

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

TENTATIVE AGENDA:

- I. Welcome
- II. Guests: Rev. Andrew Patty, Trinity Lutheran Church: 4-H Club for Kids;
Philicia McKee, Keep America Beautiful/Topeka-Shawnee County
- III. 2021 SORT Grant, 2020 Neighborhood Empowerment Grant Applications (votes)
- IV. SW 12th Street Proposal Update: Meeting With City Manager Brent Trout
- V. Lane Garden Update
- VI. Spring Neighborhood Cleanup (no more city-wide spring cleanup; set date, vote)
- VII. Facebook Fundraiser for the NIA
- VIII. Reorganized Community Policing Program; First Regional Meeting: Emma Ray
- IX. Ice House Historic Preservation Update
- X. TopArts Grant Workshops
- XI. "Grocery Oasis" Group to Establish Another Central Topeka Full-Service Grocery Store Presents Market Study Showing Viability of Grocery Store
- XII. Adoption of Agenda (vote)
- XIII. Approval of January 13, 2020, General Membership Meeting Minutes (vote; pgs. 2-4)
- XIV. Reading and Acceptance of Treasurer's Reports (vote; pg. 5)
- XV. City Council Report: Karen Hiller
- XVI. Property Maintenance Report: Carlos Hernandez
- XVII. Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) Report: Donald Fortin
- XVIII. Reports of Officers (pgs. 6 - 7)
- XIX. Old Business:
 - A. International Academy Update: Sandy Lassiter
 - B. Topeka JUMP, Momentum 2022 Updates: Joyce Revely
- XX. New Business:
- XXI. Kudos:
 - A. The Central Topeka Grocery Oasis for its Efforts to Establish a Full-Service Grocery Store in Central Topeka
 - B. Kudos from Attendees
- XXII. 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. Next Meeting: 6:30 p.m., Mon., May 11, 2020, Buchanan Center, 1195 SW Buchanan
- XXIII. 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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6:30 p.m., Monday, March 9, 2020
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Minutes of January 13, 2020 General Membership Meeting

Attendees: President Michael Bell, Vice-President Pat DeLapp, Secretary-Treasurer Sandy Lassiter, Donald Fortin, Joyce Revely, Daniel Hutchins, Rachell Ann Striecker-Jones, Katie Divel, Community Resource Council's Mary Thomas, Cornerstone of Topeka Executive Director Chris Palmer, Cornerstone Board Vice-President Rev. Michael Kuner, TPD Ofc. Matt Wilson.

Bell called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Election of 2020 NIA Officers: Bell said the 3 current officers had offered to continue in their positions for 2020. He asked if anyone else would be interested in being an officer. No one responded.

Donald Fortin moved to retain the NIA officers in their current positions for 2020. Ann Striecker-Jones seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

SW 12th Street Proposal Reducing Driving Lanes from Two Lanes to One Lane Update: Bell reminded attendees of the discussions on the driving lane reduction component of the City's 12th Street proposal that have happened at NIA meetings and other venues, as well the rest of the proposal and how those discussions have been a part of the NIA's meeting agendas since July 2019 (the past 3 meetings). Bell asked attendees if they would be comfortable voting for the following potential motion:

The Tennessee Town NIA requests that the City of Topeka's City Manager Brent Trout convene a committee of pertinent City staff and city residents to jointly work on the City's entire 12th Street proposal.

Sandy Lassiter moved adoption of the potential motion. Fortin seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Community Policing Report: TPD Ofc. Matthew Wilson gave the report. He said these community meetings will replace community police officers attending regular NIA and NA meetings and will work a lot like the various city council district crime summits that have been conducted in prior years. The new effort is called the Community Outreach Bureau and will be headed by TPD Major Darin Scott.

Wilson said what community policing has been to neighborhoods (a liaison between the neighborhoods and the TPD) won't change, just the way those services are delivered will change. Wilson said the TPD believes that the new format will lead to better communications between the community and the TPD.

Wilson said there will be an East and a West unit. He said there are currently 4 community police officers for the entire city until June, 2 for the East Unit and 2 for the West Unit. Wilson said the hope is eventually to have 8 officers. He said his primary territory will be downtown and NOTO (each unit's officers should be revealed at the 4 community meetings).

Wilson said there will be 3 issues the TPD will identify for each zone:

- Crime prevention
- Gun violence
- Q&A

Wilson said recruitment challenges, not funding shortfalls, have left the TPD about 40 officers short of what its person-power numbers used to be. He said that is what has led to the creation of this new approach featuring 4 zones (which, according to the information posted above, appear to be North, Central, East and West) and quarterly meetings.

As an example of recruitment challenges, Wilson said that recently 15 recruits had been identified, but those numbers were essentially cancelled out by about 15 retirements. He said in an effort to recruit more people that recruitment standards had been lowered (i.e. the amount of time required to expire between drug charges and being a recruit has been reduced from 3 years to 1 year). Wilson said there are fewer people now who want to be police officers than before.

Wilson said each NIA and NA will still have access to their crime stats. They now will be distributed at the quarterly meetings.

Wilson reminded attendees that the bike patrol unit has already been eliminated.

Wilson said Gretchen Koenen, the name of the poster here, is the contact regarding the Community Outreach Bureau.

Bell asked Wilson what the TPD's position was on RING doorbell devices. Wilson said overall the TPD was supportive. He said residents can register with the City.

Cornerstone of Topeka, Inc. In-Fill Housing Update: Cornerstone Executive Director Chris Palmer and Cornerstone Board Vice-President Rev. Michael Kuner came into the meeting. Palmer said Cornerstone was 33 years old and helps homeless families find housing. He said the group manages 175 housing units, 24 of which are dedicated to transitional housing (families going from homelessness to home occupancy). Palmer said to think of Cornerstone as "Habitat for renters."

Regarding the agreement Cornerstone has in place with the Tennessee Town NIA, Stormont-Vail Hospital and Habitat for Humanity, which the NIA invested \$75,000 of its 2017-2019 SORT grant to enable not only the construction of 2 duplexes in the first 1100 block of SW Lane but to enable Cornerstone to do other projects in other areas of Topeka. The duplexes will be built on land donated by Stormont-Vail and smaller lots in the area will go to Habitat to build single-family homes. Palmer said there should be a groundbreaking this spring.

2020 Neighborhood Empowerment Grant, 2021 SORT Grant Applications: Bell said Neighborhood Relations said the Tennessee Town NIA is eligible to apply for both grants this year. He said historically most NEG projects have been funded at around \$10,000 each. Regarding the NEG, Bell said there would be a workshop sponsored by Neighborhood Relations on March 25, 2020.

Regarding the SORT grant, which targets certain HUD housing and local infrastructure funds to one NIA per year, Bell said Neighborhood Relations would sponsor a workshop on February 26, 2020. He said Tennessee Town last was a SORT neighborhood for 2017-2019, the last cycle where 2 NIAs were chosen at the same time. Bell said that grant largely focused on housing and infrastructure improvements from SW 10th south to SW Munson. If the NIA were to apply to be a 2021 SORT NIA, he suggested that the NIA focus on the area of the neighborhood south of SW Munson.

Lane Garden Update: Bell said Mary and Nancy Heeney, who have been working with the NIA on making improvements, said via email that they would get back with him and City Council Member Karen Hiller after Feb. 1 to restart efforts. Marge Heeney had been a long-term Lane Garden patron who helped to maintain the park. Bell said Shawnee County Parks and Recreation Director Tim Laurent still is on board working with the NIA on bringing Lane Garden under the county's umbrella.

Creating a 501c(3) Federal Nonprofit: Last fall Citizens Advisory Council Member Donald Fortin attended a 501c(3) workshop on behalf of the NIA. Meeting attendee and Community Resources Council Executive Director Mary Thomas also attended the workshop.

Thomas said that obtaining the federal nonprofit status typically made more sense for larger groups and that there had to be a definite reason for obtaining the status. Bell mentioned that the NIA historically had partnered with 501c(3) groups when necessary. Thomas said the IRS has a simplified process involving a 501c(3) "short form" that costs about \$500. Regarding the NIA's Ice House historic preservation efforts, she said the Ice House could be incorporated.

Ice House Historic Preservation: Bell said he and NIA Vice President Pat DeLapp were still working with Ice House owner Kevin Broxterman and his son, Keith, about making renovations at the Ice House to restore its historic nature. He said the 3 agreed to meet again after January 1.

Attending TopArts Grant Workshop on Jan. 25: Bell and Joyce Revely said ArtsConnect Topeka was sponsoring a grant for arts projects in Topeka. Two workshops had been scheduled. Both said they would attend.

SORT Infrastructure Projects Report: Bell said Public Works' Linda Voss said that the last of the 2017-2019 SORT infrastructure projects had been completed.

Adopt of Agenda: *Revely moved adoption of the agenda as amended. Lassiter seconded the motion. The motion was approved.*

Approve of November 4, 2019 General Membership Meeting Minutes: *Lassiter moved adoption of the minutes as presented. Revely seconded the motion. The motion was approved.*

Reading and Acceptance of Treasurer's Reports: *Revely moved acceptance of the treasurer's reports as presented. Lassiter seconded the motion. The motion was approved.*

City Council Report: Hiller was unable to attend the meeting because of the swearing in of new city council members.

Property Maintenance Report: Carlos Hernandez was not in attendance, so there was not a report.

Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) Report: NIA CAC member Don Fortin said the group last met on Dec. 4, 2019 at its holiday party. He said that CAC Chair James Prout had been reelected chair and that Dawn Downing had been elected vice-chair.

"Grocery Oasis" Group to Establish Another Central Topeka Full-Service Grocery Store Update: Bell said the Grocery Oasis group held a press presentation on Jan. 8, 2020, to reveal the consultant's report that indicated that a Central Topeka grocery store was viable. He said the next steps would include identifying a store location and working on an incentive package to attract a grocer. Topeka Mayor Michelle de la Isla committed to helping the group at the press presentation.

Reports of Officers: Bell referred attendees to the information in meeting packets.

Old Business: International Academy Update: Lassiter said things were going well.

Old Business: Topeka JUMP, Momentum 2022 Updates: Revely said JUMP was now working on payday loans and with Kansans for Payday Reform in addition to affordable housing. Regarding Momentum 2022, Revely said bus routes (SOTO, NETO) and bicyclists were topics.

New Business: There was no new business.

Kudos: The Central Topeka Grocery Oasis's efforts to open a new, full-service grocery store.

Announcements: Living the Dream events, Neighborhood Relations programs, TOTO first-time homebuyers' program.

Next Meeting: The next NIA general membership meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Mon., March 9, 2020, at the Buchanan Center.

Adjournment: *Fortin moved adjournment. Lassiter seconded the motion. The motion was approved.*

The meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

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Treasurer's Report for March 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
TOTALS:	▶	▶	\$0.00	\$983.02**

**FYI: The 2020 allocation is down \$95.92 from the 2019 allocation of \$1,078.94.

Treasurer's Report for March 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	Balance Checks: Dividend of \$0.01 paid each time	Deposit	\$139.64
1-15-20	Cash Donation: Michael Bell (to keep account open)	Deposit	\$5.00
TOTALS:	▶	▶	\$144.64**

**FYI: The total here DOES NOT reflect the \$320.00 donated through the Facebook fundraiser as of Mar. 9, 2020.

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Reports of Officers:

A. Central Topeka Grocery Oasis (CTGO) Meeting with the Greater Topeka Partnership:

Bell attended the meeting on Jan. 15, 2020 at GTP headquarters downtown. CTGO member Clark Trammell and John Hunter also attended. Discussions occurred on the CTGO's efforts to establish a new grocery store in Central Topeka, how grocery stores are a part of the social fabric of communities, how grassroots activism still works, and how food deserts were a city-wide problem.

Discussion also occurred on the potential clientele of a Central Topeka grocery store, most notably low- to moderate-income (LMI) people in the area (accepting of SNAP and WIC) and those who drive through Central Topeka; how a new grocery store would employ Central Topeka residents, how the proliferation of dollar stores in LMI areas had made it harder to establish full-service grocery stores, and how there had been a grocery store presence at SW Huntoon and Lane Sts. since at least the 1940s (Dibble's, then Dillons).

Hunter spoke on his idea of "community markets," which would be smaller, bodega-style markets as subsidiaries to the main Central Topeka store.

B. CTGO Meeting with the GTP's Glenda Washington:

Bell, along with other CTGO members, met with Washington on Jan. 16, 2020, at the Buchanan Center. Discussions occurred on how economic development should be seen holistically as a part of community development. Washington spoke on her efforts in 1993 to establish a Publix store in Jacksonville, FL.

Regarding funding, Washington mentioned the expansion of the city's opportunity zones and tax credits. Those in attendance agreed to first identify a site for the new store and then move on to funding.

C. CTGO Meetings with John Hunter:

Bell attended a meeting on Jan. 23, 2020 and on Jan. 27, 2020, at World Cup Coffee. The CTGO's Clark Trammell, CRC's Mary Thomas and Shyla Mason attended the 1st meeting. Trammell, Thomas, and Joey Steinbock attended the 2nd meeting.

During the 1st meeting discussions occurred on the grocery desert in the Hi-Crest area (like the one in Central Topeka), the lack of transportation for residents, limits on bus service, and not being able to walk to a nearby full-service grocery store.

Trammell said the City should be more involved. Discussion occurred on there being new city council members.

During the 2nd meeting Steinbock, who has experience running a grocery store and grew up in the Oakland neighborhood, said the CTGO will need to find a location and decide what it wants in a store.

D. TopArts Grant Workshop:

Bell attended the 2nd workshop on Jan. 25, 2020, at 909 N. Kansas Ave. (the first workshop was held on Jan. 15). ArtsConnect's Sarah Fizell led discussions. She said funds from the City's general fund were being used to fund grants that would (1) increase arts access and/or (2) create/maintain public arts. She said historically most awards have been in the \$500 to \$1,500 range, brevity and being concise were important with grant applications, as were letters of support; and applicants can submit multiple applications. Fizell said applicants would need to submit an IRS letter of determination [although applicants don't have to be a 501c(3)] and artist's resumes.

E. Housing Study Meeting:

Bell attended the 1st public meeting on Feb. 12, 2020, at the Holliday Building. The meeting was facilitated by Development Strategies, the firm hired by the City.

Discussions occurred on the age of Topeka's housing stock, the historical emphasis in Topeka on single-family housing, and codes.

The consultants identified 5 goals:

- Stabilizing core neighborhoods
- Increasing housing stability
- Support new housing development
- Identify problem landlords, absentee property owners and vacant properties
- Expand the housing ecosystem

The consultants identified 6 strategies:

- Improving housing stock (weatherization, home repairs, landlord licensing, historic districts, code enforcement)
- Address abandoned and vacant properties (land banking, code enforcement, foreclosure/vacant property registry, demolitions as a last resort)
- Expand resources
- Diverse mix of housing types (duplexes, row housing, etc.)
- Expand production of affordable housing
- Expand financial and organizational capacity

F. CTGO Meeting with the Shawnee County Farm and Food Advisory Council:

Bell and other CTGO members met with the group on Feb. 17, 2020, at the Shawnee County Health Department. Discussions occurred on the CTGO's efforts to establish a full-service grocery store in Central Topeka and working with the Advisory Council to "bring together all aspects of the county's food system."

G. CTGO Meeting with Mayor de la Isla:

Bell, along with other CTGO members, attended the meeting on Feb. 25, 2020, at City Hall.

Discussions occurred on Evergy helping with solar panels to obtain the CTGO's goal of a sustainable store and the mayor offering a support letter for those efforts, incentive programs [TIF, Neighborhood Revitalization Program, opportunity zones (would require the expansion of 1 of the 2 existing zones), and eco/devo funds (although those funds don't typically go to retail projects)].

The mayor contacted Topeka Police Dept. Chief Bill Cochran about meeting with the CTGO on safety measures that could be implemented at the new grocery store.

H. SORT Workshop:

Bell attended the workshop, held on Feb. 26, 2020, at the Holliday Building. Discussions occurred on no money being available for business rehabs and eligible housing projects:

- Major Rehab for homeowners: up to \$30,000 per project, deferred mortgage (no interest), after 7 years 50% of the loan is forgiven, applicant homeowners must be at or below 80% of Area Family Income.
- Rental Rehab: up to \$15,000 for exterior rehab and HVAC, owner provides 10% match, deferred mortgage (no interest), after 7 years 60% of the loan is forgiven, tenant must be at or below 80% of Area Family Income.

Voluntary demolition funds are available as they are city-wide. They involve a mortgage but payback is dependent on the future use of the cleared land (75% payback on non-residential use).