

August 8, 2012

The Orton Park Festival is a tradition for the neighborhood now in its 47th year. The festival is important culturally as it highlights local artists and brings international artists to the neighborhood that many would otherwise not have the opportunity to hear. Orton Park is a gathering of current and former neighbors that are brought back to listen to the music and reconnect under the magnificent oak trees.

The festival is also important financially to the neighborhood as it is one of two festivals that supports the Marquette Neighborhood Association and its support of important organizations/activities such as the Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center, Commonwealth Development, Marquette Elementary, and the Eastside Express summer camp.

Changes this year are primarily to the set-up of the festival. Extra steps are being taken to make sure that the Orton oaks are protected during the festival. Additionally, MNA will be funding aeration and reseedling of the park annually in our budget.

The neighborhood agreed to assess the decibels from the festival this year and have a volunteer who will be testing from houses around the park. This data will be used at follow-up meetings to see if or what decibel level should be designated as a maximum for future festivals. City staff had offered 110-120 db, but the attendees at the meeting felt gathering some information first would make more sense.

The length of the festival has been brought up as a negative by some, and I would suggest looking at the schedule to see just what is involved. Thursday and Friday night the music ends relatively early so that Cycropia can perform their magical show in the Oaks near Ingersoll Street.

The festival has something for everyone, whether you are a music fan, enjoy bidding on auction items, sampling the food from the vendors, shopping for unique items, the Jazz Brunch on Sunday morning, family night on Thursday with a parade and kids activities before the Cycropia performance.

Scott Thornton

President, Marquette Neighborhood Association Board