



February, 2019

Old West Lawrence Association
General Membership Meeting
February 2, 2019, 10 AM
Lawrence Public Library, Meeting Room C

Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Secretary's report
3. Treasurer's report
4. Election of new officers: President; Vice President; Secretary; Treasurer. *Nominations can be sent to Daniel Poull because the nominating committee will present a slate to be voted on at the meeting. Nominations from the floor will be entertained.*
5. Q&A with Traffic Commissioners regarding traffic calming policies and other relevant issues regarding pedestrian safety. This is a chance to learn more about creating a safer walk-way across the 7th and Tennessee crosswalk.
6. CDBG grant update: Kathryn Tuttle
7. Date for O.W.L. Street Party in September. Please volunteer if you are interested in planning, set-up, and clean-up.
8. Member and Public comments
9. Adjourn

Newsletter

From the President

Dear Neighbors,

I hope this newsletter finds you warm and well. First of all, we hope you can attend our next meeting on February 2nd at the Lawrence Public Library, Room C, at 10:00 AM. We will have members of the Lawrence Traffic Commission in attendance to educate us about the new policies that they have recently adopted. Of course, this will also include the discussion of making the crossing at 7th and Tennessee streets safer.

We are thankful for all who participated in our street party. It was an expression of what is great about living in this neighborhood.

The yard sale was a success, the donations were generous, the food was plentiful and delicious, the volunteer work was exceptional, the beer was finished just as we were finishing up the night, and we kept the O.W.L. spirit alive for one more year.

I look forward to seeing you out and about.

-Daniel Poull

Improving Safety at Seventh and Tennessee

The Old West Lawrence Association has applied for a City of Lawrence Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to improve the safety of the 7th and Tennessee intersection. The application was filed in December 2018, and final decisions on the grant will be made in April-May 2019.

Improving the safety of the 7th & Tennessee intersection has been a 30-year effort of OWLA. Dedicated efforts by OWL residents led to the Transportation Commission adding this intersection to the Non-motorized Project Prioritization list. But with over 230 projects on the list, City funding is unlikely. Ultimately, the City Engineer and Transportation Engineer supported the grant application and recommended a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon, curb bulb out, and pavement markings for the intersection – a \$45,000 project. OWLA also got letters of support from leaders of the Lawrence Douglas County Health Department,

LiveWell Lawrence, and Safe Routes to School to include with our application.

The CDBG Advisory Committee will hold public meetings for applicants to discuss their requests from January through April 2019. Their final recommendations require City Commission approval in May 2019. We will inform you when our grant is being reviewed at a public meeting and encourage you to attend. If approved, construction on the project would happen Spring/Summer 2020. Stay tuned and support a positive decision for OWL and all of Lawrence.

-Kathy Nemeth Tuttle

Lawrence Association of Neighborhoods (LAN)

The Lawrence Association of Neighborhoods (LAN) exists to support and enhance the viability and effectiveness of Lawrence neighborhood associations. It has been in existence for approximately 30 years. Neighborhood representatives meet regularly (currently on the third Wednesday of the month) to review City of Lawrence activities and plans, discuss topics of mutual interest, and take action as needed. The Old West Lawrence Association is an active member.

At last month's meeting on December 19, we elected officers, received a status update from the planning department, talked about a recent meeting of neighborhood representatives with a contractor assisting with Lawrence's search for a new City Manager, shared neighborhood status reports, and discussed other topics of interest between each other and with City Commissioner Lisa Larsen.

LAN has a website and Facebook page, and maintains a very informative email list. As the OWLA representative to LAN, I strongly recommend that people who want to stay up-to-date with development projects and other city activities watch LAN agendas and status reports and consider attending from time to time. City staff always attend, and at least since I have represented OWLA on LAN, one or two City Commissioners always join us, answer questions, and share status and ideas.

For more information, visit the LAN website at <https://lawrenceneighborhoods.wordpress.com/>

-Eric Kirkendall

City Designates Neighborhoods "Opportunity Zones"

In a move that surprised many, the City of Lawrence recently caused two large tracts of Lawrence to be designated as Federal "Opportunity Zones," without the advance knowledge of or input from residents or neighborhood groups, and without a vote of the Lawrence City Commission.

The Federal Opportunity Zones program provides a huge tax incentive for investors to re-invest their unrealized capital gains into property development in these designated areas.

This is a very significant and concerning move, because many experts have said that Opportunity Zones are likely to drive increasing gentrification without helping residents.

According to the City's Opportunity Zone webpage, the first tract is located on the east side of Massachusetts Street and includes the East Lawrence Neighborhood, Brook Creek Neighborhood, portions of the Barker Neighborhood, Lawrence Venture Park and East Hills Business Park. The second tract includes the University of Kansas campus and West campus.

It is not clear if City Commissioners were consulted regarding the choice of neighborhoods, but in an email response to this author's questions, assistant city manager Diane Stoddard indicated that staff and economic development partners were involved in the discussion leading to the correspondence on the original suggested tracts.

Regarding the risks of this designation to the City of Lawrence and particularly the neighborhoods in question, analysts at the respected Tax Foundation recently wrote:

Research suggests place-based incentive programs redistribute rather than generate new economic activity, subsidize investments that would have occurred anyway, and displace low-income residents by increasing property values and encouraging higher skilled workers to relocate to the area. <https://tinyurl.com/OZKS66044>

The Lawrence Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Corp., in partnership with the City of Lawrence and the Bioscience & Technology Business Center (BTBC), will host a community informational session on Federal Opportunity Zones on Tuesday, Feb. 12, from 3:30 – 5:30pm, at the BTBC facility, located at 2029 Becker Dr., on West campus. More information and registration is at <https://tinyurl.com/OZ-meet>.

In order to encourage discussion and analysis of the impact of this development, I have set up a public Facebook group, which all Lawrence residents are invited to join: (<https://tinyurl.com/LawrenceOZgroup>).

This article represents the views of the author, and not necessarily those of the Old West Lawrence Association.

-Eric Kirkendall