all areas of life,” says Andre.

Malone Park Commons is far from a personal venture for Andre, “We are building walkable communities for people who want to minimize their dependence on cars.” The Jones brothers are Memphis natives who envisioned rebuilding a stronger city through spaces tailor-made for personal connection. “This is a way to get back to knowing your neighbors. We build large front porches to generate community.”

Jones Urban Development aims to display the best of Memphis in their projects and Malone Park Commons is no exception.

When asked, “Why place this development in Memphis?” Jones referred to a story (popularized by Russell Conwell, founder of Temple University) of a farmer who sold his land in search of diamonds. The farmer searched the world for diamonds until his death. Some time later, the buyer of his farm found one of the largest diamond mines in the world right there in his garden.

Simply put, there are diamonds right under our feet here in Memphis.

To learn more or to complete an application to rent homes in this new development, visit [maloneparkcommons.com](http://maloneparkcommons.com) or contact Harris Realty Services at 901-372-8003.

- Large front porches
- 8 ft. doors
- Hardwood floors
- Large windows and plenty of natural light
- Spacious bathrooms
- Stunning views of the Memphis bridge





The work of redevelopment is marked by daily tasks and the upkeep of systems that the average person needs but rarely considers. The CRA collaborates with a host of consultants who answer questions like:

- How do we get lighting and security cameras installed in this crime ridden area? Or, what can we put in these vacant lots to prevent unwanted activity?
- Who owns this property and can we purchase/ acquire it?
- How can we get permission to build a park or communal space here?
- Why is the water pressure so low in this area?
- Is it legal or safe to build on this land?

As you read more about each consultant, check out these scenarios that help explain what these professionals do and how the CRA works with them to address blight.

## ARCHITECTURE & COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT



**Valentina Cochran** is the Managing Principal Architect at ArchInc, an architecture firm committed to preserving the historic character of spaces in Memphis, TN, essentially, creating and maintaining feng shui. And believe it or not, neighborhoods definitely have a certain look and feel that controls how residents interact with a neighborhood.

Her work connected her with the CRA more than 14 years ago during the Hope VI project, for the development of Legends Park. Attracted to the community engagement aspect of the CRA, Valentina feels a calling to the work, "When we work with the CRA there is a strong emphasis on quality housing that fits the neighborhood. That resonates with us because we get to re-establish historic precedent and design spaces with quality material that lasts."



Good architects don't simply focus on fancy design, they consider how the environment impacts humanity. "There are studies that demonstrate the immense impact of [environment] on overall wellbeing. Simple things like restoring street signs and knowing your neighbor really impacts communities," says, Valentina.

Currently, she is working on residential infill with the CRA. That is, designing community assets in open spaces that use the land most efficiently, making it more walkable and increasing overall connectivity of neighborhoods. "We are not recreating, we are reconnecting," says Valentina.

Over the next several years, Valentina hopes her work with the CRA helps reconnect Memphians with jobs, sustainability, and ultimately, each other.

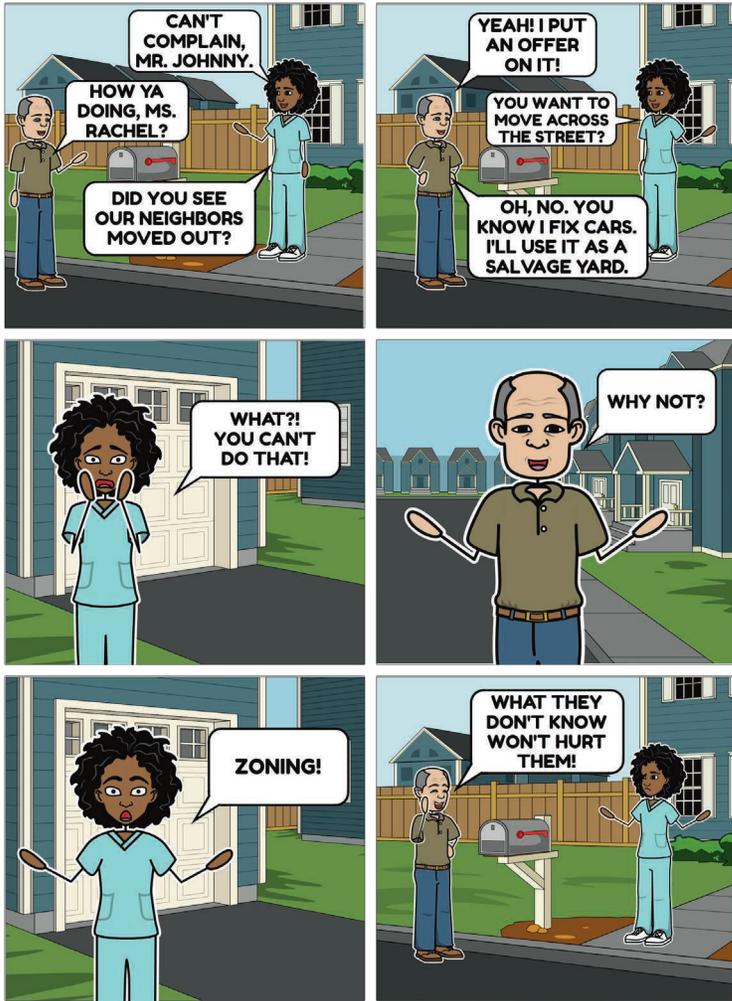
# ZONING & LEGAL



**Cindy Reaves** is the co-owner and Chief Managing Consultant at SR Consulting, a full service civil engineering, planning and zoning firm.

She has 35 years of experience in the zoning, planning, and design coordination of subdivisions, infrastructure improvements, mixed use developments, multi-family residential projects and more. She has been working with CRA in the Uptown District since it was first created in 2002. This work includes working with residents, business owners and whoever else may be impacted by new developments. Some of her most notable projects are the Crosstown Concourse, Highland Row, Bass Pro Shop Pyramid Memphis, and St. Jude.

With the CRA, she is working diligently on Uptown infrastructure, scattered lots and subdivisions. “You meet some difficult people, but for the most part, people are excited to see repairs to houses and neighborhoods,” says Cindy. And rightly so, proper zoning protects neighborhood character, property value and public safety. It also opens potential for future development that builds a community’s economy and pride. Take Crosstown Concourse for example, breathing life into the long vacant building has brought more businesses, jobs and accessibility to the area, rivaling the era of the original Sears Roebuck & Company. In 20 years, Cindy hopes to gaze at a Memphis that is as great if not greater than ever.



**Monice Moore Hagler, Esq.** is the founder and a member of The Hagler Law Group. Her law practice is concentrated in the areas of real estate, development and mixed-finance transactions, particularly projects involving public and private partnership.

“My work as the general counsel for the CRA is broad,” says Monice, “CRA is a public entity, they are accountable to the people, so my role is to make sure the CRA is in compliance and within necessary parameters to exist as an agency.”

Monice’s work in the district began in 1999 with the Uptown Redevelopment Group. She has witnessed part of the TIF district go from being deprived to beginning to thrive in just over a decade.

“Redevelopment is slow and expensive work

and the CRA is redirecting the funds from the development back into the community.”

As a lifetime Memphian, Monice is committed to doing her part to see communities like South Memphis and Binghampton see the same type of transformation that has taken place in Uptown.

“Some people jokingly call me the walking Memphis Chamber of Commerce and that’s fine because I love Memphis. We’ve been impacted by negative news, but we have a lot to offer and I will forever advocate for Memphis.”



# REALTORS & ENGINEERS



**Sherry Cole** is an Affiliate Broker who assists the CRA in identifying blight properties and areas that can be repurposed to improve the aesthetics of the neighborhood. This work increases the viability of the people and the area by providing prolific economic opportunities.

As a Memphis native and product of Joseph Edison (JE) Walker homes (a subdivision that provided homeownership opportunities for Black residents during segregation), Sherry feels a particular calling to

educate citizens on the process of homeownership and preserving the longevity of communities by addressing blight. JE Walker was a Black philanthropist, “His community service afforded my brother, myself and other children like us the opportunity to grow up in a home around neighbors who cared for us like family.” says Sherry. “We had a village. The least that I can do is try to give back.”

Sherry passionately stated, “My hope is for ALL citizens of Memphis, regardless of color or creed, to enjoy [life] with fairness and equality, [residing] in safe, economically viable neighborhoods where the amenities that many of us take for granted (local grocery stores, safe clean parks and access to education and transportation) are readily available for all.”



## Jittapong “JT” Malasri

is a civil engineer and the founder of Malasri Engineering. The CRA works with engineers to develop and strengthen infrastructure like sidewalks, lighting, and water systems.

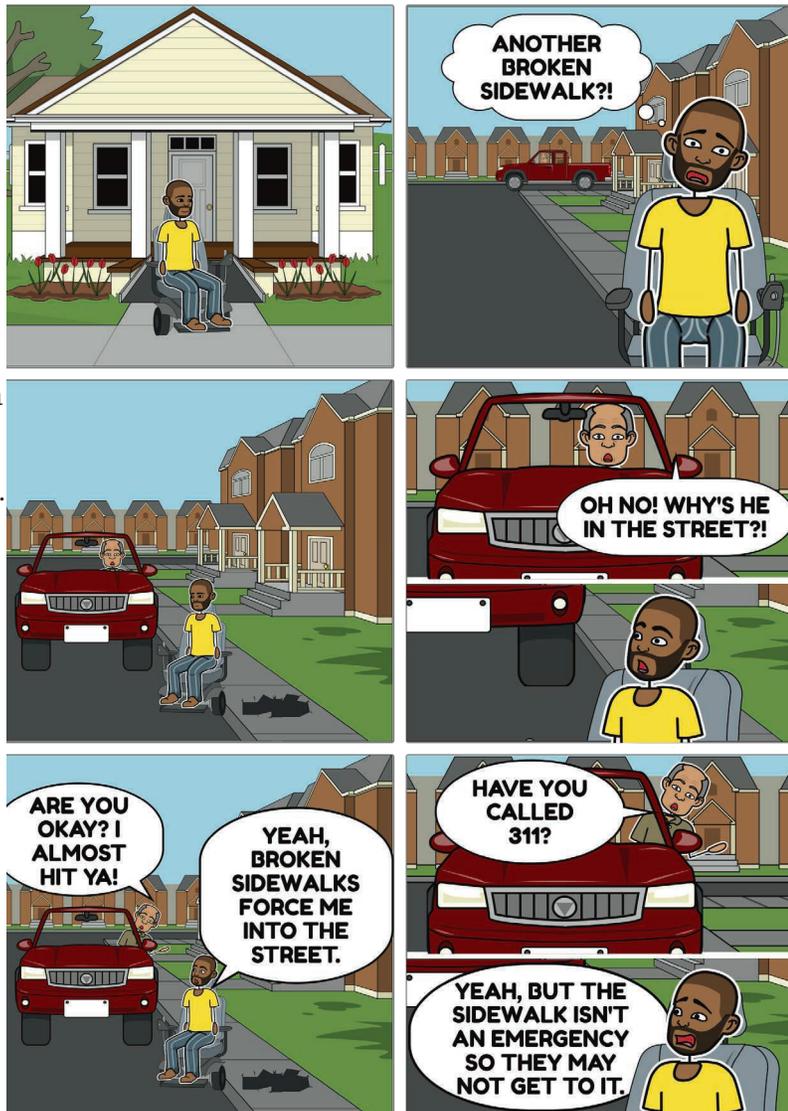
Through processes like CPTED (Crime Prevention

Through Environmental Design), JT works with other development professionals to design neighborhoods and properties intentionally, with the safety of residents in mind.

With the support of the CRA, the team aims to improve the public environment. This includes increasing visibility through enhanced street lighting, targeted landscape design, and regular maintenance of public areas. With these strategies, the team hopes to improve pedestrian safety and ultimately prevent crime.

“We have the opportunity to optimize the CRA’s equitable investment in the community,” says JT. He hopes that building more sustainable communities through infrastructure improvements and creating more affordable housing will foster a strong neighborhood identity and connectivity.

“I want to see vibrant, inclusive, and safe neighborhoods with a range of housing options,” says JT, “This is an outcome that will make the CRA and residents proud for generations to come.”





**Chris Triplett** is one of several civil engineers who work with the CRA to manage design projects that improve the infrastructure within the Uptown TIF district. For a total of 20 years, Chris has worked with EnSafe, a team of engineers, environmental scientists and safety and health consultants.

Chris is focused on increasing the walkability of the district, “We aren’t designing for today, we are looking for what tomorrow will bring,” says Chris. Things like grocery stores, neighborhood eateries, and gyms don’t find their homes in neighborhoods where people can’t physically access those businesses due to unwalkable, unsafe and poorly lit streets. This type of retail plays a major role in securing the longevity of a community. And that is Chris’ hope for the Uptown TIF district, “We just want to see people who live there remain and new people find it desirable to move there.”

**Here’s a sneak peek of the project Chris is most excited about.**

**The Smart-Green Alley Project** is located on the south side of The Office@ Uptown. It’s not a park, it’s not an amphitheater, it’s an alley! Residents will enjoy a rare alley space, equipped with seating, greenery, shading and lights, to gather and socialize outdoors. The project includes smart alley/streets concepts that provide green infrastructure to capture stormwater, collecting it underground to improve water quality and reduce peak runoff. Cheers to flood free alleyways!

Commonly seen in cities like Seattle, San Francisco and Chicago, the Smart Green Alley project will be the first of its kind in Memphis.

## It All Starts With You!

From sidewalks and the improper placement/ use of a structure or simply the aesthetic in your neighborhood, change starts with you, the neighbor. Your vision and your voice is the foundation of all community redevelopment. Let’s continue working together to build the Memphis our great, great grandchildren will remember forever.



Gregory Fenner, Speedway Terrace Resident

# Single Family Homes Rehab

Over the past year and a half, the CRA has awarded 100+ grants to families in need of renovations to make their homes safe, warm and dry. About 40 homes have been completed, while others wait for Covid 19 to subside and regular construction to continue.

Meanwhile, there were a few families in dire need of assistance during these harsh winter months. Residents Gregory Fenner and Tawana Jackson recently had emergency renovations completed on their homes.

“I needed work done on my house and I was getting the runaround from other programs. Then, one day I was sitting on my porch when a neighbor walked up and dropped off this form to fill out from the CRA,” Tajuanna said, “And I thought, now that’s God.”



Tawana, like most, was on the SFH waiting list most of 2020. However her inoperable central HVAC unit was no match for this winter’s freezing temperatures. The CRA was able to expedite the work in this extreme case. Tawana

teared up as she spoke about her new HVAC system, “I have my grandkids with me during the day sometimes and they would not have made it through the winter, going to school from home, with no heat. You can’t tell me this isn’t a blessing.”

Gregory Fenner lives in the historic North Parkway district and will be featured in Part 2 of our docu-series coming this Spring, Own the Block.



Fenner is getting several areas of his home renovated, but the most pressing need was his roof which the CRA was recently able to complete.

“What insurance company and contractor do you know of that’s going up there to [fix my roof] without charging me something astronomical? Fenner rhetorically asks, “None!



The CRA is not discriminating when it comes to who can get help because they are thinking about preserving the value of the home and that’s profound to homeowners.”

Community Redevelopment Agency  
170 N Main St 6th floor, Memphis,  
TN 38103

For more information or to receive  
The Beacon  
electronically, email us at  
info@cramemphis.org

