

Tennessee Town NIA General Membership Meeting
6:30 p.m., Monday, March 9, 2015, Buchanan Center Conference Room, 1195 SW Buchanan

TENTATIVE AGENDA:

- I. Welcome
- II. Guests:
 - A. Philicia McKee, Keep America Beautiful - Topeka and Shawnee County
 - 1. KAB Volunteer Luncheon Invitation
 - B. Sasha Stiles, Topeka Neighborhood Relations Director
 - C. James Brown, Topeka Police Chief
- III. Adoption of Agenda
- IV. Approval of January 12, 2015 General Membership Meeting Minutes (pgs. 2 - 3 of meeting packet)
- V. Reading and Acceptance of Treasurer's Report (pg. 4)
- VI. Reports of Officers, Committees (pgs. 5 - 7)
- VII. Community Policing Report: TPD Officer Matthew Blassingame
- VIII. Property Maintenance Report: Dennis Boyles
- IX. Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) Report: Donald Fortin
- X. City Council Report: Karen Hiller
- XI. Old Business:
 - A. Stormont Vail - Tennessee Town NIA Partnership Report (see "Reports of Officers," pgs. 5 - 7)
 - B. International Academy in Tennessee Town Update: Sandy Lassiter
 - C. 2015 Neighborhood Goals (see pgs. 8 - 9)
- XII. New Business:
 - A. 2015 Neighborhood Empowerment Grant Ideas
 - B. 2015 National Night Out Against Crime: Emma Ray
- XIII. Announcements:
 - A. Summer Camp for Toddlers (3 - 5 yrs, potty trained): 9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., Mon. - Fri.; June 15 - 19, June 22 - 26, July 6 - 10, and July 13 - 17, 2015; TDC Parent - Child Learning Center at Highland Park High School; \$10 one-time, non-refundable registration fee (registration closes June 1), \$50 for each week-long camp (scholarships available based on family income), transportation available (limited seats), snack and lunch will be served. Call 274-6015 or 272-5051 for more info., application
 - B. Neighborhood Relations Programs: (1) *Emergency Program*: Intended to help homeowners make repairs to immediate health or safety problems including furnace replacement, sewer line collapse, water heater replacement; significant water line, waste line or gas line leakage; medically required and documented mechanical systems, roof replacement (not repair). (2) *Accessibility Program*: Provides modifications to residential homes for owners or tenants with physical disability including access to the home, exterior ramp, bathroom modifications, access to one bathroom and/or bedroom. For more information or to apply, contact Neighborhood Relations at 368-3711
 - C. Low-Income Energy Assistance Program: Help with heating bills. Program runs through March 31. For information, call 1-800-432-0043. Apply online at <http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/ees/Pages/Energy/EnergyAssistance.aspx>
 - D. Project Takeover/Makeover City-Wide Neighborhood Clean-Up: 7 - 11 a.m., Sat., Apr. 18, 2015. For more info., call Neighborhood Relations at 368-3711
 - E. Next Meeting: 6:30 p.m., Mon., May 11, 2015, Buchanan Center, 1195 SW Buchanan
- XIV. Adjournment

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Minutes of January 12, 2015 General Membership Meeting:

Attendees : President Michael Bell, Vice President Pat DeLapp, Secretary-Treasurer Sandra Lassiter, Leroy Wed-deking, Donald Fortin, Community Police Officer Matthew Blassingame, Phyllis Phelps, Zach Scott, Barbara Scott, Topeka City Councilwoman Karen Hiller, Marge Heeney, Pastor Harry Christian, Joyce Revely, Ron Lett and Emma Ray.

Bell called the meeting to order at 6:39 p.m. He asked for adoption of the meeting agenda with changes that moved "Recognition of Lane Garden Volunteers" and "Election of 2015 Officers" up to agenda items III and IV, respec-tively. DeLapp moved adoption of the agenda as amended. Ray seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Bell introduced Marge Heeney and led a recognition of her efforts at maintaining the Lane Garden for many years, including bringing on Leonard Gonzales to perform maintenance duties (Gonzales was unable to attend). He pre-sented recognition certificates for Heeney and Gonzales. Heeney thanked the NIA and made comments about her commitment to the Lane Garden as well as her involvement in Keep America Beautiful and other efforts.

Election of officers:

President: Donald Fortin nominated Bell for president. Ray seconded the nomination. No other nominations were made. Nominations were closed and Bell was reelected by a unanimous vote.

Vice-President: Bell nominated DeLapp for vice president. Ray seconded the nomination. No other nominations were made. Nominations were closed and DeLapp was reelected by unanimous vote.

Secretary-Treasurer: Ray nominated Lassiter for secretary-treasurer. Fortin seconded the nomination. No other nominations were made. Nominations were closed and Lassiter was reelected by unanimous vote.

Citizens Advisory Council Representative: Bell nominated Fortin for CAC representative. Lassiter seconded the nomination. No other nominations were made. Nominations were closed and Fortin was reelected by unanimous vote. Fortin said 24 CAC members meet quarterly (next meeting in March), Katrina Bayless is the CAC president and one of the group's chief purposes is reviewing applications for the Stages of Resource Targeting (SORT) initia-tive.

Fortin moved approval of the November 10, 2014 NIA general membership meeting minutes. Zach Scott seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Fortin moved acceptance of the treasurer's report as presented. Ray seconded the motion. The motion was unani-mously approved.

TPD Officer Blassingame gave the community policing report and distributed an information packet. He said Dil-lon' has become a hot spot for shoplifting, especially on Wednesday evenings. He said some tow trucks have been illegally carting off inoperable cars and asked attendees to get information when possible and report it to police. He reminded attendees not to leave vehicles running unattended. He asked attendees to contact law enforcement even if a person of interest is at a vacant house. He said the TPD signed up with Nextdoor.com, which he said is a great way for people to stay informed and to help police identify and apprehend suspects. He said 7 - 9 more officers were on second shift and that the new police chief, James Brown, is trying to get more officers on the streets.

Topeka City Councilwoman Hiller mentioned that there were city council elections this year for the even-numbered districts (Hiller represents District One). She said making the mayor an official part of the city's governing body was being considered. She talked about the possibility of a District One crime summit and complimented the suc-cesses in Tennessee Town.

Bell spoke on 2015 NIA goals (included in the meeting packet), specifically pursuing a partnership with Stormont-Vail HealthCare. He mentioned the discussion at last year's housing summit on public-private partnerships and the success of the initiative in Columbus, OH involving Nationwide Children's Hospital and how it could be replicated with Tennessee Town and Stormont-Vail. He said the NIA's executive committee had scheduled a meeting with Stormont-Vail's facilities officer, David Cunningham, for Jan. 22. He said that the SORT application the NIA submitted last year could still be used to move the NIA forward regarding revitalization.

Ray spoke on the law enforcement forum that Asbury-Mt. Olive church held on Dec. 18, 2014. She and Pastor Christian shared the positives that came from the meeting, which was attended by Hiller, TPD Deputy Chief Tony Kirk and Mayor Larry Wolgast, and working with TPD Officer Julie Hoffman on the forum.

Ray moved to extend the meeting 15 minutes. DeLapp seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Bell mentioned Keep America Beautiful's offer to "adopt" the Lane Garden. He said the executive committee would try to schedule a meeting with KAB's Philicia McKee and report back to the NIA.

Hiller announced that Jamie Colon would be the new manager at the Huntoon Dillons. She said there would be a "surprise" for retiring manager Bob Underwood.

Announcements regarding Living the Dream, Inc.'s activities regarding King Day and Underwood's retirement were made.

Phelps moved adjournment. Zach Scott seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

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Reports of Officers:

A. Meeting with Stormont-Vail HealthCare Facilities Officer David Cunningham:

Bell, DeLapp and Lassiter met with Cunningham at 11 a.m. on Jan. 22, 2015, at Stormont-Vail. The meeting was a result of Stormont-Vail owning property in Tennessee Town (on the west side of the first 1100 block of SW Lane), approaching the hospital for a support letter for the NIA's SORT application (which it provided), and then approaching Stormont Vail via letter in December to discuss its role both as a neighborhood stakeholder and future partner for development of the property it owns as well as other opportunities in the NIA. Cunningham agreed to meet with the NIA.

The meeting featured the following discussion points:

1. We discussed the realities of stagnant or decreasing public funds for neighborhood revitalization activities and finding alternatives
2. We discussed how Tennessee Town had went from completely "intensive care" to majority "outpatient" and the opportunities present as it strives to be completely "healthy"
3. We discussed Tennessee Town "assets"
4. We discussed Tennessee Town partners
5. We discussed housing, infrastructure, greenspace opportunities
6. Cunningham mentioned Stormont Vail employees volunteering on projects in the NIA
7. Cunningham asked the NIA to put together an "ask" that he would present to Stormont Vail's planning committee for consideration

B. Conference Call with Nationwide Children's Hospital Regarding its Partnership in Columbus, OH:

In an effort to do the NIA's due diligence regarding putting together an "ask" for Stormont-Vail, Bell scheduled a conference call with Nationwide Children's Hospital to discuss its partnership with the neighborhood directly south of the hospital and the city of Columbus, OH. The conference call was held at 1:30 p.m. on Feb. 24, 2015 in the Sunflower Conference Room of the Holliday Office Building. Bell, DeLapp and Lassiter attended for the NIA. Topeka Planning Director Bill Fiander and Planner Susan Hanzlik attended, too.

The conference call featured the following discussion points:

1. Housing identified as the essential component of the partnership forged with NCH, neighborhood and city of Columbus, OH. Housing component, coupled with a holistic approach, was essential even if it didn't make money for NCH because those things lead to a healthier neighborhood
 - a. Forming, partnering with CHoDO (crucial)
 - b. Use of Neighborhood Stabilization Program
 - c. Form multiple partnerships
 - d. Vacant, blighted houses and existing homeowners' home repair program
 - e. No gentrification
 - f. Tax credits
 - g. Downpayment assistance to NCH employees
 - h. Formed subsidiary for property acquisition/land banking

2. City of Columbus has been great partner
3. Churches, schools key players
4. Volunteers also have played important part
 - a. From hospital, business community, local United Way

Bell prepared a draft proposal that was discussed during the conference call. The draft proposal featured housing and other opportunities that would holistically address neighborhood challenges. After the call, Fiander suggested that the NIA's proposal for Stormont-Vail focus more on housing, specifically minor rehabilitation activities. He suggested another meeting, this time including Neighborhood Relations. Hanzlik set up the meeting.

C. Meeting with Planning, Neighborhood Relations on Stormont-Vail Proposal:

Bell and DeLapp met with Planning's Bill Fiander and Susan Hanzlik and Neighborhood Relations' Sasha Stiles and Monique Glaude at 1 p.m. on Mar. 6, 2015 at the planning department.

The meeting featured the following discussion points:

1. Short-term projects: Minor housing rehabilitation activities
 - a. Projects done in "high visibility areas" like between Washburn and Lane from 11th to 12th (east side of Washburn, both sides of Lane; also 1000 block of SW Lane) and/or between 12th and Huntoon from Lane to Clay (both sides of 12th, south side of Huntoon)
 - i. Painting
 - ii. Porch repairs/porch lights
 - iii. Yard work
 - iv. Activities would involve tenant- and owner-occupied housing and occupied and vacant housing
 - v. Similar to what Christmas in Action does and to what the old "Model Block" program used to do
 - vi. To the greatest extent possible activities done through donated materials, volunteer labor
2. Medium-term projects:
 - a. Larger housing rehabilitation activities
 - b. Greenspace development/expansion (Keep America Beautiful stands as a possible partner)
 - c. Forming/partnering with CHoDO
 - d. Educational opportunities connected to the International Academy in Tennessee Town
 - e. Community garden on vacant lots not designated for housing development
3. Long-term projects:
 - a. Major housing repairs
 - b. In-fill housing
 - c. Land banking
 - d. Infrastructure improvements
 - i. Sidewalk/street lighting
 - ii. Sidewalks, alleys
 - iii. "Holistic" challenges and opportunities listed in proposal
 - e. Signage

Glaude mentioned upcoming partnership opportunities with the city that might include volunteer labor, free smoke alarm installations, and access to tools through a new program reminiscent of the old Tool Lending Library (some of those items are being reviewed by the city attorney's office before they're implemented). Bell and DeLapp indicated the NIA's interest in discussing those opportunities. The group agreed that partnering with the city on those opportunities would enhance the NIA's proposal to Stormont-Vail and provide an opportunity to hit the ground running should Stormont-Vail decide to partner with the NIA.

DeLapp also mentioned he and Bell driving the NIA to identify rehab opportunities and getting together with Property Maintenance Officer Dennis Boyles to identify "problem properties" that might qualify for assistance.

The group agreed to continue communicating via e-mail. Bell said he would make changes to the draft proposal and get them back to the group to review as soon as possible.

The plan is to put together the final draft proposal; have the NIA general membership review it, make changes, and approve it (perhaps at a special meeting); then the NIA would submit the proposal to Stormont-Vail's planning committee for consideration.

2014 Tennessee Town NIA Opportunities

12-Point Plan Presented to the NIA at its March 10, 2014 meeting

- I. Update neighborhood plan passed in 2001 (13 years have passed since it passed):
- A. Reflecting revitalization efforts made since 2001.
 - B. Reflecting new challenges and opportunities that have occurred since 2001.
 - C. Invite Topeka Planning Department staff to March 2014 meeting to get process started and to subsequent meetings to make sure that Tennessee Town is on a workable track.
- (Note: If Tennessee Town is designated one of the two 2015-2017 SORT neighborhoods, then the update will occur as part of the SORT program's 2015 year devoted to planning activities. If Tennessee Town is not designated a 2015-2017 SORT neighborhood, then the NIA can move forward with creating its own document.)**
- II. Create neighborhood survey (postcard included with water bills) to be mailed in February 2014:
- A. What are neighborhood challenges?
 - B. What are neighborhood opportunities?
 - C. Use city's permit number to send out as a bulk mailing, cost deducted from NIA's account.
 - D. Tabulate results in time for March 2014 NIA meeting.
- (Note: The survey was mailed to neighborhood residents via postcard in April 2014.)**
- III. Identify opportunities to publicize Tennessee Town and to inform its residents and those who can make a difference in the neighborhood about the opportunities here:
- A. Create a website (several free options).
 - B. Produce a newsletter (per bylaws) to be published and distributed between NIA meetings.
 - C. Identify a person/people to handle social media for the neighborhood.
- [Note: The website has been established (<http://tenntownnia.weebly.com>). Meeting cards were distributed in 2014 with possible plans to replace them with a one-page newsletter in 2015. A Twitter account has been established (@tenntown), as well as Nextdoor Tennessee Town.]**
- IV. Identify opportunities for improved housing:
- A. Housing rehabilitation:
 - 1. Single-family and multi-family.
 - B. Infill housing:
 - 1. Single-family and multi-family.
 - C. Public housing:
 - 1. Identify ways to support the Tennessee Town Plaza Apartments.
 - D. Increased use of land banking (amassing parcels of land for future development).
 - E. Identify vacant housing and work to reduce the neighborhood's percentage of vacant housing:
 - 1. Approaching owners of properties cited for multiple and serious code violations about acquiring their properties (this proved to be a very successful approach from 2001-2004)
- (Note: All points here a part of the NIA's SORT application. If the NIA is not designated a SORT neighborhood, then we can move forward on them through the partnerships we've established with housing providers and the city.)**
- V. Make sure that Tennessee Town is able and ready to submit RFPs for HUD and other funding:
- A. Identify a person/people to be volunteer grant writers.
- (Note: Michael Bell wrote the two grants the NIA submitted in 2014.)**
- VI. Identify opportunities for street/sidewalk/alley improvements:
- A. Identify worst streets/sidewalks/alleys.
 - B. Apply CPTED principles to be sure that improvements address crime concerns.
- (Note: Included in the NIA's SORT application.)**

- VII. Identify opportunities for small business/nonprofit development:
- A. Providing assistance/support to existing small businesses.
 - B. Creating circumstances that will attract future small businesses.
- (Note: Included in the NIA’s SORT application.)**
- VIII. Identify opportunities to support/develop Dillon’s block:
- A. Develop unimproved areas at northwest corner of Dillon’s block.
 - B. Develop partnership with Dillon’s regarding crime issues.
- (Note: Could be carried over as a 2015 goal.)**
- IX. Identify opportunities for parks development:
- A. Lane Garden renovations.
 - B. Other pocket park opportunities.
 - C. Basketball court complex development.
- (Note: “A” and “B” included in the NIA’s SORT application. “C” was addressed through the NIA’s successful application for Neighborhood Empowerment Grant funds for new playground matting at King’s Court. 2015 could provide other opportunities to make improvements there.)**
- X. Identify opportunities to reduce crime/increase safety:
- A. Use housing, street/sidewalk/alley improvements to craft plan(s).
- (Note: Included in the NIA’s SORT application and can be pursued in 2015 if the NIA doesn’t receive SORT designation.)**
- XI. Identify opportunities to strengthen/expand neighborhood partnerships:
- A. Keep existing/get new neighborhood stakeholders involved in neighborhood.
- (Note: The NIA has maintained or established partnerships with the city; Community First, Inc.; Topeka Housing Authority, Topeka Habitat for Humanity; Cornerstone of Topeka, Inc.; Housing and Credit Counseling, Inc.; Dillon’s; Living the Dream, Inc.; Doorstep, Inc.; Asbury-Mt. Olive Church, Faith Temple Church, First Church of the Nazarene, Shiloh Baptist Church, Lane Chapel Church, Stormont-Vail HealthCare, Penwell-Gabel Midtown Chapel, Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, WCW Property Management, Arts Connect Topeka: Topeka Mural Project, and Safe Streets Topeka/Shawnee County.)**
- XII. Identify opportunities to work with adjacent neighborhoods:
- A. Historic Old Town, Historic Holliday Park, Central Park, College Hill, Elmhurst.
 - B. Dillon’s, Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, businesses at SW Huntoon and Lincoln, among others, provide opportunities to do this.
- (Note: There are housing partnership opportunities with the Historic Holliday Park NIA along SW Clay. This partnership could be pursued through the NIA being designated a 2015-2017 SORT neighborhood or through efforts between the two NIAs. The library, along with Stormont-Vail, both own property in the NIA. Stormont-Vail already has been approached about housing activities along the Washburn-Lane Parkway.)**
- XIII. This would be a 2-year plan:
- A. Ultimate goal would be to move Tennessee Town from an “at-risk” neighborhood to an “outpatient” neighborhood.
 - B. From 2001-2004 Tennessee Town moved from an “intensive care” to an “at-risk” neighborhood, so the 2-year goal identified here is possible.
- (Note: According to 2011 data provided by the city, Tennessee Town went from being completely “intensive care” in 2001 to majority “outpatient” in 2011. The goal here is attainable, then we can move on to becoming a completely “healthy” neighborhood.)**