



A Newsletter from the Department of Neighborhood Services and Community Development



“Building Better Neighborhoods... Block By Block”

# COMMON GROUND



## Gene Roberts: Coming Home to Onion Bottom

by Tom Griscom

On January 28, Mayor Ron Littlefield officially dedicated the new Gene Roberts Public Service Complex, named in honor of former Mayor Gene Roberts, due in part to his contributions as Mayor as well as growing up in the 11th Street area when it was known as “Onion Bottom.” The following tribute by Tom Griscom tells the story. Mayor Roberts passed away on January 31.

One street in Chattanooga - from Central Avenue to Market Street - held and shaped the hopes, dreams and aspirations of a young boy.

Eleventh Street where Gene Roberts grew up, both physically and professionally, provided him shelter, an early career as a journalist and a lifetime of service as a public official.

For him, he never forgot his early years. Particularly living in an area of dilapidated housing with the fragrant smell of onions from the constant burning of the city’s dump. It is fitting to carry the name Onion Bottom as a reminder of what it was, who populated the area and the opportunity to give back to those who struggle with life’s daily issues.

Whether it was his commitment to the Community Kitchen and recalling the homeless people in Onion Bottom who were near the railroad tracks and warmed by the burning of the dump,

Whether it was his commitment to



Gene Robert’s wife Cherie and children at the dedication of the Gene Roberts Public Service Complex

Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise as a public/private means to revitalize housing in areas where substandard is the standard and never forgetting there are families with children trying to have a decent roof over their heads,

Whether it was his commitment to public service as a press secretary for Mayor Rudy Olgiati, in the Navy during the Korean War, as an agent with the F.B.I, Fire and Police Commissioner, Tennessee Commissioner of Safety or four terms as Chattanooga mayor, he understood giving back his time, energy and wisdom.

Gene Roberts touched many lives.

From his days as a student at City High School, where he was a football player, a Golden Gloves boxing champion and a member of a state championship baseball team, students *continued on page 2*

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### Neighborhood Services and Community Development

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## Gene Roberts

came from all across Chattanooga and probably planted a seed in his mind that years later led to his advocating for consolidation of the city and county school systems.

The call to serve moved him into public service and politics. His longtime friend Gene Hunt recalled, "he had an interest in government and was public spirited."

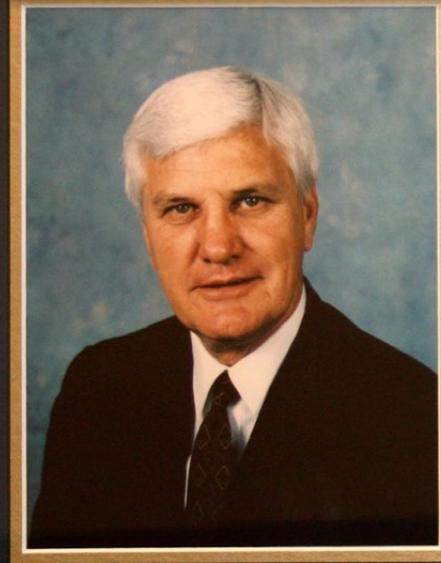
He reformed the police department and raised educational standards, but more was ahead. He was the last mayor in the former commission style of government and the first mayor in the city's new mayor and nine council system.

Over his four term span as mayor, the downtown renaissance took shape. The Tennessee Aquarium, the restoration of the Walnut Street Bridge and the early steps in reclaiming land that had been the site of an army ammunition facility took shape. Years later, Gene Roberts saw a city that went from the dirtiest to being a jewel that others hope to emulate; from outdated infrastructures to new pedestrian uses for well-worn bridges; from making explosive material for times of war, to a location for Volkswagen, Amazon, the Board of Education and others.

Progress from areas that, in many instances, time forgot and transformed into usable sites for people to live, work and play.

This is the boy who grew into the man from Onion

### In Memoriam



MAYOR GENE ROBERTS

Bottom, who never left his roots; he only nourished them to bloom in many different ways.

A man who sponsored an awards luncheon at St. Paul's Episcopal Church to recognize people who did great things.

A man who saw the yellow brick road and said, "Let's not just follow it; let's take it."

A man who had a tough upbringing, but with hard work, a core set of values and the belief in what one can do, served the community he loved and encouraged others to do the same.

Years later, his service was recognized when he received the Distinguished Citizen and Lifetime Achievement award from the local chapter of the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge.

Now friends and fellow public officials have chosen to recognize the service, the commitment to community and the spirit that got things done by naming the Public Service Complex in Onion Bottom for Gene Roberts.

U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander, who selected Gene Roberts as his safety commissioner when he was governor, shared these words: "His gentle manner and strong leadership played a crucial role in Chattanooga's becoming one of America's most admired cities."

A fitting set of words for a boy from Onion Bottom, who took what life gave him and chose to be more.

He succeeded.



Beverly P. Johnson, Administrator

## Administrator's Letter

The cold and dreary days of winter are almost over. How I look forward to the spring, with its pleasant weather, flowers, and outdoor activities. Is you neighborhood association planning any spring events? Perhaps some community beautification, or outdoor gatherings? We'd love to hear about them, and don't forget to invite your Neighborhood Relations Specialist. They love being involved!

We want to commend all the neighborhood associations that have worked so diligently through the winter on their Neighborhood Partnership Program (NPP) projects. You will soon be seeing more neighborhoods identified by sign toppers, house banners and a new mural in Ridgedale. Other projects receiving funding assistance are neighborhood T-shirts, newsletters, and directories.

It is not too soon for your neighborhood to begin thinking of new ideas for the next round of NPP projects. A technical assistance workshop will be held in May for those seeking funding assistance. Watch for the announcement.

## Better Block: Glass Street

by Teal Thibaud, Glass House Collective

Things are happening along Glass Street. For the past year, neighbors and area business owners have been meeting, planning and scheming with the folks at Glass House Collective. They have been building a vision: a vision of Glass Street as a thriving commercial corridor, vibrant with activity and filled with people.

On February 23rd, they are taking this vision for a test drive.

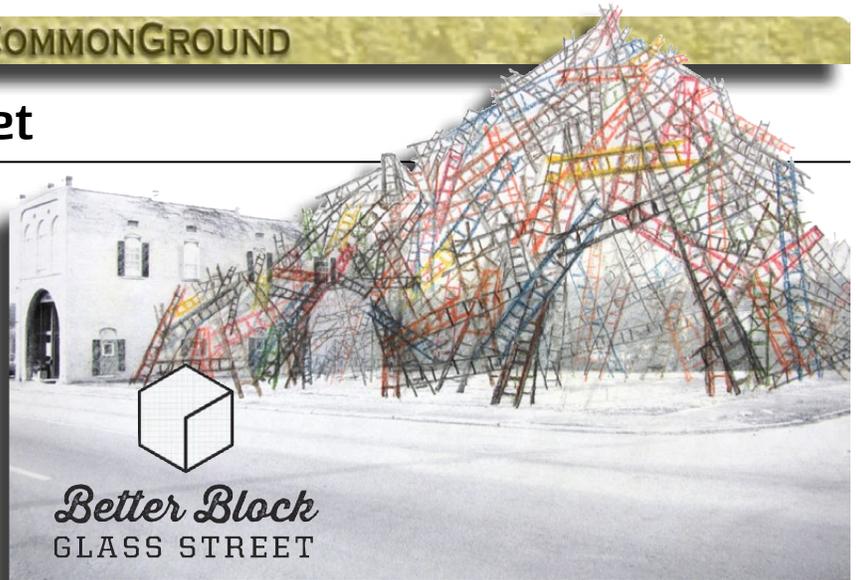
Early Saturday morning, community members from the neighborhood and greater Chattanooga area plan to gather with hammers, paintbrushes, merchandise, food, and a lot of ladders to perform a transformation.

This weekend, empty storefronts will house pop-up shops. Local vendors will be open for business. Vacant lots will become stages for performers and studios for artists to create a brand for the neighborhood. Visitors will walk along pedestrian-friendly, tree-lined streets, browsing the temporary flea market; or will sit at café tables to munch on something delicious from one of the food trucks.

The street will come alive.

Over the past several years, cities across the nation have participated in "Better Block" projects like this to promote community-driven change in urban neighborhoods. Such efforts have successfully stimulated long-term investment in underutilized areas by physically demonstrating their potential for commerce and revitalization.

Likewise, this weekend's activities are meant to be a preview of, and inspiration for, more permanent



changes that are scheduled to happen throughout the coming year. These changes include plans by Glass House Collective and its partners to install a pocket park, bus shelters, bike racks, and street lighting along the corridor. Additionally, graduates of the LAUNCH

entrepreneurship course are in the market for spaces to implement their business plans, and talks are underway about development of the street's historic buildings.

A keystone piece of "Better Block: Glass Street" will be the finalization of "Rise Up Chattanooga", an installation by sculptor Charlie Brouwer that poignantly embodies the

message of the weekend. Composed of hundreds of ladders from households and businesses throughout the city, Brouwer's sculpture speaks of a building together, of a practical creativity that produces something both greater than, and completely reliant upon, its individual parts.

This February, you are invited to join in the rise of Glass Street. Come help build a better block.

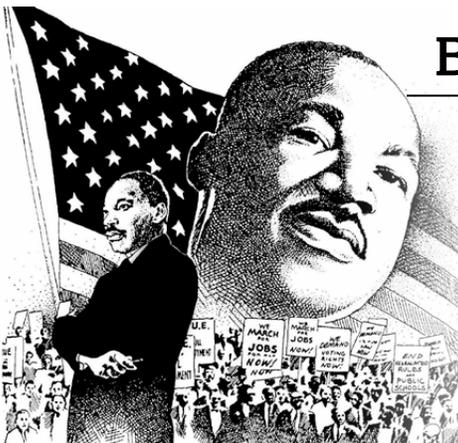
**Neighborhood associations and individuals interested in lending a ladder for the sculpture can email [teal@glasshousecollective.org](mailto:teal@glasshousecollective.org) or call 402-0565 to have a ladder picked up, or drop it by 2523 Glass Street February 9-12 from 11a.m.-7p.m.**

## Black History Month Celebration

by Dr. Elenora Woods, Alton Park Development Corporation

The Alton Park Development Corporation is proud to sponsor the Chattanooga Black History Month Parade and Historical Plaque Dedication Ceremony on Saturday, February 23. Included in the event will be a historical plaque dedication ceremony at Miller Plaza honoring the Howard Class of 1960 that led a sit-in demonstration, followed by a parade from Bessie Smith Hall to 6th Street.

The Alton Park Development Corporation invites all neighborhood associations, business and youth organizations to participate. For more information call 760-0378 or 892-3545, email [BlackHistoryMonthParade@AltonParkCDC.org](mailto:BlackHistoryMonthParade@AltonParkCDC.org) or visit the website at [AltonParkCDC.org](http://AltonParkCDC.org).



## Free Home Repair: A Primer *by Vanessa A. Jackson, Program Specialist*

With over a decade of experience under our belts in the management and implementation of the Home Repair Program, the Department of Neighborhood Services and Community Development has a plethora of knowledge to share, especially regarding the application process. A thorough and complete application makes all the difference between whether or not your application lands in a holding file or is given further consideration. With that in mind, I'd like to share a few common pitfalls as well as provide suggested courses of action to aid in a more successful experience with the program.

### Misinformation Concerning the Process

Even though this program has gained popularity over the years, there are still a number of individuals that discover the program through word of mouth. It's good that people are talking about the program and its application procedures, but the best bet is to receive information from the department staff - particularly, the Program Specialist and your respective Neighborhood Relations Specialist. This way you will obtain the correct information regarding the application process and eligibility requirements. It is strongly recommended that you attend one of several technical assistance sessions designed to explain the application and program process. If you are unable to attend a workshop, you can send someone on your behalf who is capable of understanding and retaining the information shared.

### Submittal of Incomplete Applications

Due to haste, distrust, or incorrect information concerning the process, some applicants omit answering certain questions on the application. Remember, what is most important is not that you simply get your application turned in by the March 14, 2013 deadline, but that it is complete and accurate. Some questions, may seem intrusive, but be assured that we are not asking them to be nosy. Your response provides information necessary to determine your eligibility, your household composition and the general condition of your property while other questions are necessary due to funding or city code requirements. A complete application also includes submittal of the Home Repair Asset Checklist and the Paint Sample Form.

### Multiple Property Owners

Excluding married couples, this program requires sole ownership of the property in which the applicant resides for eligibility. That is, ownership situations that involve multiple property owners will not meet the requirements since each owner's income must be counted and each owner must live in the home. Many senior homeowners may have multiple owners listed on their deed of trust for a variety of reasons based on their particular situation. The department is not a proponent for or against these types of decisions, but must adhere to certain regulations with regards to income and ownership. In addition, in past years the department has encountered applicants who may be the sole heir of the

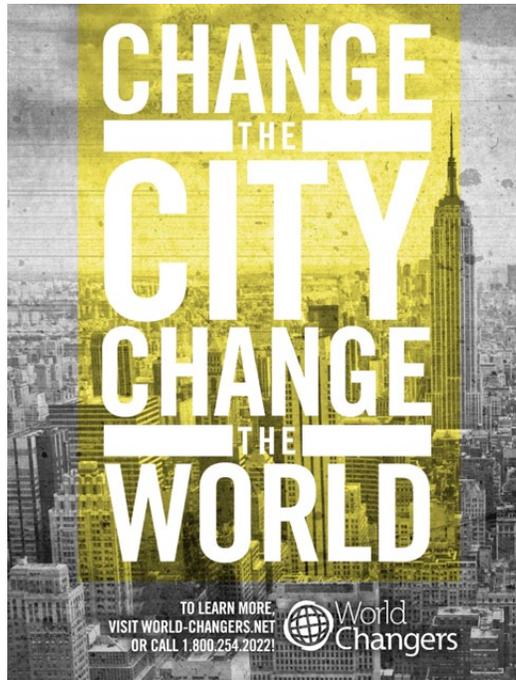
property in which they reside but they have never taken measures to have the property transferred from the name of the deceased into their name. In this case there is usually a Last Will and Testament that identifies the applicant as the owner. These situations are judged on a case by case basis; you must provide a copy of the Last Will and Testament to verify your status. If you have a question please notify the Program Specialist at 425-3741.

### Failure to Include Supporting Documentation

Before you mail or turn in the application, don't forget to include all requested supporting documentations to include proof of income for all persons in your home over 18 years or older,

Social Security and or disability award documentation, documents that verify homeownership such as a copy of your deed or mortgage statement and documentation that both City and County taxes are current. If you have misplaced the copy of your tax receipt, you may receive verification by accessing the Finance department at [www.chattanooga.gov](http://www.chattanooga.gov) and <http://www.hamilton.tennessee trustee.org>.

Keep these tips in mind as you complete the home repair application and you can be assured consideration of your request. For more information regarding the program, contact Vanessa A. Jackson at 425-3741. Don't forget to attend one of the six (6) technical assistance workshops in a location near you to gain better understanding of the process.



## Neighborly News from...

### Ridge Lake Neighborhood Association

by Karen D. Clay, Neighborhood Relations Specialist

Ridge Lake Neighborhood is located within City Council district 3, in the Hixson area. Often, neighborhood groups start off with a large number of attendees and somewhere along the journey, the participation and the attendance starts to thin out. In the summer of 2012, twelve residents of Ridge Lake decided to take the necessary steps to rebuild its ranks. Recently, new officers were elected: David Queen, President; Jeff Smith, Vice President; Rita Smith, Secretary and Sarah Ross, Treasurer. The association also has 13 block captains.

Sergeant Wayne Jefferson, Chattanooga Police Department, attended the January meeting and provided safety tips and answered questions. Doris Parham, Codes Supervisor and Karen D. Clay, Neighborhood Relations Specialist, from the Neighborhood Services and Community Development department gave overviews of code violations, bylaw development, membership recruitment and strategy planning. Mrs. Clay also gave an overview of Neighborhood Leadership Institute and Neighborhood Partners Program.

Ridge Lake Community was built in 1971, with approximately 135 homes. The unique and pleasant neighborhood has an original homeowner still living in the neighborhood. Residents' ages range from 20's to 80's. The association hosts activities for young and the young at heart, including fun movie nights with S'mores over a fire pit and a pool party. Planned 2013 activities are to have a community yard sale in May and develop a neighborhood Facebook page. Other ideas are to have social/party, welcome, beautification and sign committees. Their quarterly newsletter is a way of communicating and keeping residents involved.

Ridge Lake Neighborhood Association meets quarterly and the board meets monthly at the Colonial Shores Community Pool House at 6:30 p.m. Ridge Lake welcomes all residents to participate.



### Vaden Village Homeowner's Association

by Ty Armour, Neighborhood Relations Specialist

Vaden Village is located just off Lee Hwy at Hickory Valley Road between Vaden and Ballard Drives. As you approach Vaden Village, you will understand why people say it is a well kept Chattanooga jewel. Community dwellers have only a five minute trip by car to I-75, I-24, and Hwy 153. Residents can find themselves shopping at Hamilton Place mall in about 10 minutes, with approximately 15 minutes to Hixson. In the real estate market, Vaden Village could win for location, location, and location.

Vaden Village was developed by Byron DeFoor, DeFoor Development Company, Chattanooga, Tennessee. The construction of Vaden Village began July, 1985 and was completed by the end of 1986. These



40 townhomes are constructed of stucco with a specialty roof not common in our area. The roofs are double roman style and are constructed of concrete with a 50+ year life expectancy. An eight foot high masonry privacy wall completely surrounds the community, Residents enjoy the the ease of entrance, unique architecture, two community lots and a swimming pool. There are four floor plans in this community with each having its own attached garage and a fireplace. Vaden Village has the look and feel of homes you might expect to see in warmer climates such as Arizona, New Mexico, and Florida.

Location, continued maintenance, and well groomed lawns have helped this small community survive downtimes in the real estate world. The Vaden Village Homeowners Association is very involved in maintaining the community as a whole.

In talking with some of the Vaden Village residents, I posed the question....."What brought you to Vaden Village and why have you stayed?" Their response was the same....."I love the convenience and the beautiful architecture. When home, I feel like I'm in another place."

The Vaden Village Homeowner's Association meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. The organization rotates the meeting location throughout the community.

## Neighborly News from...

### Fairfax- Bagwell Neighborhood Association

by Debbie Johnson, Neighborhood Relations Specialist



In 2011, the Fairfax-Bagwell Neighborhood Association (FBNA) received funding to design and install sign toppers to acknowledge and enhance the pride they have in their neighborhood. The sign toppers indeed increased the visibility and name recognition of the community as intended by the FBNA. Once the sign toppers were installed a groundswell of renewed pride ignited within the residents and the Fairfax-Bagwell Neighborhood Association immediately sprang into action to build on it. The FBNA applied for and received funding in 2012 to develop and install three community markers. Fundraising events such as community yard sales were held to raise the dollars to infuse into the project.

Following the sign topper design the community markers are the perfect complement to this very warm and unique neighborhood. President Mike Mullins said, "We are a very friendly group of residents who work together to maintain our community as a neighborhood of choice. The goal of the FBNA is to highlight our convenient location, friendliness, safety and stability of our neighborhood."

Resident David Blancett said "A marker was placed in front of my property on Kensington Drive and Hixson Pike. Many of my neighbors have commented on the signs being so nice to look at when they enter the community." Other comments from residents included:

"What a beautiful and consistent design."

"Wow! We love our markers; it helps to identify our neighborhood."

"The markers help identify our area as part of the greater Chattanooga community."

Through the hard work of the Fairfax Bagwell Neighborhood Association, the essence of fellowship and community pride shines ever so brightly in this neighborhood. The FBNA never slows down and are already working on the next project to build on this one. Congratulations and keep up the good work.

The Fairfax-Bagwell Neighborhood Association meets at 7:00 p.m. on the third Monday of each month in the Brooks Memorial United Methodist Church, 3619 Fairfax Drive.



### Chattanooga Public Library



Career Coach, a mobile career center sponsored by the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce, will make stops at Chattanooga Public Library locations in February.

**Downtown Library:** February 7, 9:30 a.m.– 3:30 p.m.

**South Chattanooga Branch Library:** February 27, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Job seekers can search for work and apply for available openings online. Workshops in résumé preparation, job search, and interviewing skills will be available free of charge.

Job seekers must bring two forms of identification to get on the Coach. The Coach's trained staff will review resumes upon request and make suggestions if necessary.

Career Coaches are set up as computer lab classrooms, each having 10 workstations that are equipped with a laptop and high-speed Internet connection. The coaches are equipped with a wheelchair lift, and the workstations are ADA compliant.

In addition, the Downtown Library now offers basic computer classes for adults on Thursdays and Saturdays, every other week. These classes offer personal instruction, 2 p.m.–3:30 p.m. For more information, customers can call 757-5310. Classes are designed to help new computer users learn everything from setting up an email account to filling out on-line job applications.

# Announcements



## In Memoriam

On Wednesday, January 2, 2013, Mrs. Tangelia Woodruff, founder and former president of Wheeler Avenue Neighborhood Watch, passed away.

Mrs. Woodruff was instrumental in re-establishing Wheeler Avenue Neighborhood Watch after years of inactivity following a string of criminal activity that occurred in the neighborhood. With the help of her neighbors and her husband, Mrs. Woodruff worked diligently to address the criminal activity as well as other community issues.

Mrs. Woodruff served faithfully as President of Wheeler Avenue Neighborhood Watch for two years. She will greatly be missed by the all the members.

**Stuart Heights Neighborhood Association**  
is hosting a  
**City of Chattanooga**  
**District 2**

### Council Candidates Panel

**February 28, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.**

**St. Luke United Methodist Church**  
**3210 Social Circle**  
**Chattanooga, TN 37415**

**Anyone interested in the upcoming**  
**District 2 city council race is invited**  
**Attendees will be able to direct questions**  
**to the candidates.**

**Join us at the next**  
**Neighborhood**  
**Roundtable**

**March 13, 2013 at 1:00 p.m.**

**Mayor's Conference Room**  
**City Hall • 3rd Floor • 101 East 11<sup>th</sup> Street**

### OF INTEREST:

#### **Benwood Foundation Lecture Series** **Environment: Will Allen**

**February 26, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.**

**Roland Hayes Auditorium, UTC Fine Arts Center**

Urban farming activist and MacArthur "Genius" Award winner, Will Allen is the founder of Growing Power, a 2-acre urban farm in Milwaukee that produces thousands of pounds of healthy food each year for the surrounding low-income neighborhoods. The internships and workshops hosted by Growing Power engage young adults, often minorities and immigrants, in producing healthy foods for their communities. His new book, *The Good Food Revolution: Growing Healthy Food, People and Communities*, outlines how local food systems can strengthen the health and economy of communities across the nation.

All lectures are free and open to the public.



### **Free Home Repair** **Application Workshops**

**Tuesday, February 5, 10:00 a.m.**  
Avondale Recreation Center, 1305 Dodson Avenue

**Tuesday February 12, 10:00 a.m.**  
Eastgate Town Center, Suite C-10-11

**Wednesday February 13, 10:00 a.m.**  
Lookout Valley Recreation Center, 3202 Kelley's Ferry Road

**Tuesday, February 19, 10:00 a.m.**  
The Bethlehem Center, 200 West 38th Street

**Wednesday, February 20, 11:30 a.m.**  
Washington Hills Recreation Center, 4628 Oakwood Drive

**Monday, March 4, 10:00 a.m.**  
Parks and Recreation Administrative  
Offices, 1102 S, Watkins Street

**For more information call 425-3700**

# February Calendar of Events

Sunday February 3	
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Hemphill Neighborhood Association
7:00pm – 8:00pm	Shepherd Community Council
Monday February 4	
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Spring Valley Charitable Corporation
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Northside/Cherokee Community Association
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Battery Heights Neighborhood Association
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Wheeler Avenue Neighborhood Association
6:00pm – 8:00pm	Chattanooga Organized for Action
6:30pm – 7:30pm	Hill City Neighborhood Association
6:30pm – 7:30pm	East Lake Neighborhood Association
7:00pm – 8:00pm	Murray Hills Neighborhood Association
7:00pm – 8:00pm	Community Association of Historic St. Elmo
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Bushtown Neighborhood Association
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Shawnee Hills Neighborhood Association
7:00pm – 8:00pm	Forest Plaza Neighborhood Association
10:00am – 11:00am	Board of Zoning Appeals
Thursday February 7	
9:00am – 10:00am	Environmental Court
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Alton Park Development Corporation
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Glenwood Neighborhood Watch
7:00pm – 8:00pm	Lookout Valley Neighborhood Association
Monday February 11	
6:00pm – 8:00pm	Chattanooga Organized for Action
7:00pm – 8:00pm	Jefferson Heights Neighborhood Association
7:00pm – 8:00pm	Fairfax-Bagwell Neighborhood Association
Tuesday February 12	
5:00pm – 6:00pm	Foxwood Neighborhood Association
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Indian Hills Neighborhood Association
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Sector 2 CPIC Meeting
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Glass Farms Neighborhood Association
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Alton Park Piney Woods Neighborhood Association
6:30pm – 7:30pm	Biltmore Neighborhood Association
Wednesday February 13	
11:00am – 12:00pm	East Lake Senior Citizens

Thursday February 14	
9:00am – 10:00am	Environmental Court
6:00pm – 8:00pm	North Hixson Neighborhood Association
6:30pm – 7:30pm	Clifton Hills Improvement Committee
6:30pm – 7:30pm	Belvoir Neighborhood Association
6:30pm – 7:30pm	Sector 3 CPIC Meeting
7:00pm – 8:00pm	Fort Wood Neighborhood Association
7:00pm – 8:00pm	Cedar Hill Improvement League
7:00pm – 8:00pm	Martin Luther King Neighborhood Association
Monday February 18	
5:30pm – 6:30pm	Villages at Alton Park Neighborhood Watch
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Washington Hills Neighborhood Association
6:00pm – 7:00pm	North Brainerd Neighborhood Association
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Avondale Neighborhood Association
6:00pm – 8:00pm	Chattanooga Organized for Action
Tuesday February 19	
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Orchard Knob Neighborhood Association
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Hickory Creek Townhome Association
7:00pm – 8:00pm	Cloverale Neighborhood Association
Thursday February 21	
9:00am – 10:00am	Environmental Court
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Dogwood Village Homeowner's Association
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Brainerd Park North Neighborhood Association
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Southside Chattanooga Oak Hills Neighborhood Association
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Menlo Neighborhood Association
6:30pm – 7:30pm	Olde Town Brainerd Neighborhood Association
Monday February 25	
6:00pm – 8:00pm	Chattanooga Organized for Action
7:00pm – 8:00pm	Oak Grove Neighborhood Association
Thursday February 28	
9:00am – 10:00am	Environmental Court
4:30pm – 5:30pm	South Broad Redevelopment Group
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Woodmore Manor Neighborhood Association
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Glenwood Neighborhood Association
7:00pm – 8:00pm	Ridgedale Community Association

For more information on these events and all registered neighborhood association meeting dates go to Neighborhood Services at <http://www.chattanooga.gov> and check our Calendar of Events