



The Bloomingdale Civic Association

Historical Summary

The Bloomingdale Civic Association was established in June 1921 with Frank Coleman as its first president. The Bloomingdale Civic Association is an historic civic association organized from the interests of a group of residents of Quincy Place, NW and was reported to be of the most aggressive and progressive civic associations in the District of Columbia, this according to article written in the Washington Afro American on 4 August 1951. In a later article published in the Washington Afro American, 10 December 1955, President Dwight Eisenhower blessed the association stating, "I was particularly delighted to see this organization starting to work. It is the kind of thing that appeals to a soldier's heart: decide what to do then do it and stop talking about it...I will follow it every step of the way, certain that you are doing a great job for the United States of America."

The Bloomingdale Civic Association which serves the Northwest area of the District bounded on the South by Florida Avenue, on the North by Michigan Avenue, on the East by North Capital Street, and on the West by 3rd Street, west of North Capital Street, both North and South of Rhode Island Avenue. The U. S. Soldiers' Home, Washington Hospital Center, Children's National Medical Center, the main Catholic University campus and Trinity University are to the North; LeDroit Park and Howard University are to the West.

Bloomingdale was the country estate of George and Emily Beale members of a prominent military family. In 1834, George Beale deeded land and right-of-way to springs on his Bloomingdale estate to the City of Washington as a water supply for the Capitol. Both General Ulysses S. Grant and President Abraham Lincoln were visitors to his home. In 1887, the Bloomingdale estate was divided among Emily Beale's heirs and sold to several real estate developers.

During World War I, Washington experienced a growth spurt, and areas North, Northwest and East of the Bloomingdale area. This paved the way for African American home ownership in the Bloomingdale area despite the fact homes in some sections of the community had covenants prohibiting African Americans from owning, renting, or using the homes in any way. These covenants had been added to deeds during the wave of segregation and Jim Crow legislation in the District of Columbia during 1890's and early 1900's. Some areas of the Bloomingdale community remained exclusively white until the mid-1950.

African Americans began buying homes in Bloomingdale in the late 1920's. Early African American residents of the community were drawn to Bloomingdale because as a community it was seen as a neighborhood for African American professionals – possibly because of its proximity to Howard University. The Bloomingdale community gradually became one of the first stable African American communities in Washington, and section of Washington where many African American lawyers, teachers, pastors, physicians, dentists, professors at Howard University and other African American professionals were able to buy homes in area. The community spirit is deeply embedded along the streets of the Bloomingdale Community.

Today, the Bloomingdale community remains a densely populated area with primarily Victorian classic brick single-family row homes with their original architecturally ornamentation and brickwork. Today the neighborhood is returning to full swing. Longtime residents live next to young professionals and their families. The streets are abuzz with the laughter of children. Passersby are greeted warmly by residents sitting out enjoying what Bloomingdale has to offer -- a sense of community.

Over the years, Bloomingdale Civic Association has been a leader in revitalizing and improving the quality of live for residents of Bloomingdale. The goals of the Bloomingdale Civic Association are: to create a process and environment of revitalizing its cultural and heritage needs, inspire and motivate everyone to discover and express their values, talents and strengths; to develop a stable community with resources assuring the survival and protection the residents and visitors in the Bloomingdale

community against displacement other unjust or overwhelming interferences and disruptions in their lives; to achieve economic vitality with full employment adequate and available consumer goods and services, quality education for young people of the community, sufficient income to meet their needs and the resources necessary for the continuance health of the community.

Today, in 2010 the Bloomingdale Civic Association seeks to maintain and continue its presence and ability to enhance the quality of life for all residents of the community. It also continues to emphasize beautifying its neighborhood, education, affordable housing, employment, and targeted business expansion and development.

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