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Worcester celebrates life of Jane Jacobs, urban theorist

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WORCESTER- “Jane Jacobs in the Woo” is planning “Jane Week 2017,” a series of events May 2-7 to promote dialogue about urban design and planning in Worcester.

Last May, Joyce Mandell started “Jane Jacobs in the Woo,” a blog in honor of what would have been the 100th birthday of celebrated urban theorist and activist Jacobs who championed a community-based approach to city building.

In addition to celebrating the life and writings of Jacobs, who died in 2006 at 89, Ms. Mandell said she thought the blog would be a great way to stimulate conversation and action about building a vibrant Worcester based on Jacob’s principals.

“This has actually developed more than I ever anticipated or hoped for,” Ms. Mandell said. “The idea is to create city streets and public places that are people-filled, where people want to congregate and people want to meet other people. So it’s really about community building.”

“Jane Week” in Worcester joins an international movement that occurs the first week in May in more than 250 cities around the world.

“ ‘Jane Week’ gives Worcester residents and visitors a chance to connect to each other, explore Worcester by foot and participate in interesting discussions on how we can enhance the design and function of our city,” Ms. Mandell said. “All of the ‘Jane Week’ walks and activities will highlight these important building blocks in some way and allow Worcester residents and visitors to think about the city in a fresh way.”

Scheduled “Jane Week” activities include more than 15 “Jane Walks” (volunteer-led walking tours of Worcester neighborhoods); a pop-up “parklet” on North Main Street; a film screening; several public discussions; and multiple family-friendly activities.

The presentation of the “2017 Jane Award” (recognizing a person, place or project that best emulates the ideals of Jane Jacobs in Worcester) will close out the week from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. May 7 at Crompton Place, 138 Green St.

Cosponsors of “Jane Week” include The Greater Worcester Community Foundation and Home Depot. Partner Organizations include Preservation Worcester, Action!Worcester, Walk-Bike Worcester, Worcester Tree Initiative, Worcester Historical Museum, and MassAudubon – Broad Meadow Brook.

All walks and events during “Jane Week” are free and open to the public and will be held rain or shine. Pre-registration through the Jane Week 2017 Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/janeweek2017>) or Eventbrite is suggested but not required.

Ms. Mandell said she feels the city is on a verge of a renaissance and “Jane Week” reinforces the revitalization that is happening in Worcester.

“In these kinds of times, it’s just really important to have a place where all people, no matter who they are, can come up in the streets and meet in public and we can all join together to figure out what makes a healthy city, what makes a vibrant city, and what makes places where people want to be and meet each other in a positive way,” Ms. Mandell said. “There are so many exciting things that are bubbling up on the surface. So it’s a time to engage people who live here and who work here that can have a voice in shaping what is our collective vision of where we should be heading and what makes a great city-space.”

Events:

– The Worcester Regional Research Bureau will discuss “Growth By Design” from 7:45 a.m. to 9 a.m. Tuesday at the DCU Center, Arena.

– Woodland Academy School Route Clean-up Walk from 8 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Tuesday. Meet at the school, 93 Woodland St.

– “Worcester City Hall: A Palace for the People” from 12:30 p.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday. Meet at the front entrance for this “flash” tour.

– “A Taste of C.H.I.P. (Community Health Improvement Plan) walk from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesday. Walk starts promptly at 5 p.m. from Worcester Common by the back entrance of City Hall.

More Video:

Trot Nixon talks to Worcester Little Leaguers

– “Pop-Up Parklet Party” from 4 to 8 p.m. Thursday, outside of Deadhorse Hill, 281 Main St.

– “Design Your Ideal Neighborhood” from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Thursday at the pop-up parklet on North Main St. The EcoTarium is bringing a piece of its “City Science: The Science You Live” exhibit to the event.

– “Worcester’s Economic Revitalization: Past, Present and Future” from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Thursday. Meet at front door of City Hall.

– “Worcester Wall to Wall” from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Meet outside front door of City Hall. Learn the stories behind some of the murals and graffiti in the city and discover some hidden creative gems on this walking tour.

– “Worcester’s Famous Ghost Tour” from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Friday. Meet at the front of City Hall.

– “Urban Renewal, Then and Now” from 9:30 to 11 a.m. May 6, Saxe Room at the Worcester Public Library. A 45-minute documentary on the demise of Worcester’s Laurel/Clayton neighborhood and the rise of Plumley Village in the 1960s will be followed by a panel and open discussion.

– “Finding Worcester: A Family Scavenger Hunt Adventure” from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. May 6, starts at Worcester Historical Museum, 30 Elm St.

– “Walk Your Sanctuary in the City” from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. May 6, and 12:30 to 4 p.m. May 7 at Broad Meadow Brook Wildlife Sanctuary, 414 Massasoit Road.

- “East and East and Up!” from 10 a.m. to noon May 6. Meet at the lion statues at Christoforo Columbo Park (East Park) on Shrewsbury Street. Hike a section of the East Side Trail as it travels from Shrewsbury Street up to the top of Belmont Hill and up to an old quarry in Green Hill Park.
- “Una Passeggiata: A Stroll Down Shrewsbury Street” from 1 to 2:30 p.m. May 6. Meet at the front entrance of Union Station.
- “On the Water at Coes Reservoir with Mass Audubon” from 2 to 4 p.m. May 6. Drop in anytime on the beach along Mill Street.
- “Kilby-Gardner-Hammond: Community-Driven Neighborhood Revitalization in Main South” from 4 to 5:30 p.m. May 6. Meet at Main South CDC, 875 Main St.
- “Religion and Radicals: Revisiting Worcester’s Jewish East Side” from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. May 7 Meet at Oak Hill CDC, 74 Providence St.
- “Hike the East-West Trail at Newton Hill” from noon to 1:30 p.m. May 7. Meet in the Spencer Savings Bank parking lot, 230 Park Ave.
- “The Canal District, Past, Present and Future: Water Powered” from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. May 7. Meet at the front entrance of Union Station.