

**Tennessee Town NIA General Membership Meeting**  
**6:30 p.m., Monday; March 13, 2023**  
**Buchanan Center, 1195 SW Buchanan**

*The wearing of facial masks will be encouraged for this meeting  
to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus.*

TENTATIVE AGENDA:

- I. Welcome, Distribution of Free Smoke Detectors and Batteries
- II. Community Policing Report: TPD Ofc. Devon Long (10 minutes)
- III. Property Maintenance Report: Shane Hoven (10 minutes)
- IV. City Council Report: Karen Hiller (10 minutes)
- V. 1208 SW Munson Report: Vice President Pat DeLapp
- VI. 2023 Brown v. Board, Juneteenth Celebration Events (pgs. 3-5 of packet; vote)
- VII. DREAMS 3 Application: King's Court Complex Improvements (pgs. 5-6; vote)
- VIII. Adoption of Agenda (vote)
- IX. Approval of Jan. 9, 2023 General Membership Meeting Minutes (pg. 2)
- X. Acceptance of Treasurer's Reports (pg. 2)
- XI. 2023 NIA Goals Discussion (5 minutes)
- XII. Citizen Advisory Council Report: Don Fortin (10 minutes)
- XIII. Old Business:
  - A. Private-Public Partnership with Stormont Vail, the City of Topeka and GraceMed Update (pgs. 6-7)
  - B. Replicating the Hi-Crest NIA's SENT Initiative in Tennessee Town Update (pg. 7)
  - C. Pedestrian Mid-Block Lighting Update (pg. 7)
  - D. Lane Garden Update (pgs. 7-8)
  - E. Central Topeka Grocery Store Update (pg. 8)
  - F. 12th Street Update (pg. 8)
  - G. International Academy Update: Sandy Lassiter
- XIV. New Business:
  - A. Greater Topeka Partnership Poverty Simulation, Spring Public Poverty Simulation Update (pg. 8)
- XV. Kudos:
  - A. March is Women's History Month
  - B. Kudos from Attendees
- XVI. Announcements:
  - A. Community Engagement 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, (3) *Property Maintenance Repair Program*: Assists with repairs for low-income homeowners who need repairs to bring their homes up to code and make the home safe, livable, and healthy. All eligible households must have an active property maintenance violation and be on the deed of the property. For more info. or to apply, please call 785-368-3711.
  - B. Computers for Seniors: Contact Community Engagement at 785-368-3711.
  - C. 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.
  - D. Next Meeting: 6:30 p.m., Mon., May 8, 2023, Buchanan Ctr., 1195 SW Buchanan
- XVII. Adjournment

Tennessee Town NIA General Membership Meeting  
6:30 p.m., Monday, March 13, 2023  
Buchanan Center Conference Room, 1195 SW Buchanan

Minutes of Jan. 9, 2023 General Membership Meeting

Bell extends his apologies for not being able to include the minutes of the Jan. 9, 2023 NIA meeting in this packet for approval.

Those minutes will be submitted for approval, along with the minutes of the March 13 meeting, at the NIA's May 8 NIA meeting.

Tennessee Town NIA General Membership Meeting  
6:30 p.m., Monday, March 13, 2023  
Buchanan Center Conference Room, 1195 SW Buchanan

Treasurer's Report for March 13, 2023 General Membership Meeting:

Note: GoBlue, the printer contracted by the City of Topeka to print and mail the meeting notice cards, has decided to no longer do so. GoBlue was the printer through June 20. The figures for the next report regarding printing and mailing may be different because a new printer may be identified by then.

Update: From Community Engagement Director Monique Glaude, March 10, 2023:

"2022 year-end Budget report

"We are still reconciling purchases as there were a number of large purchases made in December and final invoices are still being confirmed. For now, we have shifted focus to 2023, since there are several new changes, and it is important to get everyone up to speed and ready to use their 2023 funding in a more effective manner. The final budget report for 2022 will be sent out in early April.

"2023 cost for mailing and printing

"We now have two vendors, a printing vendor, and a mailing and pre-sort vendor. We are working to finalize the neighborhood mailing lists for more accurate mailing address totals so that we have good addresses and numbers to provide them. We plan to have the lists finalized within the next week and we will be meeting with both vendors in the coming weeks to confirm pricing with the updated lists. Once we have that information, we will be able to provide the NIAs with better totals and costs."

The NIA has been allocated either \$983.02 (according to the latest community engagement report) or \$1,000 (according to a Feb. 15 CAC vote) in support budget funds for 2023. There have been no official expenditures from those funds so far in 2023, although the printing and mailing expenses for the meeting notice cards for the NIA's March 13 meeting will be deducted as soon as the questions listed above can be answered.

Envista Free-Will Donation Report for March 13, 2023 General Membership Meeting:

Questions about the status of the account are being resolved with Envista, which requires intermittent deposits to keep its accounts current. The last deposit was Bell's cash donation of \$5.00 on 1-15-2020 to keep the account open.

Tennessee Town NIA General Membership Meeting  
6:30 p.m., Monday, March 13, 2023  
Buchanan Center Conference Room, 1195 SW Buchanan

I. 2023 Brown v. Board, Juneteenth Celebration Events (both events established as 2023 NIA goals):

Brown v. Board: Please reference the following email string:

To: Pat DeLapp, Sandy Lassiter, Donna Rae Pearson, March 9, 2023

Yo!

Please see below. We're good to go with the Buchanan Center as our venue!

Mike Bell

From: Michael Bell

To: Teresa Baker

Sent: Thursday, March 9, 2023 at 06:40:48 PM CST

Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: [EXTERNAL] Fw: IMPORTANT, URGENT: Speaker at Tennessee Town NIA's Brown v. Board of Education Recognition Event

On Thursday, March 9, 2023 at 05:32:45 PM CST, Teresa Baker wrote:

Michael,

Hello. Everyone's schedule is so busy that speaking to the Buchanan Center Board members took a while. The Tennessee Town NIA is welcome to use the Buchanan Center grounds and, if inclement weather, the first-floor conference room on Saturday, May 13, 2023. Since the event will be held on a Saturday, no staff will be in the building. Therefore, I may have to arrange to give you a key for entry in the event it rains. As the event draws nearer, we can figure that out. Once you finalize a time for the event, please let me know.

I will ensure the door is unlocked on Monday, March 13, before 6:30 for your NIA meeting.

Thank you.

Teresa

From: Michael Bell

Sent: Tuesday, March 7, 2023 8:16 PM

To: Teresa Baker

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: [EXTERNAL] Fw: IMPORTANT, URGENT: Speaker at Tennessee Town NIA's Brown v. Board of Education Recognition Event

Hey!

We hope it's a memorable event. The NIA, in discussing its 2023 goals, decided that it should expand its social footprint beyond National Night Out and the basketball tournament, both held on the 1st Saturday of August. We discussed holding Brown and Juneteenth events (the Juneteenth event to be staged at another location).

We're hopeful for at least 50 attendees. I can make arrangements with the neighborhood churches regarding chairs and tables, and I can rent a podium with a mic for guest speakers.

Mike Bell

On Tuesday, March 7, 2023 at 04:06:17 PM CST, Teresa Baker wrote:

Michael,

Hello. It sounds like you are planning a fantastic event. As of now, I see no issues with it, especially since it will likely be held outdoors. I will ask the two other Buchanan Center Board members for their input and get back to you probably tomorrow. Do you have any idea how many people might attend the event? Thank you.

Teresa

**From:** Michael Bell

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 7, 2023 2:28 PM

**To:** Teresa Baker

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Fw: IMPORTANT, URGENT: Speaker at Tennessee Town NIA's Brown v. Board of Education Recognition Event

Hey!

Hope all is going well. Please see the email string below between myself and the Brown Foundation. The NIA is hopeful that it can work with HCCI to stage a Brown v. Board recognition ceremony on Sat., May 13, at the Buchanan Center. The Buchanan Center was the logical location to hold the event because of its historical significance to the SCOTUS decision. I apologize if it looks like I've jumped the gun here. I'm just excited about the possibilities of this event! :-)

If the weather permits that day, the event would be outdoors in front of the Buchanan Center. The NIA can take responsibility for setting up the event space. In the event of inclement weather, we'd have to stage it inside in the first-floor conference room. We'd need to work with HCCI on staging an indoor event. I know there might be liability issues regarding staging the event at the Buchanan Center. We'd love to discuss with you those and any other challenges to staging the event at the Buchanan Center.

This event, along with a NIA Juneteenth recognition event in June to be staged at another location, will be on our agenda for our next NIA meeting, to be held at 6:30 p.m. this Monday, March 13.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Thanks!

Mike Bell

**From:** Brown Foundation

**To:** Michael Bell

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 7, 2023 at 10:43:29 AM CST

**Subject:** Re: IMPORTANT, URGENT: Speaker at Tennessee Town NIA's Brown v. Board of Education Recognition Event

Hi Michael,

The speakers we have in mind worked with us on our book about Brown v. Board entitled. Recovering Untold Stories: The Enduring Legacy of the Brown v. Board of Education Decision. One of them attended Buchanan. Her family was among the plaintiffs in Brown as well.

Please forgive me for not being more specific. We look forward to learning what time of day you are planning, in order for us to confirm one of the prospective speakers.

Thanks so much for asking us to assist.

Mary Thompson

From: Michael Bell  
To: Brown Foundation  
Subject: IMPORTANT, URGENT: Speaker at Tennessee Town NIA's Brown v. Board of Education Recognition Event  
Date: Fri, 24 Feb 2023 21:03:32 +0000 (UTC)

Hi!

My name is Michael Bell. I am the president of the Tennessee Town NIA (TTNIA) in Central Topeka. The TTNIA was the city's first NIA, being founded in 1976 (for more on the TTNIA: <https://tenntownnia.weebly.com/>). The TTNIA also is the home of the Buchanan Center, formerly the segregated Buchanan School that was a part of the landmark 1954 SCOTUS Brown v. Topeka Board of Education decision that overturned "separate but equal" educational facilities in our nation. Our NIA meets on the 2nd Monday of every odd-numbered month at the Buchanan Center and was responsible for identifying the federal funds decades ago that renovated the former Buchanan School into the home of nonprofit agencies.

As we near the 69th anniversary of Brown v. Board, our NIA is planning a recognition event to be held on Sat., May 13, 2023, at the Buchanan Center. We'd love it if you could be our keynote speaker for the event. Would that work with your schedule?

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns moving forward.

Thanks!

Michael Bell  
Tennessee Town NIA President

**NOTE: Motion: We authorize the NIA's Executive Committee to work with Donna Rae Pearson and the Brown Foundation, as well as other individuals and entities, to bring about the Brown v. Board recognition event on Sat., May 13, 2023 at \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m. at the Buchanan Center, 1195 SW Buchanan.**

Juneteenth:

The recognition event has been tentatively scheduled for Sat., June 10, 2023

Community First, Inc.'s Sandy Lassiter has signed off on staging the event at the Black History Museum at 1149 SW Lincoln. Donna Rae Pearson has signed on to help to organize the event.

**NOTE: Motion: We authorize the NIA's Executive Committee to work with Donna Rae Pearson, as well as other individuals and entities, to bring about the Juneteenth recognition event on Sat., June 10, 2023 at \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m. at the Black History Museum, 1149 SW Lincoln.**

II. DREAMS 3 Application: King's Court Complex Improvements (vote)

At its Jan. 9, 2023 NIA meeting, attendees identified making improvements to the King's Court Basketball and Playground Complex, SW Lincoln and Munson Streets, as a 2023 NIA goal.

According to the City of Topeka's community engagement webpage:

"Annual selection of multiple NIAs to receive between \$1,000 and up to \$50,000 in mini-grant funding. Total of \$200,000 in annual funding available (\$140,000 (GO Bond Funds) + \$60,000 (CDBG Funds)) for small infrastructure improvements, neighborhood beautification and community building grants.

"The Topeka Neighborhood Dreams Fund is funded through the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program and from the City's General Obligation (GO) Bonds. These funds are used to support a variety of small neighborhood based public projects or local match funds for larger public projects. Projects must be located within predominately low/moderate income (LMI) neighborhoods. Program priorities include community engagement, infrastructure improvements and neighborhood empowerment and pride. \$200,000 (\$60,000 (CDBG) and (\$140,000 (GO) Bonds)) is available to award grants ranging from \$1,000 up to \$50,000 annually in this program. Interested community partners may also partner with area NIAs to apply for grants for infrastructure."

**NOTE: Motion: We authorize the NIA's Executive Committee to work with other individuals and entities as needed to complete a DREAMS application for improvements to the King's Court Basketball and Play-ground Complex, SW Lincoln and Munson Streets, including, but not limited to, \_\_\_\_\_ . The NIA's executive committee will present a completed DREAMS application for this project for approval at the NIA's May 8, 2023 meeting**

### III. Private-Public Partnership with Stormont Vail, the City of Topeka and GraceMed Update

Please see email string below. Note: the request for a Zoom meeting was met. That's how the April 25 meeting will be conducted:

To: Kincade, Amy  
Cc: Hedquist, Karla, Pat DeLapp, Sandy Lassiter

Hi, Ms. Kincade!

3:30 p.m. on Tue., April 25, works for me. If at all possible, can we set up a Zoom meeting? I have a documented physical disability that makes in-person meetings challenging for me.

Pat, Sandy, does that time and date work for you?

Thanks!

Mike Bell

From: Michael Bell  
Sent: Thursday, March 2, 2023 2:30 PM  
To: Kincade, Amy  
Cc: 'PAMELA JOHNSON-BETTS' ; Pat DeLapp ; Sandy Lassiter; Marsha Pope; Kenagy, Rob Kenagy; Tracy O'Rourke  
Subject: Re: IMPORTANT, VERY URGENT: Public Private Partnership Involving the Tennessee Town NIA, the City of Topeka and Stormont Vail HealthCare

Hi, Ms. Kincade (and all)! My apologies for not getting back with you sooner. The daily chores for an NIA president are ever changing and often expanding! I have attached here the PDF that provides the broad outlines of the partnership that

Hi, Ms. Kincade (and all)!

My apologies for not getting back with you sooner. The daily chores for an NIA president are ever changing and often expanding!

I have attached here the PDF (note: available on request; will include it at the NIA's website) that provides the broad outlines of the partnership that we could have. GraceMed has been included as a partner because of its health clinic at SW Huntoon and Lane Streets in Tennessee Town. Since creating this document other partners have been or may soon be added, including:

The City of Topeka (City Manager Stephen Wade; Planning and Development/Housing Services, Public Works/Public Utilities and Community Engagement departments; <https://www.topeka.org/#gsc.tab=0>)

Our NIA currently is in discussions with the SENT Initiative based in the Hi-Crest NIA to be a Tennessee Town partner (<https://senttopeka.com/>)

Our NIA's schedule is flexible enough to accommodate Stormont Vail's schedule. Regarding starting discussions, what dates after March 13 and in April work best for you?

This partnership could take on the shape of the one started in Columbus, OH years ago. Here's a link to that initiative: <https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/about-us/population-health-and-wellness/healthy-neighborhoods-healthy-families#:~:text=The%20HNHF%20initiative%20targets%20five%20impact%20areas%3A%20affordable,it%20can%20improve%20community%2C%20family%20and%20individual%20wellbeing>. Our NIA met via teleconference with Nationwide Children's Hospital and City of Topeka representatives in 2015 regarding this effort. All parties were supportive of replicating it in Topeka.

We see a partnership here as a win for all involved.

Thank you very much for your response!

Michael Bell  
Tennessee Town NIA President

#### IV. Replicating the Hi-Crest NIA's SENT Initiative in Tennessee Town Update

There is a Zoom meeting scheduled with the NIA's executive committee and the SENT initiative from 8-10 a.m. on Thu., May 4, 2023. That meeting will further flesh out what a partnership might look like with SENT.

#### V. Pedestrian Mid-Block Lighting Update

Bell did a brief drive-through of the NIA (SW Lincoln, 10th St. south to Huntoon) at 2 p.m. with Public Works' employees Duane Morris and Clint (don't remember his last name) to determine where solar-powered lights might be placed.

In an email sent by Public Works Director Braxton Copley to Bell, another Zoom meeting to do more follow up to the Feb. 10 drive-through was suggested for either April 3 at 3p.m. or April 4 at 2:30 p.m. Bell still needs to follow up.

Because the City has told us that an NIA is not a "philanthropic organization" [apparently meaning a 501c(3) entity], Community First, Inc. has stepped up so that the NIA can use its 501c(3) nonprofit, philanthropic status to submit funding applications for the solar-powered mid-block lighting (there are funds available at least through the federal Department of Energy). The project still would be created by and done on behalf of the NIA.

#### VI. Lane Garden Update

Bell sent out multiple times a request for emails to be sent to the Shawnee county commissioners and the county clerk indicating support for bringing Lane Garden under the county's jurisdiction and rectifying a years-old exclusion of Lane Garden from the city-county parks and recreation consolidation, which put parks and rec under the county.

So far, 18 individuals, including former District One City Council Member Duane Pomeroy, and one NIA (Historic Old Town) have sent support emails to the aforementioned county contacts. If attendees have yet to send a support email, please let Bell know and he'll get the script for the email to them.

Bell also has contacted multiple law firms about a potential civil action against the county. Bell will keep the NIA apprised of what happens.

#### VII. Central Topeka Grocery Store Update

The Central Topeka Grocery Oasis (CTGO; <https://www.centraltopekagro.com/>) is scheduled to sign a lease agreement with the GraceMed Health Clinic this week! Next, the group will put together a committee to create a celebration event for our neighbors and friends. If there are Tennessee Town residents who would like to help plan and execute the celebration event, please let Bell know.

#### VIII. 12th Street Update

Most recently 12th Street was/is closed at SW Clay in Tennessee Town and at SW Western in the Historic Holliday Park NIA.

Recently the property owner at 1201 SW Lincoln took photos of how the project had taken out her walkway to Lincoln. Bell intervened. His intervention helped make the City come out to replace said walkway. Unfortunately, the City didn't fill in the grassy areas to either side of its work, which were there before the original walkway was taken out. The City has promised to come back out to fill in those grassy areas.

#### IX. Greater Topeka Partnership Poverty Simulation Report, Spring Public Poverty Simulation Update

Due to efforts by Bell to stage a city-wide poverty simulation, the Greater Topeka Partnership (GTP) held a poverty simulation retreat for its members only on Jan. 27, 2023 (<https://www.wibw.com/2023/01/27/community-programs-bring-attention-poverty-crisis-with-simulation/>).

On Jan. 30, GTP Director Matt Pivarnik sent the following email to Bell:

“Michael,

“Thank you for this recommendation. The staff at the Greater Topeka Partnership participated in a poverty simulation on Friday. K-State Research and the United Way administered the simulation for us, and we had several volunteers help out, including folks from the Community Action Project.

“It was eye-opening, sobering, and educational. Our team appreciated the experience. Many on our team experience poverty in their younger lives and it triggered emotions.

“Again....appreciate you so much for recommending we do this brother.”

Plans are underway to stage a city-wide poverty simulation open to the public for later this spring, coordinated through the City Department of Community Engagement, the Citizen Advisory Council, the Kaw Area United Way and the Northeast Kansas Community Action Program (NEKCAP). Bell is involved in those efforts and will keep all posted on what's happening.