https://bettonhills.org

Facebook: Betton Hills Neighborhood

BETTON HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Fall 2025 Newsletter

Food Trucks
Pumpkin Painting
Kid's Games
Face Painting
Photo Booth

Barrel Train Rides
Halloween Costume Contest
Willow the Owl & Friends*
First Responders & Vehicles
Fun Inflatable Slide/Obstacle Course

INSPIRATION ROW

Community organizations and residents making Betton Hills and Tallahassee an even better place to live!

LIVE MUSIC

The Indefatigables — The amazing jazz/blues trio!

***BHNA thanks Wildbirds Unlimited for sponsoring the appearance of Willow the Owl, through St. Francis Wildlife. We appreciate their generosity!**

President's Letter - Is Betton Hils the BEST Neighborhood in Tallahassee? (Spoiler alert: YES!)

Jim Ward, BHNA President

Happy Fall! Every year, the cooler weather brings countless reminders of why Betton Hills is top of the list, for so many, of the best places in town to call home. Just why is that? I think it's because we have all the right ingredients, which combine uniquely to create a community truly greater than the sum of its parts. Please read on to see why!

Consider our premier event, Fall Fest, just days away (Sunday, October 12, 3-6 pm). As always, it'll be a great opportunity to enjoy time with neighbors at Harriman Circle Park. This year, many "fan favorites" will return. We'll have numerous food and dessert trucks, live music, and countless fun activities for kids and adults alike. Not long after, several events will create more Fall fun for everyone — including the Witches' Ride, Halloween House Decorating Contest, and the always spirited Halloween Crawl!

No matter the time of year, we have residents who go above and beyond to support not only Betton neighbors, but the Tallahassee community at large. We're blessed with abundant greenery and gardens, towering oaks, rolling hills, lovely parks (not one, but four!), and amazing, diverse wildlife. Thankfully, we have many neighbors, as well as board members, who care deeply about these things and are devoted to preserving and enhancing them. I would be remiss, of course, not to mention that we also have some of the most charming, beautiful homes in town, close to everything.

Of course, not all in Betton is constant paradise. There are always government initiatives that can, and do, impact our way of life. Fortunately, we have board members and other residents willing to actively engage with government officials on these things, keep us informed, and represent our interests along the way.

The newsletter you're reading is chock full of examples of every one of the wonderful ingredients noted above! All in all, our residents and the BHNA are a formidable partnership that greatly enhances our quality of life here in Betton (not to mention our property values!). If you agree with that statement — and you really should! — please take the opportunity to renew your voluntary BHNA membership for 2026 or join for the first time if you're not a member. You can easily renew or join on-line or send a check if you prefer to go "old-school" (see the last page of this newsletter for more information). Either way, your membership helps us continue to help YOU, and our beloved Betton, to be the best and to get even better!

Upcoming Events Reminders:

October 12, 2025 Fall Fest, Harriman Circle Park, 3pm -6pm (See page 1)

October 25, 2025 Halloween Witches Ride, Harriman Circle Park, 6 pm (See page 6)

October 26, 2025 Deadline to register for Betton Halloween House Decorating Contest (See page 7)

October 31, 2025 Betton Halloween Crawl (See page 7)

December 24, 2025 Christmas Caroling at Harriman Circle Park, 4:00 pm

Meet a BHNA Board Member:

Bill Behenna

Greetings! I'm Bill Behenna, Vice President of your Betton Hills Neighborhood Association. My wife Lecia and I are 25-year residents of Betton Hills, though I've been in Tallahassee since 1974 when I ventured north from Miami to attend FSU. After graduating with a degree in Mass Communications, I remained in Tallahassee to work at our local National Public Radio affiliate, WFSU-FM.

My career path changed in 1987 when I joined the City of Tallahassee as an entry level public information specialist in what was then known as the Community Liaison Office. Eventually morphing into the City's Department of Communications, my City Hall career spanned 25 years, retiring as the Senior Public Information Officer in 2012. Not wanting to sit still in retirement, I then accepted a position with the City's Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs Department overseeing operations at the Meadows Soccer Complex. In 2024, I finally moved on from dealing with corner flags, yellow (or occasional red) cards, and forever frequent lightning delays.

Attending the Betton Hills Fall Fest last October, I got the bug to once again join the BHNA's Board. I'd been a Board member some 20 years ago, but put that aside to concentrate on helping raise our son while still working at City Hall. While he played both soccer and baseball from a young age, we started concentrating on baseball for the most part and that led to a stint as president of Winthrop Park Baseball. We spent an incredible amount of time at Winthrop, loving every minute of being an active part of Tallahassee's most family friendly baseball park!

Back to the BHNA, I've loved our neighborhood since the first time I visited Tallahassee way back in the early 70s. I visited an aunt and uncle who lived on Betton Road and recall towering trees, hills and beautiful homes as we took walks after dinner. Fast forward to now, and I'm proud to be part of one of the most active *and caring* neighborhood associations in all of Leon County.

Whether it's neighborhood cleanups, visiting with other BH friends and neighbors at our festivals and food truck events, helping spruce up our fantastic parks for Arbor Day, or on occasion meeting with current City staff on matters of particular interest to Betton, my goal as a BHNA Board member is simply to be a strong advocate for our neighborhood. Though living here is inherently positive, we do have matters of concern from time to time, and that's what your BHNA Board is here for.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our events, and further, invite any of you who want to do more for our fantastic neighborhood by joining the BHNA Board!

THANK YOU, MIKE BREZIN!

Mario Taylor and Margie McInnes

We would like to thank and acknowledge our neighbor, friend, and long-time BHNA Board Member, Mike Joseph Brezin, for the incredible thought, energy, and ideas he has invested in Betton Hills as a 35-year resident.

People who know Mike use words like “leader”, “engager”, “problem solver”, “communicator”, “promoter” and “protector.” But even those terms do not capture adequately the person he is and what he has contributed to all of us. Mike has a core, value-based philosophy that a strong neighborhood consciousness and organizational effectiveness promote good neighbors, good neighborhoods and uplifts us all.

With Mike having recently stepped down from the BHNA board (after more than 30 years of service, including past service as President), it has been an honor for the BHNA Board to nominate Mike for both Tallahassee Neighbor of the Year and Advocate of the Year for 2024. Mike has been an active, hands-on participant in all of our community events, year after year, including Arbor Day planting and cleanup, Easter Egg Hunt, Spring Fest, Fall Fest, PREP (Emergency Preparedness), Food Truck Thursdays, neighborhood Garage Sales, Block Parties and much more.

Mike’s primary goal has been to enhance what he calls the “neighborhood consciousness” of Betton Hills, by inspiring and leading with his belief that Betton Hills is worth taking individual and group actions to make it an even more friendly, inclusive, safe, and uplifting neighborhood for all of us. Mike has a deep understanding of people and their need to be heard, and an appreciation of “community” in our lives. He has fostered great communication by chatting with neighbors while walking and bike riding in the neighborhood, writing articles in the newsletter, engaging in the neighborhood Facebook page, providing helpful information in neighborhood email blasts, and lending a helping hand when called upon by any neighbor.

Mike has worked very hard, along with others, over time to inform and educate Betton Hills residents, as well as those in other neighborhoods, about the importance of, and the process for, engagement to update the City’s Comprehensive Plan. Mike diligently communicated this information through countless avenues, including newsletter articles, email blasts, one-on-one conversations with

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neighbors, information tables at our neighborhood events and meeting with other neighbors and neighborhoods through the Alliance of Tallahassee Neighborhoods. Within days of last year's tornadoes, Mike and key board members of BHNA, along with our adjoining neighborhood association, Woodgate, worked hard to coordinate a food truck drive to feed residents of Providence and Bond, two of the most severely impacted neighborhoods.

Mike truly exemplifies every element of being a Good Neighbor. Fortunately for Betton Hills, Mike will still be living in our neighborhood, and his dedication to Betton Hills will doubtless continue even after stepping down from the BHNA Board. He will continue to inspire us with his good heart and sharp brain. For all of us, it is an honor to call Mike a Friend.

THANKS, MIKE!

City Infrastructure Project Updates

Jim Ward

Lee Avenue/W. Randolph Drainage Project – The End is in Sight!

Believe it or not, this project has been underway for about a year. Its main goal is to improve drainage, east to west, from Lee Avenue to the McCord Culvert, located west of Trescott Avenue. According to the City, the General Contractor has a contract completion date of October 17, 2025 and would be subject to daily fines for not meeting it. However, we were advised that the Contractor has requested an extension based on "rain day" delays. For that reason, the City expects that the likely completion date will move out to the end of October 2025. Whether or not that proves accurate (after all, we could have more rain days!), it appears that the final days of torn up yards and dusty, blocked roads are close at hand (Until the next project comes along!).

McCord Culvert Project – Tree Replacement Coming!

Many will recall the earlier drainage project that resulted in installation of a large, cement box culvert located due west of homes along the west side of Trescott. Many also will recall that BHNA partnered with Trescott residents to successfully lobby the City to not only plant numerous trees that were removed to accommodate the box culvert, but also to add even more trees than had existed originally. Regrettably, subsequent watering of those young trees proved inadequate, and some withered and died. The happy ending here? After BHNA pressed the City about the dead trees, the City agreed to replace them. That replacement planting will occur around mid-October, 2025. We've been assured that this time (fingers crossed!) there will be adequate watering by the tree contractor. BHNA plans to keep an eye on this. But certainly, if you see evidence of any of the trees in distress, please be sure to let us and/or the City know. Let's keep them all alive this time!

Calling All Betton Hills Ladies – The Witches Ride is Coming Soon! (October 25th)!

Emily Westfall-Crouch and LeeAnn Phillips

You're invited to the Third Annual Betton Hills Witches Ride on Saturday, October 25. Join us for a fun and whimsical bike ride with a fundraising effort. Wear your pointy hats, striped socks and decorate your broom cycles for a magical spin through our beautiful neighborhood with friends and neighbors. Riders will gather at Harriman Circle Park at 5:30 PM, with the ride to begin promptly at 6 PM. Not ready to ride? Please join us anyway, for the pre-ride and post-ride Witches Mingle at Harriman Circle Park. You can't miss us!

The Witches Ride originated in the coastal Florida town of Seaside about 30 years ago, when friends dressed up like witches and rode their bikes to nearby Grayton Beach for fun. One glimpse was all it took to pique community curiosity, and for a leisurely bike ride between friends to turn into a fundraising event.

The Annual Betton Hills Witches Ride raises funds to support the Tallahassee Memorial Cancer Center in partnership with the TMH Foundation. Our event's donation will directly impact local breast cancer patients, right here in Tallahassee. The Tallahassee Memorial Cancer Center treats more than 1,600 breast cancer patients each year in our region. We suggest a $5 donation per rider, but any amount is appreciated. Cash, check, and Venmo donations will be accepted the night of the event. All funds raised during the Betton Hills Witches Ride will be submitted to the TMH Foundation and a follow-up announcement on the Betton Hills Facebook page. Our first two Witches Rides together have donated over $1,300 with the generous support of our neighbors!

Look for more information to come on the Betton Hills Facebook page as the date gets closer. We hope you will join us!

BETTON HALLOWEEN FUN – FALL '25!

Nancy Leiva-Krause/Ron Salutsky

We have multiple cherished Halloween events that occur in our neighborhood each year, and the Trick-or-Treat Crawl and house decoration contest are once again on tap this year! You'll find the key details to join in the fun immediately below.

Halloween Crawl '25

This year's Halloween Crawl is being facilitated by Board member, and neighbor, Nancy Leiva-Krause. Participating in the crawl is easy! Email your last name and home address to BHNHalloweenCrawl@gmail.com and you're done (i.e., your home will be added to the Halloween Crawl digital map). Once you are registered for the Halloween Crawl, you will receive an email with your pumpkin image, so you can print at your convenience. It Is that easy. Still have your pumpkin sign from last year? You can use it, but you still need to register each year to be added to the Halloween Crawl digital map. Email your last name and your home address to BHNHalloweenCrawl@gmail.com so you can be added to this year's map (coming soon). Keep your eye out for more info coming soon via email and on the Betton Hills Facebook page.

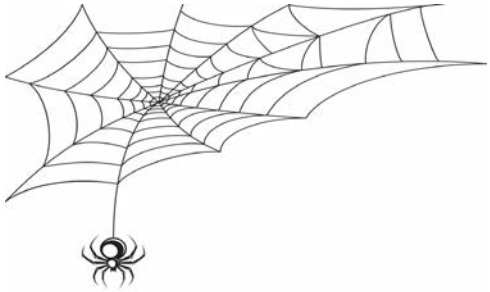
Fourth Annual Betton Hills Halloween Decorating Contest

The time for Halloween Haunt abodes to strut their stuff is drawing nigh!

This year we'll have expanded prizes, sponsored by Salutsky Realty, to include 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners: $50, $30, and $20 gift cards from a local business tba (now accepting nominations!).

*A friendly reminder to everyone to be careful while Trick-or-Treating on the streets of Betton, considering our narrow streets and lack of sidewalks on many of them. Reflective clothing and flashlights are a good idea to keep you and your little goblins visible to cars and other moving hazards.

To enter, simply send your name and home address to BettonHalloween25@gmail.com. Entries MUST be received before October 27, 2025. Our panel of judges will visit all nominated houses the evenings of Monday and Tuesday, October 27 and 28th, to assess your hallowed haunt based on these criteria:



a. Creativity
b. Originality
c. Lighting & Special Effects
d. Overall Design

Winners will be announced Wednesday, October 29th, 2025!

Happy Halloween, Betton Hillers!!!

COMING SOON TO YOUR YARD: SKUNK VINE! (If it's not there already)

Donna Legare

Take a walk around the neighborhood, focusing on the home landscapes you are passing. You will notice an aggressive, twining perennial vine with oppositely arranged leaves on long stems, up to thirty feet long growing over azalea hedges, holly fern beds, single shrubs, up trees or along the ground. The leaves are pointy but may vary in size and shape. This is skunk vine, native to Asia. When you crush the leaves, you will detect a bad smelling stench (hence the name). When young, these vines are easy to overlook as their green leaves blend in with the vegetation of the unsuspecting shrub or tree that it climbs.

Unchecked, skunk vine will eventually cover and then weaken or kill the desirable trees and shrubs in your yard. Its dense layer of leaves prevents sunlight from reaching the leaves of your desired plants.

DO NOT LET SKUNK VINE PRODUCE ITS BERRY-LIKE FRUIT

Skunk vine is more noticeable when it is blooming (August to September). It has small tubular, light grayish pink, or lilac flowers with red centers. If you see it in bloom, act fast because those multiple flowers will soon be producing abundant fruit that is small, spherical and shiny brown (each containing two black seeds). They hang in clusters.

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A single large vine produces thousands of seeds in a single growing season. Birds will eat the fruit and spread the seeds all over our yards, forests, and parks.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT SKUNK VINE

If possible, untwine the vine from reachable vegetation and follow it back to the ground where you may be able to dig out its shallow roots. If in a tree, pull the vine from the tree or cut it and then follow the vine to where the root is. There will usually be shallow runners that you should also follow and remove. Use a shovel to dig out more established roots. Carefully dispose of plant remains by bagging and placing them in the trash. Skunk vine can spread vegetatively from stems that remain on the soil or by seed spread by birds. Do not compost any part of the plant. Do not place debris in a brush pile.

If you cannot trace the plant back to its roots, pull as much of the vine from a tree or shrubs, but do not cut the stem. Pile the vine on the ground and spray it with an herbicide recommended by the Leon County Extension Office. The leaves will absorb the herbicide and carry it down to the roots, killing the plant.

Follow label instructions. Be careful of nearby vegetation. Herbicide treatment is more effective during the growing season, late spring and summer. For more information on how skunk vine ended up in Florida and the ecological damage skunk vine is causing, see an expanded article on our website, at https://www.bettonhills.org/invasives/

A Day in Life's Journey with "Owl Junior"

John and Bonnie Bailey

On Mother's Day, we found a juvenile Barred Owl in our yard by a bush. We discovered "Owl Jr." because he was clacking his beak. He was wet, looked scared, and was certainly in a place where he did not belong after a windy, rainy day. Concerned that the little guy might be injured, we called St. Francis Wildlife Rescue. St. Francis immediately sent a volunteer, "M," to pick up Owl Jr.

The next morning, a phone call from St. Francis gave reassurance Owl Jr., a fledgling, was healthy, that his parents were doing a great job and that maybe he was just exploring. So, we were instructed to pick him up and create a makeshift nest in a tree close to where we found him. A basket stuffed with dry leaves was affixed to the tree and Owl Jr. was placed in the basket. We were told the parents would find him and give him food and whatever else he needed.

Later that afternoon, Owl Jr. decided he did not want anything to do with the make-shift nest. He was found at the original spot just a few hours later, clacking his beak. A call to St. Francis once again reassured us he was capable of deciding his next steps.

As the sun was setting, the most amazing congregation of owls started "hooting it up," like a cheering section. (At that point, the movie Bambi came to mind when his father said, "Bambi get up, you must get up"). Another Barred Owl, maybe Mom or Dad, was on a tree limb about 10 feet away from Owl Jr. The owl chorus continued for several hours. In the morning, Owl Jr. was nowhere to be found. A call to St. Francis assured us Owl Jr. had most likely been reunited with his kin.

To this day, we still look around to see if Owl Jr. has come back. It is believed he is finding his way toward adulthood. This little guy certainly imprinted a lasting impression on our lives. Sometimes, the vulnerability of wildlife needs a helping hand, like the rest of us. In the end, maybe we will see other owls in our neighborhood that remind us of Owl Jr. We are so lucky to live in Betton Hills, an in-town community, with amazing wildlife that can give us a fresh perspective from the daily hustle and bustle.

The Betton Hills Real Estate Round-Up (Fall 2025)

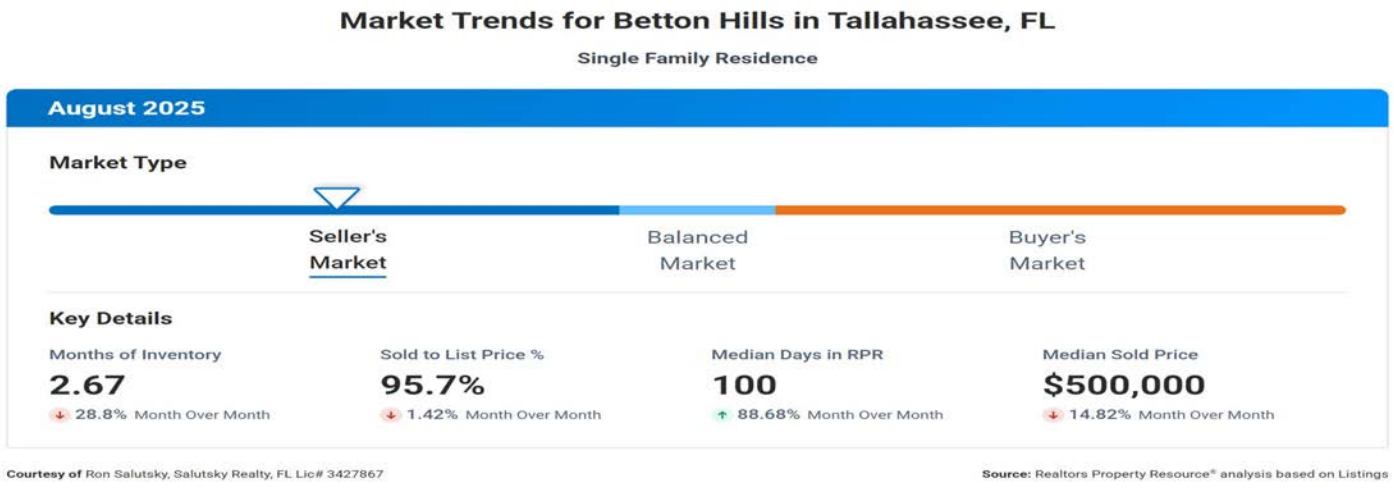
Ron Salutsky, Broker/Owner, Salutsky Realty

Dear neighbors, following up on our spring forecast of a thawing market, will we this fall feel the chill of a cooling market as temperatures drop and copper toned pine needles collect on our sidewalks?

Once again, the two biggest buzzwords in the real estate world are *uncertainty* and *affordability*. With mortgage rates trending a half-percent lower from early August to early September, we've seen some increased activity in the local market, notably Tallahassee homes that have been sitting on the market for 60+ days suddenly going under contract. On the other hand, both locally and nationally, potential homebuyers are more often terminating those purchase contracts, and deals are falling through at rates we haven't seen in years. Why the growing caution? Fannie Mae reports consumers grew less confident about housing in August, mainly due to job worries, tougher selling conditions, and concern over future prices.

You're tired of hearing the phrase *tariff uncertainty*, but sure enough, the unsettling effect of 2024's election concerns have been supplanted by 2025's own economic specter: the toll of global tariffs on local pocketbooks. Nationwide, The Fed's Beige Book shows the weight of tariffs on businesses and consumers, with economic activity and hiring mostly flat in recent weeks. Job openings dropped sharply to 7.18 million in July, the second lowest since the pandemic. Slower hiring signals labor market weakness, which tends to have a chilling effect on real estate markets. Thus, even though purchase mortgage apps are up 17% year over year, they fell 6% as August turned the corner into September, then suddenly rose 7% in the second week of September (+23% over last year). Showing somewhat similar trends, refi apps rose 1% for the week and 20% over last year. It wouldn't be unreasonable to assume homebuyers are riding the interest rate roller-coaster this fall, treading a warming market with cold feet: one day that attractive home is on budget, the next day it isn't.

Your current market snapshot: our local MLS shows 12 active Betton Hills listings that've been on the market from 7-149 days for a somewhat lengthy average of 66 days (last spring it was 40 days). Prices range from 345k-825k, with a median of 442k and an average around 525k. Your average asking price per square foot is $234, very near spring's $236. Contact a trusted Betton Hills real estate agent for a comparative market analysis (CMA) of your own home's specific value, and for a full analysis of BH properties and markets—including data that show slightly declining market values—please see the latest Betton Hills Real Estate Report, available at https://www.bettonhills.org/2025/09/betton-hills-real-estate-report-fall2025/. Happy fall, everyone!



Jack Robertson Partnership for School Excellence Fund

Mary Kay Falconer

Each year, our neighborhood donates modest funds to each of our neighborhood schools -- Kate Sullivan Elementary, Cobb Middle, and Leon High School. We meet with school administrators and teachers each year to identify their needs and learn more about their recommendations for use of our donations. The BHNA board applies a set of criteria to guide us in this process. Each school is always appreciative of our funds. For 2024-25, our donation to each school was $500. Descriptions of how our donations were spent are summarized below.

In 2025, our donation to Kate Sullivan was used to buy books for 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders in the summer reading program. Kate Sullivan staff indicated the books were a big hit!

The funds for Cobb Middle School in 2025 were allocated once again to two very popular programs in the Agriculture Department: (1) gardening and (2) raising and caring for chickens. In the gardening program, students learn to set up gardening beds, plant, and harvest what they grow. The chicken care program focuses on the process of incubating fertilized eggs and following them through hatching. The students feed the chicks, clean out the chicken coop on campus, and care for them daily. They were even able to use a 3-D printer to create a beak cast for one of the chickens whose beak was damaged. In 2025, the donated funds allowed the development of additional garden beds to grow more plants, along with feed and hay for the chickens.

Many in our neighborhood would agree that Leon High School is a flagship school in the Leon County School System. We work through the Leon High Foundation to have our donations allocated for projects that are proposed by teachers and reviewed by the Foundation. One of the larger projects the foundation has agreed to support in 2025 is the purchase of a band trailer to move equipment for games and performances (currently, the band rents equipment each game to meet this requirement). In addition, the foundation is contributing to the purchase of a dissecting scope for the science room, sewing supplies for the 3 Principles of Fashion classes, and contributing to the Black History Month Assembly speaker.

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Mentoring Students—A Gratifying Way to Make a Connection with the Young in Our Community
Mentoring students is a great way to connect with the younger generations in our community. Both Kate Sullivan Elementary and Cobb Middle School are accepting mentors again this year. Mentors meet with a student for 30 minutes once a week. There is brief training provided by the Volunteer Coordinator for Leon County Schools. If you want to learn more, go to https://www.leonschools.net/volunteers. There is an application for you to complete online to get you started.

Carol Bellamy Neighborhood Beautification Fund

Donna Legare

Carol Bellamy, a native Floridian, moved to Betton Hills in 1974. She quickly became enamored with Betton Hills' natural and horticultural beauty and the neighborliness of the residents. She joined the BHNA board, serving as president in the early 1980s. She then went on to be a city commissioner and, in 1983-1984, mayor. In 1991, she died at 49 after an extended illness. The Carol Bellamy Memorial Rose Garden in Chittenden Park was dedicated shortly after her death.

This fund supports neighborhood beautification and conservation projects. The fund has been used for Arbor Day plantings, to remove invasive plant species, to help fund the McCord Park sculptures, to maintain the Betton Hills markers throughout the neighborhood and to provide park benches, tables, recycling bins and plants for traffic islands. We have used this fund to set up and maintain bluebird and wood duck nest boxes in McCord Park as well as the bat house, which now houses approximately 261 (May 2025 count) mosquito-eating Brazilian freetail bats!

Please consider a donation to the fund next time you admire the beauty of Betton Hills and its lovely parks and amenities. Chances are, the Carol Bellamy Neighborhood Beautification Fund played at least some part in that. Thank you!

2026 BHNA Officers and Board of Directors Slate

The BHNA Board of Directors created the following slate for 2026. The election will occur later in the year. BHNA members may nominate other members for an officer or board of directors' position by October 31, 2025. Do so by emailing the person's name and contact information to: president@bettonhills.org.

BHNA Officers Slate:	Jim Ward, President	Bill Behenna, Vice-President
	Tom Schulte, Treasurer	Amber Ward, Secretary

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Board of Directors Slate:

Mary Kay Falconer
Eliza Hawkins
Donna Legare
Nancy Leiva-Krause
Casey McLaughlin
Mario Taylor
Ron Salutsky
Mari-Jo Lewis-Wilkinson

An original poem by one of our own Betton residents!

Ron Paul Salutsky

Ode on Rue

I cried today in the Target parking lot
I cried for the hot sun hitting the pavement
I cried for the wayward shopping carts
I cried for the lady to whom I conceded right of way through the electric doors
I cried for the washing soda
Target didn't stock
I cried for the fatigued heart
and the aching way the world massages our chest
sometimes
I cried for the price of coffee
I cried for the teen and her granny who couldn't find the Tide Pens
and I think they saw me crying when I told them I thought I remembered
seeing them 3 aisles over
I cried for the young man pretending to organize the soap refills
while he glanced at his phone
and I cried for the pharmacy worker peeking over her reading glasses
to see if she could see the screen clearer that way
I cried all night in just a few minutes
I cried at the vague beauty of the mops hanging in parallel lines
I cried while I imagined at that moment you touching Harper's cheek
I cried for the dogs whose toy hung too high in the loropetalum
for them to reach
I cried for the sale on linens
I cried for the ugly bath towels
I cried for the tiny jewels of moonbeams dripping from the fluorescent lights
I cried for the petrichor, the aglet, the syzygy, the avidity
I cried for Ozzy
and I cried for flat tires
I cried for July and her smarmy wetness
I cried for Ouija and oolong and the ozonosphere
and I didn't cry for any of these things
I cried because today
I hurt my love

THE COMP PLAN: VICTORY! (For Now)

Mari-Jo Lewis-Wilkinson and Mike Brezin

When most people hear the words Comprehensive Plan," they tend to either hit the snooze button or reach for another cold one. We get it; it's not a breezy beach read. Thankfully, your BHNA Board was working this past summer (linen sleeves rolled up, of course) to preserve and protect the Betton Hills brand, and we've written this handy TL; DR (too long; didn't read) plot summary, with a favorable surprise ending for in-town neighborhoods like BH! Grab your beverage of choice and read on.

- The Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) is the City's vision for the future. It sets the standards for the city's future growth and development — economic, social, physical, environmental, and fiscal.

- The Comp Plan may be updated periodically. This year, the city was updating the Land Use and Mobility elements of the plan.

- The City initially was considering proposed land use changes that would have increased housing densities in Betton Hills, allowing up to 8 units per acre. Imagine 4 houses on your neighbor's half acre lot.

- The Alliance of Tallahassee Neighborhoods (Betton Hills is a founding member of this group of in-town neighborhoods) hosted a standing-room-only forum on June 3. Planning Department staff got an earful about the proposed increased densities and a rushed timeline for citizen review.

- BHNA Board members met with those planners two days later and obtained assurance that the zoning regulations that implement the Comp Plan would not allow more than the current densities in Betton Hills.

The surprise ending? On August 18, Mayor Dailey told neighborhood leaders, including Betton Hills and ATN representatives, that he favored shelving the proposed amendments to the Land Use element of the Comp Plan, effectively leaving the current housing densities in place. At its August 20th meeting, the City Commission voted unanimously in favor of the Mayor's proposal and on September 17, voted to transmit the Comp Plan — *without increased housing densities* — to the state for review and approval. Adoption of the Comp Plan will follow.

We think the advocacy of the BHNA Board and ATN — as well as robust community engagement — significantly influenced this about face by the City. So, victory (for now!) on the housing densities front. But many challenging decisions are still before us related to continued housing availability, economic development, and mobility. Watch for updates on this story on the Betton Hills Facebook page and in your inbox. If you want to take a deep dive into the Comp Plan in the meantime, start here: https://ww.comppantlc.com/.

Betton Hills Neighborhood Association
P.O. Box 15612
Tallahassee, FL 32317-5612

Betton Hills Neighborhood Association

Time to Join or Renew Your BHNA Membership!

You can join or renew online (https://bettonhills.org/join/) or you can mail us a check. Our suggested dues are $10 a year. Dues are voluntary. Your dues to the Betton Hills Neighborhood Association (BHNA) are used to fund special events, the BHNA website, enhance our neighborhood parks and schools, and print and mail bi-annual newsletters, among other things. Not sure if you're a current member? Please check our BHNA website membership directory *(https://www.bettonhills.org/members/).* It is kept up-to-date as we receive credit card payments and process checks.

Please indicate your donation amounts:

2025 Dues Year: November 1, 2024, through October 31, 2025 $10: _____

Additional 2025 Donation: _____

2026 Dues Year: November 1, 2025, through October 31, 2026 $10: _____

Additional 2026 Donation: _____

Total Check: _____

Note: Additional Donations will be split between the Bellamy and Robertson project funds at the discretion of the BHNA board (see bettonhills.org/funds). If you do not specify a dues year, the BHNA will apply your funds to 2026.

Name: _____ Write how you want to be listed in the BHNA website membership directory (e.g., the "Smith Household" or "John and Jane Smith," etc.)

Betton Hills Street Address: _____ Zip Code: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Check here _____ if you want to volunteer to help with BHNA neighborhood projects or events.

Provide any comments here:

Mail this page with your check to: BHNA, P.O. Box 15612, Tallahassee, FL 32317