

SOUTH PLAZA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2020

JANUARY QUARTERLY MEETING

The next general meeting of the South Plaza Neighborhood Association (SPNA) will be held **Sunday, January 19, at 6:00p.m.** We will meet at restaurant Osteria IL Centro, located at 51st and Main. The restaurant is closed on Sundays so please enter through Minsky's Pizza next door. Pass through the interior door on the left. If you wish to participate in the pizza buffet, please arrive at 6:00p.m. Pizza is \$5 per person and sodas \$3. The meeting agenda will start promptly at 6:30p.m.

The Good Neighbor Committee will present a "business spotlight" on Power Life Yoga Studio. General Manager Bethany Lang will be present and we will learn about the classes they offer at the location in the 4800 Main Building. The spotlight speaker will provide a door prize.

We also are aware Patty Lewis, a candidate for representative to the Missouri House of Representatives will attend our meeting. Our current State Representative, Greg Razer is running for a Missouri State Senate seat.

We may have a representative from the Kansas City Water Services Department at our meeting. We have invited Water Services to provide updated information on long awaited stormwater improvement plans for our neighborhood. The assistant for 4th District Councilman Eric Bunch has agreed to come to our meeting. We also invited Mayor Quinton Lucas, however he is very busy.

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

As I write this, I have just turned 70 years old, a personal milestone. We have begun a new decade which may promise to be as memorable as the "roaring twenties" which was



a mere 100 years ago. This year we prepare for presidential and congressional elections that may be of more consequence to the future than any previous US election. Ask yourself not "are you better off than 10 years ago" but, "will the result of your vote help insure we are alive in 2120?" Will the poorest of the poor have enough to eat, shelter, healthcare, access to education and meaningful life work? Will income and wealth inequality change for the better? Will all those eligible have the right and the opportunity to vote? Will they exercise that right when their future depends on it?

Most, but not all of those who live in South Plaza have many of the above advantages. However, as property taxes, utility costs and basic needs rise, will we still be able to live in the neighborhood we have worked hard to stabilize? We do have uninsured and low income residents and those with home repair needs that are difficult to afford.

One hundred years ago, when 66 of the 154 single-family homes were built in South Plaza, human needs were somewhat the same. But the costs and consequences seem greater now. Globally, more frequent extreme weather events, increased population density, and the ability to employ, much less feed, those already born will strain our capacity to do so in the next few decades.

All this is to say...the importance of being informed, acting responsibly, voting wisely and taking into account the needs of the many, not just ourselves, our own family, our neighborhood, and even our own country, is crucial.

Oh! And **HAPPY NEW YEAR!** Together we can and will make a difference. Join us the 3rd Sunday in January and learn what's new in South Plaza.

SPNA WEB SITE

Our South Plaza Neighborhood web site has been established as we noted in our previous newsletter. The URL address is southplazakc.org. At some point soon, we will no longer distribute hand-delivered paper newsletters. Future South Plaza Neighborhood Association newsletters and notifications will be found on the web site. If you are a member who has given us your email address, you will continue to receive our newsletter or other notifications periodically by email.

BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE

Our efforts, in concert with the Parks Department, continue to work toward the goal of replacing the concrete pedestrian stepped walkway between Grand and Brookside where 50th Street dead-ends. Members of the beautification committee had a very productive meeting with the head of the Department, Terry Rynard. We have asked that handrails be installed on each side of the steps for added safety, and that seat benches be included in the design. We also asked for larger landings and a few bends or curves in the path, rather than a straight shot down the hill. The department was receptive and provided us with two design plans. The enhancements, above the rudimentary plan to repair the steps, comes with a higher cost, but within the PIAC grant amount we were awarded. Installing ceramic tiles with street names will also be part of the new walkway at the site.

If neighbors notice any one of our South Plaza pole banners have wind damaged or been knocked down, they should contact Keith Spare at 816-914-8761. We will repair or replace them with reserve banners. A ripped seam caught early may save the banner.

KANSAS CITY PET PROJECT

Kansas City's new animal shelter, the KC Campus for Animal Care, is located at 7077 Elmwood Avenue on the West side of Swope Park. It opens January 1, 2020. The KC Pet Project operates the shelter for the City. It is a bigger complex with better segregated quarters for different types of pets and a state-of-the-art clinic. They now have some outdoor space for the cats, a coffee shop, and an Education

Pavilion. The City dedicated 18 million dollars from KC Go Bonds towards the project. Private donations played a big part as well. They still need volunteers and donations going forward. The web site is kcpetproject.org or call 816-513-9821.

KANSAS CITY WILDLANDS

The land restoration wing of Bridging The Gap, Kansas City Wildlands, is planning its winter volunteer workday on **February 29, 2020**. The event is called Long Johns and Loppers Ecological Restoration Workday. The effort is aimed at cutting out and treating woody invasive non-native plants from nearby native natural areas on public lands or parks. It may be a grassland impacted by cedar trees or a woody glade invaded by shrub honeysuckle. The location has not yet been published. Call 816-561-1089 to volunteer or contact Linda Lehrbaum at linda@bridgingthegap.org. It can be a good corporate group volunteer event. Our own neighborhood has shrub honeysuckle and winter creeper, both non-native and invasive species.

OCTOBER MEETING RECAP

SPNA's Good Neighbor Committee presented Community America Credit Union (CACU) as the local business spotlight at our last meeting. The South Plaza branch is located at 5041 Main Street. The credit union's manager Megan Seiter explained that CACU started out as TWA's credit union. She explained the difference between a bank and a credit union. Credit union profits or dividends go to members, rather than corporate shareholders as in a bank. Anyone residing in the county can join after passing a credit check. They do not have safety deposit boxes at this location. The door prize won by Maureen Tauheed was a cooler-type tote bag filled with KC Chiefs themed items. Community America partners with the Chiefs in promotions.

Our current SPNA President, Keith Spare, noted he has been working on a history of South Plaza neighborhood as part of our board's efforts to form our SPNA web site. Some of the oldest houses in our neighborhood date from 1905-1908 and are in the 4900 blocks of Walnut and Grand. We have 154 single-family homes in the neighborhood. Of those, 57 were built before 1921. JC Nichols purchased his first acreage here for development. The land was an orchard, brick factory and pig farm at the time.

TENANT'S BILL OF RIGHTS

The recent passing of Ordinance 190935 by the City Council established a Rental Housing Assistance Operating unit at City Hall. The new unit is part of the division of housing and community development and has responsibility for assisting residents with the rules related to healthy and safe living conditions for rental housing. Landlords are required to provide a copy of the tenant's bill of rights to a prospective tenant before entering into a contract to rent. The measure expands housing discrimination enforcement, stipulates a security deposit cannot exceed 2 months rent, a landlord must give 24 hours notice to a tenant before entering a unit, and landlords must consent to disclose the utility cost history of the unit. A rental housing appeal board will be appointed by the mayor. It also intends to provide emergency housing assistance through the director of housing to low income tenants if the director orders a property in violation to be vacated. Any prospective tenant can ask the city's water services department for the previous 12 months billed amounts on a unit.

CENSUS

The Census Bureau will send postcards out to residents in March 2020 with instructions on how to complete the census online. Residents can also respond by phone or mail. It should only take 10 minutes to complete. The Census will not ask about citizenship status and census workers will not ask for your Social Security number or payment of any kind. The allocation of federal funding for transportation, infrastructure and education is informed by census data. Data that identifies individuals or households cannot be released for 72 years.

In May, census workers will visit residences that have not responded. If the resident is not home, they will leave a door hanger with a phone number to try to schedule a visit. Census workers must show photo ID from the Department of Commerce. Residents can contact the regional census office in Chicago to verify the identity of the visiting worker, or any phone contacts purported to be from the census. The phone numbers are 800-865-6384 or 630-288-9200. Go to www.census.gov for more information.

SCAMS AND SECURITY

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) web site has a consumer information page giving information on the latest consumer scams

and deceptions. The Social Security Administration scam is the number one scam reported to the FTC right now. Scammers call and say your SSA number is about to be suspended. It is not. The perpetrator is trying to get the target to reveal identifying information.

There are "car wrap" scams targeting college students. The scammer sends an email with a message about getting paid to drive your car. They offer a weekly stipend if the person agrees to have advertising wrap placed their car. The scammer then sends a check directing the person to deposit it and then pay the wrap specialist that they refer with a money order or other method. Then the person finds out the check they deposited is fake. The bank may not learn for days that the check was fake. Just because a check has initially cleared does not mean it is good. Never send money back to someone (or to their associate) who sent you a check.

Internet connected toys, smart speakers and internet connected cameras need to be set up with the security features for the device. Default passwords assigned by the manufacturer need to be changed. The device should be registered with the manufacturer to get software updates. Go to FTC.gov for the latest blog posts on scams.

AMERICAN JAZZ MUSEUM

The American Jazz Museum located at 18th and Vine has a new executive director. The American Jazz Museum's Board of Directors has named Rashida Phillips as executive director. She starts work in January. She is from St. Louis and was last employed as the senior director of community ventures at the Old Town School of Folk Music in Chicago. She oversaw the school's community-based education programs. She has a masters in Jazz studies from Rutgers University. She has worked at the National Jazz Museum in Harlem.

The museum's interim executive director Ralph Caro, and a new board of eleven members have been developing new donors and partners to work toward a more self-sustaining model for the museum. There are a lot of events, music, and education going on at the museum, the associated Blue Room jazz club and the Gem Theater. Many music events are free, or just a \$10 cover. Go to americanjazzmuseum.org for information.