



Neighborhood Advisory Council

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

5:30-7:00 PM

In Attendance: Nate Addington (UMKC), Celina Genta (UMKC) Troy Lillebo (UMKC), Sean Reeder (UMKC), Taylor Rippe, (Guest), Ken Spare (Guest), Alicia Douglass (NAC), Kate Smith (NAC), Pat Gallagher (NAC), Chief Bongartz (UMKC), Doug Ghertner (NAC), Jason Pryor (NAC), Jan Bentley (NAC), Jim Wanser (NAC), Martha Hogerty (NAC), Pam Gagel (Guest), Doug Ghertner (NAC), Sean Ackerson (Guest), Laura Burkhalter (NAC), Eddie James (NAC)

NOTES

Welcome/Introductions

Guest Speakers

- Taylor Rippe, KC Streetcar Updates
 - Contact: taylor@parsonkc.com
 - As of the end of November, 66% of the track has been built, 70% of OCS foundation has been drilled and 150/340 poles have been put up. In February, wires will begin being put up. Those wires are very high voltage and are not safe to touch. There will be a communication/education on this issue for the neighborhoods.
 - Work Continues on the retaining wall across Brookside Blvd and amenities near the South Terminus, which will include a hydration station for people and animals. Crews are welding a double cross over which will allow the streetcars will turn around in the future.
 - A permanent change at the intersection of 49th and Brookside Blvd will see the closure of the slip lane at the intersection. Jason asked how east bound traffic on 49th will get to MLK. Taylor was unsure but has followed up and indicated the preferred route is to continue north on Main and turn right on East Bound Ward Parkway.
 - Jim asked if the streetcar was working with parking benefits and shared that the neighborhoods haven't heard any specificity regarding parking. He stressed it will be important to engage the neighborhoods and communicate if there will be any metered parking. Jason echoed this and said that parking enforcement will be crucial for the residential neighborhoods.
 - Taylor Shared that they won't be taking away any parking. If they do move to an exclusive transit lane, it won't impact parking.

University Updates

- Community Engagement Updates
 - NAC Terms Opening on 12/31/23

○ 49/63- Jan	○ Countryside- Doug	○ Manheim Park- Chase
○ Rockhill Crest- Pat	○ South Plaza- Martha	○ Troostwood- Kate
○ Troost Plateau- Vacant	○ Rockhill Ridge- Vacant	○
 - Appreciation
 - Nate handed out gifts for those whose terms are expiring and thanked them for their service. He also congratulated Martha, as the Hogerty Family recently won the UMKC Legacy Family Award.
 - Elections

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- Applications for NAC will be taken through the first week of January. Appointments will be made by the Chancellor and will be announced by the first or second week in February, giving about a month before the next NAC meeting.
- Facilities Updates
 - Epperson House RFP
 - Sean provided background on recent attempts to restore Epperson House, which included an RFP issued in January of 2020 which was side-tracked with the pandemic. On November 17, UMKC reissued an RFP soliciting reinvestment into the property- targeting boutique hospitality uses. They gave tours to a number of interested parties at the end of November. Proposals are due February 14th.
 - Jim shared that he shared the RFP with members of Historic Kansas City. Eddie asked if it was possible it could be used for multi-family housing? Sean shared that is not an interest at this time.
 - Housing RFP
 - UMKC Issued an RFP for reinvestment into the Greek Housing that is on the east side Rockhill, on the circle drive. These houses have been vacant for 3 or 4 years and need some aid. They are trying to put the houses back into use to serve the campus and the students. They are soliciting National Greek Organizations in this process. Chi Omega, a sorority on campus, did a similar strategy to renovate their property and they had success.
 - Ken asked if any other Greek houses are still in use at this time. They are not. Jason asked what Greek Life looks like at the moment. Troy shared that there are 12-13 active chapters, but most don't have residential aspects. Nate will ask Student Involvement for some Fast Facts on Greek Life and share what he finds.
 - Follow up From Student Involvement: "We currently have 12 chapters and will have two additional fraternities joining the community in the Spring. We are at 287 members as of now. COVID definitely impacted our numbers, and it has been a challenge for organizations to recruit since the pandemic. We were consistently above 300 members and prior to 2019, we were above 400 and even 500 members. Some more exciting numbers are though, that last year (Fall & Spring) our community reported over 3,600 service hours and donated almost \$30,000 to various philanthropic causes. "
 - Oak Street RFP
 - The University received 4 very thorough proposals to the RFP by teams that were comprised by Kansas City and National firms. The responses were well positioned, but well beyond what the university could afford. As a result, UMKC is working with an architect to revise the scope of the arena to scale back to a price point that is more affordable. They are also looking at the retail capacity we have in our area to provide some market details to the firms.
 - Troy shared that this experience is very common and has been experienced by the university on many other projects that are now complete.
 - 51st Street
 - The proposal to transition a portion of 51st street to pedestrian only has been approved by City Council. Before the work can start there are some portions of Holmes and 52nd street that need to transition to 2-way traffic and a traffic light that needs installed at 52nd and Rockhill. The UMKC Parking along Holmes (by Linda Hall Library) will go away to accommodate that change.
 - UMKC has reached out to some designers to imagine what the now closed street could look like, and anticipates the creation of seating and yard games to make it a fun place to walk through or gather. Access to the School of Engineering Loading Dock will be accomplished through removeable bollards.

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- Nate Clarified that the light and the crosswalk at 51st will remain for those concerned about walking to campus. Kate asked if the University is looking at what's happening with 51st and Troost, as the neighborhood is concerned about pedestrian crossings due to high traffic speed. Jim shared that the city has designated \$50,000 in the city budget for a new crosswalk at that intersection and that should help the situation.
- Troost Property
 - The University has received interest in purchasing the property between Tiki Taco and Gaels to develop additional restaurant and retail space. The university is open to that and is in the process of having the property appraised. This property includes the Sam Miller Coach Building. The long-term future of the building is unsure but the University is working to preserve the neon sign.
 - Nate also clarified that the entire block between Tiki Taco and JP2 will be taken up by the new KCUR building. Also, JP2 (5220 Troost) is currently up for auction with a minimum bid of 2.8 million.
- Discussion on UMKC Houses
 - Sean gave a recap: In September, we shared that a desire for a deeper conversation on the future of the UMKC Homes located south of campus (53rd to 55th and Holmes to Harrison). Student utilization of these homes is not as high as it has been in the past years and as you move south, there are places where students are only using 16% of the homes. The university would like to find a solution that works for the university and the neighborhoods to bring the houses to a better state. At the September meeting- the recommendation we heard was to consider divesting and returning the houses to owner-occupied dwellings. UMKC has had discussions both internally externally since that time to explore the issue more.
 - The current state of the homes is mixed- they're older homes so if you don't stay on top of the building envelope, the conditions can decimate quickly. Cold winters have created freezing issues and there have been flooding issues in non-occupied homes. Sean shared there is no firm timeline, but they do want to keep momentum moving. In the meantime, any unoccupied houses that are in a conditioned to be rented will be listed.
 - Alicia shared that Rockhurst has gone through the same things UMKC has in terms of properties. They owned properties on Troost, Rockhurst, Tracy, and Forest and have divested of those properties over the last several years. Original property numbers ranged in the 30s and are now in the single digits. In the past two years, they have worked with realtors to try to get the properties sold. The goal is Owner/Occupant purchases. They sold a few houses early on, with limited success and they learned they needed to work with someone that really cared about the neighborhood and could discern if the buyer wanted to buy for their family or for developers/rentals.
 - Recently, they put out a more intentional RFP and have sold most houses on the north side of campus to homeowners. On the south of campus, they recently worked with Community Link Housing who is connecting low income/ first time home buyers to properties. Community Link has begun fixing the houses and has even started building homes on two vacant lots.
 - Kate shared her perspective on Rockhurst's process from the perspective of Troostwood. They really appreciated this last RFP process and appreciated Rockhurst's intentionality and commitment to sell to homeowners. The latest realtor they have chosen has been very transparent, communicative, and worked closely with the Neighborhood Association.
 - Multiple NAC Members expressed continued support for divesting in the properties and said it would reflect well on the university.
 - Recommendations from NAC Members:

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- Go through and fix big problems that a first-time homeowners will find burdensome (roofs, foundations) in bulk. This will ease the barrier to purchase for first time home buyers.
- Engage the new leadership in Rockhill Crest.
- Approach this as a phased/incremental approach over a number of years to avoid flooding the market- a 10-year period was suggested.
- Explore ways that deed restrictions and setbacks can be used to protect the neighborhood.
- Find a way to leverage UMKC Resources to offer appealing financing options.
- A general encouragement to use this opportunity to give back to the neighborhood and support worthy causes.

Conclusion- This is something that the university is seriously considering and is committed to doing intentionally. Any proceeds from sales would go to an endowment that supports student scholarships. The University will continue to explore this and will provide any updates on their progress between now and the March NAC Meeting.

Standard Reports- *Housing and Police Reports provided in separate documents*

Neighborhood Announcements/Events

- Ran out of time- Send to Nate for distribution.

Adjourn

Looking Ahead:

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| • January 10, 2024, | NAC Applications Due |
| • February 14, 2024, | NAC Appointments Announced |
| • March 13, 2024, | NAC Quarterly Meeting |

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