# MORNINGSIDER

The Official Newsletter of MorningSide



An elderly gentleman receives the vaccine. Image courtesy of Jim West

# Hugs, and Other Reasons Not to Fear the Vaccine

Susan Newell | The Morningsider

Detroit — Later this month, my husband and I will go to Denver to hug our daughter, son-in-law, and two grandsons for the first time in months. The freedom and peace of mind the vaccine has given us is priceless.

But according to a recent report from city officials, only 20% of MorningSide residents eligible to receive the Covid-19 vaccine have gotten it. This doesn't bode well for beating back the virus and getting back to something resembling normal for all of us. We can do it, but first we have to handle the concerns some have about the vaccine.

Fear of vaccines isn't new. When the smallpox vaccine was developed from cowpox around 1800, rumor had it that the vaccine could turn you into a creature half-human, half-cow. That sounds ridiculous to us today, but there's no shortage of equally far-fetched stories circulating about mind control, GPS tracking, and gender changes allegedly associated with the vaccines.

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# MorningSide Spotlights Deputy District Manager

Adrian L. Green | The Morningsider



District 4 Deputy Manager, Dennis Perkins Image courtesy of the City of Detroit

Last month, The MorningSider welcomed to the neighborhood New District 4 Manager Mr. Rodney "Rod" Liggons. This month, we would like to feature District 4 Deputy Manager Dennis Perkins.

Dennis is a Native Detroiter and a lifelong Eastsider, having grown up in what is known as the West End on Bewick between E. Warren and Canfield and he later lived in the Ravendale Community, across the street from his grandparents. He attended the Detroit Public Schools, Our Savior Lutheran School and is a graduate of Renaissance High School. Dennis holds a Bachelor's Degree from Marygrove College and a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the University of Michigan.

Public service has long been at Dennis' core. He joined the Detroit Police Department in 1994 and served in several different capacities, the last being the Administrative Sergeant of the Chief's Neighborhood Liaison's office.

In early 2016, Dennis retired from the Detroit Police Department after nearly 22 years. In 2018, he was appointed as the Business Liaison for District 5 and appointed as the Deputy Manager for District 4 in 2019.

Dennis has worked tirelessly on behalf of District 4 and is a valued member of the community. The MorningSide Community Organization congratulates Dennis on his accomplishments and record of service, and we look forward to years of mutual collaboration and prosperity.

Adrian L. Green, community activist and proud graduate of HBCU Florida A&M University. Serves as the MCO Treasurer

# What Is A Community Land Trust?

## Erin Butler | MECCA Development Corporation

### A Community Land Trust (CLT) is a <u>nonprofit</u>,

<u>community-based organization</u> designed to make sure that the land in a community is used to fulfill the needs determined by that community. In a CLT whose goal is affordable housing, the house is owned by a community member and the land is owned by the CLT and leased to the homeowner. When the owner is ready to sell the house, it is sold at a set price determined by the guidelines of the CLT. The community member still builds wealth from selling the house, but the guidelines of the CLT keep the cost of housing affordable for the next resident. CLTs can also be used to purchase and create shared spaces such as community gardens, art installations, apartment buildings, etc. Watch <u>this half hour video</u> for more information on how CLTs work!

# Why should you care about a Community Land Trust

(CLT)? Why might you want to support a CLT? What can it do for our community? Watch <u>this quick video</u> to find out some reasons you may want to support a CLT!

- Ensures that properties in a community are meeting the needs of the community
- Protects affordable housing in a community
- Prevents displacement and speculation
- Creates an economically diverse community
- Lowers foreclosure rates within CLT homes
- Builds generational wealth for residents
- Assists low income residents with financing for homes



Benefits of a Community Land Trust. Image courtesy of MECCA Development Corporation

# Why is MECCA exploring the idea of a Community Land Trust (CLT)?

MECCA's mission is to empower and engage residents and businesses across MorningSide, East English Village, and Cornerstone Village with the knowledge, skills, resources, and support to revitalize our communities in a sustainable way for future generations. A Community Land Trust is one possible way towards an important aspect of this mission: affordable, sustainable housing in the Morningside, East English Village, and Cornerstone neighborhoods.

The CLT would be a separate organization, different from MECCA. Some of our programs for example, our home improvement workshop training - could support the efforts of a CLT. The CLT itself would be formed as its own entity, not managed by MECCA but rather run by the CLT board and other community member volunteers.

As members of MECCA, we see ourselves as a catalyst for this conversation! So far, we have hosted talks from experts, hosted public discussions about CLTs, and sent information to every house in our neighborhood about CLTs. Check out our <u>talk with Eric Williams from the</u> <u>Detroit Justice Center</u> about Community Land Trusts!

## Why our Neighborhoods and Why Now?

As we think about access to home ownership, we can look at the history of Detroit and the current state of our neighborhoods to think about why a CLT might be important right now.

Continued on page 5...

# Continued... Vaccines Will Help Us Get Our Lives Back

Skepticism is understandable. When I first heard in early 2020 that the former president was promising a vaccine by the end of the year, I said "No way." As a nurse, I had worked on cancer drug trials, so I knew how long it takes to get new products properly tested then approved by the FDA. I assumed the former administration would pressure the drug companies and FDA to do a slapdash job, cutting corners, ignoring red flags and burying negative side effects, resulting in a vaccine that would be ineffective, unsafe, or both. Fortunately, I was wrong.



A Nurse applies the vaccination shot. Image courtesy of Jim West

The reasons why all this happened at "warp speed" are pretty straight forward.

- Researchers in the US and around the world put most other medical research on hold to focus on developing Covid-19 vaccines.
- Coronaviruses aren't new. This one is just a variation of the same family of viruses that caused MERS, SARS, and Zika, so scientists weren't starting from scratch.
- Normally it takes years to recruit enough volunteers for the large scale clinical trials you need to determine if a new drug is safe and effective. But when the call went out for volunteers to test the Covid-19 vaccines, the public response was tremendous. Within just a few months, 74,000 people had signed up for either the Moderna or Pfizer trials.
- If you're fighting a disease that develops slowly, it can take years to determine the effectiveness of a drug. In this case, though, Covid-19 has been spreading so quickly throughout the population that researchers started seeing outcomes for the vaccines right away.

In short, we have just seen what great things we can accomplish very quickly when the whole world works together on a single mission – to save lives. What about negative side effects or links between the vaccines and other sudden adverse events like strokes or heart attacks? **The good news is that these are most likely just a coincidence**.Let's consider the big picture. In any large population, thousands of people will be getting sick, having heart attacks, strokes, or getting diagnosed with a wide range of diseases every day. Unless we see a sudden increase in heart attacks, for example (and we haven't), just among those who've been vaccinated, we can assume that the connection was coincidental. Just because two things happen at around the same time, it doesn't mean that one event caused the other. To put it in scientific jargon, correlation is not causation.



Seniors have been among the first to receive vaccination shot. Image courtesy of Jim West

Mild side effects like arm soreness, headaches, and fatigue have been fairly common after receiving the vaccine. Some people have a stronger reaction to the second shot than to the first, which is just a sign that the vaccine is doing its job and making the immune system actively respond. A few people have had severe allergic reactions, as happens with any other medication, but these are quickly treatable.

Detroit is a role model for the rest of the country in getting people vaccinated. In some cities people tell horror stories of having to call 400 times before they could get through to make an appointment, or spending hours trying to get an appointment online. Here, all it takes is one phone call to (313) 230-0505 between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Continued on page 6...

# **Continued...What Is A Community Land Trust?**

Historically racist policies, the high cost of a down payment, and the uncertainty of the housing market in general are all factors that have resulted in only 40% of our community enjoying the benefits of home ownership. Today, within our community, 57% of Black people own their homes compared to 79% of white people. CLTs can help cities heal from the legacies of segregation and racial disparities in home ownership. At the same time as this gap in home ownership exists, the prices for housing are going up in our area and are expected to keep rising. While many current homeowners likely see this as a good thing, if overlooked and unaddressed, rising property values make it more difficult for would-be homeowners to enter the market. Higher property values also affect the 60% of our community that are renters. With a CLT home, the cost of owning a home is lower and mortgages can be lower than most current rental prices in our area. We envision safe, stable, diverse neighborhoods with a mix of affordable rental properties and owner occupied homes.

### Some Examples of Community Land Trusts

Community Land Trusts are not new. <u>New Communities</u>, <u>Inc.</u>, the prototype for the modern-day community land trust, was formed in 1969 near Albany, Georgia by leaders of the Civil Rights Movement who were seeking a new way to secure access to land for Black farmers.

In more recent history, <u>City First Homes</u>' work in the Washington DC area is a great example of a successful community land trust. Over the past 10 years, they have created over 217 permanently affordable homes by buying off-market homes, vacant lots, and blighted homes. Check out <u>Neighbor Space</u> in Chicago to see their beautiful community garden. Read about how <u>CLTs have</u> <u>kept affordable housing and safe guarded against</u> <u>gentrification in Austin</u>. Today there are over <u>225</u> <u>community land trusts</u> across the U.S. with these kinds of success stories!

### Are you interested in learning more? Visit

www.meccadc.org/community-land-trust, follow us on <u>Facebook</u>, and look out for invitations to our Residential Committee Meetings every third Saturday at 3pm! Do you have input, concerns or questions? Do you perhaps have skills that you would like to contribute to this effort? We want to <u>hear from you</u> about whether or not you think a Community Land Trust is a good fit in our neighborhoods!

# Gas Lines Being Replaced in MorningSide



Sidewalks partially removed to replace the castiron gas mains. Image courtesy of Jim West

As part of DTE's commitment to safety and the environment, DTE Gas is replacing the original cast iron gas mains and services in our neighborhoods over the next few months. Underground infrastructure renewals are undoubtedly a messy affair and will interrupt our front yards, sidewalks, and berms for a while.

If your gas meter is currently inside, it will also be moved to the exterior of your home as part of an MPSC (Michigan Public Service Commission) mandate. Crews will knock on your door for meter move out appointments and will work with your schedule. You can be certain they will be following all COVID safety guidelines. Feel free to ask crews questions as they work along your street.

DTE is responsible for all hard and soft surface restoration, and the City of Detroit monitors and inspects this work to make sure they are in compliance. Please be patient as we work through these upgrades together.

There's a direct line, **(313) 270-9240**, that you can call for questions about the program, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. If you are not receiving a call back, please contact your neighborhood association or District Manager – as they generally know how to get hold of DTE.

Erin Butler, Youth Committee Chair of MECCA Development Corporation Julie Jozwiak, Regional Manager, DTE Energy, Corporate and Government Affairs

# Continued... Vaccines Will Help Us Get Our Lives Back

My husband and I recently received our second shots at the TCF Center. The shot itself went very smoothly both times. We stayed in our car, and the whole process only took 45 minutes, including a mandatory 15-minute wait time to monitor for allergic reactions. Other MorningSide residents have reported similar positive experiences.

There are also legitimate concerns among African Americans about possibly getting a less effective vaccine. Unequal treatment of Black patients has occurred throughout US history, and research shows that it continues today, including treatment of Covid-19 patients. But let's keep two things in mind: first, we are not as sharply segregated by race as we once were, especially in public places. Second, unlike sickle cell anemia or high blood pressure, Covid-19 is an extremely contagious airborne illness. If any group is not vaccinated, there's a huge risk of new outbreaks and a longer pandemic. Public health experts and medical professionals of all races know this, so they want to protect everyone.

For updated information about vaccine eligibility, which seems to expand just about every day, go to: <u>https://detroitmi.gov/news/city-xpands-vaccine-</u> <u>eligibility-include-manufacturing-workers-adds-</u> <u>two-additional-senior-saturday</u>

If you'd like more details about the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines and how to separate fact from myth, check out these links: <u>https://aepc.us/the-covid-19-vaccine-what-it-is-and-</u> what-it-isnt/

https://aepc.us/follow-the-science-what-we-need-toknow-about-the-covid-19-vaccine/

For information about how the new one-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine works, check out <u>https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2021/02/28</u> /johnson-and-johnson-covid-vaccine/

And for a feel-good story about how the vaccine is lifting the spirits of health care workers and residents, check out this one: <u>https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/covi</u> <u>d-vaccine-joy-hope/2021/02/24/62b10432-7184-11eb-</u> 85fa-e0ccb3660358\_story.html

Susan Newell, retired nurse and resident of MorningSide since 1984. Serves as the Associate Editor of The Morningsider

# Three Mile Park Mural - Help decide the look & feel of the forthcoming mural

This year, Morningside will soon have a beautiful, new mural gracing the grounds of the Three Mile-Munich Park!

Detroit-artist Jake Dwyer was selected by the Morningside community as the top vote-getter out of a talented group of muralists commissioned by the city of Detroit and its City Walls program.

Jake attended two neighborhood meetings, where residents expressed their wishes for a mural showcasing an active community. Both of these sketches are titled "The People of Morningside." Please vote and offer your feedback below by March 23!

https://www.morningsidedetroit.org/three-milemural



Rendering Concept #1. Image courtesy of Jake Dwyer



Rendering Concept #2. Image courtesy of Jake Dwyer

# **NPO Whatley**

Officer Whatley, who grew up in Detroit's 9th precinct, had first considered a career as a lawyer. Her sister, who was a police officer, convinced her that this kind of work would be a better fit for her, and her sister turned out to be right.

Some of our Neighborhood Police Officers become NPO's well into their police careers, but Officer Whatley found her niche early on. After working the streets for a year and a half, she was recruited to the 5th Precinct NPO team and hasn't looked back. "Everyone was awesome," she says.

Her first community event as an NPO - 2019 Halloween in the D - was especially memorable. She was part of the haunted house contingent, and "I had a lot of fun scaring the kids," she recalls. That year they gave out more than 20,000 bags of candy.

Officer Whatley ran track and cross country in high school, and in her off hours continues to run "just for fun" and to de-stress. Whatley likes the slower pace that comes with being an NPO. "You get a chance to talk to people, to get to know them," she says.

A lot has changed with the pandemic, though, as person-to-person interactions are more limited. So many of the special events that make up a big part of the NPO's job have had to go virtual, which is a real challenge, she says. "We have to get creative to find ways to interact with the community." A March 4 online game night was one of the ways the NPO's have found to adapt to our "new normal". We hope to see Officer Whatley and the rest of the 5th Precinct NPO's at in-person events sooner rather than later, so we can thank them for a job well done.



Neighborhood Police Officer Whatley. Image courtesy of Officer Whatley

# Give A Smile, Get A Smile

The purpose of *Give A Smile, Get A Smile*, is to brighten your day some as we currently navigate through these trying times we all are experiencing.

Whether it's a motivational quote, a funny video clip, of even a few words of encouragement, Give A Smile, Get A Smile will do just that!

This months *Give A Smile*, *Get A Smile* is a motivational quote from the late, great Kobe Bryant. Checkout the link below.

#### RIP Mamba!

https://twitter.com/kobehighlight/status/13671838147 75111680?s=12



Kobe Bryant. Image courtesy of Harrison Hill, USA Today

# **TALK TO US!** Letter to the Editor

Hi MorningSide Newsletter staff and MorningSide Board,

I am REALLY disturbed and disappointed with this edition of the Morningsider newsletter. February is Black History Month and there was no mention of it at all. Like it does exist! While MorningSide is a mixed community it is mostly black residents that live here in our community. Not only that but our city is predominantly black. With what the (black) community has gone through in the past year, the Black Lives Matter movement, the countless egregiously demonstrated actions against people of color by police and government, and the disparity in access to health and wealth for people of color compared to whites you would think that Black History Month would have at least got a mention let alone an article in the February edition of this newsletter. I really don't want to bring race into this, but it is noted that the editor of the newsletter, Susan Newell is white and the leader of the organization, Jackie Grant is white. I am white myself and I am empathetic to the inequities that black and brown people experience every day let alone the events that have transpired since the start of COVID-19 here in the states.

Could someone please explain to me and the MorningSide community how such an important event for the black community, Black History Month, was completely ignored and discarded by this organization?

Thanks!

### Derek Lippert

Good Morning Derek,

I hope all is well for you and your family and I appreciate your concerns. I do understand your frustration as it may appear that The Morningsider team, or the Morningside Community Organization (MCO) as a whole failed to acknowledge Black History Month. To some extent you are correct, we did not highlight a historical African American figure, which is the usual standard for many platforms across the spectrum. In hindsight, that is probably something we should have done, and for that I do apologize. In no means would we ever discredit the importance and significance of what Black History Month means to myself and so many others.

However, I would like to shed light on some important notes that you may not have been privy to. Several articles within this edition were either written by or highlighted African American individuals that are making positive contributions to both the city of Detroit and our very own community of Morningside.

Those individuals consist of Adrian L. Green, who also serves as the Treasurer for MCO and authored the article "Morningside Welcomes New District Manager." This article itself highlights Rod Liggons, who is now representing both our city and district (District 4) as the new District Manager.

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# **TALK TO US!** Letter to the Editor - Continued

Rakisha Odom serves as the Community Outreach Manager for Brilliant Detroit. In this issue she contributed to the "Brilliant Detroit Boot Camp Translation 2021," article. She's a warrior for our Black and Brown children in the city and doesn't get hardly enough attention for the work she does.

Morningside's Finest highlighted Donyelle Pressley and the community champion she has been for neighbors over on Lakepointe and the western portion of Morningside.

I would be remiss if I did not mention Amanda Gorman, the nation's first-ever youth poet laureate and her poem, "The Hill We Climb."

Each one of those individuals have contributed to the legacy of Black History Month and are contributing every other day outside the month of February. They will only continue to do so in much larger and impactful ways.

I also want to point out a couple easter eggs that have been a standard in our publication. The closeout page of The Morningsider have two important symbols, "The Black Lives Matter fist and the Marathon flag." As you may know the "fist," symbolizes the Black Lives Matter movement which launched last summer as a result of the tragic murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and countless others. In June 2020, we published a special issue that addressed the very issues you have mentioned and more (See attachment). The Marathon flag is a nod to the late, great, Ermias Asghedom, known professionally as Nipsey Hussle. He was a musician, an activist, and a entrepreneur in Los Angeles, California who inspired millions across the world, especially Black men with his efforts of transforming both the community, and the mind. This has been a staple of The Morningsider since his tragic murder on March 31, 2019 and will continue to be as his legacy represents what every community aspires to do, make a difference and evolve to greater heights.

You mention Susan Newell being the editor and the leader of the organization. Susan serves as the "associate editor" of the Morningsider and is "one" of the leaders of the publication. I serve as the Editor in Chief of The Morningisder. I was appointed to this position by former President, Pastor Darell Reed towards the end of 2018. I also serve as the 2nd Vice President of our organization, MCO.

I say all this to say that there are African American leaders in Morningside who are contributing to Black History Month and are the epitome of what this month represents. It will continue to be displayed throughout our community and within The Morningsider.

Best,

Jeffrey D. Lewis II 2nd VP Morningside Community Organization

Editor in Chief The Morningsider

Upcoming Events

### MorningSide General Community Meeting

Second Tuesday of every month via Zoom. Our next meeting will be held **March 9th at 6:30 p.m.** To dial in with your phone, use the following info: Dial number: **(301) 715-8592** / Meeting ID: **876 5627 5944** / Password: **824390**. To access the meeting via computer, please visit either <u>morningsidedetroit.org</u> or the Morningside Facebook page the day of the meeting.

### East Warren/Cadieux Neighborhood Framework Community Meeting #4

This meeting will include a presentation of the final recommendations for the neighborhood improvement plan. Monday, March 15th from 6-7:30 p.m. Join on Zoom: <u>https://ohm-advisors.zoom.us/j/94985706120?pwd=dTE5R0EyT0gxZ1JPMi8yZIIWbXhDUT09</u> or by phone +1 301 715 8592, Meeting ID: 949 8570 6120, Password: 093734. For more information, visit: <u>https://www.ewcplan.com/</u>

### 5th Precinct Command/Community Update

The Zoom link for the 5th Precinct meeting is scheduled twice a month. For anyone who is interested in attending, please email MCO at <u>morningsidecommunity2@gmail.com</u> as we will provide you with the access link once we receive it.

### 2021 Detroit Police Department Virtual Community CompStat Meetings

The Detroit Police Department Virtual Community CompStat Meetings will be held monthly on the **4th Wednesday (March 24th)**, beginning at **4 p.m.** The meetings are open to the public. Use the following link to join the Community CompStat meeting: <u>https://cityofdetroit.zoom.us/j/82793057842</u>

### Detroit Board of Police Commissioners Each Thursday at 3 p.m.

By computer: Use the following link and follow prompts: <u>https://cityofdetroit.zoom.us/j/397380647?</u> pwd=S1kzVzU4RURFb2NBRGJIb1kwWVNjdz09

By phone: Call one of the these numbers: **1 (929) 436-2866**, **1 (312) 626-6799 1 (346) 248-7799**, **1 (301) 715-8592** Meeting ID: **397380647** and press ## The virtual meeting will use a form for public comments: <u>https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/d26fa38cc5e94a018836d065000714ce</u>

### MECCA Development Corporation is partnering with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Delivery of books every month to children under the age of 5. To sign up your child, go to: <u>https://www.meccadc.org/imagination-library</u>

Accounting Aid Society Free Tax Preparation: Free assistance is available for income-eligible families and individuals. For more information, contact (313) 556-1920 or <a href="https://www.accountingaidsociety.org">www.accountingaidsociety.org</a>

### Brilliant Detroit Virtual Literacy Tutoring

Brilliant Detroit and The Center for Success are partnering to provide tutoring for grade level reading remotely twice a week. For more information and registration: <u>https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/IFAIpQLScU98bQQahiFrJgNE\_EUjSxFVpYx9h23u49Z3ijzQ7SZc3beg</u> <u>/viewform</u>

### Gleaner's Food Distribution

The next two distributions are on March 22nd and April 12th in the rear parking lot of The Craft Cafe, 15641 E. Warren Ave.

Moning Side's Finest AJ White

In 2017, AJ White bought a land bank property off Nottingham Road, sight unseen. A 30-year New Orleanian, AJ had never been to Detroit or lived through a Michigan winter. He was used to Bourbon Street and beautiful weather. So when he arrived in the dead of winter to see the property for the 1st time. he almost turned around.

"I was gonna walk away from it that night, and drive back home south." But he didn't.

After making his house livable, AJ purchased two abandoned lots behind him on Somerset and planted 25 apple trees. Today the property is known as Somerset Orchard, and it lives up to its name. The Orchard produces hundreds of apples every seaon and, with the recent introduction of 5 grape vines, will produce grapes as well.

Neighbors in the area appreciate AJ's contribution to the community. "They love it. Before nobody used to take care of it. It was an open field." Now neighbors can come over and quench their thirst with an apple.



AJ White. Image courtesy of Nicolas Hall

# Let's Talk Trash!

Here are your next three bulk trash pickup days:

- March 18th
- April 1st
- April 15th

# Advertise in The Morningsider!

For those who want to place ads in our newsletter, please contact Jackie Grant at (313) 720-3904. Below are the rates for advertisements:

## 6 - Month Run

\$825 Full Page \$400 Half Page \$275 Quarter Page

# MorningSide Block Captain Program

Are you considering the block captain program but not sure it's right for you? On the fence? Two things to consider:

- Being a block captain is not about confronting problematic neighbors directly. It is about being the eyes and ears of your block and sharing this information so the community can tactically and tactfully find a solution.
- If you sign up, you'll get a free trash pickerupper! Trash picker-uppers are a great entry point to getting out on your block, talking to neighbors, and getting a sense of what's going on.

Our second meeting will be on, **Saturday March 13th**, at **11 a.m.** via Zoom.



For the latest news taking place in MorningSide, please follow us on:



@morningsidedet

MorningSide is a corporation organized and operated exclusively for charitable and educational purposes outlined in section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Contact The Morningside Community Organization at: (313) 355-2468 or via email <u>morningsidecommunity2@gmail.com</u> Also checkout our new website! <u>www.morningsidedetroit.org</u>

P.O, Box 24325, Detroit, MI 48224



#morningsiderepresent

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