

Ward Parkway News

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Revisiting the Idea of Private Security

WPHA families are concerned about crime, the number one issue affecting your life in the neighborhood, you tell us.

It's especially troubling right now with the Waldo rapist at loose in our area and with the increase in crime due to so many people out of work, turning to theft to put food on the table.

Many of our homeowners don't feel safe and have asked us to revisit the idea proposed about a year ago to supplement the hard work of the police with additional security.

Last time some of you asked for statistics to support using private security and we did not have them. The police were converting from one tracking system to a new one and some data was missing and some wasn't comparable from year to year. All we had was anecdotal evidence that homes associations using private security were very happy and intended to stick with it as it made such a positive difference in their crime rate.

We now have statistics for all of 2009 for three adjacent neighborhoods. They count the incidence of robberies, assaults, burglaries, stealings, stolen autos and property crimes combined.

One neighborhood with additional security had 54 crimes Jan 1, 2009 through Dec 31, 2009. Another homes association with extra security had 43 crimes last year. (BTW, they said in their first year of adding private security, crime dropped about two thirds). In comparison, WPHA had 122 crimes for the same period as these two other neighborhoods just north of us. We feel additional security will make a positive difference at a reasonable cost, but you may feel differently, so we need to hear from you. If you responded last time, we need your commitment again.

This would require an additional fee of \$50 per year per family plus basic dues which are \$40. If you're willing to pay this, please call 816.444.2159 and leave a message with your name/address or email wmurphy@kcnet.com. You must let us know by March 1st. Last time we surveyed the neighborhood, some homeowners told us when they heard this failed to pass, that they would have paid more than the \$50 we asked. If you feel that way, please let us know that. If the results are close, it could make the difference between adding it or not.



Waldo Rapist Sketch

Police believe the man in this sketch sexually assaulted two women in the Waldo area recently. They also think the same man may be responsible for two similar sexual assaults in our area last fall. Police urge anyone with information about the suspect to come forward by calling police or the TIPS Hotline at 816-474-TIPS.

The rumor that the Waldo rapist was spotted at 72nd and Summit is not true per KCPD. That person, spotted in a green Taurus, was there for another reason. The police spoke to him and don't believe he is involved. Do watch for and call in any suspicious vehicles or persons.

Idea to Foil a Criminal

One tip that makes the rounds of email says keep your car keys on your bedside table. If you hear/see someone trying to break in your car or home, hit the panic button and set off the car alarm and the burglar will run off and neighbors will respond to help you.

Snopes.com warns that neighbors probably won't respond as too often alarms are set off accidentally. People feel they're a nuisance, not a call for help. Do call 911 too. Police say the thief can smash and grab your valuables in less than a minute, before someone would respond. Leave no valuables inside your cars.

Police say flipping on a light works well and doesn't annoy neighbors with loud noise. Burglars don't want to be caught in light where their face can be seen and identified. This idea above doesn't hurt, but it may not work as well as you'd like.

Snow Info

- The city asks everyone to pull their cars into the driveway so that if /when crews plow the residential streets, they can do a better job not dodging cars.
- The post office will not deliver mail to a house where it's unsafe for the carrier to climb the steps. If you need help with shoveling, call Paul Bartel at 361.6069 for an assist.
- Some long time residents ask why WPHA no longer cleans the public sidewalks. Our insurance carrier refused to renew our liability insurance due to safety and work comp concerns, so we had to stop.
- We looked into snow removal on streets and/or sidewalks as some of you requested. It's not affordable within our budget. We'll have to depend on the city to do as much as they can. Sorry!

Your Last Newsletter?

If you don't pay your annual dues, you will soon stop receiving our newsletters in the mail.

We can't afford to mail copies to families that don't contribute to the upkeep of WPHA. However, if you provide an email address, we'll still send you PDF copies.

To all who receive the electronic version over email, please make sure you add wmurphy@kcnet.com to your address book so there's less chance your internet provider won't delete them as spam.

If you're receiving the newsletters but quit getting them, check with your internet provider what their policy is on identifying messages as spam. Be sure to tell us if your email changes too.

New residents will have time to sign up and pay.

Housekeeping Issues

There's a lot of junk sitting out in the last few months making the neighborhood look trashy. Keep in mind the following please:

- The easement and driveway apron are city property and cannot have basketball goals, rock salt storage containers, discarded furniture etc. Move those onto your own property.
- Bulky pick-up is by advance appointment. You can't just dump things curbside and hope someone will take them.
- If you have a bulky pick-up scheduled, the items can only be at the curb for 2 days plus the day of your appointment

There's a fine for these violations which nobody wants, and we all want the neighborhood to look nice, so please cooperate. Thank you.

Call 311 for an appointment.

Food Drive Results

On November 14, 2009 the WHPA Food Drive gathered almost 2,200 pounds of food and donations to help feed those in need in the Kansas City area.

Thank you to those who contributed and a very special thank you to the volunteers who were instrumental in the success of the drive.

Thank you again to Diana Prouty, One More Cup, Yoga Patch, Soil Service, Family Bicycles and HyVee for helping sponsor this event!

Raffle winners were Tom and Myra Johnson, Linda Harris, Jenee Lowe, Barbara Warriner and Trisha Coleman.

Holiday Lighting Results

WPHA thanks Marilyn Woods, Holiday Homes Coordinator and her team of judges who cruised the neighborhood this past weekend looking for great holiday displays. Thanks to all who decorated their homes brightening our neighborhood. The 3 winners of individual displays are:

7435 Ward Parkway
Keith Grahl & Harry Anderson

7410 Wyoming
Stephen & Robin Rupp

519 W. 74th Street
Donald Martin

Our 3 winners each win a \$50 gift certificate to Sutherlands. Our tradition is this year's winners are judges the following year as they are excluded from winning two years in a row.

Calendar of Events 2010

Neighborhood Night Out
Friday, March 19th

Easter Egg Hunt
Sunday, March 28th

Movie Night
Friday, May 15th

Spring Garage Sale
May 21st and 22nd

Garden Tour
Saturday, June 19th

Independence Day
Sunday, July 4th

Fall events yet TBA



**Neighborhood Night Out
Friday, March 19th
7:00 pm - whenever
Kennedy's Bar and Grill
501 W 75th Street**

Come join some of your neighbors with or without the kids and have a drink or glass of wine, beer or soda on us plus some terrific food and appetizers. We pay for the first round of drinks and Kennedy's is donating the food for this event. Thank you to the Dreilings!

It's a great opportunity to meet most of the board members and many of your neighbors. You might find a golf partner, workout buddy or playmates for the kids.

You'll have a chance to give us your input on things or get answers to your questions. Hear more about ways you can get involved in the neighborhood or WPHA if you'd like too.

Please join us; it's a fun, informal evening and everyone has a great time! Parking is tight in this area so consider walking if it's not too cold and the sidewalks are clear enough.

Thank you to Kennedy's who hosted an event recently and raised \$6000 for a reward fund for tips leading to the arrest and conviction of the Waldo rapist.

Parents and grandparents, please bring the kids and grandkids to the event, plus a basket for collecting candy. The candy is hidden in plastic eggs on the grounds of the school. Children are divided into three teams based on age (0-3, 4-6 and 7-9) to give all children an equal chance to find candy.

The Easter Bunny will appear and pose for photos with the kids, chat with them and maybe helps pass out candy or treats too. Refreshments are served to all. Kids can play after the event while the adults meet new neighbors and chat with old friends.

We ask that the plastic eggs in which the wrapped candies are placed be left behind so that we may recycle them for next year's event. Thank you to Jennifer Moore for organizing the event.

**18th Annual
Easter Egg Hunt
Sunday, Mar 28th
2:00 pm
Hale Cook School**



Did you Lose your MP3 Player?

If you've been on Belleview between 71st Terrace and Gregory recently and think you may have dropped yours there, email jmoriarty@aol.com.

Describe your MP3 player and hopefully it will match the one found and it can be returned to the rightful owner.

KCPD Personal Safety Class

The Scottish Rite Temple -1330 E. Linwood February 23rd from 6:00pm to 8:00pm includes a presentation covering personal safety at home and in public, discussion and prevention of sexual assaults, discussion of weapons; pepper sprays, stun guns and lethal weapons; a demonstration of escape moves and Q&A session. Printed materials available.



DISTRICT 4 Budget Hearing:
Date: Saturday, Feb. 20, 10 a.m. to noon
Location: St. Paul's Episcopal Church
11 E. 40th St. Kansas City, Mo.

Jan Marcason, one of our two City Council Members for the 4th district recently dropped by at a board meeting and we spent some time speaking with her about some of the priorities for our neighborhood, and issues that are important to our homeowners. She was able to reassure us that with regard to crime and code enforcement, there would be little change to the budgets for these departments, as they are very high priority.

We shared our frustration at how slowly derelict properties are repaired and at the number of vacant houses we have, many due to due recent foreclosures. It's a huge challenge to get absent owners who've abandoned their properties and moved out of the area or the federal government who has control over many of these properties to do something about them. The only action sometimes is fines for failure to fix the problems but those are unpaid until the property is sold and the back due lien and taxes are collected. That can take years.

We shared concerns over the need for good development that's an asset to the area but doesn't disrupt the quality of life in the neighborhoods, the need for more new sidewalks, traffic control on busy streets and concerns about the Action Center and Waste Management departments. Many improvements we would like won't happen due to a tight budget unfortunately. Attend the hearing above to weigh in on city priorities.

Census Tips

The census will be mailed to 134 million households on March 1. The form has 10 questions about your age, date of birth, race and whether you rent or own a home. It does not ask for your social security number or information about your taxes and income. If you do not return a completed Census Form by April 1, it is likely that a Census Taker will either call you or come to your door to obtain the information.



BE CAUTIOUS AND USE THE FOLLOWING SAFETY TIPS:

1. The Census does not ask for your Social Security Number - do not give that information out to anyone claiming to be with the Census Bureau.
2. Never invite a Census Taker into your home.
3. All Census Takers carry official government badges marked with just their name, a Department of Commerce watermark, and an expiration date.
4. The Census Worker is supposed to provide you with a letter from the Census Director on official letterhead.
5. The Census Bureau will not contact you via email.
6. Do not click on any websites that pop up disguised as a census survey. The Census Bureau does not solicit information over the internet.
7. The Census does not ask for credit card or bank account information.

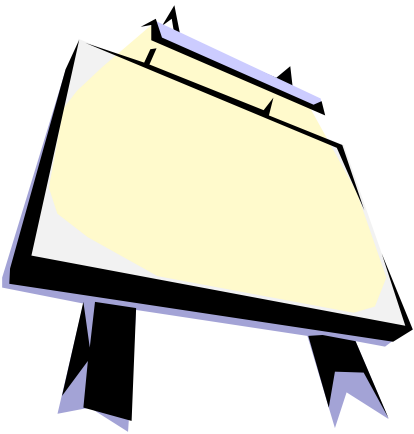
Trash Pick-up Delayed

City offices will be closed Monday, February 15th in observance of the President's Day holiday. Both curbside trash and recycling collection will be delayed one day in observance of the holiday. Trash and recyclables in WPHA will be picked up on Friday.

Spring Leaf and Brush Pick-up

The city will collect on April 15th from each household:

- 20 paper sacks of yard waste such as leaves or twigs (no grass clippings) 40 pounds or less each
- bundled brush piles tied with jute or hemp - no branches more than 3" in diameter and the bale must be no more than 2 ft in diameter or 4 ft long



Your Chance to Give Your Input

Ordinance 100114 introduced by Councilman Skaggs gives amnesty to billboards that do not conform to city code and which are impacted by state highway projects. This would weaken the effective Kansas City billboard ordinance passed overwhelmingly in 2007 with the strong support of neighborhood groups like ours and many civic leaders.

Current code says billboards that do not conform to the code may not be relocated or upgraded. MODOT has a number of highway projects planned within city limits and would pay for the permanent removal of billboards impacted by these projects which do not conform to current code.

This proposed change makes it difficult to improve the visual quality of the Kansas City landscape which would make the city more welcoming to visitors, and adds to excessive billboard clutter. For example, this change allows a small billboard 188 square feet unlit to be upgraded to a massive 800 square foot digital one.

The current ordinance ensures that the number of billboards in the city will be reduced gradually over time by highway improvements and other development activities. Most citizens believe we have way too many billboards and the Waldo business district is a prime example of that.

if you agree Kansas City has too many billboards and want the ordinance left as is to gradually decrease the number of them over time, please take a minute to email city council members to request they vote against this ordinance Email City_council@kcmo.org; jan_marcason@kcmo.org; beth_gottstein@kcmo.org.

One of the most frequent complaints we hear are those about properties that are not kept up, so it's a pleasure for a change to hear about the ones that always look great, or where owners have spent a lot of time and energy improving them.

This award isn't just about spending a lot of money. Huge improvement can come from a fresh paint job or a modest sum spent on eye-popping plants for the front yard which then draws your attention to the nice house behind them.

If you see a house that always looks well-maintained and that's a pleasure to drive by, or one that has been significantly improved, we'd like to reward those homeowners with a big sign in their yard and a gift certificate to Soil Service Garden Centers to say "thanks for the great work".

Nominations can be submitted to Jonathan and Ellen Klem at 816.363.0043 or to ellen.klem@hotmail.com.

Spring is coming so it's time to send in your nominations for Home of the Month



Gunfire Complaints

Gunshots near 73rd and Ward Parkway have been heard a few times, sometimes morning, sometimes night, The police received no call of a person or property at risk and "shots fired" complaints are common they say. Often it's folks who are in high spirits or who had too much spirits (happy their team won the Super bowl?). Sometimes it people angry that birds woke them or that squirrels are digging in their garden, so shoot a gun into the air to scare them off. There are better ways to celebrate and to deal with unwanted critters. This gunfire scares neighbors who hear it into thinking a serious crime is in progress, and could cause strangers and potential home buyers driving by to think that WPHA is an unsafe area to live. Please be considerate of others.

**Ward Parkway Homes Assn
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Kansas City MO 64114**

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Attention Please !!!!

If your newsletter is addressed to "**current resident**", we don't know who lives at your address, but we'd like to. Can you help us?

Please either email wmurphy@kcnet.com or call Michelle at 444.2159 with the information so we can update our records.

"Welcome to the neighborhood!" WPHA

Have you visited www.WPHAKC.org lately ?

If not, you're missing out on our new and improved website, created by board member Adrienne Dickinson.

- We've listed basic information like the officers, board members and by-laws of our organization.
- We've posted contractors our homeowners recommend, and can add others if you submit them.
- There are photos of events, a calendar listing all the events we sponsor and dates they will be held
- There's a list of volunteer opportunities for anyone interested in getting more involved. We welcome your ideas of where you see a need and would like to fill it too
- There's information about block parties to provide an easy way to get to know your neighbors.
- We list the welcome ambassadors who meet new families and help them settle into the neighborhood
- We post past issues of our newsletters so you needn't print them to keep a hard copy.
- There's a bulletin board where you can ask questions or post comments.
- This website is for you so tell us what you want to see there or what other ways we can communicate. Want more news? More social networking? Blogs? Let us hear about it.
- **Helpful reminders:**
 - If you forget our website but have a hard copy of a newsletter, it's always on page 1 under the title.
 - You can always ask a question or make a comment to president@wphakc.org or info@wphakc.org.

