

**Tennessee Town NIA General Membership Meeting**  
**6:30 p.m., Monday; May 9, 2022**  
**Buchanan Center, 1195 SW Buchanan**

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

TENTATIVE AGENDA:

- I. Welcome, Distribution of Free Smoke Detectors and Batteries, In Memoriam
- II. Adoption of Agenda (vote)
- III. Approval of March 14, 2022 General Membership Meeting Minutes (vote; pgs. 2-3)
- IV. Acceptance of Treasurer's Reports (vote; pg. 4)
- V. Old Business:
  - A. City Council Report: Karen Hiller
  - B. 2022 DREAMS Neighborhood Goals (Consults with the City of Topeka Starting in June 2022)
  - C. Tennessee Town Housing Nonprofit Partnerships
  - D. Reintroduction of Private-Public Partnership with Stormont Vail, the City of Topeka and GraceMed Report
  - E. Central Topeka Grocery Store Update
  - F. Walking Tour of Tennessee Town's History Report (pg. 5)
  - G. Citizen Advisory Council Report: Don Fortin
  - H. International Academy Update: Sandy Lassiter
  - I. Efforts to Save 1142 SW Washburn from Demolition: Pat DeLapp
  - J. Property Maintenance Director, Officer Complaint Update
- IX. New Business:
  - A. Shawnee County Health Department Proclamation Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis (pgs. 5-6)
- X. Kudos:
  - A. Happy Mother's Day!, Memorial Day Recognition
- XI. 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, (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. 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., July 11, 2022, Buchanan Ctr., 1195 SW Buchanan
- XIII. 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/](https://tennesseetown.nextdoor.com/news_feed/) ● E-Mail: [tenntown@yahoo.com](mailto:tenntown@yahoo.com)

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Minutes of March 14, 2022 General Membership Meeting

Attendance: President Michael Bell, Vice President Pat Delapp, Secretary-Treasurer Sandra Lassiter, Donald Fortin, Emma Ray, Bob Cockerhan, Mark Gibbs, Linda Kidd, and City Council Member Karen Hiller, .

President Bell called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

Guest: Teresa Baker, Executive Director, Housing and Credit Counseling, Inc.: Teresa Baker said she had been an HCCI employee since 2007, with a break in 2012. She spoke on the Landlord Tenant Counseling Program (phone 800-383-0217) and the availability of a bilingual staff person. She said HCCI would be celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2022 and would set a celebration date later. Baker spoke on other HCCI programming, its history and the financial services it offers. She spoke on the United Way-funded Debt Monsters program, which provides counseling and works with clients to increase their credit. She spoke on the Homebuyer Education Program, run by Ginger Ellsperman and the TOTO program, which provides housing rehab funds to qualifier applicants. Baker said Fair Housing Month was coming up.

City Council Report: Karen Hiller said analysis was ongoing regarding the Change the Culture of Property Maintenance proposal, including compiling data on code and court cases, what's working and what's not working, fairness (extra time for the poor to comply and the degree to which wealthier property owners are taking advantage of the system). She spoke on an action element and its connection to Hannah Uhrig. She said the focus would be on mowing in the warmer months and blight removal (new standards on both to be revealed later this year to be implemented during year 3 of the proposal). Hiller said Community Engagement (CE) had identified money for mowing (details to come) and a training program not involving mowing. She said attendees should contact CE's Monique Glaude if they knew of anyone who might be interested in participating in the mowing program.

Hiller said the DREAMS program was set to be introduced on March 30. She said that \$1.7 million would be available for all neighborhoods to bid on. She said that neighborhood planning meetings/consults would begin in May with public works' consults in late June and housing services consults in mid-July.

Regarding Topeka ARPA COVID-19 funds, Hiller said that \$36.6 million would go to infrastructure and \$10 million would go to neighborhood-based activities. She said the city council's policy and finance committee now had the proposal and that a public meeting would be held.

Community Policing Report: There was no report.

Property Maintenance Report: There was no report. Discussion occurred on what Property Maintenance Officer Carlos Hernandez said at the January 2022 NIA meeting and Property Maintenance Director Mike Haugen's response to the NIA's complaint.

Adoption of Agenda: *Pat DeLapp moved approval of the March 14, 2022 meeting agenda with the change of moving "city council report" to item 3. Emma Ray seconded the motion. The motion was approved.*

Approval of Minutes: *Ray moved approval of the January 10, 2022 meeting minutes with 2 changes: (1) Property Maintenance Report, next to last sentence, should read "DeLapp asked Hernandez to stay off the properties." (2) Next Meeting, should read "6:30 p.m., Mon., March 14, 2022, location to be announced." DeLapp seconded the motion. The motion was approved.*

Acceptance of Treasurer's Reports: *Ray moved acceptance of the support budget report. Bob Cockerhan seconded the motion. The motion was approved.*

Old Business: Creating a Housing Nonprofit Specifically for Tennessee Town Discussion: Bell said he had reached out to the GraceMed Health Clinic to find out if it would be willing to be a partner to bring the housing nonprofit to fruition. GraceMed is considering the request. He also said that he might reach out to local banks to support the effort.

Old Business: Grocery Store Update: Bell shared information on the Central Topeka grocery store in meeting packets.

Old Business: Lane Garden Update: Bell said he had been approached by individuals who said they would be willing to follow up with Shawnee County commissioners to encourage the county to bring Lane Garden under its umbrella.

Old Business: Citizen Advisory Council: Don Fortin gave the report.

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

New Business: Efforts to Save 1142 SW Washburn from Demolition: Pat DeLapp: The report was deferred to the May 9, 2022, NIA meeting.

Kudos: Bell recognized March as National Women's History Month.

Announcements: Neighborhood Relations Programs, TOTO first-time homebuyers' assistance program, and Habitat's Aging in Place Program.

Next Meeting: 6:30 p.m., Mon., May 9, 2022, location to be announced.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

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Treasurer's Report for May 9, 2022 General Membership Meeting:

<b>Tennessee Town NIA Final 2021 Operations and Communications Budget:</b>				
<b>Date</b>	<b>Piece Count</b>	<b>Transaction Type</b>	<b>Withdrawal</b>	<b>Balance</b>
1-1-22	▶	▶	▶	<b>\$983.02 (same as 2021)</b>
2-21-22	302	Printing of Meeting Notice Cards	\$27.90	<b>\$955.12</b>
2-21-22	302	Postage for Meeting Notice Cards	\$72.54	<b>\$882.58</b>
4-18-22	302	Printing of Meeting Notice Cards	\$27.90	<b>\$854.68</b>
4-18-22	302	Postage for Meeting Notice Cards	\$72.54	<b>\$782.14</b>
<b>TOTALS:</b>	▶	▶	<b>\$200.88</b>	<b>\$782.14</b>

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 is still the printer, but the amounts for printing and postage changed for 2022. The figures for the next report regarding printing and mailing may be different again because a new printer may be identified by then.

Note: The Envista free-will donation account will be included in the July 2022 treasurer's report.

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Walking Tour of Tennessee Town's History Report:

Dr. Valerie Mendoza and I decide to take a leap of faith and start a history consulting business. It is a good thing. The name of our nonprofit company is The Other Road. If you haven't met Valerie before, she was born and raised in Topeka. She has a doctorate in history and has extensive work documenting the Mexican community in Topeka and Kansas. We will be specializing in telling the stories of people of color.

While we do not need the NIA to sponsor the grant application, I do have a couple of favors you can help out with if possible. The first is a letter of support for the project. Just a simple statement saying that you think having a walking tour of Tennessee Town would be a good thing! The second request is hopefully simple as well. We would like to present the project to the NIA in a couple of different ways. The first is to allow Valerie and I to present the tour at an NIA meeting and ask for feedback as to what to include. The second is to allow us to host a couple of walks during National Night Out.

The only catch is we will be turning in the grant application by the 30th and will need the letter of support within the next couple of days. Let me know if that is possible. Also let me know what I can do specifically to help on the grocery team.

Shawnee County Health Department Proclamation Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis:

**Shawnee County Racial Equity Impact Analysis Group - Declaration of Support for Racism as a Public Health Threat**

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has declared that racism is a threat to our public health. Centuries of racism in the U.S. have caused unfair policies in housing, income, healthcare, education, public safety, transportation, and food access that prevent people of color from being healthy - Topeka/Shawnee County included. These centuries-old policies work negatively and together in ways that benefit the physical and mental health of white people over the physical and mental health of people of color. Confronting racism and racial inequities across this range of policies requires a broad and coordinated public health response. We ask you to join us in taking action. In April, the Shawnee County Health Department will submit a proclamation to the Topeka Mayor and the Shawnee County Commissioners requesting their formal support in declaring racism a public health crisis. This proclamation is a call to action. We encourage all people and organizations to begin taking the steps to dismantle systemic practices and policies that perpetuated racism.

It will take all of us together to eliminate the barriers that have led to poor health outcomes for communities of color. We are asking you to add your organization/name to our list of key community stakeholders that share the commitment to recognize racism as a public health crisis and commit to advocating for racial justice as a core element of policies, programs, and procedures.

Additionally, we ask that as we move forward with educating the community as a whole, that you use your social media platforms and other avenues of education to bring awareness to racism affecting your respected field. By using the hashtag #RacismIsAPublicHealthCrisis we can provide the community a way to follow this journey of growth and repair.

**Please share this survey with your Shawnee County partners who may wish to support this effort with us.**

<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6785791/Shawnee-County-Racial-Equity-Impact-Analysis-Group-Declaration-of-Support-for-Racism-as-a-Public-Health-Threat>



# CENTRAL TOPEKA *Grocery Oasis*

**Our mission is purpose driven to provide a nourishing and sustainable healthy food source to the Central Topeka Neighborhoods**

**Board Members:**

**Marge Ahrens - Chair • Marc Galbraith - Treasurer • Janet Cathcart - Secretary  
Michael Bell • Ann Marshall • Mary Thomas • Clark W. Trammell**

## **Statement in Support of the Shawnee County Health Department's Proclamation in Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis**

The Central Topeka Grocery Oasis (CTGO), the citizen-driven, grassroots effort in place since March 2018 to create a new, full-service grocery store for nearly 13,000 ethnically diverse residents of Central Topeka, supports efforts to discuss and act on the public health threats that affect its neighbors. The health of those the CTGO serves is of paramount concern as not having a full-service grocery store in Central Topeka not only has created a food desert in the middle of our city but also has created food and nutrition insecurity issues for our most vulnerable neighbors, including children. The CTGO's data show that 30 percent of households in the area live below the federal poverty line and 50 percent of those households are people of color.

As the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently said, centuries of racism in the U.S. have caused unfair policies in housing, income, healthcare, education, public safety, transportation, and food access that prevent people of color from being healthy - Topeka/Shawnee County included. Those centuries-old policies work negatively and together in ways that benefit the physical and mental health of some over the physical and mental health of others. In Topeka that has meant the creation of a "donut hole" in the middle of our city extending east where an overall lack of investment has led to the inequities the CDC detailed above, including statistical data indicating that 60 percent of Topeka is a food desert and anecdotal data showing that the majority of fresh food options are now located on the city's periphery. Ultimately, those inequities affect everyone because we all pay financially, physically, mentally and emotionally for unequal health outcomes for people of color because those costs are borne by the entire community.

Confronting racism and racial inequities across this range of policies requires a broad and coordinated public health response. The CTGO supports the Shawnee County Health Department's proclamation requesting the formal support of Topeka Mayor Michael Padilla and the Shawnee County Commission in declaring racism a public health crisis. This proclamation is a call to action. We encourage all people and organizations to begin taking the steps to dismantle systemic practices and policies that perpetuate unequal health outcomes.

Additionally, the CTGO supports the involvement of local government in meaningfully addressing the causes of the public health crisis cited in the Shawnee County Health Department's proclamation as those causes specifically relate to food deserts and food/nutrition insecurity. That would mean that local government must recognize and support efforts to bring access to fresh fruits, vegetables and meats to all of its constituents regardless of socioeconomic status or ethnicity.

And finally, the CTGO supports the Shawnee County Health Department in calling for public and private entities to support efforts to move forward with educating the community as a whole and that those entities use their social media platforms and other avenues of education to bring awareness to unequal health outcomes. By using the hashtag #RacismIsAPublicHealthCrisis, we can provide the community a way to follow this journey of growth and repair.