

SOUTH PLAZA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

JULY 2020

JULY ANNUAL MEETING

July 19 is our South Plaza Neighborhood Association Annual Membership meeting. This meeting will be at **restaurant Eggct, located at 5105 Main Street at 6pm**. The larger space allows neighbors to “social distance”. We will follow the Mayor’s guidelines that everyone must wear face masks unless they are eating. We will have Minsky’s pizza as usual, however, wait staff will serve slices to attendees. Pizza is \$5 per person and neighbors can purchase beverages separately. We expect members to remain masked when not eating. Speakers will maintain social distance from the attendees.

The meeting will be kept as short as possible to further limit health risks to neighbors. Mayor Quinton Lucas has been invited to attend and his staff indicated he may stop by for a short while at the beginning of the meeting. Patty Lewis, a candidate for State Representative, District 25, asked to attend. Our meetings are open to the public and although we will not be hosting a forum, candidates may attend and introduce themselves. We will have our annual SPNA Board election for four board member positions whose two-year terms have ended.

Annual membership dues are payable in July. See the suggested dues amounts on the back page of the Newsletter. Our dues pay for liability insurance, corporate registration 501(c)3, and newsletter printing. We thank everyone who gives their support.

WE NEED YOUR EMAIL ADDRESSES. This will be our last time delivering printed newsletters door-to-door. Volunteers distribute newsletters following KCMO suggested safety precautions, wearing disposable gloves. Both now and in the future, the SPNA newsletter will be accessible on the SPNA website: southplazakc.org.



We will continue to send them by email to those for whom we have a current email address. Therefore it is important that with your membership dues you provide a (clearly printed) email address on the newsletter’s back page membership form.

THE PRESIDENT’S CORNER-THE COLLECTOR’S EDITION

In July 1993 I wrote my first President’s Corner. None of us imagined that twenty-six years later I would be writing the SPNA President’s Corner number one hundred eight. I have sat at my computer many times without knowing what I was going to say until my fingers began typing. I can honestly say everything that I have written came from my heart concerning events and issues vital to our neighborhood.

After last month’s Zoom empowered SPNA Board meeting, I had a visceral reaction to it having been the last SPNA Board meeting I would chair. Donna Kerr and I have been side-by-side throughout this short period of time. I can honestly say what we have been able to accomplish would have been next to impossible without her and the numerous other SPNA board members. I have often asked myself and others whether I should step down and pass the responsibility on to someone else. Every time the response was something akin to, “Not me. I do not want the job.” I continued to accept the role because my love for my neighbors and my neighborhood did not allow me to do otherwise. Also, the dedicated SPNA board members and neighbors made the job both relevant and enjoyable.

I have held many employment jobs and board positions where I cherished having had the opportunity to serve. And, of course there were a

few that were less cherished. None of them reached twenty-six years and six months. Serving as president of SPNA has been the most superlative and rewarding experience of my life—to date. Together we have steadfastly met quarterly all these years. We often met because we had important issues to discuss and hear neighbor's concerns. Far more importantly it was because we enjoyed each other's company. I have often said it was the pizza Minsky's owner Greg Johnson has so generously provided and perhaps... my humor. But I know it has been the affection we have for each other.

I am thankful for this opportunity to be of service and a part of the South Plaza community. Whether it is the megalomania of UMKC or the voracious hunger of developers to terraform our neighborhood, I trust the membership of SPNA, the Board Members, neighbors (and neighbors yet to come) to vociferously, and persistently stand up for our community and neighbors.

Oh, and do not be surprised if I do not now become quiet. I have often restrained myself on your behalf.

Your friend and neighbor, Keith

SPNA BOARD ELECTION

July is our annual Board of Directors election. Board member positions are staggered two-year terms with 3 expiring one year and 4 the next. The board member positions of Keith Spare, Cliff Couty, Martha Hogerty, and Francie Hall expire in July. Keith is retiring, but the other board members are willing to run again. We need at least one new volunteer. Anyone who wishes to serve should be a dues paid member in good standing. To be on the ballot ahead of the meeting, contact Keith Spare at 816-914-8761 or Sean Tucker at 785-979-4449. Members can also volunteer at the meeting.

AUGUST 4 ELECTION

The **August 4** general election is a primary election. Candidates for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, other state positions, Representative to US Congress, County Attorney, and County Sheriff are on the ballot. The issues part of the ballot has a constitutional amendment to amend the Missouri Constitution to adopt Medicaid Expansion for low income individuals under the Affordable Care Act.

Polling places have changed for our neighborhood due to the pandemic. The Poll location may be at Visitation School, 5134 Baltimore, for most of us, but your location can be verified by going to the Kansas City Election Board website at www.kceb.org. **July 22** is the deadline to

request an absentee or mail-in ballot. After receiving the ballot, both mail-in and absentee voting require the voter to have the return envelope notarized.

You can vote absentee without a notary if you are permanently disabled or confined due to illness or physical disability, including caring for such person. Or, you can vote absentee without a notary if you are in an at-risk category for contracting COVID-19 due to age or various health conditions. Those conditions are: people 65 and over, in a care facility, have asthma or other lung disease, heart conditions, are immunocompromised, have diabetes, kidney disease or liver disease.

Permanently disabled persons can fill out a form and the Election Board will automatically send an absentee application for every election. No medical certification is required. Absentee voting in-person ahead of time at the KCEB office at Union Station is available until 5pm the Monday before election day. Call 816-842-4820 ext, 227 for more information.

PEDESTRIAN STAIRWAY

The Public Improvements Advisory Committee (PIAC) approved replacement project for new concrete stairs and walkway at 50th between Grand and Brookside in the boulevard easement is still pending. It was funded as noted in prior newsletters at \$50,000 and any costs exceeding that will be paid by the Parks Department. Implementation was delayed. We were notified by the Parks Department on June 12 that they hoped to have the contractor working on it by July 1. The work may be completed by September.

We also requested the Parks Department trim the trees and check the French drain along the retaining wall by the sidewalk on the West side of Brookside Boulevard north of 51 Street. If any prolonged seepage impacts the sidewalk in the future, please contact an SPNA Board member or the Parks Department.

DUMPSTER DAY

SPNA neighborhood "dumpster day" is **Saturday, September 26**. The previous scheduled spring dumpster was canceled due to the pandemic. Our Beautification Committee reserved a dumpster provided by the city for a general neighborhood clean up. It will be available between **8:00am and noon** on that day. The location of the dumpster will be on east 51 Terrace near Brookside Boulevard. The dumpster is for general trash and items that are hard to fit in a bag for weekly curbside pick-up, or are not large enough to schedule a bulky item pick up. Things like busted chairs, old microwaves, broken mirrors, worn-out garage door openers,

cinder block, scrap lumber, etc. No freon containing appliances or large appliances are allowed. Also, no tires, vegetation or hazardous waste.

MAIN STREET

The Main Street streetscape design plan and possible Community Improvement District (CID) focus group meetings with local stakeholders were interrupted by the pandemic shut down. VanTrust Real Estate is shepherding the community meetings with local property owners on or near Main Street from the creek down to 51 Terrace. Three meetings have been held so far, and another via a Zoom platform over the internet is planned for July. Three SPNA Board members attend the meetings. The vitality of the Main Street commercial corridor may have paused under the pandemic, but there are hopeful signs. The US Bank at 4901 Main has extended its lease through December. VanTrust owns the building and plans to redevelop it.

New restaurant Duck & Roll has recently opened in the 4800 Main building. It is a Hong Kong influenced restaurant serving Peking duck in single serve portions, Chinese BBQ, pork, seafood and chicken dumplings, rice and noodle dishes. They have patio seating, carry-out and will deliver within 4 miles. A new bakery and cafe, called Banksia, will be open soon next-door to Duck & Roll. Also in the same building, a healthy juice and smoothie bar has opened, called Nekter Juice Bar. They have all kinds of fruits, vegetables, nuts and berries made into juice drinks, smoothies, and bowls. Including vegan, dairy-free and gluten-free options.

UMKC

The Oak Place dormitory buildings between Brookside and Oak will be torn down before school starts in the fall. Traffic on Oak has been diverted for the south-bound through traffic. UMKC enrollment for the fall is up 22%. UMKC will have in-person classes for students on campus starting in August (with individual medical exemptions as needed). They intend to proceed with in-person classes and use online classes or a mixture as needed, monitoring the health situation.

UMKC is still trying to do something with the 100 year-old Epperson House mansion on the southwest side of the campus. It was donated to the university in 1942. It is a gothic-revival mansion of 24,000 square feet with five levels and 54 rooms. It reportedly costs \$60,000 per year in utilities and maintenance. A news item from February on UMKC's website indicates they are looking for a developer to engage in a public-private partnership to put it to some use for UMKC and the community. They intend to restore the exterior and interior public spaces and renovate the rest of the interior spaces

for "compatible market-rate revenue-generating office or hospitality uses".

SAFETY AND SECURITY

The summer months usually show an increase in crime. There are always thefts from vehicles in our neighborhood, and a few thefts of vehicles. The neighborhood block watch group for Wyandotte Street renewed its member contacts and proactive measures after a recent apartment break-in and attempted break-ins. Exterior air conditioners were tampered with as well, for the copper. The police advised residents to trim back parking lot weeds, use dusk to dawn lighting and trim the shrubbery. They also suggested the doorbell type monitoring cameras could be installed on the back doors as well as the front.

The Kansas City Missouri Police Department (KCPD) has a surveillance camera registration program available to any home or business that can help catch criminal suspects and solve crimes. If you have a surveillance camera, you can register it with the **WatchKC** program. Once registered, the camera location is mapped with KCPD, and if there is a reported crime incident nearby, they can contact the owner to ask for access to any footage captured at the time. The camera owner's information is confidential and for official use only (see disclaimer on their website). Participation is voluntary and you can opt out at any time. They cannot use your information to view the feed directly from your camera and would not be connected in any capacity. If you want to go a step further, KCPD partnered with Ring in 2018 to provide a free app that allows neighbors and the department to share text posts, photos and real-time safety alerts to keep in communication with local crime activity. Go to www.kcpd.org and put WatchKC in the search window to register your camera, get more information and to find the link to the special Ring app if you have a Ring product. You can go to the "Busted" page on the KCPD website to view published video and photos of persons of interest caught on camera. KCPD also partners with CrimeReports.com to provide crime incident reports with some very basic information on a map. You can subscribe to a weekly map report from that website. No individual address is provided, just the block it occurred.