

SOUTH PLAZA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2020



NO MEETING WILL BE HELD

Due to the current Coronavirus Pandemic and the Stay-at-Home order by the city and county, our neighborhood association **will not** have our quarterly meeting in **April**. We encourage our members and residents to continue to patronize Minsky's and all the other wonderful restaurants in South Plaza for take out meals during this difficult time.

Delivery of this newsletter via printed copy, email and posting to our web site proceeds as usual, however the printed copies are distributed with safety precautions. Door to door delivery is done with disposable gloves. Our web site is southplazakc.org.

We will hope that by our July quarterly meeting that all will be well, with pandemic remedies in place to ease the crisis. Until then, we encourage everyone to follow the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines for your own personal health and that of others. Many of our residents are over age 60 and may have underlying health conditions. We regret having to cancel, because it is such a joy to see each other every three months.

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I hope everyone is taking advantage of being "home-bound" to get all their projects, book reading, and of course, tax returns done. Or, just catch up on all the movies you never had time to watch. First and foremost, please be safe and know this will surely pass.

Before meetings and other gatherings were cancelled, I attended a recent UMKC Neighborhood Advisory Council meeting. At the previous meeting we were told that between 75% and 85% of UMKC students receive some kind of financial assistance. They have about 16,500 students. At this meeting, we learned that there are about 7,000 parking spaces total on the Volker and Hospital Hill campuses. That includes parking for faculty and staff. All must pay for parking permits on campus and there is a sliding scale for costs based on income for the faculty and staff, but not students. UMKC

garners 4.3 million dollars annually in parking fees, which is about \$571.00 per parking space. They report the parking overhead costs are about 3.5 million annually. So there is perhaps \$800,000 net gain garnered from parking fees. Per their web site, resident student yearly expenses are \$24,116.00 and a parking permit adds about 2% of this cost. Perhaps many cannot afford the extra expense.

I raised the concern that UMKC's stated goal of adding a 50% increase in student enrollment (8,500) will exacerbate an ongoing concern of surrounding neighborhoods that already serve as UMKC's "ancillary" parking lot. UMKC has plans to increase the number of parking spaces. We were informed the cost to create new parking is \$10,000 per space for surface parking and \$30,000 per space for covered structures. The issue of UMKC students and staffers parking in our neighborhood to attend class may continue unless campus parking structures increase and parking fees reduce or get eliminated. Junior colleges in the area do not charge for parking and Rockhurst College charges half as much. The desired increase in enrollment and the parking limitations should be well examined in their next campus master plan. Adequate and convenient parking should be as much a basic hospitality issue, and a given, as adequate restrooms.

We are in challenging times, and our April meeting is cancelled. The health and safety of each and every one of you is of utmost importance. Please take care of your self and each other.

BRUSH AND LEAF

The free curbside brush and leaf collection by the city for our neighborhood will be Friday, **April 17**. Only paper sacks are allowed, no plastic. Bundles of branches must not exceed 4 feet long and 2 feet in diameter. Individual branches cannot exceed 3 inches diameter. Use twine or jute, no wire nor plastic to tie the bundles. The limit is 20 bags and/or bundles per household.

KEEPING CLEAN

We had planned to have neighborhood “**dumpster days**” again on May 23 and September 26. Our Beautification Committee had reserved these dates for 2020. The city provides the dumpster for general neighborhood clean up between the hours of **8:00am and noon** on those days. However, due to the Coronavirus epidemic, the solid waste division has temporarily suspended all neighborhood clean ups. It is **not likely** we will have one on May 23. If we do, it be at the same location as before, on east 51 Terrace near Brookside. The dumpster is for general trash and items that are hard to include in the weekly bagged curbside trash service. No freon containing appliances or large appliances are permitted. No tires or hazardous waste are allowed.

CORONAVIRUS DELAYS:

The deadline to file federal income taxes to IRS is **July 15**.

KCMO special election for fire department sales tax is **June 2**. Absentee ballots by **May 20**.

LOCAL BUSINESS

All restaurants have suspended dine-in under the Stay-at-Home Order. The restaurants may hold on through the pandemic, providing take-out, but the situation can change from week to week. For example, Nick and Jake’s restaurant at 5031 Main is closed. Their web site says they are “temporarily” closed. Others have limited hours for take out or delivery. It is best to call and check the web site for individual restaurants’ latest operations under the current crisis. Other businesses are closed but operating with product sales via the internet.

KCMO.gov

The city of Kansas City, Missouri has posted a Stay-at-Home Frequently asked Questions page to their web site. To limit the Coronavirus spread, the emergency order to protect health and safety took effect Monday, March 24 and remains in effect through April 24. It requires residents to stay home unless they are engaged in essential activities. These include working in an essential business, obtaining supplies or necessary services, seeking medical care, caring for a loved one, and exercising to maintain personal health. Social distancing must be practiced to the extent feasible while doing these activities. Essential businesses are health care, food and drink

production and distribution, sanitation businesses and supply, transportation, financial services, manufacturing and distribution of materials for essential businesses, construction and maintenance of infrastructure and households, child care, essential government operations, hotels, media and communications, mailing and shipping services. If someone wants to know if their business qualifies, they can view the full order on the city web site or email kcbizcare@kcmo.org or call 816-513-1120.

The city approved a \$500,000 emergency fund for small business loans as part of the budget. The Small Business Emergency Relief Fund is accessed thru a community-level financial institution, AltCap. Their web site is www.alt-cap.org. The Greater KC Chamber of Commerce and AltCap announced a 5 million dollar fund for small business in the metro area. They received over 600 loan requests totaling over 30 million dollars and have already ceased accepting new applications. Donations can be made to AltCap and businesses should check the site for updates. Business information and resources specific to the coronavirus is also found through a business resource portal on the city’s web site, KCSOURCELINK.

JANUARY MEETING RECAP

At our last meeting, we had a presentation by our Good Neighbor Committee on local business Powerlife Yoga. Committee Chair Francie Hall introduced Bethany Williams, the general manager of Powerlife Yoga Studio located in the 4800 Main building. They occupy a large space in that building (since 2012) and have 3 other locations around town. The South Plaza location is their largest, and has the highest membership. They had 529 students attending classes there. They held 93 classes every week, offering 9 different types of classes including yoga with barre, with weights, cardio and heated yoga. They sponsor “yogis on the Loose” each August in Loose Park as a charity event. Bev Bilotta and Barbara McCause won the door prizes, a 5-pack of free classes to try. At the present time, their locations are closed due to the Coronavirus, but they are continuing online classes through a YouTube channel. Live-streamed classes and recorded videos are available. Their web site is www.PowerLife.com.

A copy of the site plan for the replacement of the concrete stairs and pedestrian walkway between Brookside and Grand Avenue where 50th Street dead-ends was shared at the meeting. Metal seats for resting in

three areas near the top of the hill are included. There will be handrails on both sides of the walkway. The work is scheduled to begin in April. Landscaping around the South Plaza monument sign near the stairs and around the stairs will proceed after the concrete work is completed. The SPNA Beautification Committee will follow up on the design and choice of plants and stones, but the Parks Department has purview over the landscaping since the triangle of land along Brookside Boulevard is easement under their responsibility.

None of our PIAC fund requests submitted for this fiscal year were granted. We requested new curbs and sidewalks on east 51 Terrace and west 51 Terrace. We also requested a signalized pedestrian cross walk on Brookside south of 51 Terrace. Keith related a correction for our last newsletter. There are 108 single family houses in South Plaza, not 154 as was quoted in the January newsletter.

MAIN STREET STREETScape

VanTrust Real Estate, a real estate development company with office headquarters and property on Main Street in South Plaza has organized community meetings recently with representatives of properties on or near Main Street to formulate a streetscape design plan and possibly a Community Improvement District (CID) for Main Street in our neighborhood. The focus is Main Street from Brush Creek down to 51 Terrace. They hired a marketing firm, Willoughby Design, to help lead the meetings and discussions of the attendees. Three meetings have already been held with about 50 participants. Property owners on Main Street, representatives of nearby condominium associations, the President of South Plaza NA, Country Side HOA, and a representative of Visitation Catholic Church have attended. Retail tenants were not invited. More meetings are to be held after the Coronavirus crisis abates. Many interesting ideas have been discussed for streetscape improvements, pedestrian, parking and traffic issues. The marketing firm also suggested coming up with a name for the corridor. Any future building plans or uses will have to comply with the Midtown/Plaza Area Plan guidelines. The viability of retail, offices, services and community functionality in South Plaza's commercial corridor is of great interest to our neighborhood association. SPNA has worked very hard for over 20 years to get name recognition of our neighborhood.

BROOKSIDE INTERCEPTOR

The Brookside Storm Sewer Interceptor project has been significantly changed from what we were told before. A different plan to improve stormwater control for less cost is underway. The original plan was to create a new large storm sewer under Brookside from 55th to Brush Creek to handle runoff from the neighborhoods to the south and deposit it into Brush Creek. This original plan dictated the Whole Foods development to implement a large 9 foot by 14 foot storm drain on the west side of the property when it was built. It was capped off at either end, awaiting connection to the rest of the new storm sewer project. The Water Services Department has since decided the original plan was too expensive. They also have told us it is not needed to handle the current calculated capacity during heavy rain events. New storm sewer inlets will be installed along Brookside starting this fall. Where the current Brookside storm sewer main turns east, just south of Whole Foods, they intend to add a new line 6 feet by 8 feet in diameter to parallel it. The old storm line then goes north under Oak Street and ends at Brush Creek. The new line will parallel it. The GEO Bonds will help fund this improvement starting in 2024. In the meantime, \$100,000 in PIAC funding will be used to install back flow prevention devices on the sewer lines of low-lying homes along Brookside in the Country Side neighborhood.

UMKC

The Oak Place Student Apartments at 5050 Oak Street will be torn down this summer. Students were evacuated from the two buildings two years ago due to water damage from leaking pipes, mold and sagging floors. UMKC finally determined they could not be repaired. They are still in litigation with the design company and construction company. The complex opened in 2008 as apartments and after a lease arrangement, UMKC purchased them from the developer for \$40.8 million in 2012 and made them student-only apartments. The parking garage between the buildings will remain.

KCMORE MAGAZINE

The Spring/Summer 2020 issue of the City of Kansas City's twice yearly magazine is now available on the city's web site. It contains in-depth articles about city programs the work of city employees. Type KCMORE in the search window at www.kcmo.gov.