

# LAURELHURST

L E T T E R

Published by the Laurelhurst Community Club ... serving the Laurelhurst community since 1920

October 2020

## SCH Comments Due

LCC and its legal counsel expressed concern about the lack of public access to documents for Seattle Children's proposal for Phase 3 of their Major Institution Master Plan (MIMP). To reset the process, the SDCI extended the public comment **deadline to October 12, 2020.**

In addition, the next Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting will be scheduled after the public comment period is closed, allowing time to review project details.

LCC supports the valuable work of Seattle Children's and has partnered for over 40 years to make their expansions as compatible as possible in our residential neighborhood. In that spirit, it is important for neighbors to offer public comment about potential impacts of Phase 3 that may affect their quality of life. The Design Guidelines require that, "The hospital campus should relate to and feel integrated with the surrounding residential areas."

LCC's comments to SDCI included:

1. Concerns about the permanent hard pavement roadways now taking up half of the 75-foot perimeter of the eastern and northern setbacks along 44th Ave. NE, 45th Ave. NE, and NE 50th St.
2. Plans for the height and illumination of the new Surgery Building. Windows will have shades at night, but a lighted hallway is planned along the eastern border.
3. Light and glare from both the new north garage and Surgery Center will be much closer to the property border than the original development plans had sited. The top floor of the garage will be an elevated and lit flat surface facing neighbors. The new buildings will also cause shading along residential streets bordering the new structures.

*continued on page 3*

## Milfoiled, Another History of Union Bay

*By Stowe Talbot*

With the exception of September with its awful smoke, I can't think of another summer where I've witnessed more people out enjoying themselves on Union Bay; swimming, rowing, sailing, fishing and just anchoring out in the middle. Nature was thriving too. Bald eagles were out in force, enjoying a well balanced Keto diet of seafood and waterfowl.

Growing up on Webster Point in the 70's and 80's, I spent a lot of time on and in Union Bay. And it had more than its share of ecological problems. First and foremost was the proliferation of Eurasian milfoil, a non-native aquatic plant that had overrun the basin. Union Bay at that time was a popular spot for motorboats and waterskiing. Boats would cut through the milfoil chopping off the upper three feet of the plant, which would then float to the surface and drift around in clumps. Sailboats and other watercraft venturing into the bay would accumulate long trails of the weed on their propellers, daggerboards and rudders. Some of this floating milfoil would form drifting islands, seemingly thick enough to walk on. Most of the milfoil, however, would float into shore, creating a thick mat of rotting vegetation, stretching 100 feet out from the beach. On weekends, my father and I would spend hours scooping up the stinky stuff with rakes, de-watering it on the shore, and then hauling it to the Fremont dump. Alas, it was a Sisyphean task; more milfoil would drift into shore by the next day or two.

I am now on the board of an organization called SUBA (Save Union Bay Association), a non-profit organization of Laurelhurst neighbors dedicated to preserving and enhancing both the ecology and recreational use of our beautiful bay. The organization has undertaken many projects and initiatives over the years to control invasive species: For example, successfully petitioning to stop the pumping of algal water from Green Lake into Union Bay; daylighting Ravenna Creek into the University Slough, and removing invasive nutria (a large South American species of rodent).

In 2010 with the vision of president Susan Holliday, SUBA focused on targeted herbicide treatments of invasive aquatic plants along the

*continued on page 2*

## HUB Shed Ready from your LEAP team

Despite coping with the pandemic's effects, we cannot forget the threat of earthquakes or other natural disasters. LEAP (Laurelhurst Emergency Action Plan) volunteers have continued working, despite Covid, to prepare Laurelhurst for resilience during a disaster-induced period of necessary self-sufficiency. Thanks to generous contributions from many Laurelhurst residents, LEAP has completed construction of the HUB equipment shed across from Laurelhurst Park at St. Stephen's Church, corner of NE 45th St. and 48th Ave. NE.

A significant natural disaster could cause interruption of major services including communication (phone, internet). If that occurs, our HUB's tents, tables, and bulletin boards will be set up and operated by neighborhood volunteers. Once we may safely assemble in groups, LEAP will invite Laurelhurst residents to a HUB Open House and practice drill. For more information about the Laurelhurst HUB, contact your Cluster Captain or LEAP at LEAPLaurelhurst@outlook.com. ■

## LCC Centennial Feature: Early Estates

*Researched and written by Jim Rupp, LCC trustee*

During summer neighborhood walks, consider viewing the homes of Laurelhurst's first estates. Although none retain their original acreage, the original homes remain as symbols of days gone by.

The first to be built in the neighborhood is the large grey house at 3008 Webster Point Road, which backs up to West Laurelhurst Drive. It was built by Wilbur and Hobart McNeill in 1897, twelve years before developers created the first Laurelhurst plat. They named it "Colonsay," after an island off of Scotland that is an ancestral home of Clan McNeill. By 1906 the McNeils had subdivided their original 35-acre property, but they retained five choice acres for the estate, which extended from West Laurelhurst Drive NE to Union Bay and encompassed the area now served by Webster Point Road. It was Laurelhurst's loveliest estate for years, partially forested with manicured lawns sloping down to the water. When I was a kid it was "the Balmer Estate," home of

Thomas Balmer, a prominent Seattle lawyer and long-time member of the UW's Board of Regents (the UW's Balmer Hall is named after him). The property was purchased and subdivided after he died in 1959.

The house on the second grand estate is located at 4315 NE 33rd Street. It was built by Paul C. Murphy, one of the three original developers of Laurelhurst, on five acres that extended from West Laurelhurst Drive and Northeast 33rd Street down to Union Bay. It stands at the top of the hill and an attractive curved trellis extends out towards the bay. A 1913 book on significant houses in Seattle praised the home's Spanish Revival architecture with its "curving arches of wondrous beauty (and) overhanging gables and massive columns." I assume Paul Murphy lived there until 1915 when he moved his family to Portland to focus on developing the Laurelhurst neighborhood in that city. The estate's carriage house at 3222 43rd Avenue NE is now a separate home. The Murphy property was subdivided in the 1940s, but up until the early 1960s, the gardens and lawn extended over the lot at 4303 NE

33rd Street, now occupied by a large colonial home.

The third home, located at 5155 NE Latimer Place, is unusual because it was not built as a house. This unique, vertical concrete structure with expansive views over the lake was built in 1925 to be the carriage house of an estate owned by prominent Seattle banker Leroy Backus. It was built to house horses on its lowest level, cars, and presumably a chauffeur or other estate employee. The mansion was never built and the property was sold to descendants of Norval Latimer, another local banker. The Latimers eventually subdivided the property. I don't know if it's true, but my father (who was born in Seattle in 1913 and lived in Laurelhurst from 1938 to 1986) understood that Backus decided not to build a home and traded this property for acreage the Latimer family owned elsewhere.

Of course, over the past 95 years since Leroy Backus was inspired to build here, Laurelhurst has accumulated a large collection of stately residences. However, none preside over impressive estates such as those once graced by these three early homes. ■

*Milfoil on Union Bay continued from page 1*

developed shoreline and the crew lanes used by the UW. Aquatechnex, our longtime contractor, uses gentle herbicides. These annual treatments, which are licensed and approved by the State, have proved by far the most effective method for weed control, and have significantly brought back the health of the bay for both recreation and wildlife. In fact, the Department of Ecology has recognized our accomplishments and has recommended other lake associations model their programs on ours.

SUBA's work is financed primarily by donations from Laurelhurst neighbors – \$450,000 to date – with additional support from the UW and grants from the State. We also want to acknowledge the ongoing support from the UW athletics department and intramural sports programs to keep the bay navigable for their boat programs and to enhance the UW's restoration of the Union Bay Natural Area. Today the bay is a thriving natural treasure that we should all cherish and enjoy.

To get involved or just find out more about SUBA, please attend our **annual meeting at 7 p.m., Wednesday, November 18**. Zoom link will be available later next month on SUBA's website.

Save Union Bay Association

SaveUnionBayAssn@gmail.com

<http://www.saveunionbay.org/Home.html> ■

## Your Help Needed to Boost LCC Coffers

With two significant land-use projects (Talaris redevelopment and Seattle Children's Phase 3 Copper Project) continuing to demand analysis, legal work, and consultation with various experts, LCC's available funds are becoming scarce.

It's not too late to pay annual dues or too early to make an end-of-the-year extra donation to LCC.

Any amount is needed and much appreciated to help LCC continue its work on behalf of neighbors.

Donate on LCC's website or mail checks to the PO Box listed on the back of the newsletter.

**Thank you!** ■

**UNCLASSIFIEDS**

**BABYSITTER:** Reliable 8th-grade girl from The Bush School with Better Babysitting, CPR and 1st Aid certificates looking for babysitting jobs in the neighborhood. Two year's experience. 206-972-4792 or romymckey@gmail.com.

**BABYSITTER:** Experienced Seattle Children's certified babysitter. CPR and first aid certified. alederman17@gmail.com or 206-743-2054. Alexandra Lederman

**BUBBLY BABYSITTER:** WSU Soph. Honors, RHS grad. Camp counselor 3 summers. Former Mini Mac employee. Former Lifeguard. Age range: 3 and up, dog walks/sits as well! Contact: Libby Hulst, 206-931-3574.

**BEST CLEANING LLC:** 27 Years cleaning Windermere and Laurelhurst homes. Regular cleaning and special projects; references from current clients; quality guaranteed. 206-948-2433. bestcleaning@outlook.com

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**PAINTING:** Luis Ramirez 206-465-3593. Interior and exterior. Great Laurelhurst references. Bonded and insured. Any size job.

**RAPID COMPUTER HELP:** PC/Mac. Upgrades; hardware, software installation; troubleshooting, repair. Spyware, virus removal. Windows, MS Office certifications. Local References. Matt, 206-498-8901.

**SWEET TREATS:** Laurelhurst teen baking to raise \$\$ for University District Food Bank. Due to COVID-19, the number of people facing food insecurity has increased, and I want to help by baking and selling: 3 types of cookies at \$12 per dozen and cupcakes at \$27 per dozen. For details or to place a custom order email alederman17@gmail.com or text 206-743-2054. Thank you! Alexandra Lederman

**TUTORING:** Customized tutoring available to fit your learners needs. Thirty years of experience. References available. Online or social distancing. Text 617-501-4304. Email Lucasliterature@gmail.com

**WANTED:** Laurelhurst Homes - As Is. Top Dollar Paid. I will buy your house as is. Don't worry about problems or cleaning up or preparing for sale. Quick and easy cash sale. I live in the neighborhood. Call Mike, LREA, at 206-459-9375.

**WANTED:** Laurelhurst area 23-24' boat moorage for Summer 2021. Will pay top rent. Call Michael at 206-459-9375.

**Sign up for LCC's Constant Contact electronic newsletter for time-critical communications: email laurelhurstnews@comcast.net.**

**Laurelhurst Blog**  
http://thelaurelhurstblog.blogspot.com/  
News, events, issues, restaurants, businesses and lots more. Email a tip or story idea or subscribe at laurelhurstblogger@gmail.com.  
*The blog and LCC are separate entities. ■*

**CALENDAR**

**October 12 (Mon.) 6:30 to 8 p.m.**  
**LCC Trustee Meeting**  
Virtual meeting via Zoom  
Check the website for login information.  
**Drop off donations for Elizabeth Gregory House,** a U District women's shelter: Huda Giddens at 4338 NE 44th St. (Leave in green bin at front of house.)  
**Gently used shoes needed** for the homeless and distributed through Blessed Sacrament parish's Outreach to the Poor in the U District. Drop off in white plastic container in front of 3891 44th Ave. NE.  
**Each month, trustees review Calls and Concerns from neighbors. Please contact any trustee to bring up something you would like LCC to be aware of or consider action on or if you need assistance maneuvering City government offices.**

The Laurelhurst Letter is published ten times a year. DISPLAY ADS cost \$75 per space per issue, with a five-issue commitment paid in advance. UNCLASSIFIED ADS are free for PAID members of the Laurelhurst Community Club, except that repeat ads or ads deemed commercial cost \$20; 25-word maximum. Email copy to laurelhurstnews@comcast.net.

*Seattle Children's continued from page 1*

4. Mature trees in the construction area will not be protected, and all 45 exceptional (very large) trees are slated for removal. In total, 105 trees will be removed and replacements will not fulfill prior function and screening.

5. The mechanical penthouse on the new surgery center will be visible and will emit noise and other emissions.

6. On-site parking will be very limited during the three years of construction. SCH must provide adequate off-site parking to reduce neighborhood employee parking.

7. Extra square footage is being squeezed into the same footprint, because half of the new buildings will be underground. Digging deeper creates more space and more intensity on this site, which results in greater transportation intensity and other impacts.

Please include project #3036201-LU and your address in the comment letter. Send your comments to prc@seattle.gov. deadline to October 12, 2020. ■

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**Newsletter:** laurelhurstnews@comcast.net;  
Leslie Wright, editor, 206-229-1505

**Security Patrol:** crimeprevention@laurelhurstcc.com

**Aircraft Noise Hotline** 206-433-5393

**Animal Control** 206-386-7387

**Community Center** 206-684-7529

**Laurelhurst Beach Club (business)** 206-729-3724

**Police, Non-emergency** 206-625-5011

**Street Light Out, City Light** 206-684-7056

**24-Hour Crisis Line** 206-461-3222

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CHOOSE A BROKER FROM YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD.



**LCC urges you to  
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your animal  
when out  
walking, scoop  
the poop, and  
don't allow  
nonstop barking.**

### Engage with Your City

Let your council member and mayor know what's on your mind.

**Jenny A. Durkan, Mayor**  
Phone: 206-684-4000  
Email: [jenny.durkan@seattle.gov](mailto:jenny.durkan@seattle.gov)

**Alex Pedersen, District 4  
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