



Community Engagement
Cyrus K. Holliday Bldg.
Holliday Conference Rm.
620 SE Madison

City of Topeka CITIZEN ADVISORY COUNCIL

Minutes

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

6:45 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Citizen Advisory Council Vision Statement: *“A community of neighborhoods illuminating collaborative models to foster harmonious and balanced neighborhood communities.”*

Citizen Advisory Council Mission Statement: *“The Citizen Advisory Council is a community of neighborhoods organized to forge available resources to empower, rebuild, and revitalize areas within the city of Topeka.”*

CALL TO ORDER – *Susan McClacherty, Citizen Advisory Council Chair*

Enter name and represented neighborhood or organization on the sign-in sheet or use the chat feature in Zoom, please.

Susan opened the meeting by introducing our first presenter:

Cheryl Wright Kunard, Keep America Beautiful, Executive Director

New Executive Director at Keep America Beautiful (KAB) stated her goals were to continue moving forward, working with the community, and giving back to Topeka, her hometown. She shared upcoming KAB events, distributed the 2022 Tentative KAB Calendar, and invited everyone to the KAB monthly meeting on March 8 at noon at Perkins restaurant. She also shared that there is a recycling directory available, by hard copy or online version. She distributed KAB “Butt” Buckets (can be placed in car cup holders or on picnic tables) and Pocket Ashtrays (for walking or hiking, etc.) that can be used to keep cigarette butts off the ground. NIA’s may contact KAB if they need more of these two promotional items. KAB’s big event “Get Down and Get Dirty” is scheduled for April 23, and more information is on the KAB calendar and Facebook page. If interested in having KAB get involved with NIA’s contact Cheryl. Questions followed from members. Cheryl closed by encouraging everyone to email or call her so KAB can help the NIA’s.

Susan thanked Cheryl for her presentation. Susan then explained the next scheduled guest would not be joining us due to illness. Susan then proceeded to introduced the next presenter,

Tim Laurent, Director of Shawnee County Parks and Recreation

Tim shared Shawnee County Parks + Recreation Strategic Plan: 2022-2026. He explained that Shawnee County Parks and Recreation is a merger of city and county park systems.

He distributed their Strategic Plan and discussed each of their five goals. Parks and Recreation is looking at extending existing trails, updating areas in Gage Park, upgrading the mini-train to an electric train, pickleball courts, creating a family park, and working on renovating the community centers. Hillcrest Community Center has recently been renovated. Tim shared that there are 110 parks in Topeka some are just traffic circles.

Parks and Recreation is facing challenges with hiring enough lifeguards for the seven pools in Topeka. They raised their salary from \$8 per hour to \$10 per hour. There is a shortage nationally of lifeguards. Parks and Recreation is researching the implementation of Splash pads as an alternative to pools because they do not require lifeguards. This might be an option in Oakland due to their pool needs. A survey was sent out to ask neighbors what they would like to do.

Tim shared they have worked for over a year on developing Core Values, Mission/Vision Statements for Shawnee CO Parks + Recreation.

The discussion also covered applying for a board position on their Advisory Board. Those positions are appointed by Mayor, City Council, and County Commissioners. There is one position currently open in Councilman Brett Kell's District 5. Interested applicants may contact their Councilperson and/or Tim if interested.

Staff Updates: LaToya Burnett, Senior Community Engagement Coordinator

LaToya shared that Monique was away and would postpone her presentation on Anti-Blight to a future meeting. LaToya stated that a request for proposal (RFP) was out for printing and mailing services. GoBlue's contract for printing NIA publications ends in May. LaToya hopes to have a new vendor on contract by end of April. Community Engagement is working closely with GoBlue to make sure that the right contractor is selected. GoBlue will assist with evaluating contractors who apply.

Topeka DREAMS Neighborhood Improvement Initiatives Program

LaToya sent out an email to all NIA officers and CAC members, providing information about the new Topeka DREAMS Neighborhood Improvement Initiatives Program. The Neighborhood DREAMS committee recommendations were incorporated into the outline of the program presented by Planning Director Bill Fiander and approved by the City Council in December 2021. Community Engagement will host the Topeka DREAMS Neighborhood Improvement Initiatives Program Informational Workshop on Wednesday, March 30th from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. in the Holliday Building, and via Zoom. LaToya shared the program webpage on-screen and pointed out the link to the workshop registration form. There will be three funding levels for the program. LaToya encouraged everyone to go to the website and register. If there are questions contact LaToya directly.

Tools for CAC – Kim Thompson, Vice-Chair CAC

Kim shared information on various topics including:

- Building Pathology & Rehab
- Housing Defects
- Life Cycle Cost

Topeka's Finance Workgroup – Kim Thompson, CAC Vice-Chair

Kim shared that March 10th is the final meeting of this group. The Committee will prioritize proposals.

Status of CAC Working Groups – Susan McClacherty, CAC Chair

Susan asked for updates from the CAC Working Groups.

- Meeting tomorrow at TSCPL on Code Compliance in Room 1 at 7:00 p.m.
- Meeting Saturday at 2:00 p.m. at Classic Bean on the potential of developing a Resource/Safety Fair. Open to anyone interested; possibly a CAC activity or an NIA collaborative.

Susan called for a 15-minute recess so Work Groups could break into their groups. Questions considered during the discussion:

- Identify your needs
- Short plan so it can be accomplished

Susan called the group back together and asked for an informal assessment of ROE of the evening. Where did we use the ground rules tonight and where can we improve?

1. Staying on track
2. Helps us interact with each other
3. Keeps us on track with our mission and vision

Susan shared information obtained from events at the State House about the Kansas Register of Deeds offering free recording of military discharges. Kim explained about discharges.

Susan also shared that with the spring coming, there is a need to address the overgrowth and noxious weeds. She provided some pamphlets on common weeds and the herbicides used to kill weeds and keep them under control.

Susan asked for a motion to adjourn. Kim so moved; Yvonne seconded the motion. Motion carried

Susan: Thanks to everyone for coming.