



THE JOURNAL

Join Our Weekly E-Newsletter

An Elliot Park enthusiast

November 4, 2015

BY: SARAH MCKENZIE

Share this:



A Q&A with community organizer Lynn Regnier

(This feature is part of our [Elliot Park neighborhood guide](#), which will be published in the Nov. 19 edition of The Journal)

Lynn Regnier has served as executive director of [Elliot Park Neighborhood Inc.](#) since 2010. She oversees the neighborhood organization at a time of significant growth for the downtown neighborhood as the new Vikings stadium and other development are reshaping Downtown East. Here are excerpts from a recent interview:



Q: In your opinion, what are some of the neighborhood's greatest strengths?

The people, the history, and the institutions. While this is somewhat of a transient neighborhood, with people coming and going, it has also been home to a number of residents for decades.

The institutions and organizations here also share a long standing history. They choose to remain and grow here and they are friends in partnership with the residents in caring for their community. An example of that shared responsibility is seen in the brand new regulation sized

soccer field in Elliot Park. That amazing new facility became a reality thanks to the collaborative efforts of North Central University and the Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board with financial support from neighbors like Aeon and the Minnesota Vikings.

Q: And what about some of the biggest challenges?

EPNI was established in 1976 by volunteers who banded together over community concerns and worked on solving problems. They made a difference and helped to bring services and housing initiatives that stabilized the neighborhood.

They learned how to plan for the future, to work with government partners, to craft a vision and to remain purposeful to their ideals.

Things are moving fast and a big challenge for everyone is to remain focused and fair and to seek a balance in housing opportunities that appeals to a variety of economic incomes. Now that redevelopment is burgeoning they are determined to remain diligent and achieve the outcomes that they have planned for these past many years. Elliot Park volunteers are pretty savvy about community needs and they have waited a long time to see their efforts materialize. Frankly, they are prepared for the challenges and they are having a good time now.

Q: How is the development of the new Vikings stadium impacting the neighborhood?

The new stadium, coupled with the Ryan Companies/Wells Fargo development and planned park space has combined to bring welcome new attention to the entire district. We are excited to see long-time neighbor Kraus-Anderson (75 years!) making a commitment to maintain their company legacy in the Elliot Park Neighborhood. The same should be said for HCMC that is beginning construction on their new ambulatory clinic. Both of these developments are substantial in size, attractiveness and will make a considerable positive impact in the neighborhood.

Add in Shamrock Development's Portland Tower, already under construction, and the pending Hunt Associates/Weidner Apartment Homes, and the neighborhood is starting to see housing choices that will help to balance our large inventory of good affordable and supportive housing opportunities.

Q: What are some of Elliot Park's hidden gems?

Walking through the neighborhood streets is a treat. Elliot Park is full of architectural features and designs. If you just drive through the area you miss out on the hidden gardens and green spaces and the village-like atmosphere. It is surprisingly quiet here despite the 24/7 workforce at our institutions and the proximity to downtown.

Q: What's a perfect day like for you in the neighborhood. What would be on your agenda?

That's easy. Start with morning coffee at Segue Café, a visit to Band Box for lunch and seeing folks, all day long, from throughout the neighborhood. The people here are Minnesota Nice with personality, quirkiness and energy. Can't beat that.

Q: If people were interested in getting involved in the neighborhood, what tips do you have for them?

We are really excited about a new Historic Preservation program that we are in the process of organizing with events and activities to start early next year and we encourage everyone to get involved.

The Building, Land Use & Housing Committee meets monthly on the third Thursday, 7 p.m., at the Elliot Park Recreation Center, 1000 E. 14th St. the committee reviews developments and property issues and serves as a resource for issues that impact the neighborhood such as public realm improvements.

The Livability Task Force meets on the first Monday of the month at 4 p.m. at the Alliance, 719 E. 16th St.

We email meeting announcements and anyone can sign up to receive them at:

info@elliottpark.org. We email a free monthly newsletter which helps to keep people informed and folks can sign up at tinyurl.com/elliottparknewsletter.

We also post announcements and keep a calendar of events that can be viewed on our website elliottpark.org. And Facebook fans can find us there too where we post articles and events of neighborhood interest. We have been seeing a lot of new faces lately and the return of old friends too.