

Knoxville Neighborhood Advisory – Vol. 9, No. 26 – Tuesday, July 19, 2016

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Published by the City of Knoxville's Office of Neighborhoods to report news important to Knoxville's residential neighborhoods. Include your neighborhood-related event or meeting in this space. Call 215-4382. News deadline: 5 p.m. Mondays.

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1. Funding Available for City Neighborhoods

A mandatory pre-application workshop for the **Neighborhood Small Grants Program** will be held at 5:30 p.m. this coming Thursday, July 21, at Cansler YMCA, 616 Jessamine Street.

To be eligible for funding, a representative of your neighborhood organization must attend this workshop (if you did not attend the July 16 workshop).

Under the NSGP, city neighborhood groups can apply for grants ranging from \$500 to \$3,000 to fund neighborhood improvement projects. Applications are due August 29, and awards will be announced in October. The City of Knoxville is allocating up to \$40,000 in NSGP funds for neighborhood-based projects that would be funded in late 2016 for projects to be carried out during calendar year 2017.

The [grant guidelines](#) and the [application form](#) are available on the city's website. To have hard copies mailed to you, call the Office of Neighborhoods at 215-4382 (Debbie Sharp) or 215-3232 (David Massey). Also, call Debbie or David if you have questions or just wish to talk about project ideas.

2. City Council to Ponder Neighborhood Issues Tonight

[Knoxville City Council](#) --- meeting tonight at its new time (6 p.m.) --- will consider whether to adopt, on second reading, an ordinance that would use the city's zoning power to limit the placement of payday loan shops and similar businesses.

The 9-member body will also hear zoning appeals on properties located in the Inskip and Oakwood Lincoln Park neighborhoods.

At its July 12 meeting, Council passed, on first reading, an ordinance that would prohibit “alternative financial services” (AFS) such as pay day loan businesses and pawn shops from locating within 1,000 feet of other such businesses or within 1,000 feet of residentially zoned property. If adopted, the Ordinance will not impact existing AFS services, which will be grandfathered.

Oakwood Lincoln Park: Also on the agenda is an appeal by Oakwood Lincoln Park resident Deborah Thomas of the Infill Housing Design Review Committee’s approval of a certificate of appropriateness granted to Knoxville Habitat for Humanity for a property located at 431 E. Springdale Avenue.

Habitat bought the property, tore down the dilapidated house on the property, and submitted a design for a new five-bedroom house on the now-vacant lot. Thomas and other residents assert that the design for the new house --- particularly the roof pitch and the placement of a side door --- does not meet infill housing guidelines.

Oakwood Lincoln Park has a mix of R-1a and R-2 base zoning, but the neighborhood also has an IH-1 infill housing overlay requiring that new infill housing be designed in a way that is compatible with nearby homes. This appeal, which was denied by MPC 14-0, is believed to be the first appeal of a decision by the Infill Housing Design Review Committee.

Inskip: Clint Bourgeois, owner of a property on Bruhin Road in the Inskip neighborhood, is once again asking Council to rezone his 4.73-acre property from R-1A (low density residential) to R-2 (general residential) so that he can proceed with his plans to develop the property.

Following an extensive public process, property was rezoned in 2013 from R-2 to R1A as part of a general rezoning of several areas of Inskip. Bourgeois did not object to the rezoning but later claimed he did not receive notice of the rezoning. He asked MPC and Council to restore the zoning to R-2 but did not succeed in that effort.

It was this and perhaps similar zoning disagreements that may have led to the [introduction of a zoning bill](#) in the State Legislature in 2015 and again in 2016. If enacted, the bill would require that no Tennessee municipality can rezone private property without the written consent of the owner. Such a law would hamstring efforts by neighborhoods, MPC and city government to adopt new zoning requirements to further neighborhood revitalization and historic preservation. However, in both years the bill was “taken off notice” and was not adopted.

Now Bourgeois is trying a second time to have his property rezoned. MPC turned down this second request earlier this year. Although the property was previously zoned R-2, the 2013 general rezoning to R-1A brought the zoning into conformance with the one-year plan, MPC staff noted in its opposition to the R-2 zoning. “The current R-1A zoning conforms with the low density residential plan designations on the property, is appropriate for the area, and allows reasonable use of the site for future development.”

[See the paperwork](#) on this appeal including MPC’s reasons why the rezoning is not justified.

3. Applications Due Friday for Citizens Police Academy

Applications are due this coming Friday, July 22, for the Knoxville Police Department's Citizens Police Academy, a 12-week program that will meet in the Training Room at the Knoxville Police Department from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on 12 consecutive Thursday evenings starting August 18 and running through Nov. 3, with graduation on Nov. 10.

Topics cover the various capabilities and functions of the Knoxville Police Department. Class sizes are kept to a minimum, so as to foster an environment for individual attention and active class participation.

To qualify for the Academy, you must be at least 18 years old, live or work within the City of Knoxville, submit a completed application, and undergo a background investigation including a criminal history check.

[Download the Application](#). For additional information, visit [the Academy webpage](#) or contact Officer Matthew Gentry at 215-1303 or [mgentry@knoxville.tn.gov](mailto:mgency@knoxville.tn.gov).

4. Bring Police Concerns to PARC Next Week

The Police Advisory and Review Committee (PARC) is a civilian oversight committee that audits the discipline process and the policies and procedures of the Knoxville Police Department (KPD).

The purpose is to strengthen the relationship between the citizens of the City of Knoxville and the KPD; to assure timely, fair and objective review of citizen complaints while protecting the individual rights of police officers; and to make recommendations concerning citizen complaints to the Chief of Police and to the Mayor.

By making sure citizen concerns are addressed by an independent body, PARC aims to improve the relationship between members of KPD and the citizens they serve.

PARC meets quarterly, and its next meeting is at 6 p.m. Thursday, July 28, at Beck Cultural Exchange Center, 1927 Dandridge Avenue. For more, contact Lisa Chambers at 215-3966 or visit the [PARC website](#).

5. National Night Out Set for Tuesday, October 4

It is not too early to begin making plans for National Night Out, which the City of Knoxville will observe on Tuesday, October 4.

To observe National Night Out, neighborhood groups host potluck suppers, picnics, and other events to celebrate the strength of community and send a message to would-be thieves and con artists that neighbors keep an eye out for them and watch out for one another.

Events do not have to be held at night. Some groups mindful of elderly members may choose to hold events earlier in the day.

This is a nationwide effort promoted by the [National Association of Town Watch](#), which suggests that the event be held either the first Tuesday of August or the first Tuesday of October. Due to the likelihood of thunderstorms and hot temperatures in August, the Knoxville Police Department observes the event in October each year.

Register your event with the KPD Safety Education Unit by notifying Neighborhood Watch Coordinator John Morgan at jmorgan@knoxvilletn.gov or 215-1519. This will ensure that KPD schedules officers to attend your event. Be sure to give the name and phone number of your contact person and organization, the time your event will begin and end, and the exact location.

Also, please inform KPD even if your group is participating just by encouraging neighbors to turn their porch lights on to ward off would-be thieves and show that someone is at home. This shows the officers in the area that your neighborhood watch group is in support of looking out for suspicious people and criminal acts in their neighborhood.

Some local groups participate in the nationwide National Night Out in August so that they can compete with other groups around the nation. These groups should register on www.natw.org (National Association of Town Watch). In addition, please notify Officer John Morgan that you will be having your event in August.

Whether your event is in August or October, please provide details to the Office of Neighborhoods so that we can include details in this newsletter. Notify Debbie Sharp at dsharp@knoxvilletn.gov or 215-4382.

6. KEMA Turns to Neighborhood Contacts Following Storms

Exactly three weeks after participating in a disaster simulation, members of the **Neighborhood Emergency Contact Network** last Thursday provided important information to emergency responders who were trying to get a handle on storm damage across the city.

The network --- composed of representatives from over 30 city neighborhoods --- is part of the [Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness Program](#) managed by the Office of Neighborhoods.

Colin Ickes, director of the Knoxville-Knox County Emergency Management Agency ([KEMA](#)), set the ball rolling.

“We have had reports of trees down and power outages,” Ickes wrote in an email to network members on the evening of July 14. “Please respond by email to let us know how your neighborhood is doing. Are there trees currently blocking roads? Is the power out (please also report this to your utility provider)? Are any homes damaged? If you can, please provide the address of damaged homes so that we can request that our partner agencies check on them.”

Ickes praised the response. “We got some good information back pretty quickly and used that information --- along with some from 911 --- to direct the Red Cross and other emergency response partners to some homes that had been impacted. Great success!”

Members of the Contact Network participated in the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency's annual "TN CAT" (Tennessee Catastrophe) exercise back on June 22 ([Neighborhood Advisory 6-21-2016](#)).

To learn how you and your neighborhood can be a part of the network, contact Debbie Sharp at 215-4382 or dsharp@knoxvilletn.gov. To see a list of the neighborhoods currently represented in the network, [check out the website](#).

7. Old South High is on the Market

The City of Knoxville is seeking proposals to purchase and redevelop the Old South High building located at 953 E. Moody Avenue on the edge of the Lindbergh Forest neighborhood in South Knoxville.

A [Request for Proposals](#) was posted on the City's website this week. A pre-proposal conference will be held Aug. 16, and proposals are due Sept. 20. The red brick building, with an estimated 46,366 square feet of floor space, is located on a 2.55-acre lot that is zoned R-1 with an H-1 historic overlay.

The city's objective in redeveloping the site reflects community input received at a public meeting one year ago this week.

"The local community has indicated a strong desire for the rehabilitation and re-use of this historic building so that it will be considered a community asset," the RFP states. At a public meeting held one year ago this week, "community members cited residential, office, community space, or an educational facility as the preferred re-uses of the building. The winning proposal will incorporate the goals and vision of the local community to enhance the property while complying with historic zoning requirements."

For South Knoxville, as well as the City's anti-blight efforts, this has been a long row to hoe. Here is a partial timeline:

1935-1936 -- Building --- designed by the renowned Charles Barber --- is erected.

1991 -- Building ceases being used as a school. Long period of decline ensues.

2008 – Knox County auctions the building and sells it to the highest bidder, Parisa Kadhoda, for \$117,700, with no strings attached. Building is partially re-roofed but no other repairs are made.

2011 – Owner threatens to demolish building. City Council intervenes, placing an H-1 overlay on the property.

2012 – Parisa Kadhoda sells building to her husband, Bahman Kasraei.

2012 – After years of codes violations by the owner, City invokes "Demolition by Neglect" ordinance and makes \$30,000 worth of repairs to prevent further deterioration by virtue of the owner's neglect. Lien is placed on the property, adding to back taxes.

2014 – Better Building Board certifies the property as blighted under the Chronic Problem Properties ordinance.

2015 – City Council authorizes Community Development to acquire the property by eminent domain if necessary. Negotiations ensue, and City [acquires the property](#) for \$207,900, of which \$65,265.59 was used to pay back property taxes, the demolition-by-neglect lien, and overgrown lot liens.

Over the past year, the City has worked to prepare the property for the RFP that was released this week. This work included surveying the structure to identify any asbestos or lead-based paint; carving out a portion of adjacent city property to go with the site; and reaching an agreement with Knox County, whose adjacent structure, the Sarah Simpson Professional Building, shares one wall with Old South High.

8. Forum to Encourage Walkable, Bikeable Neighborhoods

Residents of Knoxville and Knox County have been invited to learn how to create a more walkable, bikeable and transit-friendly community.

“Better Streets, Better Places” will be held Wednesday, July 27, at the Knox County Health Department, 140 Dameron Avenue. Ian Lockwood, the featured speaker from [Toole Design Group](#), is a transportation engineer who encourages communities to think differently about how their streets function.

Doors open at 5:30 p.m., and the program begins at 6 p.m. Light refreshments will be served. Afterward, there will be a social time with food trucks at nearby Schulz Brau, 126 Bernard Avenue.

This event is part of a Walkability Series sponsored by the [Knox County Health Department](#) and [Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization](#).

The purpose of the Series is “to create continual conversations, educational opportunities and community engagement processes where community members, businesses and local elected and appointed officials can learn how to make the city and county more walkable, connected, accessible and safe for all,” according to Liliana Burbano of KCHD.

“Nationally recognized speakers will come to Knoxville quarterly to talk and spark conversations about walkable, bikeable and transit-oriented places, connected and compact neighborhoods, mixed used districts and active, and vibrant and prosperous communities,” Burbano added. Dates for future events are not yet scheduled.

For more, contact Burbano at 215-5546 and liliana.burbano@knoxcounty.org or Ellen Zavisca of TPO at 215-4014 and ellen.zavisca@knoxmpc.org.

9. Neighborhood and Government Calendar (clickable to online calendar)

Include your neighborhood-related event or meeting in this calendar. Call 215-4382.

Visit <http://knoxvilletn.gov/calendar> for a complete list of meetings of various city boards and commissions.

If you are a person with a disability who requires an accommodation in order to attend a City of Knoxville public meeting, please contact Stephanie Brewer Cook at scook@knoxvilletn.gov or 215-2034 no less than 72 hours prior to the meeting you wish to attend. For an English interpreter, contact David Massey at 215-3232 or dmassey@knoxvilletn.gov.

About This Newsletter

- ** This Advisory is produced on most Tuesdays of the year.*
- ** Ideas and contributions are welcome. We reserve the right to edit submissions.*
- ** Deadline for news & calendar items: 5 p.m. Mondays*
- ** May be copied and forwarded via neighborhood e-mail lists and newsletters.*
- ** See past issues at our Website: <http://www.knoxvilletn.gov/neighborhoods>*
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