



January, 2020

**Old West Lawrence Association
General Membership Meeting
February 1, 2020, 10 AM
Watkins Museum Community Room**

Agenda:

1. Call to order and Welcome to the Watkins Museum of History – Bill Tuttle
2. Minutes of last meeting – Mary Carson
3. Treasurer’s report – Steve Lopes
4. Proposed Slate and Election of new officers (additional nominations will be entertained):
 - President, Eric Kirkendall
 - Vice-President, Maren Bradley
 - Secretary, Mary Carson
 - Treasurer, Steve Lopes
 - Karen Kressin, Newsletter and Block Worker Coordinator
 - Tresa Hill, LAN Representative
5. LAN report – Eric Kirkendall
6. City of Lawrence Land Development Code: Accessory Dwelling Units in RS5

Newsletter

7. Safe Neighborhood Speeds Education and Outreach Campaign: Tennessee Street Safe Crossing
8. 2020 Census worker recruitment – Frankie Foster-Davis
9. Proposed 2020 OWL Day Date – September 12, 2020
10. Tour of the Watkins Museum – Sarah Bell

OWL Day at the Watkins Museum of History

Please consider sticking around after the OWLA meeting for a behind-the-scenes tour of the Watkins Museum, which includes visiting the attic space and seeing the famous bathtub of J. B. Watkins. Members will also receive OWL architecture coloring pages to take home to the children in their lives, and they will get a chance to interact with some documents related to the OWL neighborhood. Tour and activities will last for 45 minutes to an hour.

Right of Way Street Events Meeting

The Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department is offering a “Stakeholder Meeting for Right of Way Street Events” on Tuesday, January 28 from 3:00 – 6:00 pm at the City Commission Room in City Hall (shortly after this issue of the Newsletter is being posted electronically). It is a drop-in event for those organizing street events that require a City permit. The process and fees for the permit changed last year.

This affects the OWL Street Party, so OWLA Executive Committee members will attend, but it is open to the public.

LAN Report

The Lawrence Association of Neighborhoods (LAN) was formed 33 years ago, on January 29 (Kansas Day), by our OWL neighbor Steve Lopes and others who wanted the neighborhoods to have a strong voice in city decision making. Prior to that, the city often ignored the wishes of the residents of the historic neighborhoods of Lawrence and neighborhoods fought each other.

Many of those in power did not want the neighborhood associations to have that voice, but the founders of LAN were successful. The group, of which OWL remains a member, has been a strong voice for the neighborhoods for decades, and now is a "must attend" meeting for Lawrence City Commissioners, with one or more commissioners always in attendance.

Topics on which LAN was briefed and had input last year included Opportunity Zones, the Downtown Master Plan, Short Term Rentals, Affordable Housing, Plan 2040, the 19th Street project, and the Fiscal Impact Study.

The hottest topic of the new year is a city staff proposal to consider allowing Accessory Dwelling Units in RS5 zones, to allow resident homeowners in OWL to add a small second residential unit to their home. OWL is in an RS5 zone.

No doubt much more will happen this year. The LAN board meets from 7 - 9 p.m. on the third Wednesday of every month at the Lawrence Public Library. The meetings are open to all Lawrence residents, who are welcome to ask questions and join in conversations. For more information, visit the LAN website at <https://lawrenceneighborhoods.wordpress.com/>

Eric Kirkendall

ADUs in OWL: Planning Commission Meeting

by Karen Kressin

On Wed. evening, Jan. 22, I spoke at the Planning Commission meeting, opposing the addition of Accessory Dwelling Units to OWL and the other RS-5 districts in Lawrence. Our neighbor Tresa Hill also spoke. She highlighted the many improvements made by OWL residents over the past 30-plus years, such as new kitchens, new baths, and landscaping designs, all at considerable personal financial cost and risk. She pointed out that recent heavy rain events have overwhelmed Old West Lawrence streets and basements, noting that increased density makes such problems worse. She also cited studies that have shown that as the percent of rentals increases, eventually property values decrease. Representatives of East Lawrence and Brook Creek expressed similar concerns, in person and by

written submission, about the existing high density of their neighborhoods, and the undesirability of increasing it with ADUs. What follows is an edited excerpt of what I said to the Commission:

I fully endorse the comments made by my neighbor Tresa. I would add another investment, which I know for a fact many neighbors besides me have undertaken over the years -- the removal of secondary upstairs kitchens, vestiges of the bad old days when OWL was full of boarding houses and duplexes. None of these investments would have been a wise investment over the years, but for the City's committed policy against adding apartments in OWL. We relied on it. Now that commitment is about to vanish, and it feels like a taking without just compensation.

There seems to be a trend in the urban planning profession to promote ADUs everywhere. Advocates consistently deny that the effect of such units constitutes turning houses into duplexes. I disagree.

A common justification is to provide affordable housing. I would ask: Are needs met by offering a low-income mother and her children a musty apartment in the basement of a one-hundred-year-old house? Are they met by providing an elderly person an apartment upstairs above a garage? Are they met by providing a person who uses a wheelchair with a backyard "tiny house," which has limited chair turn-around space because the house is so small?

My time here is limited [to 3 minutes], so I cannot present my concerns regarding other issues, such as:

- *RS-5 areas are not examples of urban sprawl, indeed they are the opposite — dense enough already.*
- *Parking and aging infrastructure impacts must be considered.*
- *Installing an ADU in a basement can be a ruse to get around the maximum occupancy limit for the house, especially for student rentals.*
- *Corporate landlords must be explicitly barred from meeting the owner-occupancy requirement (by having "board members" or "tenant/vice-presidents" reside there).*
- *If ADUs are to be benign and of limited impact, as proponents claim they are, the design and size limits of the existing ordinance must not be waived by variances, and city enforcement must be strengthened.*
- *Neighbors must be given notice of applications for installation of ADUs and for size and design variances.*

Perhaps OWLA should establish a committee to study ADUs in relation to OWL. An investigation of how the ordinance has been used in RS-7 districts and above would illuminate the appropriateness of these units for OWL. If you wish to volunteer to serve on such a committee, or to share your opinions with me, you may contact oldwestlawrenceassn@gmail.com (the president will forward your comments to me). Thanks!