

2009 Volker Neighborhood Report

To Crestwood Board

By Kenneth Spare and Carol Thrane

As previously reported a great deal of time in late 2008 and beginning of 2009 was invested in regrouping and establishing a codified structure for the Volker Neighborhood Council (VNC). Ken and Carol represented Crestwood in the extensive process. Both Ken and Carol served on the committee creating bylaws for the VNC. The by-laws created officer positions of President, Vice President and Secretary. Ken Spare was elected to serve as president. Jim Wanser president of Rockhill Homes Association was elected vice-president, and Renee Neades, president of the 4963 Neighborhood Coalition was elected secretary. There were two standing committees: Rockhill Crest and Troost development. The Troost committee due to the recession is pretty much on hold and inactive, as there are no funds available in the near future to follow through on the UMKC long range plan of developing mixed use development on Troost. The Rockhill Crest committee developed goals and objectives for Rockhill Crest specifically targeted at better management of UMKC and Trustee Properties. This year Rockhill Crest Neighborhood Association (RCNA) was reorganized and the board participation increased with an almost completely new board. Ken Spare is a member of the new Rockhill Crest Board. RCNA now has regularly scheduled quarterly meetings and a positive cooperative representation on the VNC.

As part of that refocusing VNC process a long list of goals and objectives was drafted and adopted by the VNC which included the Rockhill Crest goals verbatim. In order to develop action plans to implement those goals three committees were created.

1. The Maintenance, Landscape and Parking (off street parking) Committee was formed. Ken Spare is the chair of that committee. The committee has met several times. There has been significant progress.
 - a. UMKC has committed to using the KCMO Property Maintenance Code as a standard. Acting on that standard and as a consequence of citations by the Neighborhood code inspector, Cohen Esri, the management firm for UMKC and Trustee properties, has surged ahead and between the middle of October and the middle of November
 - i. They completely painted 14 homes
 - ii. Replaced gutters on 3 homes
 - iii. Repaired and painted soffits and trim on 3 homes

- iv. Two garages were repaired
 - v. Stucco on three homes were repaired
 - vi. One home was totally resided
 - b. Additionally work is anticipated on 45 more homes. Some work will likely carry over into 2010 unless the weather is unusually cooperative. The following work was scheduled. Much of it as of the beginning of December has been completed:
 - i. 10 more homes fully painted
 - ii. 23 homes with some painting
 - iii. Trim and soffit repair of 12 homes
 - iv. Drainage problems addressed on 3 homes
 - v. Hand rail replacements on 4 homes
 - vi. Concrete steps repaired or replaced on 5
 - vii. Chimney repairs and or re-stucco work on 6 homes
 - viii. One roof replacement
 - ix. Two porch repairs.
 - c. The committee has also begun development of a landscape plan to address brush, tree maintenance, lawn care and landscaping. A preliminary plan has been developed and is expected to move forward.
 - d. The facility manager has agreed to make a priority of resolving issues of the gravel parking lot next to U-News. This lot has been an issue with residents for years. Drainage from it causes a walking hazard on the side walk.
- 2. The Residential Parking Only committee is looking into having parking on Holmes, Charlotte and Harrison designated as resident parking only. This plan is intended to better meet parking needs of resident owners and renters reduce neighborhood traffic, improve crime by having less transient parking etc. The committee is scheduled to meet with the city engineer who would work with us on this plan in early January.
- 3. The Crime Prevention Committee has met with UMKC police. Results of this committee are:
 - a. Plans to develop crime watch program in Rockhill Crest
 - b. UMKC police officers meeting regularly with and coordinating with 4963 CAN officers
 - c. Activity reports going to Rockhill Crest president, Ken and Carol on a regular basis. Often this has been daily.

I have met several times with Chancellor Leo Morton and VNC has received significant support from him. He has instructed Cohen Esri to develop and implement a Service Level Agreement

to document responsiveness to work requests and maintenance requests for UMKC and Trustee Properties.

I am greatly encouraged that UMKC has begun a significant commitment to improving the quality of the maintenance and management of their properties. The commitment evidenced by the work done in the last few months is nothing short of remarkable. If funds are made available and a landscaping plan implemented in the near future the neighborhood may be really looking good.

Much work is still to be done; the recently presented Oak Street West Development Phase III (OSWDIII) was presented as a total surprise. When presented it was not clear how much input was going to be solicited. The direct stakeholders (home owners adjacent to areas affected by the developments and business owners were not included as partners as they could have been. As president of VNC I called a meeting of the VNC executive officers and included Paul as president of Crestwood, Keith Spare as president of South Plaza and John Crawford to discuss the plan. We agreed to provide the Chancellor with a memo to make it clear that we were not endorsing the plan until stakeholders' concerns were addressed. The vice president Jim Wanser and I presented this to the Chancellor and we had a very positive discussion. (I have a copy of this document for the Board) I believe, even before we met with Leo, my efforts to inform stakeholders and the scheduling of our meeting, helped move them to the current plan which is to have several stakeholder meetings and at least the possibility of trying to accommodate stakeholder input. DST and 360 degree Architects are scheduled to meet jointly with South Plaza and Countryside Homes associations on Tuesday December 15. Other meetings are to be scheduled in January.

The meeting with Chancellor Morton went very well, with him assuring us that they would solicit input from ALL stakeholders and attempt to find common ground that would result in endorsement by neighborhoods. Of course it is likely not possible to make everyone resoundingly happy. But as I discussed with him the process of being able to express concerns and get answers if not solutions is essential. Due diligence cannot be avoided if neighborhoods are desired as partners.

As we review this proposal and as more information is available, I intend to keep all stakeholders, including the Crestwood board, informed of developments.

The placement of the KC Young Matrons in the southwest corner of the education building parking lot as far as I can determine has mostly positive aspects for Crestwood. I think Crestwood Homes president was invited to the meeting with the misconception that the Guignon home at 5236 Cherry was in the Crestwood Homes Association.

1. The KC Young Matrons are a service organization with about 300 members on their books. From what Bonnie Illig told me, about one third to half of those attend two meetings per year. They have a couple monthly meetings that usually have 15-20.
2. In the past they did rent their space out for weddings. This was not a good experience and they do not plan to do that in the future.
3. They have voted to continue planning and have a willingness to be moved.
4. The new site would give them ownership of the land and in that land 30 parking spaces.
5. The property is planned to be fenced off with wrought iron fencing similar to the fencing around the Donnelly/Reed property. They do not intend to allow parking on the site to anyone other than their membership.
6. UMKC is offering to make additional parking adjacent to the property available for their two large meetings.

A meeting should be scheduled soon with Crestwood board. When that is scheduled there are several issues to keep in mind.

1. I have recommended that Paul Guignon and Dave and Stacy Graves be invited to join us. They are the home owners closest to the future site of the KC Young Matrons. I have provided them with the concept drawings. They wish to be included.
2. We may wish to consider offering membership to Paul Guignon and to the KC Young Matrons. While the Guignons's address is 5235 Cherry, if 53rd street continued west they would be south of 53rd. They are directly west of our home at 5310 Holmes.
3. We should negotiate for as much of the area around the planned rerouting of 53 Street at Holmes to 52 and Cherry to become green space and landscaped as such.
4. We may want to discuss with the KC Young matrons a written agreement not to become a wedding site, if there are concerns on a negative parking and traffic impact to Crestwood.