



Department of Neighborhood Relations  
Cyrus K. Holliday Bldg.  
Holliday Conference Room  
620 SE Madison

## City of Topeka CITIZEN ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING NOTICE AND MINUTES

Wednesday, January 5, 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

Remaining participants stated their names and which NIA they represented or organization. Chair also requested of those in the room please update the NIA Roster.

### **Rules of Engagement**

Susan began with the discussion about the Rules of Engagement that were emailed to all members prior to the meeting. Along with some discussion Susan would be asking for a vote on the Rules. Susan gave the following examples as to why they need the Rules:

- “When someone isn’t staying on task how could we remedy this?”
- They’re not following the rules.
- How do we handle that issue?

Kim Thompson stated some solutions:

- Raise hands to signal the body at large
- See if discussion will stop and get back on task
- Keep with the rules
- Maybe use the number of the Rule that fits the issue

Susan concluded at the end of the discussion stating it was the consensus of the Body that members will raise their hand and tell which Rule is being violated and then move on.

### **Top Concerns for the NIA’s**

Susan then led the discussion asking everyone what their top three concerns were for their NIA.

### **Oakland NIA**

David Bawden, NIA President

- Infrastructure (i.e. sidewalks, curbs, etc.)
- Safety
- Homeless who don't want help

### **Hi-Crest**

David Holl, NIA President

- Putting up fences for the dumpsters
- Having dumpsters on hand at certain times

### **Historic North Topeka East**

Debra McClelland, Treasurer

Arson and other bad condition structures

- Homeless camps along the river
- Lack of participation
- Demolish houses
- Fires in the homeless camps
- Infrastructure – curbs
- Safety at Gordon and Kansas, - lack of stop signs & sidewalk

### **Central Park**

Kim Thompson, President

- Suspicious fires
- Burned out structures
- Squatting in semi habitable houses
- Home projects / businesses
- Old vehicles / trash issues
- Dumpster diving by homeless

### **Tennessee Town**

Don Fortin, CAC Member

- Membership
- Community Safety, e.g. Fires
- Neighborhood awareness

### **Historic Old Town**

ShaMecha Simms, Secretary

Debby Dubois, Treasurer

- Membership – attendance at meetings
- Safety
- Fair amount of Spanish speaking families and no way to communicate, how to engage them. Need flyers in Spanish etc.

### **Jefferson Square**

Alicia Barber, President

- Volunteers, need more people involved
- More Spanish speaking families
- Safety Issues – kids play/ walk in the Park, speeding down the streets
- Austin Park has homeless
- Housing on Adams can see tents with homeless

### **Michael Bell, CAC City at Large Member**

- Sent emails to various past NIA leaders asking what their ideas about the neighborhood. He received no responses.
- Affordable Housing
- Parks
- Safety
- Neighborhood clean-up
- Food insecurities
- Art, all forms
- Community gardens

### **Central Highland Park**

Yvonne May, CAC Member

- Assistance with home repairs
- Infrastructure 50-70% old street, with edges crumbling, don't have curbs
- Flooding in the NIA – streams going through yards, and other drainage issues

### **East End**

Tommy Green, CAC Member

- Lack of volunteers

### **Working Groups**

Susan led the discussion on what working groups members would commit to addressing after hearing the needs of the membership in their NIAs.

**Topics:** Membership, Safety, Neighborhood awareness, Homeless, Vacant houses, Dumpsters/fencing, Landlords, Arson, Homeless camps, Infrastructure, Affordable housing, Food deserts/Food insecurities.

Members then volunteered to sit on the following working groups:

- Membership – lack of participation: Tommy Green, Debby DuBois, Don Fortin, Susan McClacherty
- Affordable Housing: Michael Bell, Jill Rice
- Dumpster project: David Holl, Jill Rice, Kim Thompson
- Infrastructure: Alicia Barber, David Bawden
- Translations for Spanish speaking families: ShaMecha Simms
- Water drainage problems, Flooding: Kim Thompson

CAC members were encouraged to recruit more volunteers from their NIA or neighboring NIA.

Each working group are to consider:

What is the scope/vision for the working group?

- What does the working group want to accomplish in the each quarter of 2022? Each group would decide their focus for the first quarter but also have option to focus on a different topic in the second quarter.
- **Working groups to report out at the February CAC Meeting**
- Share group's vision
- Who is willing to facilitate the meetings
- Decision on where and when to meet

Susan also asked a question concerning the option of holding a second CAC meeting during the month that would be only for members to hear from one or two selected outside presenters on topics of concern or interest. Also could hear an update from the working groups, a one line update. No decision was made. Susan also asked if there were any specific topics. There was a response from Michael Bell: "I support the concept but doesn't have the time".

Susan said staff reports will be given beginning with Latoya.

### **Staff Reports**

#### **LaToya Burnett**

Reported out on the binders that were distributed to the members in the room. There is one binder per NIA. Additional binders are available in the office for those who not in attendance. The binders have different sections that additional information can be inserted as the year progresses. There are sections for agendas, minutes, schedules, website, and updated By-laws, etc. LaToya also mentioned that the CAC would be going back to use of table top tents with names. In addition the CAC page on city website will be updated.

Along with the binders, a book of Roberts Rules is available for each NIA. Books can be picked up at the office. It is a 740 page book LaToya will check if it's available online.

### **Monique Glaude´**

Monique opened wishing everyone a Happy New Year 2022 and with wishes that 2022 is better than last year.

**Code Compliance:** Monique reported that work is continuing on changing Code Compliance. Council members Hiller, Validivia-Alcala and Dobler are working on this project. There is \$184,000 in the anti-blight fund. The plan is to use \$60,000 of it and then give to a non-profit to employ someone to mow neighbors grass or to hire a LMI individuals to mow anyone's grass who can't. The goal is cut the number of code violations. They are waiting to hear from HUD. CAC members will decide on the CDBG monies and vote.

**Digital Program:** This program is moving along. Plan on having the kick-off in February/March. Currently looking for devices to give to LMI individuals. As for numbers we know there are 47,000 LMI individuals in the City. We are working with PC's for People to purchase 1,000 devices a month to distribute. Digital classes will also be offered.

**GoBlue update:** They will no longer be doing printing and mailings as of May 30<sup>th</sup>. We are looking for a new printer so a RFP will be developed. They have been great partners over the past decade.

### **Kim Thompson**

Kim provided a short presentation with 2- page handout. The focus was to show that everyone's perspective can be different.

### **Announcements:**

Susan shared that the next meeting will be Wednesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:45 in the Conference Room in Holliday Building. Susan asked for motion to adjourn.

Moved – David Bawden; Second – Yvonne May

Respectfully submitted,  
Maria Torrez Anderson  
Community Engagement Coordinator/Digital Navigator