

Tennessee Town NIA General Membership Meeting
6:30 p.m., Monday, July 11, 2016, Buchanan Center Conference Room, 1195 SW Buchanan

TENTATIVE AGENDA:

- I. Welcome
- II. Guest: Shanae' Elem, Topeka JUMP: Group's Efforts Regarding Affordable Housing in Topeka
- III. Adoption of Agenda
- IV. Approval of May 9, 2016 General Membership Meeting Minutes (pgs. 2 - 3 of meeting packet)
- V. Reading and Acceptance of Treasurer's Report (pg. 4)
- VI. Reports of Officers (pgs. 5-6)
- VII. Community Policing Report
- VIII. Property Maintenance Report: Dennis Boyles
- IX. Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) Report: Donald Fortin
- X. City Council Report: Karen Hiller
- XI. Old Business:
 - A. Huntoon Dillon's Closure Update (see pgs. 7-9 for the letter sent to Kroger Co.)
 - B. NIA Bank Account Report
 - C. 2017 Neighborhood Empowerment Grant Application: Support Letters Received, Vote
 - D. Lane Garden Expansion Report
 - E. Minor Exterior Housing Rehab Initiative Update
 - F. Health and Wellness Programming at Tennessee Town Plaza Apartments Update
 - G. 2016 National Night Out Update: Emma Ray
 - H. 2016 Basketball Tournament Update: Sandy Lassiter
 - I. International Academy Update: Sandy Lassiter
- XII. New Business:
 - A. Electing a Citizens Advisory Council Alternate (see candidate's bio at pg. 10)
 - B. Status of Stormont Vail-Owned Properties in First 1100 Block of SW Lane
 - C. "Adopting" NIA Activities (In Response to Reduced 2016 Operations/Communications Funds):
Meeting Notice Cards
 - D. Finding Volunteers to Maintain Lane Garden
- XIII. Kudos: Recognizing the Good News and Deeds of Our Neighbors and Friends:
 - A. Recognizing All of the Tennessee Town NIA Stakeholders and Their Contributions to the Neighborhood
 - B. Other Recognitions from Attendees
- XIV. Announcements:
 - A. 39th Topeka Police Dept. Citizens' Academy: Classes held Thursdays 6-9 p.m. starting Aug. 10. If you're 18 or older, please contact Liz Toyne at 785-368-9237. Applications can be picked up at the TPD or downloaded at the City's website - http://www.topeka.org/pdfs/Citizens_Academy_Application.pdf
 - B. 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
 - C. Next Meeting: 6:30 p.m., Mon., September 12, 2016, Buchanan Center, 1195 SW Buchanan
- XV. 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](https://twitter.com/tenntown)

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Minutes of May 9, 2016 General Membership Meeting:

Attendees: President Michael Bell, Vice President Pat DeLapp, Secretary-Treasurer Sandra Lassiter, Property Maintenance Employee John Schmidt, Emma Ray, John Williams, Joyce Revely, Karen Hiller, Marge Heeney, TPD Officers Jennerett and Stricklin.

Bell called the meeting to order at 6:39 p.m.

Marge Heeney had to leave early. Just wanted to report in.

Pat DeLapp moved adoption of the meeting agenda. Joyce Revely second the motion. The motion was approved.

A correction was made to the March 14 meeting minutes, pg. 2, paragraph 1: "Working Men of Christ's Spencer Lindsay said his group would be willing to pay the closing costs of *about* \$300 in exchange for furniture that DeLapp has available."

Emma Ray moved approval of the March 14, 2016 minutes as amended. Pat DeLapp second the motion. The motion was approved.

There was no Treasurer's Report because Neighborhood Relations still has not calculated how much each NIA will receive this year for operations and communications.

Officer Stricklin is working in concert with Officer Diehl as a community officer. He shared the most current crime stats for Tennessee Town. He said there had been a report of gunshots around Buchanan St. Tennessee Town residents John Williams and Joyce Revely confirmed that. He also said car thefts are a TPD focus. He then shared his contact info.

John Schmidt reported on Property Maintenance. Specifically about the 770 vacant structures citywide. He said it is necessary to file a **311** form online in order to have a complaint filed about a structural nuisance.

There was no Citizens Advisory Council report. Don Fortin has not contacted us about his lack of attendance at those meetings. The NIA may have to select another representative.

Councilmember Karen Hiller shared info. on the budget process. We can communicate through the City's website: www.topeka.org. Council will talk about it at this Tuesday's meeting. She addressed the house Working Men of Christ are renovating as a discipleship house. Initially the house was to be rezoned multi family. The planning department suggested that it be zoned Planned Unit of Development. Angle parking spaces at the Buchanan Center to be approved.

Hiller said the Crime Summit went well. Donald Fortin was present from Tennessee Town. Quality was good. Suggestions could be taken to the neighborhood level. Summit discussion sessions should probably have more neighborhood participation as well as small sessions about crime and strategies. 5-year crime stats being done neighborhood by neighborhood.

Councilwoman Hiller said there had been no response yet about the vacant Dillon's. Discussions on what might succeed the Dillon's have included the Urban Market concept. Hiller mentioned Sheila Lowrey as her Dillon's contact. Hiller mentioned Topeka JUMP and how the group has set affordable housing as a goal and how it plans to work with the City to set up a task force involving the Citizens Advisory Council.

Ray moved to extend meeting through Kudos. Joyce Revely seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

President Bell presented a draft letter from the NIA to Kroger Co. (Dillon's parent company) to move forward with gaining control of the building and property at 1400 SW Huntoon, the former Dillon's location. Discussion occurred on what should be in the NIA's letter.

President Bell will send a letter to Dillon's /Kroger corporation and cc Topeka's Governing Body, Go Topeka, Topeka Chamber of Commerce, and Central Strong Topeka's Brett Martin and Megan James.

President Mike has approached Envista Credit Union about opening an NIA account. (The savings account was opened on May 27.)

Bell said the Habitat house to be built in the first 1200 block of SW Buchanan is still in the works. More info. is forthcoming.

Bell said communication had stalled between the Topeka Housing Authority and the NIA regarding the health and wellness programming the two entities had met on earlier this year. He said he'd follow up on it and report back.

Suggestion that we resubmit Lane Garden Improvements for this year's 2017 Neighborhood Empowerment Grant application with applicable updates to properties involved and amenity costs. Group agreed by consensus to do that.

Ray spoke on National Night Out (NNO). She said she would coordinate the NIA's event and was starting earlier this year. She said there will be concerns moving forward about finding money to cover the costs of the event. She said expenses would include \$200 for inflatables and \$500 contribution from churches and donations for food.

Lassiter said the annual Tennessee Town Basketball Tournament would be held on Aug. 6, the same day as NNO.

Update on International Academy by Sandy. 17 Students and 10 on waiting list.

Regarding the proposal for angled parking in front of the Buchanan Center, *Emma Ray moved to support the angled spaces in front of the Buchanan Center. Joyce Revely seconded the motion. The motion was approved.*

Bell spoke on public comment on the City's Consolidated Action (1-year) and Strategic (5-yr) plans. Con Plan involves how HUD and local monies will be spent for low- to moderate-income populations.

Discussion occurred on Gov. Sam Brownback's veto of the Kansas Senate bill on abandoned structure due to concerns about property "takings." DeLapp explained the old \$1.00 home program and suggested that it be brought up to today's standards. Give the owner the cost of the demolition. That is what is taking place in Kansas City, Missouri.

Bell thanked those who have helped to maintain Lane Garden and asked for suggestions for a person to cut Lane Garden. Ray suggested David Banks, who cuts the grass at Asbury-Mt. Olive Church.

Announcements on the meeting agenda were referred to.

Next meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, July 11, 2016, at the Buchanan Center.

Ray moved adjournment. John Williams second the motion. The motion was approved.

Meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

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Treasurer's Report for July 11, 2016 General Membership Meeting¹:

Tennessee Town NIA 2016 Operations and Communications Budget:				
Date	Piece Count	Transaction Type	Withdrawal	Balance
1-1-16	▶	▶	▶	\$1,500.00²
2-9-16	1	Reimbursement to Emma Ray for NNO	\$50.00	\$1,450.00
2-26-16	301	Printing of Meeting Notice Cards (\$0.08 each)	\$24.08	\$1,425.92
2-26-16	301	Postage for Meeting Notice Cards	\$80.77	\$1,345.15
4-28-16	301	Printing of Meeting Notice Cards (\$0.08 each)	\$24.08	\$1,321.07
4-28-16	301	Postage for Meeting Notice Cards	\$77.44	\$1,243.63
TOTALS:	▶	▶	\$256.37	\$1,243.63

¹This report does not reflect the July 11, 2016 meeting notice cards printing and postage. Those costs will appear on the next treasurer's report.

Note: Moving forward we have 2 more NIA meeting notice card mailings (September and November), 1 NNO/Basketball Tournament notice card mailing (by the end of the week of July 18), and the Neighborhood Clean-Up in October (that mailing would go out as a notice card at least 2 weeks before the clean-up, probably near the end of September. The NIA will schedule the October clean-up at its Sep. 12 meeting).

At approximately \$100.00 per mailing, that would mean 4 more mailings would total about \$400.00. That would bring our balance down to about \$840.00. The costs of the July 11 meeting notice cards brings that balance down to about \$740.00. We'll have that money left to contribute to NNO/Basketball Tournament and the year-end Holiday Party. That's a tight budget, but we can do it! (see "Adopting" NIA Activities" at the agenda for more info. on the operations/communications fund).

²Neighborhood Relations' Roseanna Haugen said this line item had been reduced from \$2,000 (which had been the allotment for op's/comm's for each NIA for some time) to \$1,500 because 1 NIA, Monroe, is now active again and had to have an op's/comm.'s budget. She said that 2 currently inactive NIAs might be up and running this year, too, and so adjustments had to be made for the potential NIAs. I asked Roseanna what would happen to the op's/comm.'s funds of the 2 currently inactive NIAs if 1 or both of them weren't able to become active this year. Would those funds be returned to the line item and divided up amongst the recognized NIAs? I haven't received an answer so far but will follow up.

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Reports of Officers:

A. Neighborhood Empowerment Grant Workshop:

Bell attended the workshop, held from 9 - 10 a.m. on May 21 at Neighborhood Relations. The requirements for the grant were discussed, as well as a new component which enables applicant neighborhoods without a neighborhood plan to submit paperwork requesting one. NR staff said available NEG funds had been reduced from approximately \$150,000 to approximately \$120,000 because of a reduction in HUD funds. Bell asked if the City had been asked to kick in some money to address reduced grant funds coupled with increasing needs. NR staff said it had asked the City for NEG funds for program years 2017 and 2018.

NR staff said NEG applicants submitting parks projects should get together with Shawnee County Parks and Recreation's Bill Riphahn by June 1. (Note: Bell contacted Riphahn via e-mail on May 22 about the NIA's application for Lane Garden Improvements.)

B. Meeting with Topeka JUMP to Discuss Its Efforts Regarding Affordable Housing in Topeka:

Bell and DeLapp met with Shanae' M. Elem, Topeka JUMP Lead Organizer; and Joyce Revely, Tennessee Town resident and JUMP board member, at 10:30 a.m. on June 20 at the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library. Revely set up the meeting to further discuss and clarify Topeka JUMP efforts with the NIA after it initially had been discussed at the NIA's May 9 meeting.

Elem said Topeka JUMP consisted of 20 local church congregations and that the group has "house meetings" where Topeka JUMP members and church congregants get together to discuss local concerns. She said USD 501's graduation rate was the first issue Topeka JUMP took up. The group's efforts led to "wraparound" services to meet students' needs. She said supported employment for those with persistent mental issues was the second issue the group took up. The groups' most recent issue, she said, is affordable housing.

Those in attendance discussed "substandard housing" as it's defined in the city's Consolidated Plan and how approximately 7,000 Topekans pay more than 30 percent of their income on rent. Elem said Topeka JUMP is particularly interested in using the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to address affordable housing in Topeka. She said Topeka JUMP wants to create an oversight committee that would include all affordable housing stakeholders, including tenants. The oversight committee would look at and approve projects for people between 30 and 50 percent of Area Family Income and would look at both in-fill housing and housing rehabilitation options. She also said transitional housing would be a priority and cited the Hi-Crest NIA as a prime location.

Elem said Topeka JUMP also would pursue programs that move more people to homeownership and would pursue a city ordinance (either a tweaked current ordinance or a new one) that better defines what affordable housing is. DeLapp mentioned the \$1 homebuying program that is working in Kansas City, MO and said doing housing rehabs to HQS (Housing Quality Standards) would help. (Note: Bell and DeLapp said that the City currently requires "Cadillac rehabs," which run up the costs of rehabs per house and make some structurally sound houses fail to qualify for housing rehab funds because the "Cadillac" standard is more than Topeka's standard of 30 percent of the value of the house) when "Chevy rehabs" would do nicely. Elem also said Topeka JUMP would pursue land banking* for Topeka, which has been discussed before but never formally pursued.

*Tennessee Town used land banking to amass parcels of lots in the early 2000s to be used for the in-fill housing that was created during that period throughout the neighborhood, most notably in the first 1200 block of SW Lincoln.

Elem said Topeka JUMP is a citizens' organization that seeks to create a "seat at the table" for citizens. She said the group has met with Mayor Larry Wolgast and discussed with him how something different needs to be done with affordable housing in Topeka. She said the group had asked Wolgast to chair its Affordable Housing task force mentioned above and to help it get the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to Topeka. Wolgast agreed on May 5. She said there are 10-11 task force members right now comprised of housing providers and JUMP members. She said that for every \$1 invested in the Affordable Housing Trust Fund \$6 is generated to use. She suggested that local funds could be raised through fees already charged for a variety of things.

Elem said Topeka JUMP is working to attract more young professionals to the effort and suggested that some rehabs could be targeted to that group. She also said that Topeka JUMP is part of a national network that has been in existence for about 30 years. She said the Lexington, KY group had obtained the Affordable Housing Trust fund for that city.

C. Neighborhood Leaders' Training:

Bell attended the training, held from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. on June 25 at Neighborhood Relations. The training included a presentation by Topeka Police Dept. Ofc. Matt Wilson on CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design). The rest of the training included meeting management and facilitation tips, door knocking/block walks, and a resource listing page. A binder with materials was provided. There was one interactive session where attendees were split into groups and brainstormed ideas regarding what a new NIA might do to get started.

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NIA's Kroger Co. Letter Regarding 1400 SW Huntoon:

June 19, 2016

W. Rodney McMullen, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Kroger Co.
Jessica C. Adelman, Group Vice President, Corporate Affairs, Kroger Co.
Brian Folmer, Kansas Real Estate Manager, Kroger Co.
1014 Vine Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202-1100

Dear Mr. McMullen, Ms. Adelman and Mr. Folmer:

This letter comes to you all with a great deal of concern. The undersigned represent the Tennessee Town Neighborhood Improvement Association, a low- to moderate-income neighborhood located in Topeka, Kansas. Tennessee Town is the neighborhood in which the recently closed Dillon's Store #58 is located. After 40 years of being a neighborhood anchor the Dillon's corporation, with only two weeks notice, closed said location on February 13 of this year. This corporate decision has made Tennessee Town revitalization efforts more difficult, removed the option of healthy food options in proximity to their homes from its residents; made residents who walked to the store find other more expensive and less convenient options; removed jobs from the neighborhood, and created a food desert in the center of the capital city of Kansas, among other harms.

The Tennessee Town NIA is very concerned about what will happen to the former Dillon's at 1400 SW Huntoon, particularly as it has sat vacant for four months and has forced neighborhood residents, as well as those living in other Central Topeka neighborhoods, to find other, less convenient, alternatives for food, medicine, and financial services. We're also concerned about what will happen to the adjacent property, which contains the Aaron Douglas Art Park and mural and annually hosts the Aaron Douglas Art Fair, which has become an important and popular city event since its inception 10 years ago.

We want this to change. Tennessee Town residents will be most affected by a building that remains vacant and becomes an eyesore for each month that it remains vacant. Tennessee Town residents will be most affected by being excluded from what happens in our own neighborhood.

Kroger apparently has made its decision to leave Central Topeka. What we want is a chance to find a suitable replacement so that the many residents of Tennessee Town and Central Topeka can make whole again their daily lives. What we want is for Kroger to give us that chance, either through a new incarnation involving Kroger or through another grocer.

We realize that with the closure of Dillon's Store #58 the statements and actions made in response to the closure seemed to make a de facto declaration that traditional grocery store models might not work at that location. *We absolutely believe that a store can thrive there.* That said, innovation may be needed to come up with a model and a fresh approach that will not only fully and in a healthy way serve the immediate greater neighborhood, but also will draw from elsewhere and serve as a sound, moneymaking investment for its owner. What we want is Kroger to work with us, directly or in supporting our efforts to reach out to others, to give us a chance.

The City of Topeka also is on board regarding finding a suitable replacement. At the first community meeting held on the Dillon's closure on January 31 of this year, Mayor Larry Wolgast and various city council members said doing so would be a city priority. Two hundred people attended that meeting and also committed themselves to finding a suitable replacement. What we all want is for Kroger to give us all that chance.

Two citizens' committees grew out of the two Dillon's' closure community meetings that were held. One of those committees, on which the three Tennessee Town NIA officers serve, is the long-range planning committee. That committee has been and continues to investigate suitable replacements to occupy 1400 SW Huntoon and once again serve Tennessee Town and Central Topeka. What we want is for Kroger to give this committee a chance to pursue suitable replacements in earnest.

The Tennessee Town NIA, founded in 1976 around the same time Dillon's opened its store at 1400 SW Huntoon, has been working in earnest on revitalization efforts for almost 20 years. The following improvements all have occurred since 2001 or will occur within the next few years. For more information, please go to the NIA's website at tenntown-nia.weebly.com:

1. Decorative lighting on SW Washburn and Lane Sts. along the west and east sides of the former Huntoon Dillon's.
2. Aaron Douglas Art Park at SW 12th and Lane Sts. directly northeast of the former Huntoon Dillon's.
3. Tennessee Town Mural on the south wall of WCW Property Management, 1238 SW Lane, directly east and across Lane St. from the former Huntoon Dillon's.
4. Acquisition of properties at 1192 and 1194 SW Lane and the upcoming demolition of 1194 SW Lane to enable the upcoming expansion of the Lane Garden park at SW 12th and Lane Sts., diagonally across the street from the Aaron Douglas Art Park and 1 block north of the former Huntoon Dillon's.
5. The King's Court Basketball and Playground Complex at SW Lincoln and Munson Sts., 3 blocks northeast of the former Huntoon Dillon's. For the past 9 years the Tennessee Town Basketball tournament has been hosted here in August, which draws players and recognition from the entire city. The complex recently was improved with new playground equipment matting and a fence at its western boundary.
6. The establishment of the International Academy school at Faith Temple Church, 1162 SW Lincoln (3 blocks northeast of the former Huntoon Dillon's) and the upcoming construction of a building to house the Academy at 1195 SW Lincoln (2 blocks northeast of the former Huntoon Dillon's).
7. The expansion of the Tennessee Town Plaza Apartments for our senior and physically challenged neighbors in the second 1100 block of SW Lincoln, 2 blocks northeast of the former Huntoon Dillon's. The Tennessee Town Plaza Apartments has been one of the Topeka Housing Authority's most successful complexes since its inception in the early 1980s.
8. 9 single-family houses through partnerships with the City of Topeka and Habitat for Humanity in the first 1200 block of SW Lincoln, 1 block east of the former Huntoon Dillon's. The addition of those homes completely turned around what once was the neighborhood's worst block.
9. The upcoming placement of 2 additional Habitat homes through a property donation from Shiloh Church in the first 1200 block of SW Buchanan, 2 blocks east of the former Huntoon Dillon's.
10. The 11-unit Asbury-Mt. Olive Apartments built just north of Asbury-Mt. Olive Church (1196 SW Buchanan) in the 2nd 1100 block of SW Buchanan, 3 blocks northeast of the former Huntoon Dillon's.
11. Cornerstone of Topeka, Inc., a Tennessee Town stakeholder and tenant at the historic Buchanan Center (1195 SW Buchanan), construction and occupancy of a new house at 1231 SW Clay as part of its program that matches those transitioning from homelessness to homeownership, 3 blocks east of the former Huntoon Dillon's.
12. Upcoming minor exterior housing rehabilitation initiative to focus on making minor improvements (i.e. painting, porches, walkways, yard improvements) to owner- and tenant-occupied housing located in the 1000 and 1100 blocks of SW Washburn and Lane Sts., encompassing the 3 blocks directly north of the former Huntoon Dillon's.

Having a grocery store presence at 1400 SW Huntoon is vital to our continuing efforts to make Tennessee Town a welcoming neighborhood for individuals and families as well as having a conveniently located and locally supported food destination for Tennessee Town and all of Central Topeka.

There was a grocery store presence at 1400 SW Huntoon decades before Dillon's located there as Dibble's preceded Dillon's in what was then called Elmhurst Plaza. Some of us had or have relatives who worked at Dibble's. We all shopped at Dibble's. Once Dibble's closed Dillon's occupied the space for 40 years. We considered Dillon's to be an important neighborhood partner and always extended an invitation to the store manager that she or he were welcome to join our neighborhood's revitalization efforts. Having a grocery store at that location has been as much a part of the lives of Tennessee Town and Central Topeka residents as having family has been. What we want is for Kroger to give us the chance to make our family whole again.

At the May 9 Tennessee Town NIA general membership meeting the body voted to draft and send this letter to the Kroger Corporation, Topeka's governing body and Topeka City Manager Jim Colson.

We stand ready to be involved. We stand ready to make a difference not only for Tennessee Town but for all of Central Topeka. We stand and await your response.

Please let us know if you have any questions moving forward.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Michael Bell

Patrick DeLapp

Sandra Lassiter

Michael Bell

Patrick Delapp

Sandra Lassiter

Tennessee Town NIA President

Tennessee Town NIA Vice-President

Tennessee Town NIA Secretary-
Treasurer

cc: Topeka Mayor Larry Wolgast
Topeka City Council Members Karen Hiller, Sandra Clear, Sylvia Ortiz, Tony Emerson, Michelle de la Isla,
Brendan Jensen, Elaine Schwartz, Jeff Coen, and Richard Harmon
Topeka City Manager Jim Colson
Brett Martin, Megan James, Central Strong Topeka

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Citizens Advisory Council Alternate Candidate Donna Rae Pearson's Bio:



DONNA RAE PEARSON:

- Is the Local History Librarian for Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library. She joined the library in 2013 with the goal of making the library THE PLACE to find the diverse stories of Topeka and Shawnee County. She leads the Local history team comprised of staff and volunteers that coordinate local history related programming such as oral history projects, information about historic buildings, and preservation of personal items. In addition to other duties, she acts as the archivist for the Local History collection
- She is serving as a commissioner on the city of Topeka's Local Landmark Commission. As former Collection Development Specialist for the Kansas Historical Society, she helped the organization develop and implement pro-active collecting strategies of material culture and archival materials for the permanent collection
- She co-authored and developed the program for an Institute of Museum and Library Services grant (IMLS) awarded to teach select Kansas museums how to work with community organizations and individuals to tell their stories. She served as project director for this grant
- She holds a master's in Public History from Wichita State University
- Donna Rae's career emphasizes her firm belief that everyone should participate in the creation and preservation of history and toward that end, she has previously worked with community organizations such as the N.A.A.C.P; Research on Black Wichita, Kansas, the Aaron Douglass Mural Project and Art Fair, and the Nicodemus Historical Society to preserve local history
- She specializes in working with local history museums and individuals implementing history community-collecting projects
- Additionally, Donna Rae has researched, developed, and presented historical scholarship in a variety of formats, including web postings, signs, panel exhibits, film, and presentations across the state of Kansas.

Note: Donna works Monday nights and so would be unable to attend most NIA meetings. However, she has agreed to submit written reports of the CAC meetings she is called on to attend and would be available for questions and/or suggestions at any time.