

Tennessee Town NIA General Membership Meeting
6:30 p.m., Monday; September 12, 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
- II. Presentation: NIA Resident Rob Cockerham for Helping Resident with Home Repairs: Pat DeLapp (10 minutes)
- III. Lincoln Street Shootings: Topeka Police Department (15 min.)
- IV. Video Presentation: Walking Tour of Tennessee Town's History: Dr. Valerie Mendoza
- V. Presentation: "Missing Middle" Affordable Housing Proposal: Dan Warner
- VI. Adoption of Agenda (vote)
- VII. Approval of May 9 and July 11, 2022 General Membership Meeting Minutes (votes; pgs. 2-5 of packet)
- VIII. Acceptance of Treasurer's Reports (vote; pg. 6)
- IX. Fall Neighborhood Cleanup for late October, early November 2022, Asbury-Mt. Olive and 1163 SW Lane (vote)
- X. City Council (Karen Hiller), Citizen Advisory Council (Don Fortin) Reports (20 min. total)
- XI. Old Business:
 - A. 2022 DREAMS Neighborhood Consults Recommendations, Timeline (pgs. 7-8)
 - B. Private-Public Partnership with Stormont Vail, the City of Topeka and GraceMed Update (pgs. 8-9)
 - C. Lane Garden Update (pgs. 9-10)
 - D. Central Topeka Grocery Store Update (pg. 10)
 - E. Property Maintenance Department Concerns (pg. 10)
 - F. 2022 National Night Out (Don Fortin), Basketball Tournament (Sandy Lassiter) Reports
 - G. International Academy Update: Sandy Lassiter
- XII. New Business (10-15 min.):
 - A. 2022 Holiday Party in December? (if yes, vote for date and location)
 - B. Mailing/Delivery of Meeting Notice Cards for this Meeting
 - C. Hiring of New City Manager (pgs. 10-11)
- XIII. Kudos (10 min.):
 - A. Labor Day, 9-11 Recognitions
 - B. Our New (and Newer) NIA Members/Meeting Attendees/Nextdoor Members
 - C. Kudos from Attendees
- XIV. 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, Free Lawn Mowing: 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., November 14, 2022, Buchanan Ctr., 1195 SW Buchanan
- XV. Adjournment

Tennessee Town NIA General Membership Meeting
6:30 p.m., Monday, September 12, 2022
Buchanan Center Conference Room, 1195 SW Buchanan

Minutes of May 9, 2022 General Membership Meeting

Attendance: President Michael Bell, Vice President Pat Delapp, Secretary-Treasurer Sandra Lassiter, Donald Fortin, Emma Ray, Rob Cockerhan, Mark Gibbs, Christine Allen, Rachelle Jones, and Zachary Scott.

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

Adoption of Agenda:

Christine Allen moved adoption of the agenda as presented. Emma Ray seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Adoption of March 14, 2022 General Membership Meeting Minutes:

Pat DeLapp moved adoption of the minutes as presented. Allen seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Acceptance of Treasurer's Report:

Ray moved acceptance as presented. Donald Fortin seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Old Business: City Council Report:

Karen Hiller gave the report. She talked on the Changing the Culture of Property Maintenance proposal. Hiller said Karen Black, who is a civil rights' attorney based in Atlanta, is reviewing our codes. She spoke on the new 12th St. crosswalks and the \$610,000 in unspent HUD housing funds.

Old Business: 2022 DREAMS Neighborhood Goals, June Consults with City of Topeka:

Bell gave the report. He said that because the NIA had completed being a SORT NIA in 2019 that it didn't make much sense to apply for DREAMS One funding (which is the new name of the SORT) this year. He asked attendees to identify areas for infrastructure improvements under DREAMS Two (the new category). The following projects were identified:

- Kings' Court Complex
- Lane Garden
- New park in first 1100 block of SW Clay
- Sidewalks south of Munson
- Alley between Lincoln and Buchanan, 2nd 1100 block
- Alley between Lane and Lincoln, 11th to Munson (pave it)
- NIA Brown v. Board and Juneteenth events

Old Business: Citizen Advisory Council:

Don Fortin gave the report. He said the May 4 meeting included discussion on Futures 2045 (transportation plan) and an assessment of the group following its rules of engagement at meetings. Fortin said June 18 is designated as Free Landfill Day and talked about the "Get Google" event.

Fortin said a number of people had given presentations at the April 2022 meeting, including Michelle Stubblefield (Momentum 2027), Carla Hedquist, Adam Vaughn, and City Planning and Development Director Bill Fiander. Bell mentioned the affordable housing/food desert and food/nutrition insecurity work group report that he and Hi-Crest NIA rep Jill Rice put together.

Old Business: Tennessee Town Housing Nonprofit Partnerships:

Bell talked on the partnerships the NIA currently has with the City of Topeka, Topeka Habitat, HCCI and SENT, and said that the NIA would keep looking for other partners as housing is the basis of any residential neighborhood.

Old Business: Reintroduction of Private-Public Partnership with Stormont Vail, the City of Topeka and GraceMed:

Bell said that the proposal to work on housing, infrastructure, economic development, parks and other issues that was first presented to Stormont Vail in 2015 had been updated and represented. He said there is a different CEO and real estate manager in place now. He said the proposal is based on a similar effort successfully implemented in Columbus, OH that involves Nationwide Children's Hospital, the City of Columbus and a low-income neighborhood adjacent to the hospital.

Old Business: Grocery Store Update:

Bell said fund-raising efforts have continued after the Central Topeka Grocery Oasis (CTGO) had received grant funds from the Topeka Community Foundation (\$95,000) and the Sunflower Foundation (\$10,000).

Old Business: Walking Tour of Tennessee Town's History:

Bell referred attendees to a report contained in their meeting packets. He said Tennessee Town resident, NIA CAC alternate, planning commission and landmarks' commission member Donna Rae Person had shared with him that she and Dr. Valerie Mendoza had formed the history nonprofit The Other Road and that the 2 decided that they wanted to work on a presentation of Tennessee Town's history.

Old Business: National Night Out:

NNO NIA Coordinator Fortin said the effort included 45 neighborhoods last year and that it was aiming for 100 this year. National Night Out is the yearly national event that brings attention to crime and safety issues in neighborhoods.

Old Business: International Academy:

Sandy Lassiter gave the report. She said things were going well for the kids. She said Deborah Dandridge would be giving a presentation at the Colored Women's Clubhouse/Black History Museum, 1149 SW Lincoln, at 1 p.m. on May 12 and that there would be an Amtrak Topeka to Kansas City event on May 20.

Old Business: Efforts to Save 1142 SW Washburn:

DeLapp gave the report. He said the property owner at the address had indicated to him that he wanted to demolish the house although it seemed to be structurally sound. DeLapp said he had approached Topeka Habitat to partner on acquiring and rehabbing the house; Habitat was interested in working with the NIA on that. Unfortunately, he said the property owner was not sold on the idea and would proceed with the demolition.

Old Business: Property Maintenance Director, Officer Complaint:

Bell said nothing had changed. Property Maintenance Director Mike Haugen still refused to discipline Officer Carlos Hernandez for calling a NIA resident a liar and vowing never again to work with NIA Vice President DeLapp. Bell said he would continue to work on getting an apology from Haugen.

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

Bell provided in meeting packets the letter the Central Topeka Grocery Oasis had adopted on the proclamation.

Christine Allen moved to support the Shawnee County Health Department's Proclamation. DeLapp seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Kudos: Mother’s Day, Memorial Day Recognitions

Announcements: City programs, TOTO program, Habitat’s Aging in Place program.

Next Meeting: 6:30 p.m., Mon., July 11, 2022, Buchanan Center, 1195 SW Buchanan.

Adjournment:

Allen moved adjournment. Fortin seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Minutes of July 11, 2022 General Membership Meeting

Attendance: President Michael Bell, Vice President Pat Delapp, Secretary-Treasurer Sandra Lassiter, Donald Fortin, Emma Ray, Rob Cockerhan, Mark Gibbs, Rachele Jones, Deidra Bean, Brenda Redmon, and City Council Member Karen Hiller, .

President Bell called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

Kudo: Rob Cockerham for Helping Resident with Home Repairs:

Vice President Pat DeLapp led the recognition of Cockerham, who took it upon himself to help a resident by repairing a roof. Cockerham could not find the right color shingles for the job, so he removed some from another area of the house not so visible to get a better match. He charged not a penny for his help.

Adoption of Agenda:

DeLapp moved adoption of the agenda as presented. Rachele Jones seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Approval of May 9, 2022 General Membership Meeting Minutes:

Will be presented for approval at the Sep. 12 NIA meeting.

Acceptance of Treasurer’s Reports:

Will be presented for approval at the Sep. 12 NIA meeting.

Old Business: Walking Tour of Tennessee Town History Presentation:

Tennessee Town resident and library historian Donna Rae Pearson gave the presentation. She said the idea of the tour was born about 7 years ago. She and Dr. Valerie Mendoza have formed the nonprofit “The Other Roads” dedicated to history. The nonprofit is partnering on 2 grants, one for \$9,500 through the State Historical Society and the other for \$20,000 through the University of Kansas. She asked that the 1st Tennessee Town tour occur on the date for National Night Out (Aug. 6, 2022). Pearson distributed a handout with tour locations.

Old Business: 2022 National Night Out, Basketball Tournament Updates:

Don Fortin, NNO Coordinator, and Sandy Lassiter (basketball tournament) gave updates. Both events will be held at 9 a.m. on Sat., Aug. 6, 2022.

Old Business: 2022 DREAMS Neighborhood Goals, Consults:

Information was provided in meeting packets on goals primarily established at the May 9 NIA meeting.

Old Business: Private-Public Partnership with Stormont Vail, the City of Topeka and GraceMed Health Clinic:

Bell discussed reapproaching Stormont Vail regarding the partnership to enable neighborhood revitalization in housing, infrastructure and other areas. The NIA's executive committee initially approached Stormont Vail in 2015 with its partnership proposal. Eventually, because of Stormont Vail, the effort faded away.

Old Business: Request for New Property Maintenance Officer:

Bell discussed the request, which stemmed from former Property Maintenance Officer Carlos Hernandez calling a NIA resident a liar and refusing to work with the duly elected NIA vice president, Pat DeLapp. Property Maintenance Director Mike Haugen denied the request. The NIA will continue to work to get a new officer.

Old Business: Central Topeka Grocery Store Update:

Bell said 3 new board members recently had been added. They are ShaMecha Simms (Historic Old Town officer, CAC rep.), Tim Laurent (principal, Robinson Middle School) and James Monson (Marketing, an Entrepreneurship and Innovation degree candidate and a Masters in Business Administration student at Washburn University).

Old Business: City Council Report:

Karen Hiller gave the report. She said the Changing the Culture of Property Maintenance document was being updated.

Old Business: Citizen Advisory Council Report:

Don Fortin gave the report. He discussed board training being offered and a number of handouts that had been distributed at CAC meetings.

Bell, who is a CAC at-large member, expressed concerns that the body only educates (important, yes) but doesn't advocate (last time was the DREAMS proposal at the beginning of 2021), which is part of its charge per the CAC ordinance.

Old Business: International Academy Update:

Sandy Lassiter gave the report. She said things were going well and that the kids were on break.

New Business:

None

Kudos:

Independence Day and Juneteenth recognitions.

Announcements:

City programs, computers for seniors and free lawn mowing programs, TOTO program, and Habitat's Aging in Place Program. Next meeting: 6:30 p.m., Mon., Sep. 12, 2022; Buchanan Center, 1195 SW Buchanan.

Adjournment:

Fortin moved adjournment. Jones seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 9:18 p.m.

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Treasurer's Report for Sep. 12, 2022 General Membership Meeting:

| Tennessee Town NIA 2022 Operations and Communications Budget: | | | | |
|--|--------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Date | Piece Count | Transaction Type | Withdrawal | Balance |
| 1-1-22 | ▶ | ▶ | ▶ | \$983.02 (same as 2021) |
| 1-1-22 | 1 | CRC Tier-Two Membership | \$0.00 | \$983.02 |
| 2-21-22 | 302 | Printing of Meeting Notice Cards | \$27.90 | \$955.12 |
| 2-21-22 | 302 | Postage for Meeting Notice Cards | \$72.54 | \$882.58 |
| 4-18-22 | 302 | Printing of Meeting Notice Cards | \$27.90 | \$854.68 |
| 4-18-22 | 302 | Postage for Meeting Notice Cards | \$72.54 | \$782.14 |
| 6-1-22 | 1 | State of KS Nonprofit Status | \$40.00 | \$742.14 |
| 6-20-22 | 302 | Printing of Meeting Notice Cards | \$27.90 | \$714.24 |
| 6-20-22 | 302 | Postage for Meeting Notice Cards | \$72.54 | \$641.70 |
| TOTALS: | ▶ | ▶ | \$341.32 | \$641.70 |

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.

National Night Out and Basketball Tournament expenses will appear on the next support budget report.

Envista Free-Will Donation Report for Sep. 12, 2022 General Membership Meeting:

| Tennessee Town NIA 2016-2021 Envista Account: | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Date | Transaction Type | Deposit/Withdrawal | Balance |
| 11-12-18 | Balance Check | None | \$139.47 |
| First of the month going through 9-1-22 | Balance Checks: Dividend of \$0.01 paid each time | Deposit | \$140.15 |
| 1-15-20 | Cash Donation: Michael Bell (to keep account open) | Deposit | \$5.00 |
| TOTALS: | ▶ | ▶ | \$145.15 |

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2022 DREAMS Neighborhood Consults City of Topeka Project, Funding Recommendations:
Neighborhood Plan:

NIA Infrastructure Projects (DREAMS 2)

Alleys:

Alley between Lincoln and Buchanan, Munson to 12th:

Possible work: Alley repairs and construction - alleys between Lincoln and Buchanan the 2nd 1100 block aligns with the neighborhood plan.

Recommended for approval? Yes

Estimated budget: \$181,280 (Condition of sewer needs to be determined. If sewer condition warrants, sewer needs to be replaced prior to replacement of alley. \$400 per LF for sewer if needs replacements. 515' x \$400=\$206,000).

Alley between Buchanan and Clay, Munson to 12th:

Possible work: Alley repairs and construction - alley behind Asbury-Mt. Olive Church aligns with the neighborhood plan.

Recommended for approval? Yes

Estimated budget: \$176,000 [Sewer was constructed with PVC in 2004 (no need to replace in current project)].

Alley between Lane and Lincoln, 11th to Munson:

Possible work: Remove gravel and pave alley.

Recommended for approval? No. City policy is that no gravel alleys are eligible to be paved. Staff will grade the alley and add gravel as needed. My responses to this determination:

“I wanted to follow up with you regarding our discussions during the recently completed DREAMS public works consult on the unpaved alley between SW Lane and Lincoln Sts., running from SW 11th south to SW Munson. Specifically, I wanted to address the city policy you articulated regarding not paving unpaved alleys.

“That policy is arbitrary and punitive. It is arbitrary because paved but distressed alleys can be torn up and replaced with new alleys while unpaved alleys cannot be paved. Multiple paved but distressed alleys in Tennessee Town over the past 15+ years have been replaced with new alleys. Why can paved but distressed alleys be replaced while unpaved alleys cannot be replaced with paved alleys? It can't be because of costs because the difference between the two alleys, one torn out and repaved and one unpaved, couldn't be enough to justify that.

“That policy is punitive most notably because of the affects it has on the residents who use the alley to access their homes from it. Inclement weather (rain, melted snow) create drainage problems as water collects in the unpaved alley. That creates challenges for those attempting to navigate the alley to get to their homes or simply to pass through.

“The alley in question has been a source of concern for years, yet nothing changes. I am asking that this policy be reviewed and changed to enable the paving of the alley in question.”

And “Here's the challenge I have, Braxton (Copley, Public Works Director). I have to continue to try to explain to Tennessee Town residents generally and particularly those situated along the alley in question why that alley remains the *only unpaved alley in the neighborhood* and that the City *refuses* to do anything about it. All of that has happened as other paved alleys in the neighborhood have been repaved in the past 15-20 years.

“It's completely reasonable for those residents to think that the City's actions here are arbitrary and potentially discriminatory as this alley is located in a low- to moderate-income NIA and given this alley's unique position as the only unpaved alley within the neighborhood.

“This is what happened in Minneapolis in 2008 (<https://www.tcdailyplanet.net/northeast-s-forgotten-alleys-might-finally-be-due-paving/>). I'm not crazy about assessing property owners fees for the unpaved alley replacement as paved alley replacements happen all of the time with funds taken from the City's budget, but the assessments could be spread out over a long period of time so as not to hit property owners too hard.

“It's at least worth considering.”

Sidewalks:

Sidewalk repair and construction - including and south of SW Munson (also including Huntoon, Washburn, Lane, Lincoln, Buchanan and Clay St., but not 12th St.) This aligns with planning department.

Possible work: repair or construction.

Recommended for approval: No. The City is already replacing all non-compliant sidewalks in this neighborhood in 2022 as part of the Pedestrian Master Plan sidewalk replacement program.

Sidewalk on north side of Faith Temple Church

Possible work: repair or construction.

Recommended for approval: In process (church is working with public works).

Pedestrian Mid-Block Lighting and Signing:

Installation of pedestrian midblock lighting and signage within and including the boundaries of the Tennessee Town NIA.

Possible work: Pedestrian mid-block lighting - this needs to be outlined by the Engineering department in the lighting guidance whether feasible.

Recommended for approval: No. For lighting Evergy is to be contacted and then the electric bill must be paid for by the NIA or the individual property owners requesting lighting. Mid-block signing for pedestrians is not appropriate except in extraordinary situations. Pedestrians are to cross at the cross streets where they are expected to cross by motorists. My response:

“Signing was NOT requested in our DREAMS submission. We were told that mid-block lighting funding might have been available through a previous program implemented in the Historic Old Town NIA. Didn't happen.

“Years ago funding for mid-block lighting had been available through the US Dept. of Energy and the Kansas Dept. of Transportation, but the City of Topeka REFUSED to help us to complete an application for that funding.

“We will continue to seek funding for a project that is NOT about where pedestrians cross the street. It is about the safer passage of pedestrians throughout our neighborhood at night, a precedent already set by the period lighting installed years ago along Washburn and Lane.”

Private-Public Partnership with Stormont Vail, the City of Topeka and GraceMed Update:

From Stormont-Vail CEO Robert Kenagy in an email dated Wed, Jul 27 at 4:43 PM:

Mr. Bell,

Your power point is impressive and features Stormont Vail prominently. We have a planning process that results in our strategic plan which includes specific actions we will take to support the mission of the organization.

While it is true that the goals and actions contained within the power point are ones that fit our mission and we are committed to joining with others to address, we have the planning process that will define our participation.

We are in the midst of preparing our strategic plan covering the next three years and are in the midst of a particularly difficult time influenced by COVID and staffing and supply chain issues.

The NIA's proposal is modeled after the "Healthy Neighborhoods, Healthy Families (HNHF)" initiative in Columbus, OH. That initiative is a public-private partnership involving Nationwide Children's Hospital, the City of Columbus and a low-income neighborhood adjacent to the hospital.

Here is the HNHF initiative:

Nationwide Children's Hospital has proudly called the area around our downtown campus home for more than 118 years. So when we announced the Healthy Neighborhoods, Healthy Families (HNHF) initiative in September 2008, it was with a vision and commitment to making a significant, positive difference for our neighbors and our surrounding community.

Modeled after successful revitalization programs across the country, HNHF seeks to remove barriers to the health and well-being of thousands of families in our neighborhood using a multi-pronged approach. HNHF is a public-private collaboration that targets five impact areas: affordable housing, education, health and wellness, community enrichment and economic development.

Affordable Housing:

Renovating and selling homes in Columbus' South Side is the goal of Affordable Housing. By addressing vacant and abandoned properties and offering programs like home buyer assistance/education and homeowner grant repair, we can revive the neighborhood. (Opportunity: HCCI, City of Topeka)

Health and Wellness:

By improving residents' access to health care coverage, primary care, fresh fruits and vegetables, we are helping to prevent obesity and pre-maturity, while reducing infant mortality rates. (Opportunity: New grocery store)

Education:

The creation of mentoring and academic enrichment programs at Livingston Avenue Elementary School, as well as child consultant services to child care centers, will improve early childhood education. Taking it a step further, expanding after school programming to target parents and creating literacy education programs for children and adults will help families, not just children.

Safe & Accessible Neighborhoods:

By supporting plans for roadway infrastructure improvements (like sidewalks, bike paths and enhanced green space), the quality and appearance of the neighborhood will improve, not to mention the ease of transportation. Creating both crime prevention programs in the area and personal safety programs, like bike helmet and car seat safety checks, will improve the personal safety of residents.

Workforce Development:

By targeting economic development efforts and supporting the Parsons Avenue Vision Plan, we will increase the workforce in Columbus' South Side. We also will increase employment and career fairs for jobs and vendor opportunities at Nationwide Children's Hospital as well as establishing student internship programs for the younger generations.

HNHF has demonstrated noteworthy, tangible outcomes in each of the five areas listed above. Our current success has been fueled through the collaboration of numerous partners including, most notably, the City of Columbus, United Way and Community Development for all People (CD4AP). We thank everyone involved in HNHF's progress to date and look forward to continuing our successful collaboration in the years ahead.

**Please see the public-private partnership proposal being distributed at this meeting.

Lane Garden Update:

The following points were discussed in a Aug. 19 phone call involving Bell and Shawnee County Parks & Rec Director Tim Laurent:

Mowing:

Laurent will prepare 2 memorandums of understanding committing the county to mow Lane Garden. The MOUs will involve the NIA, the county and the City of Topeka.

Yearly costs to mow Lane Garden and 1194 SW Lane negligible (about \$2,000; Commissioners Cook and Mays have signed off).

Laurent has committed to continue speaking with all 3 commissioners regarding bringing Lane Garden under the county's umbrella.

Central Topeka Grocery Store Update:

- The Central Topeka Grocery Oasis (CTGO) made it through the first round of applications for ARPA funds to purchase highly energy efficient, no carbon refrigerators so that the store can keep overhead low and pass the energy savings on to lower the cost of food for customers.
- CTGO is hoping to hear from Grace Med soon on the lease agreement we have prepared for them.
- The group is learning about ways to save through financing the construction of the store.
- CTGO will have a table and samples of fresh, locally grown food at the Robinson Open House on November 2.
- The group has three great new board members.

Property Maintenance Department Concerns:

Below is a PDF of multiple email strings involving myself as the elected Tennessee Town NIA president and various City of Topeka officials regarding the performance of the City's Property Maintenance Department, specifically Property Maintenance Officer Carlos Hernandez and his supervisor, Department Director Mike Haugen.

There has been much discussion recently about a rebranded property maintenance department through the City's efforts to "change the culture" there. Unfortunately, the property maintenance department that has existed for decades takes every criticism personally and defensively lashes out at those who dare to question its service to the people it is supposed to serve. I don't know if discussions on those issues have occurred during the "change the culture" process.

I will let the emails speak for themselves.

NIA website (at the homepage): tenntownnia.weebly.com.

Hiring of New City Manager:

Below is a key issue for Topeka's most challenged neighborhoods that I hope the four city manager finalists consider and take seriously.

Disinvestment in Topeka's low- to moderate-income neighborhoods:

1) We LMI activists used to refer to the Topeka's donut hole, where the historic lack of investment inside the donut has been juxtaposed against investments outside the hole on our city's periphery that have increased, has exacerbated the challenges those neighborhoods within the hole face. As time has passed, however, the donut hole has revealed itself to be a horseshoe of disinvestment, with the open end facing east. Topeka must meaningfully address this challenge (https://www.cjonline.com/story/news/local/2021/01/30/topeka-east-central-hi-crest-neighborhood-say-investment-has-left-them-behind/6701840002/?utm_source=cjonline-Daily%20Briefing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=daily_briefing&utm_term=hero).

2) All 21 of Topeka's NIAs (Neighborhood Improvement Associations, where at least 51% of residents are at or below 80% of Area Family Income) are inside the horseshoe (<https://s3.amazonaws.com/cot-wp-uploads/wp-content/uploads/neighborhoodrelations/communityengagement/NIAs.pdf>).

3) 1930s-'40s Topeka redlining maps still are largely true and are reflected through today's neighborhood health maps (www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5jCZdSdKrM).

4) Our next city manager must prioritize this issue and these areas as they actually present the best areas for investment (www.strongtowns.org/journal/2017/1/10/poor-neighborhoods-make-the-best-investment).

Please feel free to share this appeal with interested others.

To contact the City of Topeka, please email the city clerk at cclerk@topeka.org, Mayor Mike Padilla at mayor@topeka.org and the city council at council@topeka.org.