

BLAIR STREET GARDENS
NEWSLETTER and NOTICE of ANNUAL MEETING
SPRING 2024

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION to Blair Street Gardens. Some of you are first time donors, many of you have given for many years. How wonderful to visit our post office box, retrieve the envelopes, and see the generous checks with so many familiar names, and new ones as well. We thank you all. With your help, Blair Street Gardens Committee, Inc. maintains two gardens at or near the intersection of John Nolen Drive and Blair, Wilson and Williamson Streets in downtown Madison.

- *Gateway Garden* on the 600 block of Williamson Street
- *Wilson Green* on the 400 block of E. Wilson Street

As we begin our 2024 season, **you are invited to attend the Annual Meeting on Thursday, April 4 at 4:30 p.m.** to plan activities and elect Board members and officers.

NOTICE of ANNUAL MEETING

April 4, 2024
4:30 – 7:30 p.m.
807 Jenifer Street

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Elect
board &
officers | • Adopt
the
budget | • Plan for
2024 &
beyond |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|

THANKS TO THE BOARD

Thanks to the 2023 Officers and Board members - Ellen Henningsen, President and Acting Treasurer; Mary Knapp, Vice-President; Kevin Earley, Secretary; and Gary Tipler, Board member – for their dedication to the gardens.

***ALERT about THE FUTURE of
BLAIR STREET GARDENS***

The Board is currently discussing a significant issue - the future of Blair Street Gardens - and asks for your input. Better you should be alerted before any decision is made, than learn about it after the fact.

Volunteers have kept Blair Street Gardens thriving for nearly 40 years. But, the senior volunteers want to retire from Board and gardening activities and are not being replaced by newer volunteers. **The Board will be discussing the future of Blair Street Gardens at the Annual Meeting. One option is to dissolve the organization and turn maintenance over to the City of Madison Parks Department. Another option is to recruit new Board members and volunteers to replace the current Board, though that has not been successful to date.**

No decision has been made yet by the Board. **If you have an opinion, please contact info@blairstreetgardens.org or come to the meeting on April 4.**

Better yet, consider becoming a Board member! Responsibilities include 1-2 meetings a year, being available for input via e-mail or phone, and volunteering at the gardens. Mentoring and orientation are available. If interested, e-mail info@blairstreetgardens.org

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BLAIR STREET GARDENS P.O. Box 1333 Madison, WI 53701-1333
info@blairstreetgardens.org www.blairstreetgardens.org
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Beautifying the Gateway to Downtown Madison

- **CONT'D from OTHER SIDE** -

WEBMASTER NEEDED

Kate Nagel of Business Support Solutions, LLC, has been our volunteer webmaster for several years. We appreciate her time and expertise. She has recently moved on to other activities, so we are in need of a new volunteer.

Duties include: updating the website as needed, and maintaining the domain name and email forwarding program (the writer of this newsletter is not website savvy so may not be explaining this properly). Ideally, a new volunteer would also be able to redesign the website.

GATEWAY GARDEN UPDATE

Consequence of Last Summer's Drought

The drought conditions during the summer of 2023 resulted in the loss of the hornbeam tree at The Gateway Garden. The loss was a surprise because the tree was planted nine years ago so certainly had plenty of time to become established. And it gave no indication of decline until – all of a sudden – it was dead. If we'd noticed signs of decline, we would have watered it, just like we've watered the Reiner Family Evergreen. We plan to replace it in 2024.

Reiner Family Tree

Fortunately, the City restored electricity to The Gateway Garden (discontinued due to street reconstruction) so the family was able to add holiday lights in November and December 2023. The tree commemorates the first Christmas tree in Madison, erected in 1855 in the home of the Reiner family which once stood near the garden. Thank you to the Reiner Family for continuing to support the Gardens and for lighting the tree every holiday season.

WILSON GREEN UPDATE

BSG's second garden is Wilson Green, located on E. Wilson Street across from Come Back Inn and next to Lakefront Porch. We continued to maintain the large, raised perennial bed last year.

Wilson Green may be impacted by the City's plan to improve the lakeshore along John Nolen Drive. We continue to monitor developments and provide input as needed.

MAINTAINING THE GARDENS

BSG had a crew of 5 volunteers who visit the gardens regularly to weed, prune, mulch and pick up litter. In addition, last summer we hired a landscape company to help. We did not schedule volunteer events, but hope to in 2024. Check our Facebook page for the latest schedule (nothing is scheduled yet). To receive e-mails about the schedule, email us at the address below. Or look for signs posted at the gardens. You can also volunteer on your own schedule – if interested, email us.

TREASURER NEEDED

Do you like to count money? Blair Street Gardens Committee is looking for a volunteer to handle the duties of Treasurer. Duties take about 2 hours a month, and include maintaining financial records and mailing lists, handling mail, paying bills, processing contributions, etc. If interested or for more information, email BSG at info@blairstreetgardens.org.

- **OVER** -

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