



# WILDWOOD

February 23, 2023

## MEMORANDUM

To: Wildwood Historic Preservation Commission Members

From: Department of Planning and Parks

Re: Belleview Farms Update (**Wards – All**)

Cc: The Honorable James R. Bowlin, Mayor  
Steve Cross, City Administrator  
John A. Young, City Attorney  
Rick Brown, P.E. and P.T.O.E., Director of Public Works  
Melanie Rippetoe, Assistant Director of Planning and Parks  
Travis Newberry, Senior Planner

### BACKGROUND >>>

The City has an on-going lease agreement with St. Louis County for property abutting its far southeast corner, which was approved by the City Council on December 8, 2014. This property, known as Belleview Farms, consists of two (2) parcels of ground totaling nearly one hundred (100) acres and is accessed from St. Paul Road. The property has a rich history and an incredible view of the Meramec River Valley.

Friends of Belleview (501c3) was created by those area residents who value Belleview Farm Park as a natural treasure. The organization's mission is to promote and protect the vision of Harold Donnelly, a conservationist who, through his service as a Board Member of Open Space Council of St. Louis, helped to found Forest 44, Castlewood State Park, and Bee Tree Park. Mr. Donnelly generously gifted Belleview Farms to St. Louis County on the condition that it will be, in perpetuity, a wildlife and nature preserve (now leased and maintained by the City). The organization's purpose is to advocate for Belleview Farms, fundraise for its restoration, develop and maintain a volunteer base to restore and sustain Belleview Farms, and recruit community partners to support its mission as a wildlife and nature preserve.

Since its founding in 2019, the following has been accomplished by the organization:

- 1) Received \$31,000 in grants from the Missouri Department of Conservation for woodland invasive removal with twenty (20) acres now cleared with tree stand improvement.
- 2) Cleared seven (7) acres of honeysuckle with help from volunteers.

- 3) Established the Donnelly Memorial Garden, populated with natives that will feature plants used in the prairie restoration project, which started Fall 2021.
- 4) Cleared a path to restore two (2) springs in the park.
- 5) Supported Wildwood in receiving an MDC grant for \$25,000 to restore five (5) acres of prairie.
- 6) Formed partnerships with Open Space Council of St. Louis and the Confluence Master Naturalists, which co-host workdays.
- 7) Installed a riparian buffer at the head of one of the creeks to address erosion.
- 8) Registered as a Missouri Stream Team.
- 9) Planted hundreds of common and swamp milkweed seedlings.
- 10) With MDC support, developed a plan to protect the two (2) springs from erosion.

(The above was largely copied from the Friend of Belleview Facebook Page).

On June 9, 2022, the Historic Preservation Commission visited the property and met with two (2) Friends of Belleview leaders to discuss plans for the restoration effort. In 2023, the Commission has "Complete design and engineering of new parking area and trail connection to Belleview Farms property," on its Annual Work Plan, with \$50,000 budgeted for this work.

Tonight, the Department is providing an update on Friends of Belleview restoration efforts for information only.

UPDATE: PAST AND FUTURE WORKDAYS >>>

### **Be My Valentine Honeysuckle Hack, Saturday, February 11, 2023**

Open Space Council of St. Louis cohosted a workday with Friends of Belleview over Valentine's Day weekend. Twenty-five (25) people participated and cleared a quarter acre along the creek.

### **Luck of the Irish Workday on Saturday, March 11, 2023**

The group's next workday is the Luck of the Irish Workday. All treats will be green. Wear something green if you can. Sign up link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F49A8A722A7FEC25-luck>.

IN CLOSING >>>

If any of the Commission Members should have comments or questions regarding this information, please feel free to contact the Department of Planning and Parks at (636) 458-0440. A presentation is planned on these matters at tonight's meeting. Thank you for your consideration of this information and discussion of the same.