

A short history of MONA

since 1996

Table of Contents

Merry Oaks Neighborhood Association (MONA)	3
Small Area Plan and Neighborhood Improvement Projects.....	4
Land Use and Zoning	5
Briar Creek Greenway (B.C.G.).....	6
Merry Oaks-to-Plaza Midwood Connectivity Project.....	7
Merry Oaks Elementary School and Campus Park	8
Community Building and Environmental Stewardship	9
Miscellaneous MONA Projects.....	10
Property Values	12

Merry Oaks Neighborhood Association (MONA)

- 1996 *Concerned with crime, decline of area multi-family developments, and turnover of long-time residents' homes to absentee landlords, neighbors started a Neighborhood Watch program. They also voted to adopt the name "Merry Oaks", after the manor house (location of current Woodmere Condominiums) built by Cyrus Wolfe, a Civil War veteran who farmed the area.*
- 1998 (September 28) MONA organized.
- 1998 Nancy Pierce (Shaver) installed as President. Bylaws approved by general members.
- 2002 Cate Martin installed as President.
- 2006 Tom Poston installed as President
- 2008 For the first time in 10 years there is no MONA summer meeting. Instead, 10-year celebration/potluck cookout/fall meeting will be held October 18. See newsletter for details.

Small Area Plan and Neighborhood Improvement Projects

1996 M.O. and Briar- Creek/ Woodland activists petition the CharMeck Planning Commission to create a Small Area Plan for the area. Residents and business owners participate in Small Area Plan process.

1998 City Council adopts M.O. and Briar Creek/Woodland Small Area Plan. Key features include:

- Limit multi-family development by downzoning and corrective rezoning
- Establish safer pedestrian/bike access.
- Institute neighborhood beautification plans.
- Add open and recreational space.
- Master Plan future development of Briar Creek Road @Central Avenue (Renfrow/Plummer properties)
- Encourage cooperation between police, landlords and property managers to reduce crime
- Identify and provide human services for youth and the elderly

2000 City announces Neighborhood Improvement Plan (NIP) for M.O. To be included: sidewalks, planting strips, curb and gutters, storm water repairs, street trees, round-about, landscaping.

2001 Construction begins on NIP infrastructure: stormwater, curb, gutter and sidewalks.

2002 NIP begins with stormwater work, then Graybark, Draper sidewalks and planting strips. Many neighbors contract separately with the construction company to pave their driveways.

2002 MONA approves NIP design for roundabout at Draper@M.O. Road.

2003 MONA agrees to exchange entrance signs for street trees in NIP budget.

2003 NIP sidewalks, curb, gutter are all finished. Landscaping delayed due to drought.

2004 NIP landscaping , street trees installed.

2005 City commences M.O. street resurfacing

Land Use and Zoning

- 1998 MONA leaders lobby State to withdraw federal tax credits for low-income housing project Trinity Community Apartments on Central Avenue, which was prohibited under City's scattered-site Locational Policy for subsidized housing. City employee erred in approving site. MONA failed, project was built. Contrite City agrees to prioritize M.O. improvement projects, Central streetscape and bike/ped connectivity to Plaza-Midwood.
- 1999 City Council approves Small Area Plan rezonings, including downzoning properties on Arnold Drive from multi- to single- family zoning. Some properties on Central also downzoned.
- 2004 Four-and-a-half-acre Plummer property at Central @Briar Creek (south side) under contract contingent on rezoning for a mixed-use (retail and residential) project.
- 2005 MONA joins seven other neighborhoods to protest Plummer property rezoning. Developer wants to sell part of the property for an Aldi Store, with a Phase Two residential. Neighborhoods with support of City Planning staff protest typical suburban-style site plan, contend that residential would never succeed next to an Aldi parking lot. MONA leaders meet with Aldi, hundreds of neighbors attend several meetings to convince developers to drop the rezoning request, contending that it should stay all residential.
- 2006 Developers withdraw request for Plummer Property rezoning. Plummer property keeps residential zoning.
- 2006 Tuscan Development buy 8-acre Renfrow property (Briar Creek Road @ Central, north side), propose eco-friendly "treehouse" duplexes for sale.
- 2006 Citiline Resortline purchases Plummer property for condo development.
- 2006 Plummer house (white frame) and Renfrow house (brick), both built in the 1920s at Briar Creek @ Central, are demolished. They were built by children of Cyrus Wolfe, the Civil War veteran who farmed this area.
- 2007 Citiline announces The Vyne at Briar Creek @ Central. Construction begins.
- 2007 Tuscan Development protests City's requirement that Briar Creek Road be extended through former Renfrow property (under City's subdivision ordinance) for eventual connectivity to Cosby.
- 2007 MONA takes position that extension of Briar Creek Road is unnecessary and would harm the neighborhood.
- 2007 Tuscan withdraws plans for 58-unit eco-friendly duplexes, proposes rental apartments instead.
- 2008 Tuscan and the City's disagreement over road extension continues to delay any development there.

Briar Creek Greenway (B.C.G.)

- 1991 Nancy Pierce (Shaver) takes her toddlers to play in Briar Creek, sees potential for greenway.
- 2000 MONA lobbies County for Briar Creek Greenway (B.C.G.) section near Masonic as per County's adopted Greenway Master Plan.
- 2001 County approves purchase of floodplain properties on Harbinger Court and Masonic Drive for B.C.G.
- 2001 MONA previews preliminary design concept for B.C.G.
- 2002 MONA discussions B.C.G. bridge options with County Park and Recreation Department.
- 2002 MONA agrees that county money allocated for M.O. School Park can be re-allocated to speed up B.C.G.
- 2004 Neighbors view final design plans for B.C.G. Construction begins.
- 2005 Greenway trail installed.
- 2006 Greenway bridge installed over Briar Creek, completing ped/bike connection to Plaza-Midwood. Several M.O. neighbors cheered as bridge was dropped by crane.
- 2006 B.C.G. circle with benches installed. Neighbors plead for tree at circle center, County denies request saying "circle center must be flat to ground." Neighbors plant flowers.
- 2008 County plants tree in greenway circle.
- 2008 County installs signage, trees at B.C.G. entrances.

Merry Oaks-to-Plaza Midwood Connectivity Project

- 2000 MONA lobbies City for ped/bike path to Plaza-Midwood. MONA leaders bushwack, explore possible routes.
- 2001 City allocates a half million dollars for ped/bike path to Plaza Midwood via Masonic, Logie and Roland Ave.
- 2002 MONA butts heads with some Plaza Midwood residents who do not want connectivity from Logie to Roland.
- 2002 CDOT announces connector compromise: a “choker lane” from Logie to Roland.
- 2003 Two dilapidated houses on Logie removed for ped/bike path/choker lane from Masonic to Logie to Roland
- 2004 Connectivity project completed.
- 2004 Properties on Logie double in value immediately after choker lane is installed.

Merry Oaks Elementary School and Campus Park

- 2000 MONA lobbies City and County for a park on Merry Oaks (M.O.) School campus including walking path through woods.
- 2001 MONA meets with CMS to help design M.O. School campus park.
- 2002 M.O. School campus park delayed while CMS designs and builds new school. MONA gives input on school and grounds design.
- 2002 MONA agrees that county money allocated for M.O. School Park can be re-allocated to speed up greenway.
- 2003 Students move into new M.O. school. Old M.O. school demolished.
- 2003 MONA help park planners re- design campus park, including wooded trail.
- 2003 MONA advocates for trail from M.O. Road to the campus.
- 2004 County approves purchase of small parcel from M.O. Road for trail to campus park, and of additional parcel adjacent to campus for park expansion.
- 2005 CMS and County Park and Recreation Department squabble. MONA keeps after them.
- 2006 Work begins.
- 2006 MONA volunteers help establish butterfly garden in school courtyard.
- 2007 Park and trail from campus to M.O. Road is completed.
- 2007 Neighbors, teachers and 40-50 students join hands to clean up and plant around M.O. School.
- 2007 MONA helps initiate and finance Wildlife Habitat application for school.

Community Building and Environmental Stewardship

- 1999 Spring social on M.O. Campus: Volleyball, kids' games, live band, potluck dinner.
- 2000 100+ adults and kids attend free neighborhood roller skating party at Kate's Roller Rink (on Central).
- 2000-2004 Briar Creek stewardship project is part of county's Adopt-a-Creek program.
- 2001 MONA Board and members decide that the most important job of MONA is to build a sense of community.
- 2002 MONA has group yard sale, block party on Arnold Drive, and free skate night at Skate World.
- 2003 A dozen neighbors sing Christmas carols throughout the neighborhood and enjoy treats afterward.
- 2003 MONA receives award from Mecklenburg County for its twice-per-year clean-up of Briar Creek.
- 2003 MONA establishes <http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/charlotte/merryoaks>
- 2003 Hands on M.O.: storm drain stenciling, edge and clear sidewalks on M.O. Road.
- 2003 MONA co-sponsors City Council and School Board candidates' forum.
- 2003 MONA Day yard sale and block party.
- 2004 Urban Cost share program debuts: County pays up to \$3000 each for residents to install cisterns, rain barrels, rain gardens, compost bins, and eco-friendly landscaping.
- 2004 Nine neighbors pulled 300 pounds of trash out of Briar Creek.
- 2006 MONA Day: Hands on M.O. invasive species removal from greenway, cookout and bonfire.
- 2007 Chili night at Cate's for new neighbors.
- 2007 <http://Merryview.blogspot> debuts for neighborhood photographs
- 2007 MONA co-sponsors candidates forum for City Council and mayoral races.
- 2008 M.O. neighbors feed and treat homeless German Shepherd mother and pups on the greenway.
- 2008 October 18: MONA 10th anniversary celebration and cookout

Miscellaneous MONA Projects

- 2000 Speed bumps installed on Arnold Drive, speed limits on Merry Oaks, Draper and Flynnwood reduced to 25.
- 2000 City announces streetscape improvements from Sharon Amity west to Eastway Drive. MONA successfully lobbies City to extend the project west to Morningside Drive.
- 2001 Fence installed at Roseview Lane to limit cut-through to Arnold Drive from the The Park Apts.
- 2001 MONA asks Duke Power to redesign street light design/type to decrease light pollution and increase safety.
- 2002 MONA Board bird-dogs zoning code violations near the end of Arnold Drive near Central. Property owners install proper tree buffer and cease operating unsavory businesses (i.e. gambling).
- 2002 CDOT announces accelerated streetscape improvements for Eastcrest area including trees, medians, planting strips, wider sidewalks. MONA contends plans are being rushed with no public input, calls for more improvements such as consolidated parking and nicer landscaping. MONA loses this one.
- 2002 MONA pursues City grant to install neighborhood signs, raises \$3600 cash and in-kind donations.
- 2002 MONA prints “friendly letters” to send neighbors prior to calling the City for code violations.
- 2003 MONA awarded \$3100 City grant for neighborhood signs. Leaders work on locations, easements and design.
- 2003 MONA erects neighborhood signs in six locations.
- 2003 Duke Power agrees to install street lighting upgrades (cobra-style lighting) throughout the neighborhood.
- 2004 MONA works with Duke on the design and volunteers get signatures from every resident. Lights installed.
- 2004 Guard rail installed to prevent vehicles from parking on Roseview.
- 2004 MONA leaders meet with Hillcrest and The Park Apartment managements to discuss crime and trash.
- 2004 MONA advocates with City for code enforcement at Flynnwood, Merry Oaks Rd. and Arnold Drive entrances.
- 2004 MONA participates in Central Avenue streetcar planning (now on hold).
- 2004 Street trees installed at Central/Eastcrest.
- 2006 MONA meets with artist Jim Gallucci, Arts and Science Council re: bridge art at Briar Creek Bridge
- 2006 Decorative lamps installed at Briar Creek Rd@ Central.

2006 MONA gets City tree banding grant.

2006 MONA starts Google Group. Former email list transferred to Google Group.

2007 MONA works with Charlotte Country Club to improve edge of Farmington

2008 Briar Creek Bridge @ Central improved. Art project installed.

Property Values

2000 For the first time, a M.O. house sells for more than \$100,000

2002 Average price per square foot for homes sold in M.O. was \$93.72

2003 M.O. area is rated “Stable” (formerly “threatened”) by City Quality of Life Study. Average home value = \$110,064 (City = \$162,717)

2006 Some MO properties sell for \$144 per square foot.

2006 First M.O. home sells for more than \$200,000

2006 House upgrades/additions are frequent for the first time since the early 1970’s, especially along Arnold Drive.

2006 Logie and Masonic see surge in real estate values, most likely because of greenway/connector path.

2008 Price-per-square-foot of homes sold in M.O. increased 39.23% between 2003 and 2008.