



# Summit News

October 2004

## City Approves Miriam Expansion

At its June 16th meeting, the City Plan Commission brushed aside neighborhood concerns and approved Miriam Hospital's most expensive expansion ever. The hospital intends to demolish three buildings on the Summit Avenue complex, and replace them with two 56-foot high buildings that will occupy almost half of the existing hospital's land area.

In proposing to rebuild half of their current hospital, Miriam has chosen to spend over 120 million dollars on a site that offers no future opportunity for growth. Completely surrounded by one- and two-family homes and not served by any major roadway, Miriam, the most profitable unit of the Lifespan network, will be as big as its site allows. Hospital administrators say they do not want to be any bigger. Neighbors, who have watched the hospital grow for 50 years, remain concerned.

Those concerns were loudly heard at the City Plan Commission meeting, where scores of neighbors spoke against the project and a lawyer representing SNA presented the case for the neighborhood. SNA argued that this neighborhood is unique, valuable and worth preserving, and is endangered by institutional growth and this project in particular. SNA urged a go-slow approach, that would allow the hospital to modernize its operating rooms, but postpone any decision about the larger project until the city com-

*Continued on Page 2*



Lippitt Park will get some sprucing up this fall.

## Lippitt Park Playground & Lights To Be Updated

A group of Summit residents calling themselves Parents for Parks has succeeded in persuading the Parks Department to update the play equipment at Lippitt Park. The group, which formed earlier this year, has been working with the city on a design that will include more play equipment for both younger and older children. The cost of the new equipment exceeds the Parks Department's budget, so Parents for Parks has agreed to raise private funds to help pay for it.

In addition, the antiquated lighting system in the park was removed this past spring, and will be replaced by a new system this fall. The new lights will be in the same style as the old ones, but will be more reliable.

*Continued on Page 4*

## Traffic Calming Beset By Delays

The Summit Neighborhood Traffic Calming Project, now three and a half years in the planning, is promised for the spring of next year. The project, which began with an SNA proposal and the strong support of Councilman Kevin Jackson, has suffered a series of delays and setbacks over the past two years as a new city administration restructured personnel. Two departments and four project leaders later, it seems that plans are moving forward and the construction bidding process is now underway.

Traffic calming seeks to slow traffic by changing the roadway in a way that makes it difficult or unpleasant for motorists to speed. There are a number of techniques that can accomplish

*Continued on Page 3*

## Expand Summit!

Summit has a unique opportunity to expand. With home prices and taxes spiraling upward, this city needs more taxpayers and less tax-exempt land. So why not convert some tax-exempt land into residential real estate? Here's our three-part plan:

1) Convert Miriam Hospital's Seventh Street parking lot to house lots. The parking lot is zoned for homes, and surface parking is among the worst things you can do to a residential neighborhood. This block already has curb cuts and utilities for 18 additional houses.

2) Miriam builds a parking garage on the Arena site. This site, which rises 5 stories from

North Main to Highland Avenue, is grossly underutilized, offering only 194 parking spaces. With five levels, it could provide for almost all of Miriam's parking needs. More important for the



Design for a park across Summit from Miriam.

Avenue, a short two blocks from the Hospital. Rhode Island Hospital visitors should have it so good!

3) Convert Miriam's two Summit Avenue lots to a park. A park across from the hospital would give the neighborhood some much needed green space. A park would benefit hospital visitors as well as neighbors, and

*Continued on Page 4*

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## Miriam

*Continued from Page 1*

pletes its plan for Summit Neighborhood.

A neighborhood-by-neighborhood planning process has been underway for the past year. The Department of Planning is conducting public meetings in each of the city's 25 neighborhoods, and devising plans tailored to the unique circumstances that exist in each neighborhood. Together, these 25 plans will be part of a new Comprehensive Plan for the City. Under state law, each city's zoning laws must conform to its comprehensive plan. Summit Neighborhood was promised a planning meeting this fall, though it has not yet been scheduled.

SNA believes the plan should come before the project. Residents and business owners should have an opportunity to say what we want our neighborhood to be like in 5 or 10 or 25 years, and the city should have

an opportunity to legislatively balance the competing interests of the neighborhood and the hospital *before* ten years of construction begin. Councilman Kevin Jackson supported this position in a letter to the Commission that was also signed by Rep. Gordon Fox and Sen. Rhoda Perry.

Plan Commission members struggled visibly with their decision. They scolded hospital administrators for failing to engage in a dialogue with neighbors, and they imposed a number of requirements and constraints on the project designed to lessen its impact and improve the hospital's relationship with its neighbors. They limited the approval period to one year and instructed the hospital to come before the Plan Commission at the end of that time and submit their master plan for approval once more. But in the end, they gave Miriam everything it asked for.

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### Street Tree Planting

On Saturday September 18th, as one of the many hurricanes was dumping the last of its rain on Rhode Island, a diehard group of volunteers, along with the Parks Department, planted 20 trees in the Rochambeau/Dana Street area. Kids and adults alike were digging and planting all morning, despite the downpour. Thanks to everyone who came out despite the conditions and we look forward to another planting of 12 trees this coming spring at Rochambeau and Camp Streets.

To apply for a tree planting on your street, contact the Providence Neighborhood Planting Program (PNPP) at 368-5380, or download an application at [pnpp.org](http://pnpp.org). The trees are free, but neighbors must pitch in to plant and care for them. The next deadline for applications is December 1st, for a spring 2005 planting.



Getting their hands dirty...and wet!

### Business Scene

**USA Wireless** has moved into the former Paradise Boutique space at 738 Hope Street. They are an authorized dealer for Nextel and T-Mobile, and also serve AT&T. The manager at this location is Kay Solomon, and she and her husband also have another store on Thayer Street.

**Judaic Traditions** (formerly Rhoda's Judaica) has moved across Hope Street to 746, the former Cat's Pajamas store.

**Hope Street Convenience** has

moved into Rhoda's old space at 775 Hope Street. The proprietor is Ammar Al-Sahli.

**Padapsy Salon** is open in the former Vanity Fair Salon at 737 Hope Street, at the corner of Rochambeau Avenue.

Down on North Main Street, **Raymond James Financial Services, Inc.**, has opened an office at 1052, in the south half of the Jade building, at the intersection with Cemetery Street.

### Traffic Calming

*Continued from Page 1*

this, but for our project the primary one is road narrowing or "bump outs." A bump out is an extension of the curb and sidewalk into the roadway, usually at intersections. It causes motorists to slow, and provides pedestrians a safer and shorter crossing.

We will get bump outs at intersections along Rochambeau, Summit, Lorimer, Tenth, Hillside, and Hope Street north of the business district.

This project represents about one third of the overall

### Business Profiles

We continue our series of online business profiles of neighborhood businesses with one new and one established business. **CreaToyvity** is a toy store and much more. **Camera Werks** has been offering photography services and supplies for 23 years. Both are profiled at <http://sna.providence.ri.us/biz/>.

traffic calming plan envisioned in the Summit Neighborhood Traffic Study, which is available on the SNA website. Future projects include traffic calming and streetscape beautification of the Hope Street business corridor.

## Yes, I'm joining Summit Neighborhood Association today.

I enclose my 2005 member contribution of:  \$15  \$25  \$35  \$50  Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: (please print clearly) \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Family Membership** - list other adults living in your household who wish to be members: \_\_\_\_\_

I can leaflet

I am concerned about: \_\_\_\_\_

Please enclose a check made out to: **Summit Neighborhood Association** and mail it to **SNA, P.O. Box 41092, Providence, RI 02940**

The Summit Neighborhood Association Presents

# ELECTION FORUM 2004

*Featuring Candidates for Local Office and Discussion of Ballot Questions*

## State Senate District 3

Rhoda Perry (D)

Barry Fain (I)

## State Rep District 4

Gordon Fox (D)

Paul Tarullo (R)

## Ballot Questions

**Wednesday, October 27th**

**6:30pm to 8:30pm**

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**Church of the Redeemer**

**655 Hope Street**

**Moderated by the League of Women Voters**

*Refreshments will be served at 6:00pm*

### Lippitt

*Continued from Page 1*

Other issues have not yet made it onto the Parks Department's radar, or at least not into their budget. Among these are the abysmal condition of the benches, trees lost to storms and disease, and the fountain that has been dry since the 70's. But we welcome the attention and the money being spent on this jewel of a park.

For more information about Parents for Parks, call 454-0096.

### Expand Summit

*Continued from Page 2*

shifting all parking to the Arena site would dramatically reduce hospital traffic.

This plan would accomplish two broad goals. It would improve our neighborhood and give more people the opportunity to live here. And it would eliminate the possibility of the hospital ever seeking to build beyond its borders.

Miriam plans to spend more

than \$120 million on construction over the next five to ten years. We think a \$14 million parking deck would be a prudent investment, and this neighborhood and the city should demand it. And if the newly rebuilt hospital is truly as big as it will ever need to be, as they insist, then why not return those parking lots to the neighborhood? It would be the neighborly thing to do.