

Tennessee Town NIA General Membership Meeting
6:30 p.m., Monday, May 12, 2014
Buchanan Center Conference Room, 1195 SW Buchanan

TENTATIVE AGENDA:

- I. Welcome, Housekeeping
- II. Adoption of Agenda
- III. Approval of March 10, 2014 Meeting Minutes
- IV. Reading and Acceptance of Treasurer's Report
- V. Reports of Officers, Committees
- VI. Community Policing Report (about 6:40 p.m.): TPD Officer Robby Sachs
- VII. Code Compliance Report: Dennis Boyles
- VIII. Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) Report: Donald Fortin
- IX. Old Business: (about 6:50 p.m.)
 - A. Nextdoor.com: Shane Wilson
 - B. 2014 Neighborhood Goals (adopt as document)
 1. Neighborhood Survey Card (approve expenditures)
- X. New Business: (about 7:05 p.m.)
 - A. Topeka Mural Project: Jamie Colon
 - B. National Night Out Against Crime: Emma Ray - Anyone Interested in Buying T-Shirts, Volunteering at NNO?
 - C. Special Guests:
 1. HND Director Brad Reiff (about 7:15 p.m.): What HND Does, Takeover/Makeover Neighborhood Clean-Up, Neighborhood Empowerment Grant, Target Neighborhoods (SORT)
 2. Planning Department's Susan Hanzlik (about 7:25 p.m.): What the Planning Department Does, Neighborhood Plan Update, Community Gardens
 3. Public Works Director Doug Whitacre (about 7:35 p.m.): What the Public Works Department Does, Street/Sidewalk Lighting
 4. Cornerstone of Topeka, Inc. Executive Director Chris Palmer (about 7:45 p.m.): What Cornerstone Does, In-Fill Housing, Housing Rehabilitation
 5. Housing and Credit Counseling, Inc. Executive Director Robert Mackey (about 7:55 p.m.): What HCCI Does, TOTO Program
 - D. Neighborhood Empowerment Grant: What Should We Apply For? Form a Committee?
 - E. Housing Summit (approve)
 - F. Strategies of Resource Targeting (SORT) Neighborhood: Submit an application? If So, Who Would Like to Serve on Committee?
 - G. Other
- XI. Adjournment

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Minutes of March 10, 2014 General Membership Meeting:

Meeting was set for Buchanan Center at 6:30 p.m. President Donald Fortin was unable to get the key for the Buchanan Center, so he arranged to have the meeting moved to the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library.

Meeting called to order at 6:50 p.m. upon Don's arrival.

Attendees: President Don Fortin, Secretary/Treasurer Sandra Lassiter; USD 501 School Board Pres. Patrick Woods and members Janel Johnson and John Williams; Michael Bell, Barbara Scott, Phyllis Phelps, Zach Scott, Pat DeLapp, Joyce Revely.

Topeka Police Department Ofc. Kerri Connell presented the Tennessee Town NIA community policing report.

There was no code compliance report.

Janel Johnson presented information on the upcoming USD 501 bond issue. Specifics of the issue were discussed and she emphasized the vote would be a mail-in ballot. Voting ends April 8.

Joyce Revely presented on a Topeka High School scholarship worth \$250 for computer science/engineering majors and minority and women applicants.

Also, John Williams gave a presentation about Living the Dream, Inc.'s acquisition of the former Colored Women's Clubhouse at 1149 SW Lincoln. Williams said LTD is excited to occupy the historic house. He also voiced concerns about vandalism occurring at address and possible squatters in the house north of the address. Bell said the NIA could ask for increased police patrols in area.

Don Fortin gave the Citizens Advisory Council report. He said Nextdoor.com is a new neighborhood social network available to people who live within each neighborhood's boundaries. Bell and DeLapp had questions about Nextdoor.com. Attendees agreed to invite Neighborhood Liaison Darin Scott to the May 12 NIA meeting to talk about Nextdoor.com.

At 8 p.m. Fortin moved to extend the meeting. Motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Don conducted election of officers. Sandy Lassiter nominated Don Fortin for president, he declined. Pat DeLapp nominated Michael Bell for president, with unanimous vote. Mike Bell nominated Pat DeLapp for Vice President, with unanimous vote. NIA attendees nominated Sandra Lassiter for Secretary/Treasurer, with unanimous vote.

Delapp suggested we speak with Code Compliance Officer Dennis Boyles about abandoned tires in the NIA.

Phelps moved adjournment. Fortin seconded motion, which was unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Next meeting scheduled for May 12, 2014, at 6:30 p.m. at the Buchanan Center.

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Treasurer's Report:

2014 Budget Allocation, March 6 - May 12, 2014: Tennessee Town NIA (Operations/Communications)				
Date	Piece Count	Transaction Type	Withdrawal	Balance
				\$2,000.00
March 6, 2014	245	Printing of newsletters (meeting cards) @ \$0.09 each	\$22.05	
March 6, 2014	245	Postage of newsletters (meeting cards)	\$53.40	
Total: March 6, 2014	245	Printing, mailing of newsletters (meeting cards)	(\$75.45) \$22.05 + \$53.40	\$1,924.55
April 21, 2014	258	Printing, mailing of meeting and survey cards, return stamps	(\$295.68)	\$1,628.87
Total: March 6 - May 12, 2014	503	Printing and mailing expenses	(\$371.13)	\$1,628.87**

****Note: The printing and mailing costs of the May 12, 2014 meeting cards will appear on the next report.**

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Reports of Officers, Committees:

A. Executive Committee Meeting, March 19:

Bell, DeLapp and Lassiter met to discuss 2014 challenges, opportunities for NIA. The following topics were discussed:

1. Tennessee Town Basketball Tournament in August:
 - a. Arturo Lassiter will coordinate again.
 - b. Matting under playground equipment needs to be replaced.
 - i. Will need to identify funding.
2. Upgrading Neighborhood Plan:
 - a. Bell spoke with Planning Department Director Bill Fiander. He's on board.
3. Neighborhood Survey Card:
 - a. Draft ready.
 - b. Will get cost estimate from HND's printer.
4. Website:
 - a. Free site established for executive committee review. **(Note: now available for public viewing at <http://tenntownnia.weebly.com>)**
5. Future Meetings Noticed with Current Meeting Cards or Newsletter?:
 - a. Will go to 8 1/2" x 11", one-page, double-sided meeting notice that also will discuss what happened at last NIA meeting, what's going on and what will be going on. **(Note: new notices to start for July 2014 NIA meeting)**
6. Social media?:
 - a. Nextdoor.com invited to May 12 NIA meeting.
7. Housing Summit:
 - a. Many opportunities for in-fill housing and housing rehab activities in the NIA.
 - b. Many players who can help us, including HND, Planning, Public Works, Code Enforcement, Community Policing; housing providers like Habitat, Cornerstone and Christmas in Action; local businesses through donated materials, labor, time, money.
 - c. Should bring together those players and the NIA to plot a course for activities. **(Note: Bell reserved Marvin Auditorium 101C at the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. on Saturday, June 21, 2014 at no cost to the NIA.)**
8. Neighborhood Empowerment Grant:
 - a. Discussed eligible activities from last year's grant.
 - b. Officers agreed that the NIA should submit an application.
9. Strategies of Resource Targeting (SORT) RFP to be issued in November:
 - a. SORT neighborhoods get targeted funds above and beyond whatever else is available in the Consolidated Plan for each NIA to qualify/apply for.
 - b. The NIA last was a SORT neighborhood in the early 2000s.
 - c. Should we prepare for this?
10. Dillon's
 - a. Set up a press event expressing our support for the Dillon's Store at 1400 SW Huntoon.
 - b. Perhaps do this with the other neighborhoods that are adjacent to Dillon's.
11. Community Garden:
 - a. Asbury-Mt. Olive UMC used to have one just north of the church before the apartments were built.
 - b. Make food from the garden exclusively available to NIA residents; anyone could work at the garden.
 - c. Partnership opportunities with Dillon's, area nurseries, etc.

B. Vandalism at Living the Dream, Inc. Headquarters, 1149 SW Lincoln:

LTD's John Williams attended the March 10 NIA meeting to report on his group's acquisition of the former Colored Women's Clubhouse, at 1149 SW Lincoln. During his report it was revealed that vandalism had occurred at the address, and it appeared that the vandals might have been squatters in the vacant house directly north of LTD, at 1129 SW Lincoln.

Bell followed up with the Topeka Police Department through Community Police Officer Robby Sachs. On March 21, Sachs reported that the TPD had "increased the patrols in (the) area over the last week and identified 3 subjects who may be the core of the problem regarding the vandalism to this property." Since Ofc. Sachs' report, the NIA hasn't heard any other reports of vandalism at LTD headquarters.

In a related matter, Bell, DeLapp and Lassiter met on April 9 with John Lewis, who is one of the members of the Loran and Lois Lewis Trust, the entity that owns the house at 1129 SW Lincoln, about helping to make improvements at the house. Lewis said the trust is interested in rehabbing the house for occupancy. The NIA provided contacts for Lewis to enable rehab activities. As Lewis lives in another part of Topeka, he authorized Bell to contact the TPD on his behalf should there be any future unauthorized activity at the house.

C. Topeka Mural Project at SW Huntoon and Lane Sts.:

Bell followed up on an article in the Topeka Capital-Journal with the Topeka Mural Project, which plans on painting a mural on the south side of the WCW Property Management building at SW Huntoon and Lane Sts. Bell invited the Topeka Mural Project's Jamie Colon to the May 12 NIA meeting to discuss the mural.

D. Abandoned Tire Drop Off:

A number of abandoned tires have been identified in yards in the NIA. DeLapp said he would accept those tires being dropped off on the trailer at his house at 1013 SW 11th. Code Compliance Officer Dennis Boyles then will pick up the tires and dispose of them.

E. National Night Out Planning Meetings:

Bell and Emma Ray attended the first National Night Out Against Crime planning meeting on April 17. NNO, a community crime and safety event, will be held this year on Saturday, August 9. The NIA qualified for a \$250 stipend for its NNO celebration. Ray, who coordinated the NIA's celebration last year, will once again head the NIA's activities this year.

Bell and Ray met on May 6 on NNO activities for the NIA. The following items were discussed:

1. Time and Location: 3 - 6 p.m., Saturday, August 9, 2014, corner of SW 12th and Buchanan Sts.
2. Attendees:
 - a. Topeka Police and Fire Departments, Shawnee County Sheriff's Dept., Mayor Wolgast, City Councilmember Karen Hiller.
3. Donation solicitation letter:
 - a. Will produce 2 letters: 1 for large businesses and 1 for neighborhood businesses/entities (i.e. Dillon's, Penwell-Gabel, churches).
 - b. The letter to neighborhood businesses will go out by the end of June; the letter for large businesses will go out sooner.
4. Produce flier, to be approved by Safe Streets and distributed in July by Young Lions youth group.
5. Food and water:
 - a. Use \$250 stipend to buy meat to be barbecued. A-MO's Tim Dortch will be "grill master."
 - b. Approach Dillon's, Reser's, Wal-Mart, Target for food donations.
 - c. Snow cones.
 - d. Bottled water available through Safe Streets.
6. Restrooms: Asbury-Mt. Olive will be open.

7. Activities:
 - a. Inflatables, face painting, clown, balloons, dunk tank, fire truck, dog trainer with dogs, book bags with school supplies distributed, music DJ (if funding can be identified), will work on mounted horses.
 - b. Will ask Buchanan Center for permission to use electricity there for inflatables.

F. Neighborhood Empowerment Grant Executive Committee Meeting:

The city's Department of Housing and Neighborhood Development has required each interested NEG applicant to attend 1 of 2 workshops for the NEG (May 3 or May 5), at which ideas for grant applications must be presented. Bell, DeLapp and Lassiter met on April 25 to discuss ideas for a Neighborhood Empowerment Grant application. Mid-block street and sidewalk lighting, tree planting, new matting for the playground equipment at King's Court, and sidewalks were discussed.

G. Community Gardens Meeting:

The city's planning department sponsored a community gardens meeting on April 28, which Bell attended. Planning is working on a city ordinance to allow an activity considered agricultural to occur within the city and sought community input at the meeting. Lawrence and Kansas City allow for community gardens. In addition to city residents, representatives from Topeka Common Ground and the Shawnee County Extension Office were in attendance. Ideas were shared about land use, zoning, permits and fees, and help for low- to moderate-income neighborhoods. There is a survey asking for input and additional information at www.topeka.org/planning/communitygardens.shtml. Additional information on community gardens is available at the Topeka Common Ground (www.topekagardens.com) and Shawnee County Extension Agency (www.shawnee.ksu.edu) websites.

H. New Playground Equipment Matting at King's Court:

Bell met with Jim Billingham, who does matting installations, on April 30. Billingham was referred by Jewell Welch, who was the point person at Community Action, Inc. when it installed new matting at its head start center. Billingham surveyed the area and said he would get an estimate to the NIA.

HND's Roseanna Haugen sent the NIA information on the old installation, which was funded with Neighborhood Empowerment Grant funds, to use as the NIA tries to identify funding for the matting replacement.

I. HND Neighborhood Empowerment Grant Workshop:

Bell and DeLapp attended the May 3 workshop. There is \$150,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds available. The deadline for submissions is 5 p.m. on June 9. NIAs and other qualifying applicants may submit applications for multiple projects. Only projects making "public facility" improvements or that "exclusively serve a group of persons in presumed benefit categories" are eligible (sidewalks, streets, curbs, gutters, parks, senior/handicapped/youth/recreation centers, health facilities, clearance and demolition, abused children, battered spouses, the elderly, severely disabled adults, the homeless, illiterate adults, and persons living with AIDS).

J. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library's "Neighborhood Fair":

Bell attended the May 10 Neighborhood Fair at the library, where he manned a table and gave a presentation on Tennessee Town to Fair attendees. Through an agreement with Barker's Printing, Bell was able to get 40 professional copies made free of charge of the presentation he made at the Fair. The presentation also is at the NIA's website, <http://tentownnia.weebly.com/> (click on "history" link at top of homepage).

K. Soliciting Donations from Area Businesses:

Per the discussion at the March 19 executive committee meeting, Bell began contacting area businesses about partnering with the NIA through donated materials, labor, time and/or money. Contacts so far have been made with Security Benefit Group, Federal Home Loan Bank, Payless, Target, Goodyear, Dillon's, Starbucks, Washburn University, Menard's, Home Depot, and television stations WIBW and KSNT. Security Benefit Group has declined. Follow up required with the other businesses.

**2014 Tennessee Town NIA Opportunities
12-Point Plan**

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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).
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- IX. Identify opportunities for parks development:
 - A. Lane Garden renovations.
 - B. Other pocket park opportunities.
 - C. Basketball court complex development.
- X. Identify opportunities to reduce crime/increase safety:
 - A. Use housing, street/sidewalk/alley improvements to craft plan(s).
- XI. Identify opportunities to strengthen/expand neighborhood partnerships:
 - A. Keep existing/get new neighborhood stakeholders involved in neighborhood.
- 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.

- 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.