

The Magic Bike Tour

A HISTORY OF MINNEAPOLIS PARKS DEVELOPMENT



WOOHOO!

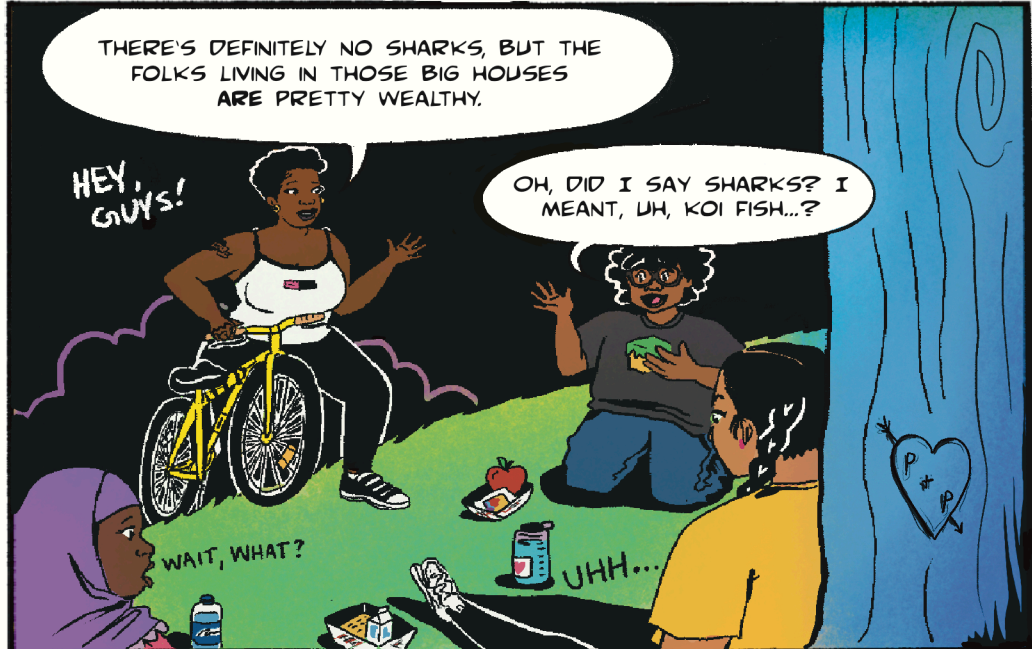
STORY BY PARKS AND POWER
ART BY HAWWA YOUNGMARK



ROXXY SAID WE'RE BIKING TO LAKE OF THE ISLES TODAY. THE PEOPLE OVER THERE ARE SO RICH, THEY GOT SHARKS IN THEIR POOLS!

IN UPTOWN? THAT LAKE IS SO BOUGIE...

SHARKS?! PFF! YOU'RE CRAZY. SAY WALLAH, BRO.



THERE'S DEFINITELY NO SHARKS, BUT THE FOLKS LIVING IN THOSE BIG HOUSES ARE PRETTY WEALTHY.

OH, DID I SAY SHARKS? I MEANT, UH, KOI FISH...?

HEY, GUYS!

WAIT, WHAT?

UHH...



WHY ARE THERE ALWAYS BIG HOUSES AROUND BIG PARKS?



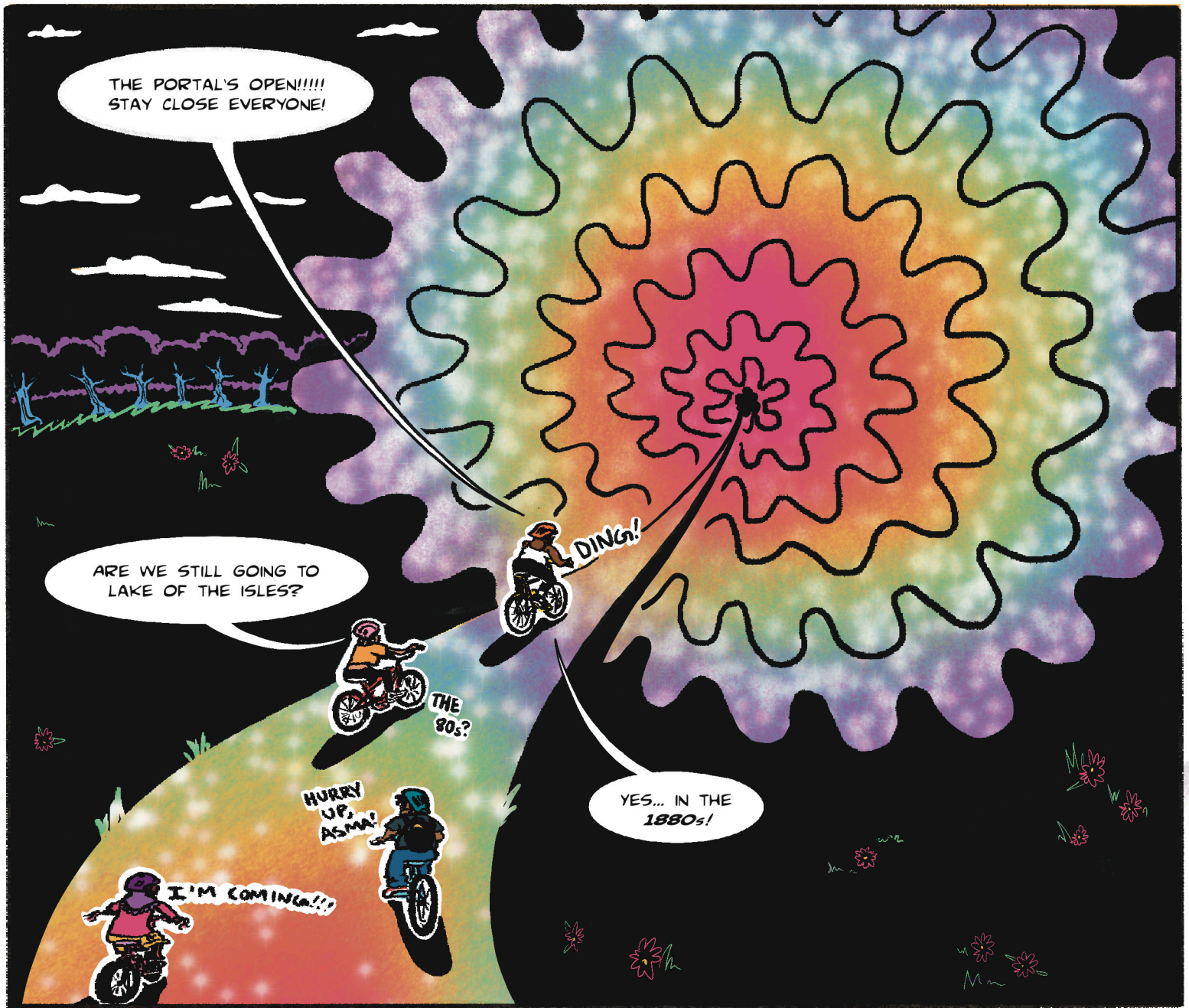
THAT'S A GREAT QUESTION, CECE. THERE'S DEFINITELY A CONNECTION WORTH CHECKING OUT. LET'S GO BACK AND EXPLORE THIS HISTORY TOGETHER!

HELMETS, EVERYONE!!!

YESSS!

YAAAAY!

SKO!



THE PORTAL'S OPEN!!!!
STAY CLOSE EVERYONE!

ARE WE STILL GOING TO
LAKE OF THE ISLES?

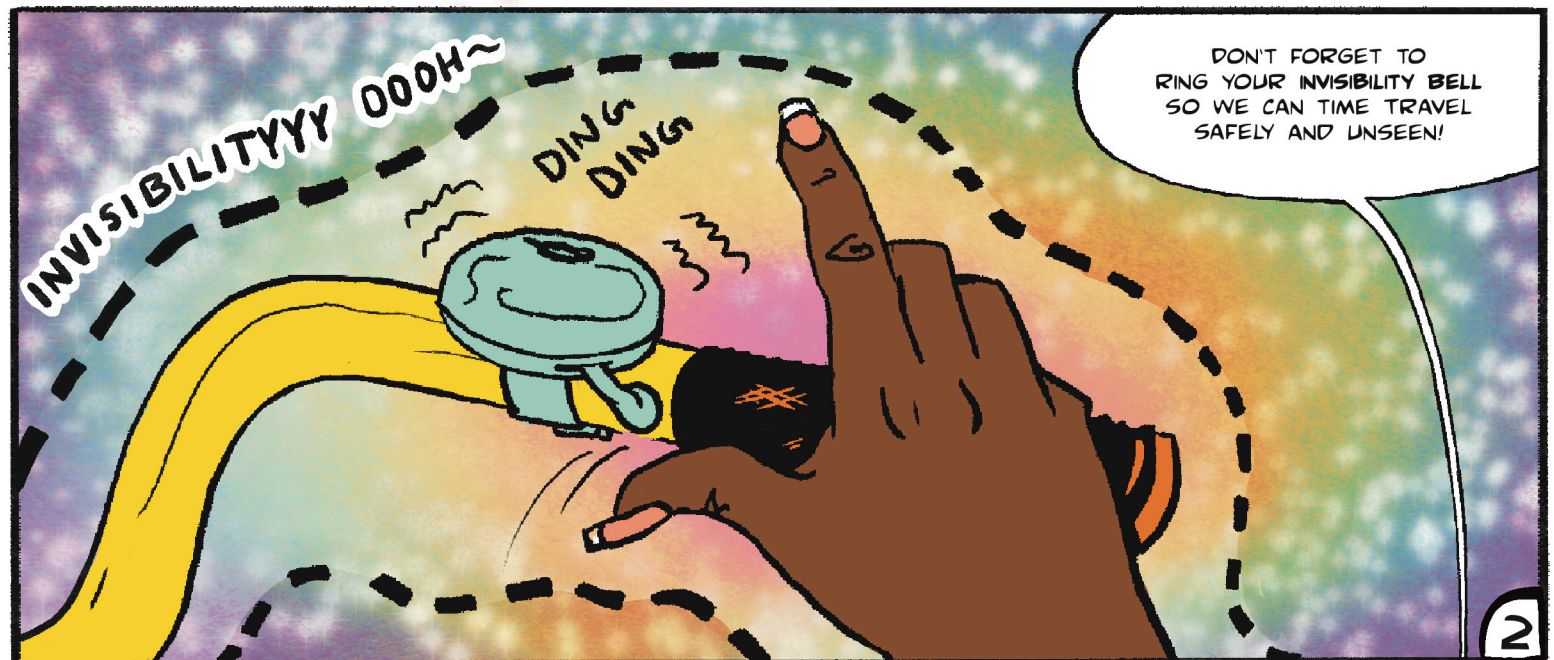
DING!

THE
80s?

HURRY
UP,
ASMA!

I'M COMING!!!

YES... IN THE
1880s!



INVISIBILITYYY OOOH~

DING
DING

DON'T FORGET TO
RING YOUR INVISIBILITY BELL
SO WE CAN TIME TRAVEL
SAFELY AND UNSEEN!

LAKE OF THE ISLES, 1880s

WE MADE IT! THIS IS LAKE OF THE ISLES IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY BEFORE THE CITY DEVELOPED IT INTO A PARK. WHAT DO Y'ALL SEE?

THERE'S LESS MANSIONS! AND THE GRASS IS SO TALL!

WHOA THE GRASS IS TALL!

THIS IS UPTOWN??

IT'S WET!

I LIKE IT!

WOW, IT'S BEAUTIFUL!

WHERE DID OUR HELMETS GO?

IT IS BEAUTIFUL, HUH? AND GOOD OBSERVATIONS! THIS AREA WAS ORIGINALLY A SWAMP, HENCE THE WETLAND AND TALL GRASS.

AND, YES, DEFINITELY LESS MANSIONS OR HOUSES AROUND THE LAKE YET. BUT, THIS IS STOLEN DAKOTA LAND, SO THERE USED TO BE HOMES HERE BEFORE THE SETTLERS CAME. THE ORIGINAL DAKOTA NAME FOR THIS BODY OF WATER IS WITA TOPA, OR "FOUR ISLANDS".

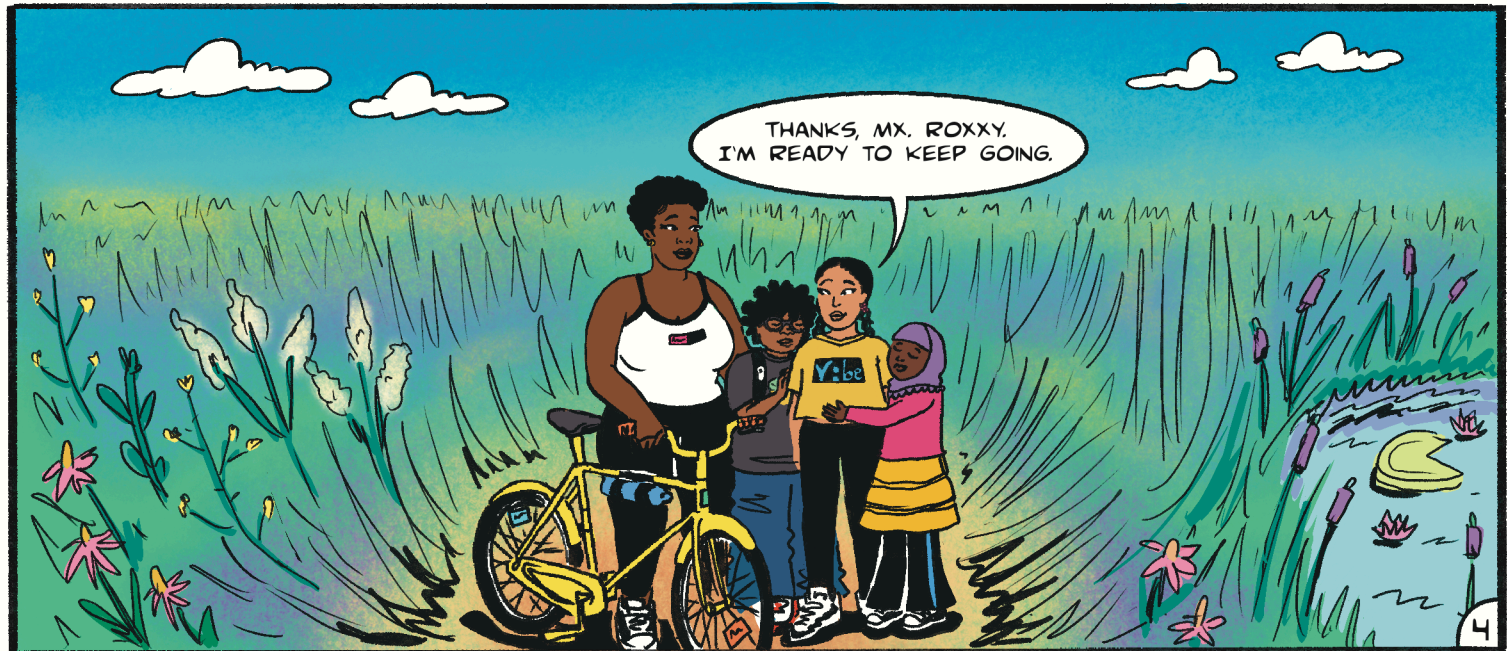
SPEAKING OF SETTLERS, WHAT ARE THOSE WHITE GUYS DOING?

THEY'RE DREDGING THE LANDSCAPE. PEOPLE USED TO BE SCARED OF SWAMPS. THEY THOUGHT SWAMPS CAUSED DISEASES, EVEN THOUGH, IN REALITY, THEY CLEAN OUR WATER AND ARE HOME TO A LOT OF FISH AND BIRDS. AND SWAMPLAND HELPS CONTROL FLOODING!



SWAMPS CAN BE USED TO CONTROL FLOODING? NO WAY! THAT SEEMS LIKE A GOOD THING. BUT, I GUESS IT WOULD BE HARD TO BUILD A PARK ON A SWAMP..

EXACTLY. AFTER THE FORCED MIGRATION AND REMOVAL OF DAKOTA FAMILIES FROM THIS AREA SETTLERS QUICKLY LEARNED NOT ONLY HOW IMPORTANT GREEN SPACE IS TO OUR COMMUNAL HEALTH, SOMETHING INDIGENOUS PEOPLE HAD BEEN KNOWN, BUT ALSO THE ENORMOUS FINANCIAL BENEFIT OF HAVING LAND LIKE THIS.





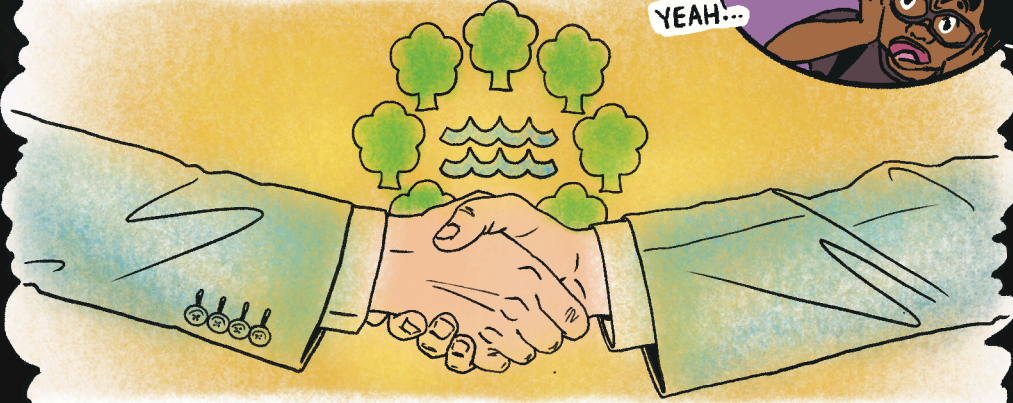
DEFINITELY! BUT, NOT ONLY THAT, SETTLERS WHO HAD STOLEN LAND FURTHER WEST FELT THAT HAVING METROPOLISES "TAMED" THE WILDNESS OF THE LAND AND INVITED DIFFERENT INDUSTRIES TO SETTLE THERE AS WELL.



IN 1883, THESE MEN FORMED WHAT IS NOW CALLED THE MINNEAPOLIS PARK AND RECREATION BOARD, WITH CHARLES LORING AS ITS FIRST PRESIDENT.



YES, LIKE THE GRAIN INDUSTRY! CHANGING THE LAND AND MAKING IT PUBLIC WAS A COMMON PRACTICE. IT LEGITIMIZED CITIES AS COOL METROPOLISES AND INVITED BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT TO THE CITY, SO BUILDING PARKS WAS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THIS PROCESS.



MPRB WAS GIVEN THE AUTHORITY TO BUY AND DEVELOP LAND, TAX RESIDENTS TO PAY FOR PARKS, AND EVEN TO RUN THEIR OWN POLICE FORCE. "TAMING" AND DEVELOPING THE NATURAL LANDSCAPE WAS PART OF THIS PROCESS.



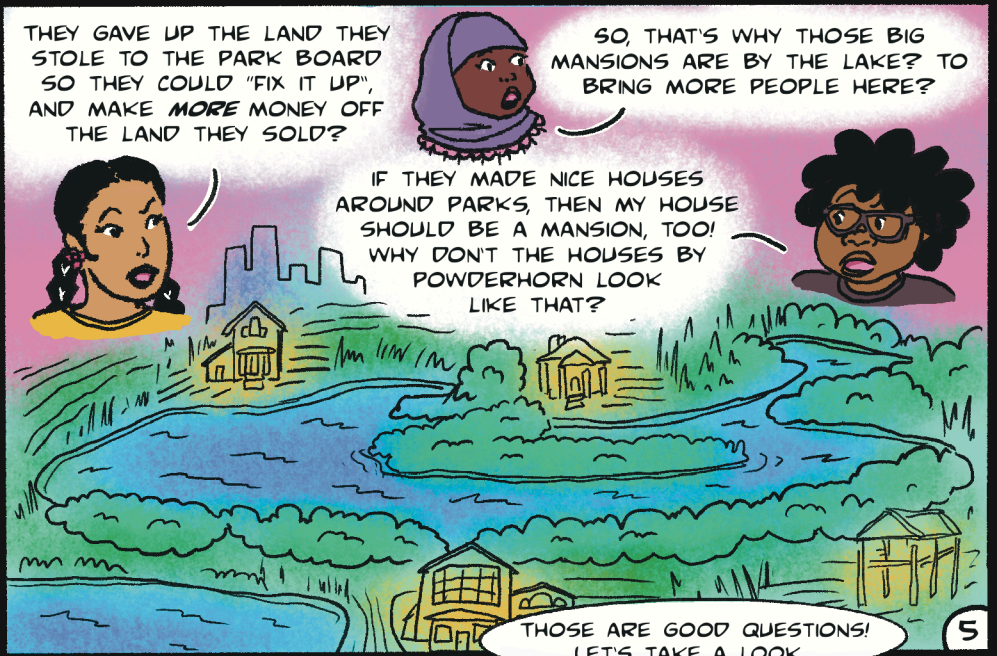
YEAH... GETTING RID OF THE SWAMP MADE THE LAND MORE DESIRABLE FOR THE WEALTHY UPPER CLASS, WHO WERE MORE THAN WILLING TO PAY TO LIVE THERE.



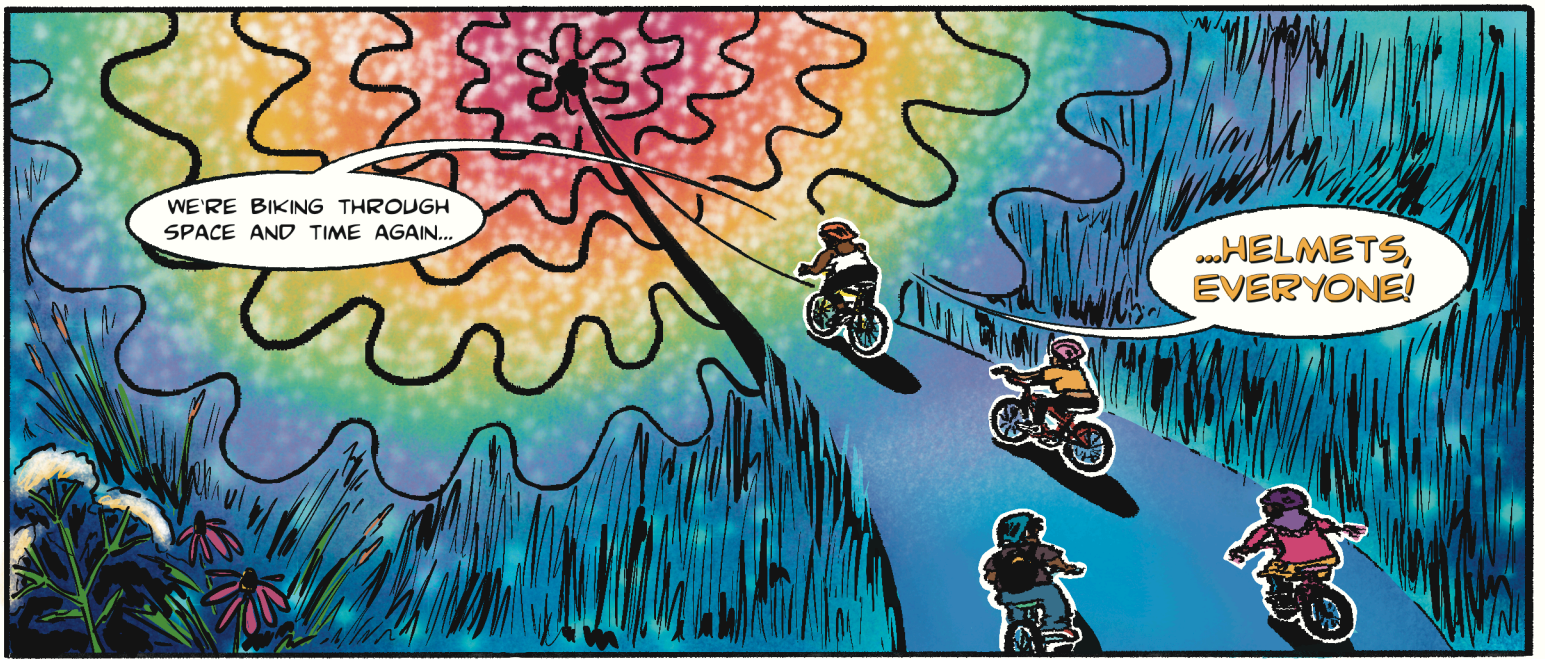
THEY GAVE UP THE LAND THEY STOLE TO THE PARK BOARD SO THEY COULD "FIX IT UP", AND MAKE MORE MONEY OFF THE LAND THEY SOLD?

SO, THAT'S WHY THOSE BIG MANSIONS ARE BY THE LAKE? TO BRING MORE PEOPLE HERE?

IF THEY MADE NICE HOUSES AROUND PARKS, THEN MY HOUSE SHOULD BE A MANSION, TOO! WHY DON'T THE HOUSES BY POWDERHORN LOOK LIKE THAT?

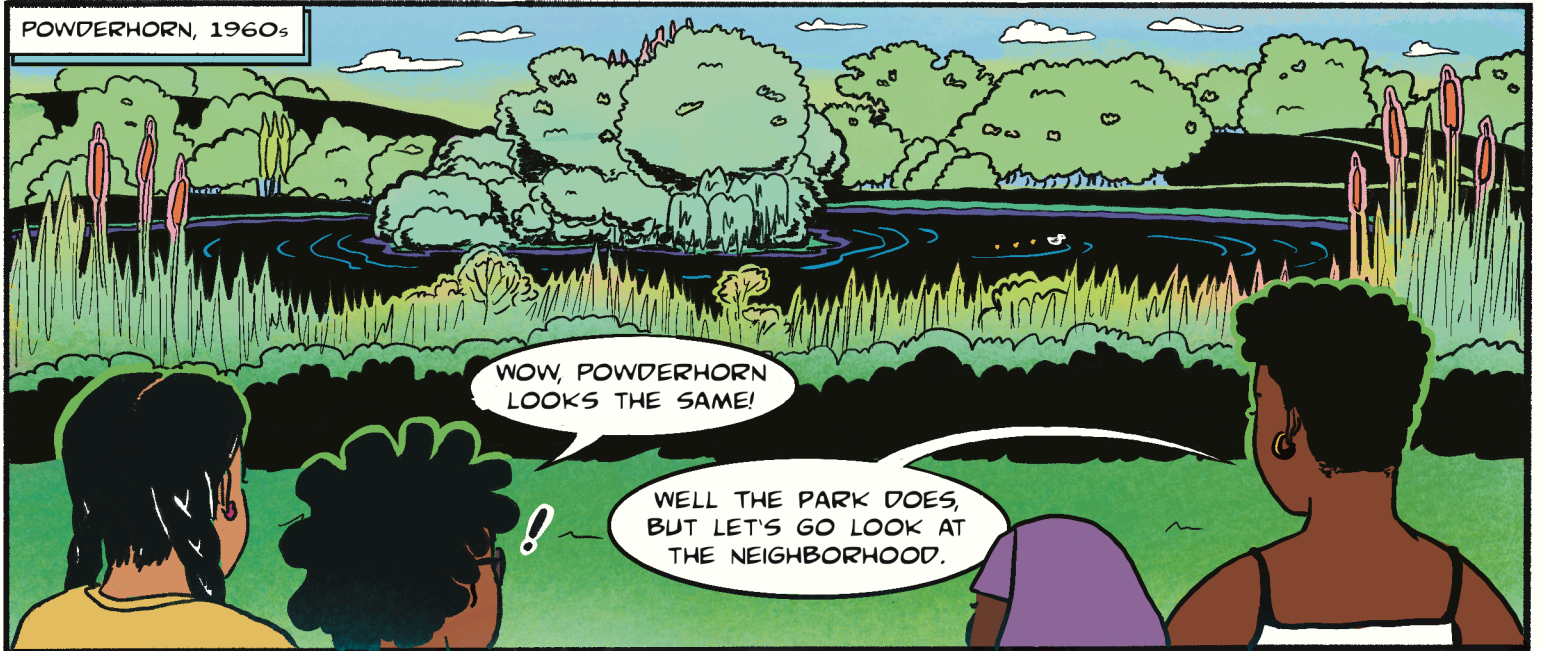


THOSE ARE GOOD QUESTIONS! LET'S TAKE A LOOK...



WE'RE BIKING THROUGH SPACE AND TIME AGAIN...

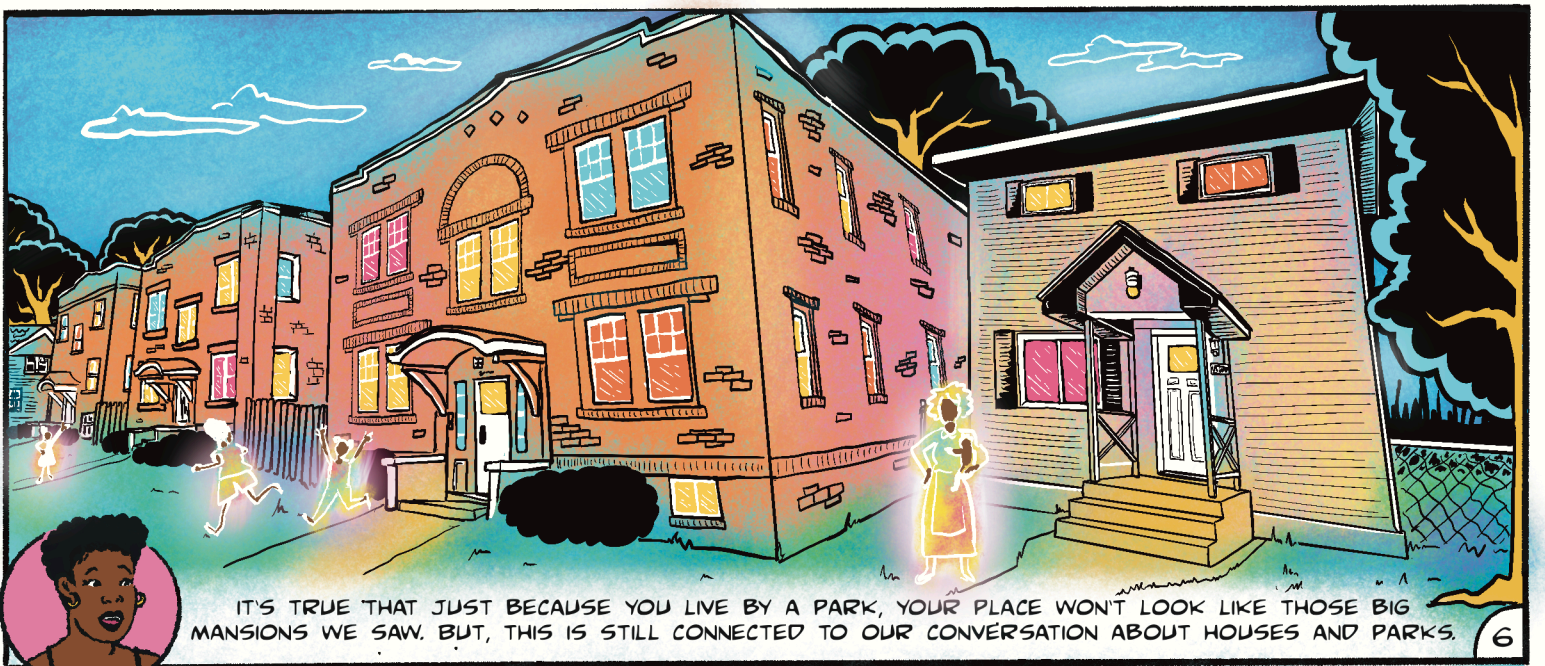
...HELMETS, EVERYONE!



POWDERHORN, 1960s

WOW, POWDERHORN LOOKS THE SAME!

WELL THE PARK DOES, BUT LET'S GO LOOK AT THE NEIGHBORHOOD.



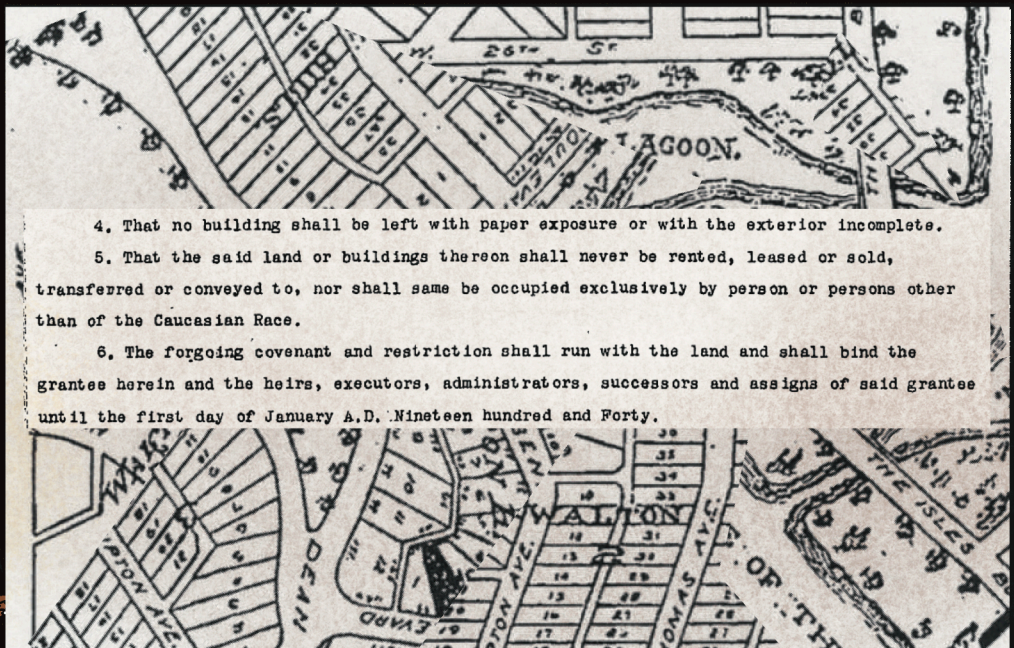
IT'S TRUE THAT JUST BECAUSE YOU LIVE BY A PARK, YOUR PLACE WON'T LOOK LIKE THOSE BIG MANSIONS WE SAW. BUT, THIS IS STILL CONNECTED TO OUR CONVERSATION ABOUT HOUSES AND PARKS.

YOU SEE, WHEN THE PARKS WERE CREATED, LIKE LAKE OF THE ISLES, THEY WERE FOR THE WHITE AND WEALTHY. IN FACT, THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REAL ESTATE BOARD MADE SURE THAT SOME NEIGHBORHOODS WERE BUILT EXCLUSIVELY FOR THESE PEOPLE.

DURING THIS TIME, REAL ESTATE DEVELOPERS USED LANGUAGE IN THE DEEDS FOR THE HOUSES NEAR THOSE PARKS THAT EXPLICITLY SAID THE OWNERS COULD NEVER SELL TO ANYONE WHO WAS BLACK, INDIGENOUS, AN IMMIGRANT, OR JEWISH.

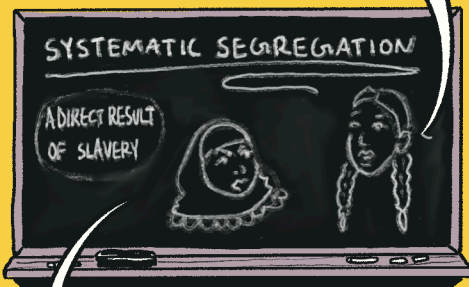


YES KWEEEM, TEACH US!



4. That no building shall be left with paper exposure or with the exterior incomplete.
 5. That the said land or buildings thereon shall never be rented, leased or sold, transferred or conveyed to, nor shall same be occupied exclusively by person or persons other than of the Caucasian Race.
 6. The forgoing covenant and restriction shall run with the land and shall bind the grantees herein and the heirs, executors, administrators, successors and assigns of said grantee until the first day of January A.D. Nineteen hundred and Forty.

I HEARD ABOUT THIS FROM MY GEOGRAPHY CLASS. THEY'RE CALLED RACIAL COVENANTS. THE SUPREME COURT MADE THAT ILLEGAL IN 1968! BUT, FOR 51 YEARS THE GOVERNMENT KNEW THIS WAS HAPPENING AND WAS COOL WITH IT!



SO, WE WOULDN'T BE ALLOWED TO BUY THOSE HOUSES EVEN IF WE WERE RICH, TOO? THAT'S SO MESSED UP!

I STILL DON'T GET WHY SOME PARKS DON'T LOOK LIKE LAKE OF THE ISLES AND WHY THE HOUSES AROUND THEM AREN'T THE SAME.



RIGHT! REMEMBER HOW POPULAR THE LAKE WAS AND SO MANY PEOPLE WANTED TO LIVE AROUND IT? WELL, WHEN THE 20TH CENTURY HIT, ANOTHER DEVELOPER BY THE NAME OF JAMES T. ELWELL CREATED A LAW THAT REQUIRED PARK MONEY TO COME FROM A "SPECIAL TAX ASSESSMENT." THIS CREATED A FUNDING PROCESS THAT TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE POPULARITY OF THESE PARKS. ANYONE (WHITE) WHO COULD AFFORD TO LIVE AROUND THEM COULD, BUT WITH A PRICE.



"THIS WAS CALLED THE ELWELL LAW. IT REQUIRED THAT ANY PARK IMPROVEMENTS WOULD BE FUNDED BY TAXING NEARBY PROPERTY OWNERS. BECAUSE, EVENTUALLY, THE VALUE OF THEIR PROPERTY WOULD GO UP AS THE PARK GOT NICER."

James T. Elwell

SO, YOU'RE SAYING THAT IF YOU LIVED NEAR A PARK, YOU WOULD HAVE TO PAY MORE TAXES IF YOUR PARK IS REALLY NICE. BUT, WHAT ABOUT PEOPLE WHO CAN'T AFFORD MORE TAXES?

PEOPLE WHO COULDN'T PAY DIDN'T GET NICER PARKS...

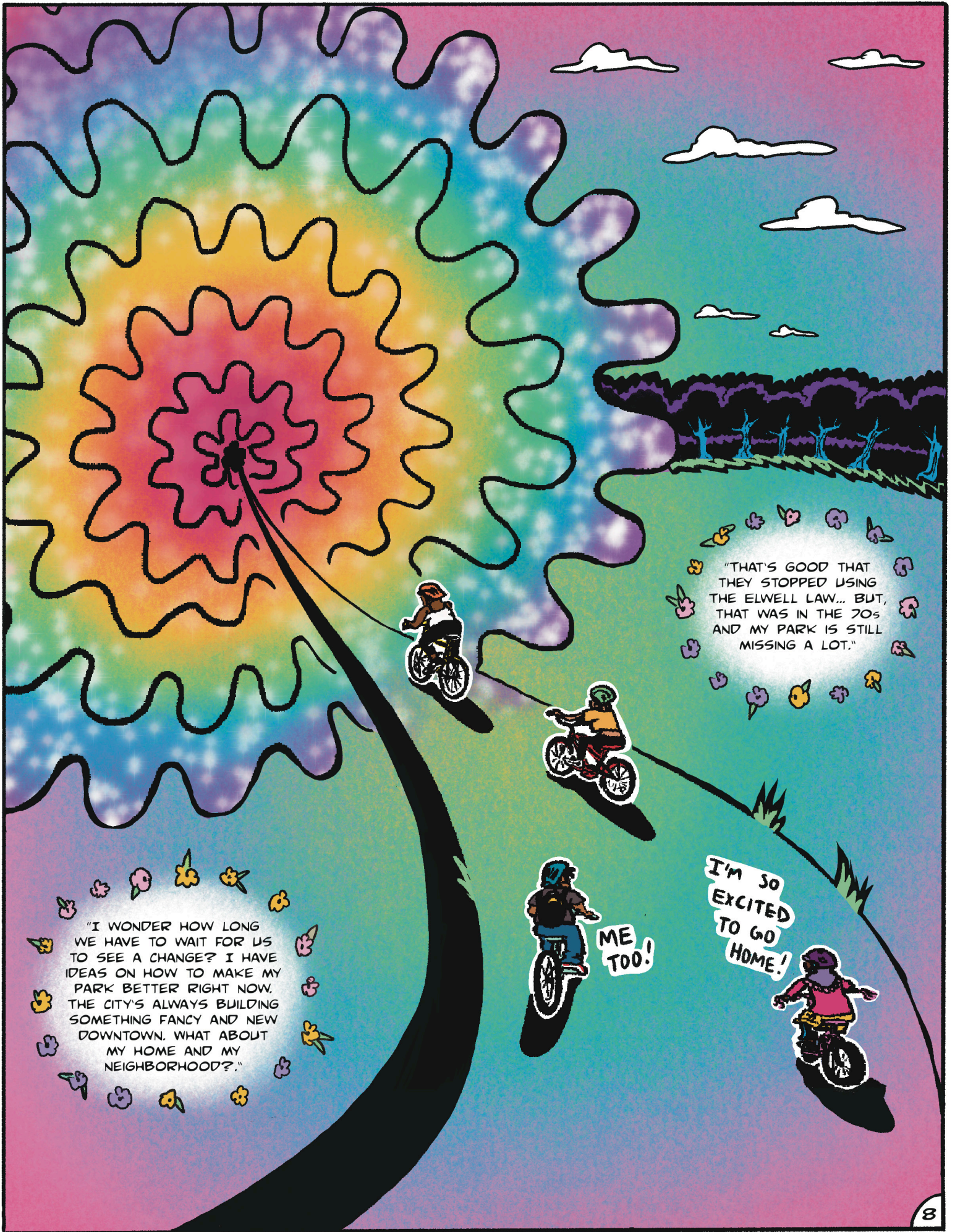


...AND BASED ON WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT RACIAL COVENANTS THAT MEANS GREEN, OPEN SPACES IN WORKING CLASS NEIGHBORHOODS WOULD HAVE NEVER GOTTEN THAT KIND OF INVESTMENT.

MY NEIGHBORHOOD USES OUR PARK ALL THE TIME. IT WOULD BE COOL IF WE COULD HAVE A SAY IN HOW OUR PARKS ARE INVESTED IN, INSTEAD OF THAT BEING A DECISION MADE FOR US. DO WE STILL USE THIS LAW?



NO, THE ELWELL LAW STOPPED BEING USED IN THE 1970S. BUT ITS LEGACY STILL HAS AN IMPACT ON OUR PARKS. THE PARK BOARD HAS TAKEN STEPS TO CORRECT THE LEGACY OF THIS LAW BY CREATING A BUDGET FOR IMPACTED PARKS

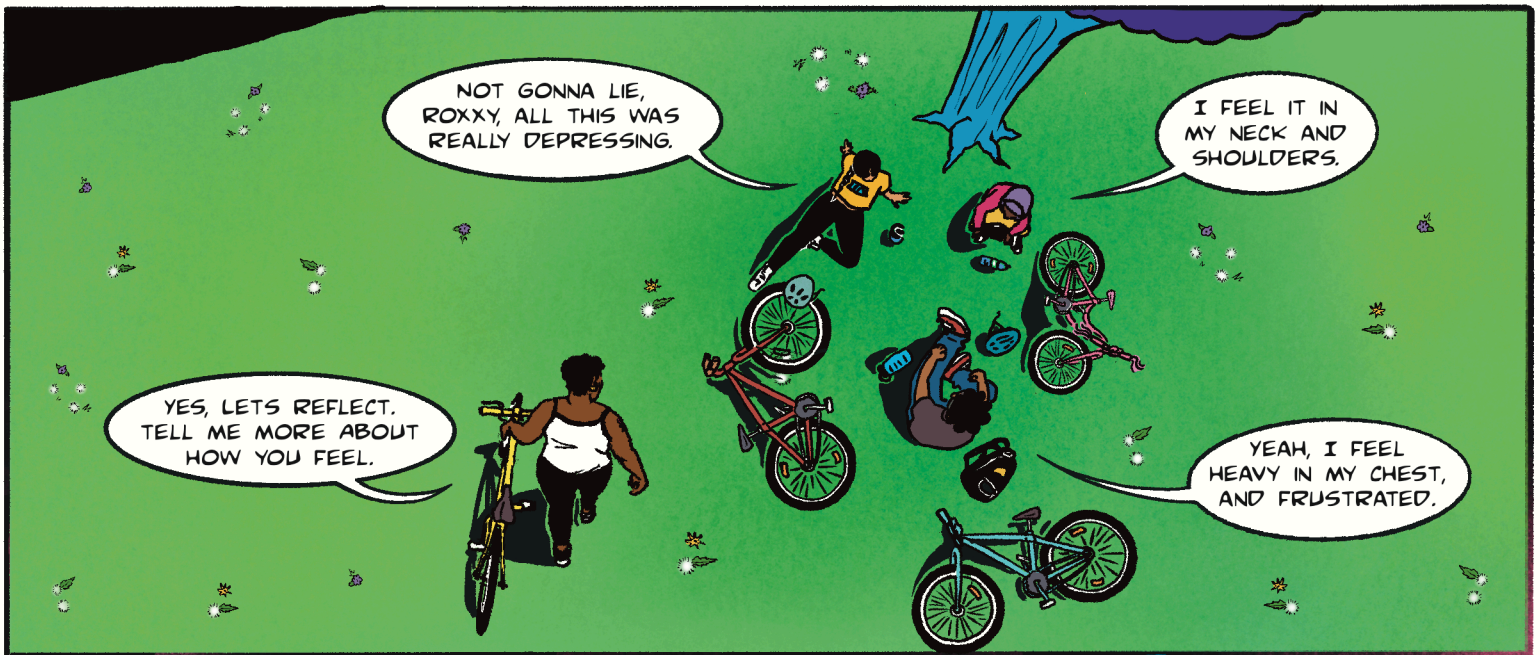


"I WONDER HOW LONG WE HAVE TO WAIT FOR US TO SEE A CHANGE? I HAVE IDEAS ON HOW TO MAKE MY PARK BETTER RIGHT NOW. THE CITY'S ALWAYS BUILDING SOMETHING FANCY AND NEW DOWNTOWN. WHAT ABOUT MY HOME AND MY NEIGHBORHOOD?"

"THAT'S GOOD THAT THEY STOPPED USING THE ELWELL LAW... BUT, THAT WAS IN THE 70s AND MY PARK IS STILL MISSING A LOT."

ME TOO!

I'M SO EXCITED TO GO HOME!

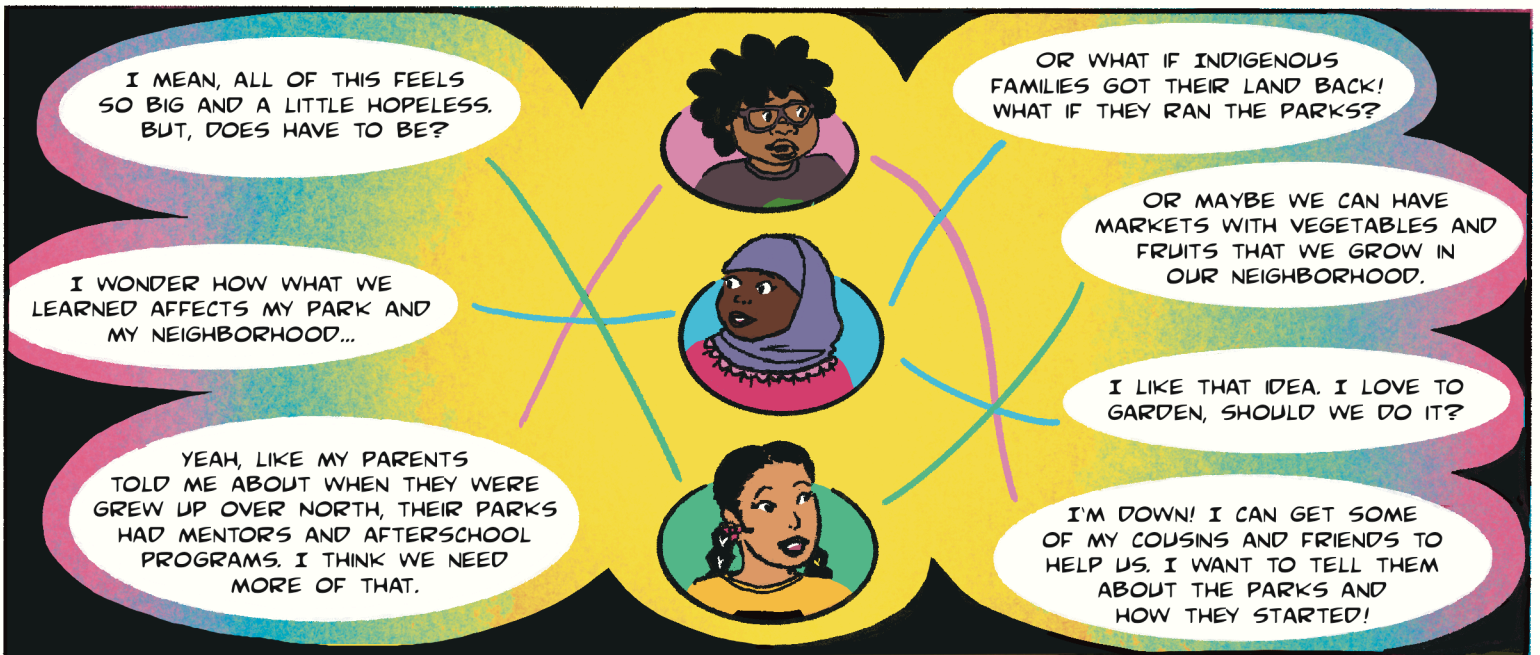


NOT GONNA LIE, ROXXY, ALL THIS WAS REALLY DEPRESSING.

I FEEL IT IN MY NECK AND SHOULDERS.

YES, LETS REFLECT. TELL ME MORE ABOUT HOW YOU FEEL.

YEAH, I FEEL HEAVY IN MY CHEST, AND FRUSTRATED.



I MEAN, ALL OF THIS FEELS SO BIG AND A LITTLE HOPELESS. BUT, DOES HAVE TO BE?

OR WHAT IF INDIGENOUS FAMILIES GOT THEIR LAND BACK! WHAT IF THEY RAN THE PARKS?

I WONDER HOW WHAT WE LEARNED AFFECTS MY PARK AND MY NEIGHBORHOOD...

OR MAYBE WE CAN HAVE MARKETS WITH VEGETABLES AND FRUITS THAT WE GROW IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD.

YEAH, LIKE MY PARENTS TOLD ME ABOUT WHEN THEY WERE GREW UP OVER NORTH, THEIR PARKS HAD MENTORS AND AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS. I THINK WE NEED MORE OF THAT.

I LIKE THAT IDEA. I LOVE TO GARDEN, SHOULD WE DO IT?

I'M DOWN! I CAN GET SOME OF MY COUSINS AND FRIENDS TO HELP US. I WANT TO TELL THEM ABOUT THE PARKS AND HOW THEY STARTED!



EVEN THOUGH THE HISTORY MAKES ME UPSET, IT FEELS IMPORTANT TO SHARE. I HAD NO IDEA THERE WAS SO MUCH HISTORY CONNECTED TO THE PARKS. IT MAKES ME FEEL LIKE I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

THANK YOU FOR SHOWING US MX.ROXXY, WHERE ARE WE GOING NEXT TIME?

I WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WITA TÓPA! WHY WAS IT CALLED 4 ISLANDS?

OUR NEXT TRIP IS A SURPRISE, BUT I THINK WE CAN START WITH THAT QUESTION... AT NEXT CLASSES

MAGICAL BIKE TOUR!

Rosxy

THEY/
THEM

- TEACHER
- LOVES TREES
- VEGAN



Cece

- ACTIVIST
- LOVES TO DRAW
- VIBE READER



SHE/
THEY

Nasir

HE/
HIM

- GAMER
- LOVES FROGS
- TRYING OUT SKATEBOARDING



Asma

SHE/
HER

- ♥ BASKETBALL FAN
- ♥ LOVES CHOCOLATE
- ♥ LISTENS TO KPOP



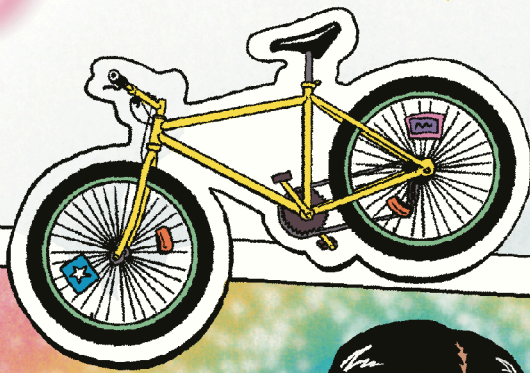
Thanks for

WANT TO KNOW MORE?
CHECK US OUT AT WWW.HOPE-COMMUNITY.ORG
TO LEARN ABOUT THE WORK WE DO IN OUR
PARKS AND POWER PROGRAM!

OR YOU CAN FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA
[@PARKSANDPOWER](https://www.instagram.com/parksandpower)



Reading!



Asma, CeCe, & Nasir ♥
Mr. Roxxy's Magic Bike Club, Summer '24



NOTES

- PAGE 3, PANEL 2, "WÍTA TÓPA"

"DAKOTA LAND MAP" THE ART OF MARLENA MYLES, 20 DEC. 2022, MARLENAMYLES/PROJECT/DAKOTA-LAND-MAP/.

- PAGE 3, PANEL 3, "THEY'RE DREDGING THE LANDSCAPE."

"LAKE OF THE ISLES PARK." MINNEAPOLIS PARK & RECREATION BOARD, 15 DEC. 2022, WWW.MINNEAPOLISPARKS.ORG/PARKS-DESTINATIONS/PARKS-LAKES/LAKE_OF_THE_ISLES_PARK/

- PAGE 3, PANEL 3, "... (SWAMPS) CLEAN OUR WATER AND ARE HOME TO A LOT OF FISH AND BIRDS. AND SWAMPLAND HELPS CONTROL FLOODING!"

"WHY ARE WETLANDS IMPORTANT?" NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, WWW.NPS.GOV/SUBJECTS/WETLANDS/. ACCESSED SUMMER 2023.

- PAGE 3, PANEL 4, "AFTER THE FORCED MIGRATION AND REMOVAL OF DAKOTA FAMILIES FROM THIS AREA..."

"DAKOTA OF MINNESOTA." DAKOTA WICOHAN, DAKOTAWICOHAN.ORG/DAKOTA-OF-MINNESOTA-HISTORY/. ACCESSED SUMMER 2023.

- PAGE 5, PANEL 2, "...HAVING A PUBLIC PARK ESTABLISHED A PLACE AS A 'REAL CITY.'"

TAYLOR, D. E. 1999. "CENTRAL PARK AS A MODEL FOR SOCIAL CONTROL: URBAN PARKS, SOCIAL CLASS AND LEISURE BEHAVIOR IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA." JOURNAL OF LEISURE RESEARCH 31:420-477

- PAGE 5, PANEL 4, "CHANGING THE LAND AND MAKING IT PUBLIC WAS A COMMON PRACTICE."

WALKER, REBECCA. 2023. "GREEN SPACES, WHITE FACES: WHITE SUPREMACY AND THE MINNEAPOLIS PARK AND RECREATION BOARD," 1910-1953 ANNALS OF AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF GEOGRAPHERS: 12.

- PAGE 5, PANEL 5, "MPRB WAS GIVEN THE AUTHORITY TO BUY AND DEVELOP LAND, TAX RESIDENTS TO PAY FOR PARKS, AND EVEN TO RUN THEIR OWN POLICE FORCE."

"PARK POLICE & SAFETY." MINNEAPOLIS PARK & RECREATION BOARD, 22 DEC. 2023, WWW.MINNEAPOLISPARKS.ORG/PARK-CARE-IMPROVEMENTS/PARK_POLICE__SAFETY/.

- PAGE 5, PANEL 7, "THEY GAVE UP THE LAND THEY STOLE TO THE PARK BOARD SO THEY COULD 'FIX IT UP,' AND MAKE MORE MONEY OFF THE LAND THEY SOLD?"

WALKER, REBECCA. 2023. "GREEN SPACES, WHITE FACES: WHITE SUPREMACY AND THE MINNEAPOLIS PARK AND RECREATION BOARD," 1910-1953. ANNALS OF AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF GEOGRAPHERS; 13.

- PAGE 7, PANEL 1, "THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REAL ESTATE BOARD MADE SURE THAT SOME NEIGHBORHOODS WERE BUILT EXCLUSIVELY FOR THESE PEOPLE (WHITE AND WEALTHY)."

"HISTORY." THE JUST DEEDS PROJECT, 10 APR. 2023, JUSTDEEDS.ORG/HISTORY/.

- PAGE 7, PANEL 2, IMAGE EXAMPLE OF RACIAL COVENANT

"WHAT IS A COVENANT?" WHAT IS A COVENANT? | MAPPING PREJUDICE, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, MAPPINGPREJUDICE.UMN.EDU/RACIAL-COVENANTS/WHAT-IS-A-COVENANT. ACCESSED 2023.

- PAGE 7, PANEL 5, "THIS WAS CALLED THE ELWELL LAW."

MINNEAPOLIS PARK & RECREATION BOARD ARCHIVES. "HISTORY OF THE ELWELL LAW." ARCGIS STORYMAPS, ESRI, 22 DEC. 2023, STORYMAPS.ARCGIS.COM/STORIES/B9B4AD2404B54628AC300B44E0C96635.



PARKS & POWER IS A GRASSROOTS, COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVE TO STRIVE TOWARDS RACIAL, GENDER, AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE IN THE MINNEAPOLIS PARKS SYSTEM.

A HOPE COMMUNITY CENTER PROGRAM, PARKS & POWER IS NOW LEADING A CITY-WIDE CAMPAIGN WITH ALLIES IN SEVERAL MINNEAPOLIS PARKS FOCUSED ON BRINGING A RACIAL EQUITY ANALYSIS TO HOW PARK RESOURCES ARE ALLOCATED.



@PARKSANDPOWER



HAWWA YOUNGMARK, AKA HAWWABE, (THEY/SHE) IS A BLACK MUSLIM CARTOONIST AND ILLUSTRATOR BASED IN NORTH MINNEAPOLIS. HAWWA HAS BEEN MAKING COMICS SINCE 2019 AND SPECIALIZES IN SELF-PUBLISHING AND ZINE-MAKING. THEY ALSO ENJOY SLEEPING, COOKING, LEARNING NEW LANGUAGES, AND WATCHING FANDOM VIDEO ESSAYS.



WWW.HAWWABECOMICS.COM



