

Tennessee Town NIA General Membership Meeting
6:30 p.m., Monday, September 11, 2017; Buchanan Center Conference Room, 1195 SW Buchanan

TENTATIVE AGENDA:

- I. Welcome, Moment of Silence in Remembrance of 9/11
- II. Demolition of 1129 SW Lincoln; Demolition of 1194 SW Lane and Lane Garden Expansion, Meeting with Shawnee County Commissioner Kevin Cook and Shawnee County Parks and Recreation Director John Knight on Lane Garden Ownership (see Reports of Officers)
- III. SORT Committee Meeting with Topeka Planning, Neighborhood Relations Departments (see Reports of Officers, vote to proceed); Neighborhood-Wide Meeting to Conclude SORT Planning Process (must be Sep. 25-28, vote on time, date; 1st Church of the Nazarene is available Sep. 25, 26, and 28)
- IV. Doorstep, Inc. Plan to Move Dovetail Services to 10th and Buchanan Location, zoning change (vote to support)
- V. Citizens Advisory Council Candidates' Forum Update
- VI. Adoption of Agenda (vote)
- VII. Approval of July 10, 2017 General Membership Meeting Minutes (vote, pgs. 2 - 4 in meeting packet)
- VIII. Reading and Acceptance of Treasurer's Reports (vote, pg. 5)
- IX. Reports of Officers (pgs. 6 - 9)
 - A. Community Resources Council's Offer to NIAs to Use its 501c(3) Nonprofit Status; Paid Membership
- X. Community Policing Report, New Community Officer
- XI. Property Maintenance Report: Carlos Martinez
- XII. Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) Report (see Reports of Officers)
- XIII. City Council Report: Karen Hiller
- XIV. Old Business:
 - A. National Night Out Against Crime Report: Emma Ray
 - B. International Academy Update, Basketball Tournament Report: Sandy Lassiter
 - C. Topeka JUMP, Heartland Visioning Updates: Joyce Revely
 - D. 2017 Neighborhood Clean Up Report
- XV. New Business:
- XVI. Kudos: Recognizing the Good News and Deeds of Our Neighbors and Friends:
 - A. SORT Committee Members and Their Service on the Committee and to the NIA in General
 - B. Recognitions from Attendees
- XVII. 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. Well Wishes to Former Topeka City Council Member Betty Dunn
 - D. Next Meeting: 6:30 p.m., Mon., November 13, 2017, Buchanan Center, 1195 SW Buchanan
- XVIII. 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 • Twitter: @tenntown

Tennessee Town NIA General Membership Meeting
6:30 p.m., Monday, September 11, 2017
Buchanan Center Conference Room, 1195 SW Buchanan

Minutes of July 10, 2017 General Membership Meeting:

Attendees: President Michael Bell, Vice President Patrick DeLapp, Secretary-Treasurer Sandra Lassiter, TPD Officer Michael Diehl, Emma Ray, City Council Member Karen Hiller, Christine Allen, Ricky Cruse II, Joyce Revely, John Williams, Donald Fortin, City of Topeka Planning Department's Timothy Esperza.

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

House Demolitions at 1129 SW Lincoln and 1194 SW Lane: The demolitions were discussed. Bell said he was frustrated because, after multiple changed deadlines and promises from the City, the demolitions had not been completed. He said those frustrations included a delay at 1194 SW Lane involving the presence of the northern long-eared bat because the City did not know that the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife's guidelines regarding the bat had changed (Bell followed up with Fish and Wildlife and its most recent guidelines were sent to the City). He said the NIA taking an official position on the demolition delays might help get the demolitions done. He proposed putting the demolition at 1194 SW Lane aside to see if the City met its promised August 2017 deadline on it and vote only on the 1129 SW Lincoln demolition. Bell suggested the following motion: *The NIA requests from the City an explanation for the demolition delays and a specific date for when the demolition at 1129 SW Lincoln will occur and if the demolition there is delayed, then the NIA requests that the City provide to it specific reasons why the demolition has been delayed.*

Emma Ray moved Bell's suggested motion. Christine Allen seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Neighborhood Partnership Program: The NPP was discussed. Bell included information on the grant in meeting packets. The NPP is a competitive grant funded with \$25,000 in City funds available to all neighborhoods "to support neighborhood events, beautification projects and other community-building projects..." Discussion occurred regarding whether the NIA should apply for the grant and, if so, what project(s) it would like to pursue. The group decided to submit an application. Discussion centered on a combination carnival/concert/movie night.

Christine Allen moved that the NIA submit a NPP application for a carnival/concert/movie night. Emma Ray seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

NIA SORT Committee Meetings with Topeka's Planning Department: Bell provided information on the meetings in the "Reports of Officers" in the NIA meeting packets. Tim Esparza, who has led many of the SORT committee's discussions, was in attendance from the planning department. Bell said the SORT committee had discussed a wide range of issues including new housing and housing rehabilitation, infrastructure (streets, sidewalks, curbs and alleys) and parks, community building, and land use. Housing condition, infrastructure, housing tenure, and crime total maps from 2016 also were reviewed to show where challenges existed. At the committee's final meeting on June 15 two target areas were identified for consideration: Northeast (roughly bounded by SW 10th, SW Lane, SW 11th, SW Lincoln, SW Munson, and SW Clay) and West (roughly bounded by SW 11th, SW Washburn, SW 12th, and SW Lane). Esparza said there would be another neighborhood-wide presentation to discuss the committee's work and decide the two target areas.

Adoption of Agenda: Joyce Revely moved adoption of the agenda. Allen seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Approval of May 8, 2017 NIA Meeting Minutes: Allen moved adoption of the minutes as presented. Ray seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Reading and Acceptance of Treasurer's Reports (Operations/Communications Budget, Envista Account): Pat DeLapp moved acceptance of both treasurer's reports. Ray seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Reports of Officers: Bell reviewed the report, which included SORT committee meetings and the NIA's meeting with Working Men of Christ Ministries and the City's Department of Neighborhood Relations on May 16.

Community Policing Report: Officer Michael Diehl gave the report and distributed handouts. He said there were 10 reported crimes during the last counting period (May 10 - July 10), including two domestic battery reports. Diehl said the TPD is working on the situation at 1111 SW Fillmore (just east of Tennessee Town). He said Tennessee Town is in a bubble, with serious crimes occurring around it but not within it. Diehl said he may be assigned to the TPD's gang unit and that he would let the NIA know if that happened. Don Fortin reported on damage at one of his properties and that nothing had been done. He said he is personally filing a complaint with the TPD.

Property Maintenance Report: There was no report. Carlos Hernandez has replaced Dennis Boyles as the NIA's property maintenance officer.

Citizens Advisory Council Report: Bell said, after the City Attorney's office initially advising Neighborhood Relations that the CAC couldn't hold a candidates' forum, that federal guidelines he checked in fact allowed the CAC to hold the forum. The NIA at its May 8 meeting discussed and agreed to holding the forum in Tennessee Town, either at the King's Court Complex or in Faith Temple Church's multipurpose room. Bell asked Lassiter if the church would be agreeable to holding the forum inside its multipurpose room. She said yes. A specific time and date for the event are yet to be determined. Bell said the next CAC meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m. on Wed., Aug. 2.

City Council Report: City Council Member and Tennessee Town resident Karen Hiller discussed voter registration activities for the August primary and November general elections for city council and mayor. She said the deadline to register is July 11. Hiller said thus far there were 400 more registered votes this year than in 2013.

Old Business - NIA SORT Committee Meetings with Topeka Planning Department: Bell and Esparza discussed this item under "Reports of Officers."

Old Business - City of Topeka and Abandoned Tires: DeLapp gave the report. He talked about how he started driving Tennessee Town looking for abandoned tires to turn over to the NIA's property maintenance officer, Dennis Boyles, and how he then started looking for abandoned tires in other neighborhoods. DeLapp said other cities have programs that give residents 14 days to bring in tires to a location with nominal or no fees. He said he had spoken with Topeka Public Works' Jason Peek about a local effort to collect abandoned tires as they are not only visually unappealing but pose health hazards from the standing water that collects in them. Discussion also occurred on state funds available for local abandoned tires' collection efforts.

Old Business - National Night Out Against Crime Update: Ray gave the report. She said \$211 had been raised at the Gospel Fest on June 17. She said finding funds and volunteers for the NIA's NNO remain her two biggest challenges and that she wanted to let people know that NNO is not an Asbury-Mt. Olive event but a NIA event. Ray said WMOC is volunteering and that she was doing outreach to churches looking for female volunteers. She said Shiloh Church is on board donating school supplies and that she would go to local dollar stores, too. Ray said NNO would have inflatables and that the liability would be covered by the inflatables' owner.

Old Business - International Academy, Basketball Tournament Updates: Lassiter gave the reports. She said the Academy is on its summer break. Lassiter said the basketball tournament would seek \$175 for inflatables and \$60 for medals and that Darrell Winston was coordinating the tournament this year. Bell asked Ray and Lassiter to get together to discuss their anticipated expenses for both events.

Allen moved to extend the meeting through “Announcements.” Ray second the motion. The motion was approved.

Old Business - Topeka JUMP, Heartland Visioning Updates: Revely gave the reports. She said Heartland Visioning was looking at code compliance issues, including speaking with landlords. Revely said there was an open, city-wide meeting on July 14 at the library that she wouldn't be able to attend. DeLapp said he would go in her place.

Old Business - CAC Candidates' Forum: The item was discussed under the “CAC Report.”

Old Business - 2017 NIA Goals: Bell presented a hard copy of the survey, mentioned that it was available at the NIA's website and lamented the lack of responses so far.

New Business - Scheduling Neighborhood Cleanup For September: Bell asked the group to schedule the fall cleanup the NIA holds in September this year so that its announcement could be included in the meeting notice flier that will go out in advance of the Sep. 11 NIA meeting. Discussion occurred on whether to have trucks and/or dumpsters for the event and that last year's fall cleanup didn't result in much refuse being collected in the two dumpsters provided. Bell said he would check to see how much it would cost to use trucks. It was also suggested to get more young people involved to help people get things to the curb for the trucks and/or to the dumpster(s).

Don Fortin moved that the NIA hold the cleanup on the second Saturday in September (Sep. 9) using trucks and/or dumpsters. Revely seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

New Business - Taxes Paid on 1194 SW Lane: Bell said the 2017 second-half taxes on 1194 SW Lane had been paid (see Envista account report in this packet).

Kudos: Bell thanked Cornerstone of Topeka, Inc. and Housing and Credit Counseling, Inc. for donating copy services to produce the NIA's meeting notice fliers and Lassiter for finding kids to distribute the fliers.

Announcements: Bell recognized the passing of Marge and Barney Heeney. Marge had been a consistent supporter of Lane Garden, including paying for mowing there for a number of years. He discussed speaking with Keep America Beautiful Topeka and Shawnee County's Philicia McKee about possibly renaming Lane Garden for Marge and Barney Heeney. He also recognized the passing of Chesney Park NIA leader Frank Hoge.

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Next NIA Meeting: 6:30 p.m., Monday, September 11, 2017, Buchanan Center, 1195 SW Buchanan.

Tennessee Town NIA General Membership Meeting
6:30 p.m., Monday, September 11, 2017
Buchanan Center Conference Room, 1195 SW Buchanan

Treasurer's Report for Sep. 11, 2017 General Membership Meeting: 2017 Operations/Communications Budget***

Tennessee Town NIA 2017 Operations and Communications Budget:				
Date	Piece Count	Transaction Type	Withdrawal	Balance
1-1-17	▶	▶	▶	\$1,080.00
2-24-17	302	Printing of Meeting Notice Cards (\$? ea.)	\$30.20	\$1,049.80
2-24-17	302	Postage for Meeting Notice Cards	\$76.54	\$973.26
4-28-17	302	Printing of Meeting Notice Cards (\$? ea.)	\$30.20	\$943.06
4-28-17	302	Postage for Meeting Notice Cards	\$76.54	\$866.52
6-26-17	1	State of KS Nonprofit Status	\$40.00	\$826.52
TOTALS:	▶	▶	\$253.48	\$826.52

Treasurer's Report for Sep. 11, 2017 General Membership Meeting: Envista Account

Tennessee Town NIA 2016-2017 Envista Account:			
Date	Transaction Type	Deposit/Withdrawal	Balance
3-27-16	Account opened	Deposit of \$5.00	\$5.00
9-22-16	Check from Working Men of Christ Ministries	Deposit of \$337.00	\$342.00
10-20-16	Payment of Lawyer's Title Closing Costs for 1192, 1194 SW Lane; Reimbursement of Pat DeLapp's Expenses Related to Closing Costs	Withdrawal of \$275.00 (\$200.00 for Lawyer's Title; \$75.00 for DeLapp's Expenses)	\$67.00
12-20-16	Emma Ray Donation	Deposit of \$5.00	\$72.02 (includes interest earned)
12-20-16	Payment of First Half of Property Taxes at 1194 SW Lane	Withdrawal of \$20.79	\$51.23
3-13-17	Account Balance Check	NA	\$51.23 (interest earned only on accounts with \$200+ on hand)
5-8-17	Account Balance Check	NA	\$51.23 (interest earned only on accounts with \$200+ on hand)
6-28-17	Payment of Second Half of Property Taxes at 1194 SW Lane	Withdrawal of \$21.08	\$30.15 (interest earned only on accounts with \$200+ on hand)
9-8-17	Account Balance Check	NA	\$30.15 (interest earned only on accounts with \$200+ on hand)

***2017 National Night Out and/or Basketball Tournament expenditures and payment for the truck for the Sep. 9 neighborhood clean up will appear on the Nov. 13, 2017 operations/communications report.

Tennessee Town NIA General Membership Meeting
6:30 p.m., Monday, September 11, 2017
Buchanan Center, 1195 SW Buchanan

Reports of Officers:

A. Neighborhood Leaders' Roundtable Meeting:

Bell and DeLapp attended the Neighborhood Leaders' Roundtable meeting, held from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, July 29, 2017, at the Oakland Community Center, 801 NE Poplar.

Jennifer Goodrich and Keya Downing, from the City Clerk's office, spoke on the requirements for neighborhood special events.

Visit Topeka President and CEO Brett Oetting spoke about the group and its efforts to bring visitors to Topeka. He also spoke on "Topeka365.com," the group's event website where neighborhoods can submit events.

Topeka Metropolitan Transit Director Susan Duffy spoke on her group working with USD 501 to provide its students with free rides during the school year. She said the program is using 501 grants. For more information, please go to Metro Transit's website at <http://www.topekametro.org/> or call 785-783-8610.

Shawnee County Waste's Joan Graves and Keep American Beautiful Topeka and Shawnee County's Philicia McKee spoke on their group's efforts.

Graves spoke on her group's involvement in the city's annual "Curb Your Clutter" NIA clean-up event. She also distributed a packet of information on the group's services. For more information on Shawnee County Waste, please go to its website at <http://www.snco.us/sw/> or call 785-233-4774. McKee said her group promotes beautification, recycling and litter reduction and provides education on those issues. She distributed materials including the group's 2017 calendar. For more information, please go to the group's website at <http://kabtopsh.org/> or call 785-224-0446.

The Community Resources Council's Mary Thomas and G.R. Laughlin spoke on the group's mission, which is to "connect the resources in our community through Collaboration, Advocacy, Reach and Education (CARE)." Thomas said NIAs being able to use the group's 501c(3) status to acquire funds for activities. Thomas said CRC acts as an accountant in such an arrangement, receiving funds, paying bills, and providing accountability. She said pursuing federal nonprofit status normally costs about \$800. Thomas said a NIA could become a CRC member at a reduced cost, \$100/year. Bell asked, given that NIAs don't always have the funds to pay that amount, if the City would work with CRC to negotiate a reduced rate. Neighborhood Relations' Monique Glaude said that city was working with CRC on that. Thomas and Laughlin also distributed materials. For more information on CRC, please go to the group's website at <https://crcnet.org/> or call at 785-233-1365.

B. Telephone Conversation with Shawnee County Commissioner Kevin Cook on Lane Garden:

Bell and Cook had the conversation on August 2, 2017.

Bell contacted Cook via e-mail to provide history on the NIA's efforts to make improvements at Lane Garden and its recent efforts to expand Lane Garden to include the lot at 1194 SW Lane. This is the e-mail Bell sent to Cook and copied to DeLapp and Lassiter:

“...For years now we've been trying to make improvements to the Lane Garden, a pocket park located at the intersection of SW 12th and Lane Streets, including expanding it to property the NIA acquired for that purpose. And for years we've been unable to do so because of the contentious nature of who owns the current Lane Garden.

“That contentious nature is solely because, during the parks and rec merger between Topeka and Shawnee County, Lane Garden wasn't included. I recently learned from LJ Polly that Lane Garden was the only pocket park in the city left out of the merger. While that may have begun as an oversight, it now feels patently unfair and the county's consistent unwillingness over the years to make it right feels like some kind of punishment for some crime we didn't commit. We are in limbo regarding trying to improve the only recognized greenspace in the NIA and it isn't because of anything we've done. This is especially painful for us as we have watched the county recently put the Aaron Douglas Park, located directly across the street from Lane Garden, under its umbrella.

“We're hopeful that you can help us to correct this mistake...”

Bell's e-mail to Cook also included details on the NIA's designation as a SORT neighborhood and how that would make money available in 2018-2019 to make improvements to an expanded Lane Garden and how it had been in touch with Bernie Heeney about a partnership involving Lane Garden.

In the telephone conversation Cook said that once 1194 SW Lane had been demolished, then he would sit down with the NIA and Shawnee County Parks and Recreation Director John Knight to discuss what could happen next.

C. August 2, 2017 Citizens Advisory Council Meeting:

Bell attended the meeting, held at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, August 2, 2017, in the first-floor conference room of the Holliday Building, 620 SE Madison. CAC Alternate Donna Rae Pearson attended and voted for the Tennessee Town NIA.

The major topic of discussion involved addressing attendance issues at CAC meetings. CAC Chair Howard Blackmon proposed instituting a graduated system to make NIAs responsible for getting a member to each of the quarterly CAC meetings. His proposal was to increase attendance at its meetings by withholding 25% of an NIA's operations/communications funds until attendance is reestablished (at which point full funding would be reestablished).

From the audience, Bell said he saw the proposal as a *traffic light*. If NIAs are sending people to the CAC meetings (it meets quarterly, so there are only 4 meetings per year), then the traffic light shows "green." No issues, no problems, full attendance by the NIAs and no need to even discuss operations/communications funds. If, however, a meeting is missed, then the traffic light shows "yellow." If that NIA then can make arrangements to have someone at the next CAC meeting, then the traffic light shows "green" again. If 2 consecutive meetings are missed (which would be half of the meetings in a calendar year), then the traffic light shows "red," and 25% of a NIA's operations/communications funds are put on hold, not deducted. If that NIA then can make arrangements to have someone at the next CAC meeting, then the traffic light shows "green" again and the funds are restored. If a 3rd consecutive CAC meeting is missed (out of 4 in a calendar year), then the 25% is deducted.

Bell said he believed that attendance is a *minimum requirement* and each NIA should be able to find a rep, an alternate and, if necessary, a list of others who are eligible to represent a NIA at the 4 yearly CAC meetings. The idea, he said, was to have as many voices and minds at CAC meetings as is possible to discuss challenges and create solutions.

Concerns were expressed by many CAC members that the proposal seemed punitive to them and that reductions to a NIA's operations/communications funds should not be used to encourage attendance, particularly given the issues arising regarding decreasing operations/communications funds and how those funds are already stretched through paying for newsletter/meeting expenses and neighborhood activities.

After much discussion the proposal was voted on and approved 9-7.

Neighborhood Relations said it would soon present workshops on corporate governance, one held on a Saturday morning and one on a week night. Details to come.

D. SORT Committee Meeting with Topeka Planning, Neighborhood Relations' Departments:

The NIA's SORT committee met with Topeka Planning, Neighborhood Relations' staff on a proposal related to the NIA's SORT grant at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 29, 2017, in the first-floor conference room of the Holliday Building, 620 SE Madison. Bell, Lassiter, Don Fortin, and Joyce Revely attended for the NIA. Dan Warner and Tim Esparza attended for the planning department. Sasha Haehn and Corrie Wright attended for Neighborhood Relations.

Haehn said that there is an opportunity for the NIA to use some of the \$330,000 in SORT housing rehabilitation funds for new housing construction. She said Cornerstone of Topeka, Inc., a Topeka affordable housing provider and Tennessee Town NIA partner and neighbor, is working with Stormont-Vail's David Cunningham to acquire the vacant property owned by Stormont-Vail on the west side of the first 1100 block of SW Lane (at the "jog" where Lane turns northeast, roughly bounded by 1131 SW Lane on the north and 1153 SW Lane on the south) and build two duplexes to be used for affordable housing. Ironically, this is essentially the same proposal the NIA previously proposed to Cunningham. To complete the "deal," Tennessee Town would need to use approximately \$160,000 of its \$330,000 in rehab funds to enable the property acquisition and the construction of one duplex now (funding would need to be found later for the construction of the second duplex, which could be done through pursuing funds in partnership with the City and Cornerstone). The in-fill funds would be expended in 2019.

The proposal also would involve acquiring three more vacant lots owned by Stormont-Vail and located near the proposed duplexes. Two of those vacant lots are found in the same block of SW Lane but on the east side and closer to SW 11th St. The third vacant lot is just around the corner from the first two, in the 1300 block of SW 11th (between Lane and Lincoln Sts). Planning's Tim Esparza said he would get Bell a PDF showing all of the lots involved.

The proposal would leave Tennessee Town with approximately \$170,000 in SORT funds for housing rehabilitation to be spent in 2018 and 2019. Wright said two types of rehab are available with the SORT funding:

- Major Rehab, where \$25,000 to \$30,000 is spent per rehab for owner-occupied housing (she said most rehabs are around \$30,000).
- Rental Rehab, where most rehabs are around \$15,000 per house for tenant-occupied housing.

New housing construction costs are typically higher than rehab costs, and given the opportunity to acquire vacant land that can be improved with new affordable housing through Cornerstone *and* Topeka Habitat for Humanity (both partners have recently constructed new housing in the NIA, Cornerstone at 1231 SW Clay and Habitat at 1221 SW Buchanan), *the Committee thought it worthwhile for Neighborhood Relations to continue discussions with Stormont-Vail and Cornerstone.*

This new opportunity, coupled with the plan the NIA already has approved to recruit Topeka private entities to donate labor, materials and financial resources to do minor exterior rehabilitation (painting, porch repairs, landscaping, etc.) would enable the NIA to do complete rehabs with SORT funds *and* make improvements to the exteriors of housing through recruiting private partners, could address new construction *and* provide another way to do housing rehabilitation. And given the SORT funds and the plans being put together, we can approach private entities with a pretty impressive plan of action.

Neighborhood Relations said that it would work with the NIA to contact property owners via letter and conduct "walk-and-talks" to meet directly with residents to discuss housing rehab opportunities in the NIA.

E. Meeting with Shawnee County Commissioner Kevin Cook, Shawnee County Parks and Recreation Director John Knight:

The NIA's executive committee (Bell, DeLapp and Lassiter) met with Shawnee County Commissioner Kevin Cook and Shawnee County Parks and Recreation Director John Knight at 3 p.m. on Thursday, September 7, 2017, in the conference room of the Buchanan Center, 1195 SW Buchanan. The purpose of the meeting was to continue discussions on whether the county would take the existing Lane Garden and the newly vacant lot at 1194 SW Lane under its umbrella so that the NIA can make improvements to the expanded Lane Garden.

The City of Topeka, which currently has the deed to the existing Lane Garden, has refused to allow any improvements to Lane Garden because parks are now under the domain of Shawnee County Parks and Rec, and the county hasn't helped because Lane Garden is owned by the city.

Cook and Knight discussed the county's master plan regarding park development and mentioned that at some point it might consider aquatic attractions or other improvements to the Aaron Douglas Park across the street from Lane Garden. Bell said that while those things might happen in the future, the NIA's only recognized greenspace had an opportunity to make improvements to a place of respite for NIA and city residents now and that improvements to Lane Garden and any future improvements to the art park would work together to make both parks better. Bell also said that since the NIA had the funds to start making improvements in 2018 through its SORT grant, then the county would not be on the hook for those improvements.

Regarding maintenance, Bell said it was working with Working Men of Christ Ministries to cut the current Lane Garden and the lot at 1194 SW Lane and would find additional partners to make sure that the expanded Lane Garden was maintained.

Cook suggested that the NIA contact the county's Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to state the NIA's case and then work up the county ladder. Bell said he knew board member LJ Polly and would contact him. (Note: Bell also knows board members Howard Blackmon and Kevin Rooney.)