

Tennessee Town NIA General Membership Meeting
6:30 p.m., Monday; November 9, 2020
Multipurpose Room, Faith Temple Church, 1162 SW Lincoln

The wearing of facial masks will be required for this meeting to help to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Seating will be socially distanced.

TENTATIVE AGENDA:

- I. Welcome, Recognition of Veteran's Day on Nov. 11
- II. Adoption of Agenda (vote)
- III. Approval of September 14, 2020 General Membership Meeting Minutes (vote; pgs. 2-3 of this meeting packet)
- IV. Treasurer's Reports (vote; pg. 4)
- V. Expenditure of 2020 NIA Support Budget Funds, 2020 NIA Holiday Party Discussion (vote)
- VI. Continuation of SORT Grant, 2021-2025 and 2021 Consolidated Plan Updates (HUD, local funds)
- VII. Appointment of Topeka Housing Study Implementation Committee Report (pgs. 5-9)
- VIII. Grassroots Housing Initiatives Work Group Report, "DREAMS" Initiative: (pgs. 9-10) Karen Hiller
- IX. Operation Food Secure Update
- X. City Council, Property Maintenance (Code Compliance), Citizens Advisory Council (Ass'n of City's NIAs) Reports; International Academy, Topeka JUMP, Momentum 2022 Updates
- XI. Old Business:
 - A. Grocery Oasis Update
 - B. Lane Garden Grants Update
- XII. New Business:
 - A.
- XIII. Kudos:
 - A. Giving Thanks in the Month of Thanksgiving
- XIV. Announcements:
 - A. Neighborhood Relations Programs: (1) *Emergency Program*: Intended to help homeowners make repairs to immediate health or safety hazards, (2) *Accessibility Program*: Provides modifications to residential homes for owners or tenants with disabilities. For more info. or to apply, please call 785-368-3711.
 - B. TOTO first-time homebuyers' assistance program: The program helps low-income families purchase their first home through HUD funding. The program helps Topeka residents become homeowners by providing education, financing, and home rehabilitation by partnering with Housing and Credit Counseling Inc. For more info., please call 785-234-0217, ext. 317.
 - C. Habitat's Aging in Place Program: Available to individuals living in Shawnee County, age 60 or older, living at or below 60% of the area median income. Must be the home's owner and currently residing in the home. Addresses basic repairs on homes, which reduces the need for critical repairs and enables seniors to live autonomously and with dignity in their homes. Shawnee County Advocacy Council on Aging partnership, business partners and community donors make program possible. To apply, please call Habitat at 785-234-4322.
 - D. Next Meeting: 6:30 p.m., Mon., January 11, 2021, Location to be Announced
- XV. Adjournment

Tennessee Town on the Internet! Website: <http://tenntownnia.weebly.com> (all NIA meetings, activities posted) •
Nextdoor Tennessee Town: https://tennesseetown.nextdoor.com/news_feed/ • E-Mail: tenntown@yahoo.com

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Minutes of September 14, 2020 General Membership Meeting

Attendees: President Michael Bell, Vice President Pat DeLapp, Secretary-Treasurer Sandy Lassiter, Don Fortin, Emma Ray, Rachelle Jones, Leroy Wedeking, Jeff Williams, Janlyn Nesbett-Tucker, Karen Hiller.

Bell called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda: *Don Fortin moved approval of the agenda as presented. Leroy Wedeking seconded the motion. The motion was approved.*

Approval of July 13, 2020 NIA General Membership Meeting Minutes: *Fortin moved approval of the March 9, 2020 NIA general membership meeting minutes as presented. Pat DeLapp seconded the amended motion. The amended motion was approved.*

Treasurer's Reports: *Fortin moved approval of the NIA Operations/Communications report and the Envista free-will donations report as presented. Emma Ray seconded the motion. The motion was approved.*

Fall Neighborhood Clean Up: Bell reminded attendees about the NIA neighborhood clean up scheduled for Fri., Oct. 23 through Sun., Oct. 25.

Continuation of SORT Grant, 2021-2025 and 2021 Consolidated Plan Updates (HUD, local funds); Tennessee Town's 2017-2019 SORT Grant Assessment Report: Discussion occurred on the continuation of the SORT grant program and the 120-day delay on city council action on the 5-year and 1-year Consolidated Plans.

Bell said the deadline for 2021 SORT applications was Sep. 9. Tennessee Town had already decided not to apply for this cycle.

Appointment of Topeka Housing Study Implementation Committee, First Meeting Report: Bell said the City had appointed a committee to meet to discuss how to implement the housing study that was completed earlier this year. This new committee included 4 neighborhood representatives (Bell, Valley Park NIA President Susan McClacherty, CAC At-Large Member Margo Rangel and CAC Chair James Prout, who had served as the lone neighborhood representative on the initial housing study committee).

The following topics were the major discussion points of the 1st meeting:

- Affordable Housing Trust Fund: convene a committee, establish application criteria, set goals, identify funding.
- Weatherization: work with Community Action, Inc. and Habitat.
- 2nd Chance Tenancy (now called Take 2 Tenancy): helping to rehabilitate challenged renters; players include Housing and Credit Counseling, Inc., Community Action, Shawnee County Landlords' Association.
- Aging in Place: helping seniors to take care of their homes; Habitat.
- Rehab Assistance: generally offered, income based.
- Land Banking: amassing parcels of property for future development; planning department, players include Cornerstone of Topeka, Inc., Habitat.
- Downtown Housing: market-rate units; I asked that affordable housing in downtown-adjacent neighborhoods be included.

Grassroots Housing Initiatives Work Group Report: Karen Hiller gave the report. She said a grassroots group, the Neighborhood Initiatives Work Group, had been formed to discuss the city's affordable housing study and its implementation, as well as the HUD-funded Consolidated Plan after both had been put on hold. Those discussions would be from the viewpoint of those who actually represent low- to moderate-income people and neighborhoods.

City Council: See Hiller's comments above.

Property Maintenance: There was no report.

Citizens Advisory Council: Fortin gave the report. He spoke on technical issues affecting the CAC. He said Planning and Development Director Bill Fiander had presented at the Sep. 2 CAC meeting on the housing study implementation committee and that a presentation occurred at that meeting on Operation Food Secure, which is distributing free food to those in need. A Tennessee Town distribution had been scheduled the same evening as this NIA meeting.

International Academy: Sandy Lassiter gave the report. She said things were going well.

Topeka JUMP, Momentum 2022 Updates: Joyce Revely was unable to attend the meeting.

Old Business: Lane Garden Update: Bell said that he had contacted the National Recreation and Parks Association about a possible partnership to acquire and make improvements at Lane Garden.

Old Business: Grocery Oasis Update: Bell said the group had formed a partnership with the Community Resources Council for it to act as the group's 501c(3) for fundraising and legal purposes.

Old Business: 12th Street Update: Bell said trees located on private property at Lane Chapel Church, 1200 SW Lane, had been mistakenly removed by Evergy. He said Pastor Rodney McDuffie had informed him that Evergy was going to compensate the church for the mistake.

New Business: Abandoned Tires Collection Update: DeLapp updated attendees on his latest efforts to collect abandoned tires.

New Business: Citywide Discussions on Police Reforms Update: Bell said city residents had testified in person and via Zoom at a special city council meeting devoted to police reforms held on Aug. 25. The families of police officers and those with concerns about law enforcement were discussed.

New Business: CDC's National COVID-19 Renter Eviction Moratorium Report: Information was shared in the meeting packet on the renter eviction moratorium.

New Business: Cancellation of 2020 National Night Out Against Crime Event Report: Bell said SafeStreets Judy Wilson had announced that because of COVID the 2020 National Night Out Against Crime event had been cancelled.

New Business: Topeka Public Works Director Jason Peek Resigns Report: Bell said the resignation might mean another opportunity for the NIA to approach public works about pedestrian midblock lighting in the neighborhood.

Kudos: Bell recognized the power of grassroots organizing through groups like NIAs, the Grocery Oasis and the Housing Initiatives Work Group.

Announcements: Neighborhood Relations' programming, Habitat's Aging in Place program listed.

Next Meeting: 6:30 p.m., Nov. 9, 2020, multipurpose room, Faith Temple Church, 1162 SW Lincoln.

Adjournment: *Jeff Williams moved adjournment. Rachelle Jones seconded the motion. The motion was approved.*

The meeting adjourned at 8:59 p.m.

Tennessee Town NIA General Membership Meeting; 6:30 p.m., Monday, November 9, 2020
Buchanan Center Conference Room, 1195 SW Buchanan

Treasurer's Report for November 9, 2020 General Membership Meeting:

2020 Operations/Communications Budget

Tennessee Town NIA 2019 Operations and Communications Budget:				
Date	Piece Count	Transaction Type	Withdrawal	Balance
1-1-20	►	►	►	\$983.02
6-1-20	1	State Nonprofit Fee	\$40.00	\$943.02
6-22-20	302	Printing of Meeting Notice Cards	\$28.10	\$914.92
6-22-20	302	Postage for Meeting Notice Cards	\$78.52	\$836.40
8-24-20	302	Printing of Meeting Notice Cards	\$28.10	\$808.30
8-24-20	302	Postage for Meeting Notice Cards	\$78.52	\$729.78
10-6-20	302	Printing of Meeting Notice Cards: Clean Up	\$28.10	\$701.68
10-6-20	302	Postage for Meeting Notice Cards: Clean Up	\$78.52	\$623.16
10-19-20	302	Printing of Meeting Notice Cards	\$28.10	\$595.06
10-19-20	302	Postage for Meeting Notice Cards	\$78.52	\$516.54
TOTALS:	►	►	\$466.48	\$516.54

Treasurer's Report for November 9, 2020 General Membership Meeting: Envista Account

Tennessee Town NIA 2016-2019 Envista Account:			
Date	Transaction Type	Deposit/Withdrawal	Balance
11-12-18	Balance Check	None	\$139.47
11-1-18, 12-1-18, 1-1-19, 2-1-19, 3-1-19, 4-1-19, 5-1-19, 6-1-19, 7-1-19, 8-1-19, 9-1-19, 10-1-19, 11-1-19, 12-1-19, 1-1-20, 2-1-20, 3-1-20, 4-1-20, 5-1-20, 6-1-20, 7-1-20, 8-1-20, 9-1-20, 10-1-20, 11-1-20	Balance Checks: Dividend of \$0.01 paid each time	Deposit	\$139.72
1-15-20	Cash Donation: Michael Bell (to keep account open)	Deposit	\$5.00
TOTALS:	►	►	\$144.72**

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Appointment of Topeka Housing Study Implementation Committee, First Meeting Report:

S C O P E 8/24/2020

Topeka Housing Study Implementation Plan Governing Body motion ...adopt the study as an invaluable collection of data and strategy options, and request the City Manager work with citizens, staff, providers and Council to draft a starting implementation plan in 120 days

Purpose Develop an action plan for 2021 that kick-starts recommendations of the adopted "Citywide Housing Market Study and Strategy" in time to report back to the Governing Body by November 17, 2020.

Scope

- Time period => Jan-Dec 2021
- Primary Focus => Affordable Housing actions that implement Study
- Secondary Focus => Market Rate Housing actions that implement Study
- Process o Committee meetings
 - #1 – determine scope, tactics, and metric types
 - #2 – determine tactic action plans, and overall metrics
 - #3 – review final document o Public engagement o Survey/Data collection

Which short-term tactics should be activated in the next 12 months? (Tier A)

Actions/Timelines

- Who is accountable? Lead? Supp Support?

Which short-term tactics should we be planning for activation in the next 12 months? (Tier B)

Actions/Timelines

- Who is accountable? Lead? Support?

How do we track and evaluate progress of action plan?

- Type of Metrics/Targets
 - Investment
 - Basic
 - Advanced

Who Provides Oversight?

When do we update?

Committee Make-Up

- Housing Study Steering Committee
- Housing Study Sponsors
- Affordable Housing Providers
- Housing Partners
- Neighborhood Representatives
- City Council City Staff

P R I O R I T I Z A T I O N: 8/24/2020

New and Expanded Efforts: Short Term: 1-3 yrs.

- Fund Affordable Housing Trust Fund
- Establish Strategic Land Banking

- 2nd Chance Tenancy
- Host CDC Training
- Aging in Place
- Weatherization
- Rehab Assistance

New and Expanded Efforts: Mid Term: 4-6 yrs.

- Housing CDFI
- Housing Near Employers
- Landlord Licensing
- Expanding Homeownership Supports

New and Expanded Efforts: Long Term: 7+ yrs.

- Alternative Transportation
- Tenant Legal Council

Continued Efforts

- Market Topeka's Housing
- Shelter Plus Care
- Emergency Assistance
- Code Enforcement
- THA Units
- THA Vouchers
- Demolition Program
- Leverage Assets
- SORT
- Revise Zoning Code
- Utilize Foreclosure/Vacant Property Registry
- Support Downtown Development

Topeka Housing Study Implementation Plan Committee Meeting #1, Monday August 24, 2020 1:00 PM:

Zoom meeting Present: Michael Bell, Linda Briden, Janice Watkins, Katrina Ringler, Marsha Pope, Jeanette Spurgin, Lloyd Ränge, Teresa Baker, Steve Schiffelbein, Charlene Robuck, Margo Rangel, Tawny Stottlemire, Ivan Weichert, Kathy Smith, Chris Palmer, Steve Vogel, Trey George, Nicki Ramirez-Jennings, Bill Fiander, Dan Warner, Corrie Wright, Brent Trout, Karen Hiller, Spencer Duncan, Christina Valdivia-Alcala Meeting

#1 Objective: Consensus on scope, first year tactics (Tier A, Tier B, etc.), and metric types

1. Welcome and Intro

Mr. Fiander – task of this committee is to develop a one-year implementation plan for the Topeka Housing Study in roughly 60 days. The committee builds upon the work of the Housing Study's steering committee.

2. Housing Study Overview

- Mr. Warner provided an overview of the Topeka Housing Study. Takeaways include
- 30 percent of Topeka households are cost burdened showing a need for quality affordable housing. There has been a lack of reinvestment in core neighborhoods, specifically, in the existing housing stock.
- Topeka has a high rate of homelessness and evictions for a city of its size.
- In target areas analyzed, minority households have a higher instance of being cost burdened (paying greater than 30 percent of income on rent and utilities).
- The Housing Study outlines the future demand of affordable housing (4,000 units), work force (3,650 units), market rate (4,700 units) and senior housing (2,250 units).

- Some tactics covered in the Housing Study are to improve the quality of existing housing stock, address abandoned and vacant properties, expand resources and encourage housing stability, support development of a diverse mix of housing types, and expand the production of affordable housing.
- The four priority recommendations include – fund the affordable housing trust fund, establish a strategic land bank, expand community development ecosystem, and expand key programs (weatherization and rehabilitation). These different programs require an incremental approach with goals requiring partners to help seed funding and implement the plan.

3. Scope of Work

- Mr. Fiander – The draft scope was developed following a motion from the Governing Body to draft starting implementation in 120 days (July). Based upon this motion this committee needs to develop an action plan for the year 2021 by November 17th. The three main questions outlined in the scope focus on what short term tactics should be activated in the next 12 months (Tier A)? , which short term tactics should we be planning for activation in the next 12 months (Tier B)? , and how should we track and evaluate the progress of the action plan? Secondly, we should consider who will provide oversight of this action plan? And how often should it be updated?
- Councilwoman Hiller – We need to define how many units we need and how fast will we create/preserve housing units. The Consolidated Plan’s adoption has been delayed to coincide with the adoption of the Housing Study Action Plan. Specifically, for the implementation plan we need to set measures and what data we collect first, with a goal to improve our quality affordable housing.
- Mr. Fiander – Would you propose changing the scope?
- Councilwoman Hiller – Defers to Mr. Fiander on the changing of the scope, but clarifies that if the volume of units created should dictate the necessity of something such as a Community Development Corporation (CDC). Additionally, we should define the populations we want to serve and how this plan will serve them. Raises the question is there any focus within this implementation plan that address quality of life?
- Mr. Fiander clarifies that while the primary focus of the Housing Study Implementation Plan is affordable housing, it is okay to consider more if the group wants.
- Mr. Vogel suggests that recommendations in the Implementation Plan should be very specific and detail who will lead each tactic, who the partners for implementation are and how we address barriers to implementation.
- Ms. Briden – The discussions started from the Housing Study have opened up communication between housing entities but seconds the question of what barriers are there to implementation.
- Ms. Ringler – Suggests assessment of the implementation matrix to identify projects that don’t require significant work and can be addressed with solutions like a policy change. Recommends a focus on the items which can be “easy wins” while continuously working on the larger issues that will require more time and effort.
- Mr. Schiffelbein – Has Coronavirus limited what is accomplishable in this time frame?

Year One Tactics – Top 4 priorities (Affordable Housing Trust Fund, Weatherization expansion, CDC Development and Establishing a Land Bank)

Weatherization

- Mr. Bell – Regarding Weatherization, Community Action already has a weatherization program. Will this program work together with the study’s recommendation?
- Ms. Stottlemire clarifies the program run through Community Action is part of a federal grant program and focus on whole home weatherization.
- Ms. Wright confirms the expanded weatherization program would address smaller projects and compliment the City’s Rehab programs as an additional tool they could offer.

Establish Strategic Land Bank

- Ms. Watkins believes this should be the strongest priority of the group. A strategic land bank can address vacant properties and allow for properties to be acquired before they reach a demolition state.
- Ms. Briden seconds that and states that other markets, specifically, Wyandotte County have utilized this tool to address previously dilapidated areas. Momentum 2022 had a working group that covered parts of this topic and she is willing to share that information with the group.

CDC establishment

- Councilwoman Hiller – Before pursuing the development of a CDC we need to evaluate how many units we want to produce. If the unit goal is too low this may not be a necessary program. 4D. Are any of these other tactics worth activating?
- Ms. Baker – A second chance tenancy program may help those who do not qualify for decent housing due to credit score or rental history. Believes this program would be good to activate earlier.
- Mr. Vogel – The burden of risk falls on landlords. Would charitable groups be willing to cosign for tenants?
- Mr. Palmer states that this seems similar to a program run by Catholic Charities and Capital Federal in other areas.
- Overall support to move second chance tenancy to Tier A

Aging in Place

- Ms. Watkins – Habitat for Humanity is probably the only group working on this in the community but is limited to low and moderate income households above the age of 55. Views this as the most sought after program besides their new builds.
- Mr. Bell – Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging should be included as a partner in this.
- Ms. Briden – Because we do not know of all of the programs that exist and resources that are in place we should not try to recreate the wheel for programs that already exist.

Rehab Assistance and Technical Assistance

- Ms. Ringler - Can we come up with a single place where all of the resources are listed?
- Mr. Schiffelbein – Stated that CRC has a good resource directory. 4G. Other Tactics for consideration □ Councilwoman Valdivia-Alcala – living wage and percent of household that are cost burdened need to be considered.
- Councilwoman Hiller – Many households get cited and do not know how to get the work done to correct these deficiencies.
- Ms. Watkins – Habitat for Humanity will be opening a classroom that teaches homeowners how to do their own home repair.

Metrics and Measurements

- Mr. George- likes the baseline metrics but believes the affordable housing trust fund goal should be \$1,000,000 instead of \$500,000.
- Mr. Fiander – Generally metrics will be measured by overall investment, new units created, units preserved, households served, percent of households pay more than 30 percent of their income, investment/units by neighborhood health and unity typology mix. Are any other metrics needed to measure success?
- Mr. Weichert – clarifies that in the last few years the development process with the city has not been a barrier to new development. What he sees as the biggest issues is the cost of building materials, and that may be addressed with an affordable housing trust fund.
- Councilwoman Hiller recommends measuring first time home buyers and elderly helped.

Moving Forward – How to engage the public

- Councilwoman Hiller recommends a meeting with the Citizens Advisory Committee.
- Mr. Bell recommends communicating about the plan with Topeka Capital Journal to reach more people and have personal stories tied to our outcomes.
- Mr. Cushinberry offered to help reach out to Topeka Capitol Journal as he sits on their advisory board

Bell met with planning department staff Bill Fiander and Dan Warner on Sep. 2 regarding including downtown-adjacent NIAs in discussions about supporting downtown development.

These are my notes from that meeting:

What can downtown support?

- Housing huge component
- Downtown underperforming

Downtown could support at least 900 housing units (primarily market rate)

- Where could that happen?
- Old building rehabs (Mike Wilson's project at 1st and KS Ave.; Mark Burnheide and Assumption School, St. Joseph's)
- Storefronts along KS Ave.

Rents don't support new construction without subsidies

- Neighborhood Revitalization Program, TIF

Why doesn't market respond/act?

- Downtown masterplan addresses this
- 700 acres available (NOTO on the north, Topeka Blvd., on the west, 12th St. on the south, train tracks on the east)

Where are the best locations to support downtown development?

- KS Ave. north to NOTO and south through downtown
- Realtors and owners who have participated say they want to be where the action is
- Identify different subsidies

Defining downtown housing

- Could mean the area described above or
- Could mean expanding the geography to include downtown-adjacent NIAs (Casson Bldg. at 6th and Topeka, Mike Wilson's project, possibilities at old Van Buren school on 17th, East Topeka Junior High
- DTI, GTP, realtors looking at topic
- Ripples created as downtown-adjacent NIAs can leverage downtown's assets

A New Approach for Topeka's Neighborhoods

The DREAMS Program is based on neighborhood input and assets, revitalization, activities, and successes as an alternative approach to Topeka's current Neighborhood Revitalization program, proposed start 2021.

DREAMS has four pillars at its foundation, each critical to developing and encouraging a strong, healthy community that is safe, desirable, successful, and accountable to the people for input and guidance on how they wish to see their neighborhoods develop over time:

- Neighborhood Engagement
- Infrastructure
- Housing
- Community

Neighborhood Goals: Attractiveness, safety, greater sense of community

Neighborhood Association Goals: Increased self-sufficiency, more frequent neighbor-to-neighbor interactions, meaningful improvements and activities.

- We believe that we should always start with celebrating what has been accomplished and learning from those successes.
- We think Community Engagement (CE) should shift to an engagement and access model that primarily focus on NIA neighborhoods while still assisting other neighborhoods for prevention and sustaining activities.
- CE Staff duties would include assisting with approaches to City and County departments and other resources, Planning (see other side), grant writing or access to help, assisting residents in building their own events, resulting in improved neighborhood identity, strength and quality and multiplier effect.
- Links with events such as National Night Out and training such as neighborhood organizing and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) should be strengthened and encouraged.
- A slight restructuring of the Neighborhood Operating Funds program could provide an incentive to preserve the funds by allowing the CAC to come up with a planned alternative use for unused \$\$.
- We think that Neighborhood Planning should be converted to a freestanding cycle. NIAs would be placed on a 10-year rotation (with two NIAs having their Neighborhood Plans updated each year) for full updates. Other updates could be made upon request, per staffing availability. Linking Historic Preservation planning when warranted will also strengthen the Neighborhood Planning process.
- We are eager to work collaboratively on critical neighborhood issues such as code compliance and community policing.
- We know that Affordable Housing and Revitalization efforts need to shift to flexibility and opportunity models in order to bring the kinds of change our residents want to see in their communities.
- We support and encourage all NIAs to be active members of discussions for the Affordable Housing Plan, with all options available to all neighborhoods every year. These options would include everything from major rehab, exterior rehab, homeownership and infill to self-help rehab, weatherization, accessibility and emergency repairs. Neighborhood-generated opportunities should be prioritized and neighbor-to-neighbor activities should be not only encouraged, but supported. A refreshed Neighborhood Enhancement program should be discussed to include partnerships with a refreshed and enhanced Code Compliance program. All the above programs are to be managed by City and/or contracted vendors.
- We recommend a shift in infrastructure funding from SORT to all City and County funds in their own departments. Funds will be accessed through annual direct bidding in the capital budget processes and community engagement in planning processes.
- We appreciate the \$200,000 in funds committed for neighborhoods for 2021 and urge that it be named the DREAMS Fund and be renewed annually. Fundraising efforts and additional funds from the City should also be attained each year as outlined in the Affordable Housing Trust Fund program guidance. These and other funds could then be competitively awarded for small projects and/or act as local match funds for larger project applications.