

**District III Advisory Board Minutes**  
**October 4, 2006**  
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The District III Advisory Board meeting was held at 7 p.m. at the Wichita Water Center at 101 E Pawnee. Eight District Advisory Board members were in attendance. Nine City staffers and 28 members of the public were present.

**Members Present**

Teresa Cook  
Judy Dillard  
Matt Foley  
Charlotte Foster  
Jim Gulick  
Joann Hartig  
Jesse Sheffield  
Bill Ward

**Members Absent**

John Kemp  
Dewayne Kitchen  
Gerry Myers

Councilman Jim Skelton

**Staff Present**

Officer Ginny Wylie, Patrol South  
Officer Darlene Zerr, Patrol East  
Officer Morris Floyd, Patrol South  
Officer Brian Mock, Patrol East  
Janet Johnson, Neighborhood Assistant  
Dale Miller, Planning  
Marty Miller, Housing  
Deb Legge, OCI  
Kurt Schroeder, OCI

**Guests**

Listed on the last page

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

At 7 p.m. **Pro Tem Bill Ward** announced there was not yet a quorum, and asked for the reports from the Community Police Officers since those items do not require action.

**STAFF REPORTS**

**Community Police Report**

**Officer Ginny Wylie, Patrol South Beat 25**, reported that the Patrol South area is being hit with a lot of gang graffiti from Planeview residents. She said they are painting over it as quickly as possible, but it has been an ongoing battle. She said the 26 Beat (South City) is also being hit hard with graffiti, and she asked that citizens report graffiti as soon as they spot it. She said the construction on Pawnee is causing some traffic issues because motorists are cutting through private drives and parking lots to avoid traffic. Officer Wylie also reported that some of the blight issues on the 25 Beat are being addressed.

**Joann Hartig arrived at 7:05 p.m.**

**Charlotte Foster** reported that she had attended a gang awareness meeting the previous night and only 10 people showed up.

**Jesse Sheffield arrived at 7:07 p.m.**

**Office Wylie** said she had a rash of burglaries on her beat in August – 16 total, and after arresting suspects, the burglaries in her beat dropped to three in September. **Joann Hartig** asked if gang activity is on the increase in the 23 and 25 beats. **Wylie** said not any more so than any other area and also noted that Officer Bill Stevens had recently worked to get some gang members evicted.

**Officer Darlene Zerr, Patrol East Beat 35**, reported that gang graffiti is also very heavy in her beat right now. She said that the Dry Creek and Hilltop neighborhoods both had successful clean-ups. Dry Creek filled 11 skids. Officer Zerr also reported that the new drug dog in the Patrol East Bureau “Fester” is doing a great job and really helping with the drug cases.

**Officer Morris Floyd, Patrol South Beat 27**, reported that the Haunted Island at Watson Park will be opening up soon and that Officers will have keys to it so if kids try to go in there after it’s closed, the Officers will be able to access the area. He also announced the Firefighters Parade this coming Saturday. **Officer Floyd** said that the SCAT Officers are now working only on gang issues for the next few weeks and in the mean time CP Officers will be doing drug complaints. He also announced that two properties in the Patrol South area have received approval for condemnation.

## **ORDER OF BUSINESS**

At 7:15 p.m. **Pro Tem Bill Ward** announced there was a quorum and called the meeting to order.

The meeting minutes from September 6, 2006, were approved as submitted. (**Foster:Hartig, 8:0**)

## **PUBLIC AGENDA**

1. There were no scheduled items submitted.
2. Unscheduled items. Five citizens had concerns to express.

**Donna Thorton, 2714 Southfork**, said that there are several properties in her area that have environmental violations and that she talks to Environmental Services every week and it is so frustrating because nothing ever gets done. She feels it is a staffing issue and posed the question, how can you keep the neighborhoods clean if the City doesn’t have enough people?

**Elena Ingle, 3608 Meadow Lane**, said that she is seeing a lot of signs in the right of way and that issue needs to be addressed.

**Mary Smith, 307 W. 33<sup>rd</sup> St. South**, said she works with the Pure and Simple Lifestyles program that works with teens in the neighborhood to promote abstinence.

**Holly Nelson, 2011 S. Terrace Drive**, said she read about a graffiti contest that was held at Linwood Park and wanted to know how and why they would do that. **Joann Hartig** said no one showed up for the event and **Teresa Cook** said it was held outside. **Cook** offered an additional explanation saying that Pastor Scott Dryden at Believers Tabernacle has been working hard for a year, in partnership with the Police Department and Gang Coalition, on outreach to kids who are struggling with gang issues. She said they need more help from the community and the next meeting will be on Oct. 10 at 7 p.m. She explained that at the event at Linwood they provided canvasses and were trying to provide the teens with an outlet to show case their talent in a more positive way, rather than on neighborhood structures.

**John Dickson, 6054 S. Minneapolis**, said his neighborhood has had a number of cleanups and you just have to keep after it and keep on reporting problem properties and eventually it does get better. He said his neighborhood has looked a lot better this summer than in years past.

**Bill Ward** announced that DAB member **Gerry Myers** wife is very ill and asked that everyone keep them in their prayers.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Zoning case ZON2006-40 1740 S. Oliver**

**Dale Miller, Planning Department**, said the owner of the property is trying to sell it, and in order for the buyer to get the lowest mortgage rate possible, they need to change the zoning back to a TF-3 two-family residential. In 1995, it was changed to a LC Limited Commercial subject to Covenant 29 so the owner could run a small animal clinic out of it.

**Dillard (Hartig)** made a motion to approve request to change it back to a TF-3 two-family residential.

**Motion passed 8:0**

**Action: Board approved the zoning change.**

### **Neighborhood Revitalization Area Boundary**

**Marty Miller, Housing and Community Services Department**, presented a PowerPoint detailing the Neighborhood Revitalization Area Boundary and asked the DAB for input on the existing NRA boundary and the addition of the boundaries designated in the South Central Neighborhood Plan which are: Kellogg on the north, the Arkansas River on the south and west, and Washington and the railroad tracks, from Pawnee to the Arkansas, on the east. The current NRA boundary extends south to Harry Street; therefore the new boundary would add the southern half of the South Central Neighborhood Plan. All other current NRA boundaries were recommended to remain unchanged. **Miller** said the plan can be viewed on the City website or at all the City libraries.

Concerning the tax abatement that Miller talked about, **Matt Foley** said in his neighborhood they have challenges because when people try to make improvements the county runs out and immediately increases the appraisal value. **Foley** asked how long the tax abatement applies. **Miller** said five years, but it cannot be used retroactive.

**Miller** explained that the green areas on the map are Local Investment areas that are target areas that the Council allocates HUD dollars to. **Foley** pointed out that if it's more than a \$10,000 improvement, the applicant can get their permits free of charge.

Miller reviewed the definition of "low to moderate" income. **Ward** asked where the information on household income comes from. **Miller** said from the census.

**Jesse Sheffield** asked why the South City area wasn't included in the NRA. **Miller** said that they included the area that they were requested to include. **Hartig** said that the South Central area was included because they have a Neighborhood Plan.

**Miller** said anyone who thinks of additional comments after the meeting can either mail them to him or e-mail them to him. He went on to explain that the NRA isn't required, but pointed out that federal funding is going down and we are enlarging the area, and it is a good idea to have the plan because other funding sources require it.

**Jody Bennett, 1709 E. 48<sup>th</sup> St. S.**, asked how much money was in the program. **Miller** gave a brief overview of approximately \$600,000 for housing, \$650,000 for CIP, \$600,000 for economic development, and pointed out that 51 families were able to get into new homes last year under the program.

**Gerald Graves, 3801 E. Funston**, asked if there were programs available outside the identified areas. **Miller** said those are private sector issues, and yes there are other programs available. **Miller** also pointed out that City Manager George Kolb is working very hard to recruit new businesses to Wichita.

**Betty Strickland, 1302 Galena**, asked what you have to do to qualify for sidewalks. **Miller** said for the designated areas it is driven by the City Council member, and last year in District 3 money was appropriated for sidewalks in Hilltop. **Strickland** said they need sidewalks in the Anderson Elementary area. Several people thought that area would fall into the new NRA boundaries.

**Jesse Sheffield** said that South City always gets overlooked and he feels like they are losing out on everything.

**Foster** asked if the programs could be made more for the homeowners and less for the landlords. **Miller** said most of the money is for homeowners and only one small program is for landlords. He also said that the emergency repair program is citywide so qualified citizens living anywhere in the city would be eligible for that.

**Gerald Graves, 3801 E. Funston**, asked if there are any programs for businesses and **Miller** said yes, on an individual basis.

**Hartig** said her Neighborhood Association has worked on its Neighborhood Revitalization plan for more than 10 years and they really need the programs that being included in the NRA would provide.

**Foley (Dillard)** made a motion that the DAB support the proposed NRA boundaries.

**Motion passed 7:0 (Jesse Sheffield abstained from voting)**

**Action: Board expressed support for the new boundaries by passing a motion and provided comment.**

Because City staff had not yet arrived for the StopBlight presentation, the DAB moved on to Agenda item 6.

## **BOARD AGENDA**

### **Updates, Issues and Reports**

**Sheffield** reported the main projects going on in the South City area include the Pawnee street construction and the sewer work and Hydraulic and Wassall.

**Hartig** said they had some problems in their neighborhood with a church using a PA system to broadcast their service, and they were seeing an increase of homeless people under the Harry Street bridge.

**Foster** said that Curtis and Caldwell schools in her neighborhood are still on the “need improvement” list and as a result a lot of residents are bussing their kids out to other schools. She said she feels like this hurts the neighborhood.

**Cook** reported that in her area they are sponsoring a Home Buyers Fair on Oct. 21<sup>st</sup> at 922 S. Topeka.

**Foley** said they had a great neighborhood clean up in the Hilltop area and that their streetlights have been upgraded to produce maximum lighting.

**Dillard** said her Neighborhood Association had a candidate forum at their Monday night meeting. She also said they are having some vandalism problems so they are going to meet with the CP Officer later this month to discuss those issues. She said the work on the 47<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge is causing a lot of traffic problems in the area.

**Gulick** said in his neighborhood they continue to have problems with the houses that were bought out for the flood control project. He said of the four houses that were bought-out for demolition, only one was demolished without incident. He said the other three have created problems in the neighborhood and it has definitely not been a smooth transition. He also announced Grandview Heights will hold their candidate forum the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month.

**Ward** said his neighborhood association works hard to support Griffith Elementary and so far they have collected eight or nine bags of school supplies and have delivered them to the school.

**Kerin Smith, 2240 S. Crestway**, said two people in the neighborhood have offered to do some free landscaping at Griffith Elementary. **Elena Ingle, 3608 Meadow Lane**, added that two military people have offered to volunteer labor on the project.

At 8:36 p.m. staff for the StopBlight presentation still had not arrived so **Pro Tem Bill Ward** called for a short break. At 8:46 p.m. **Pro Tem Bill Ward** called the meeting back to order.

### **StopBlight proposed ordinances**

**Kurt Schroeder and Deb Legge, Office of Central Inspection**, reported that over the past year, the City Council has expressed its desire to strengthen neighborhoods, and particularly, to find more effective ways to eliminate blighting influences such as deteriorating, vacant and/or abandoned

buildings. A significant part of this effort includes the “StopBlight” initiative.

The StopBlight initiative, as first presented in a City Council workshop in early 2006, included five (5) key strategies: (1) obtaining tax delinquent property through tax foreclosure or “special” tax foreclosure purchases made by the City or qualified neighborhood non-profit entities, and working with Sedgwick County to promote more timely and frequent tax foreclosure sales; (2) identifying and developing resources to allow for bidding and/or outright purchase of properties that can be rehabilitated or redeveloped; (3) strengthening boarded and/or abandoned/long-term vacant building ordinances, policies and procedures; (4) requiring local agent designation/registration for problem properties owned by non-local persons or entities; and (5) creating means to acquire and “land-bank” land for future re-use.

At the August 15, 2006, City Council workshop, staff presented an overview of proposed ordinances, processes and procedures related to strategies 3 and 4 above, focusing primarily on proposed revisions to the current Housing Code (Chapter 20.04 of the Code of the City of Wichita) and a proposed new Vacant and Neglected Building Code (Chapter 30.01). The City Council indicated substantial support for the proposed ordinance amendments, and directed staff to prepare the ordinances for City Council review and adoption (with the understanding that the other key strategies would continue to be developed for implementation).

The ordinances were presented for City Council review and possible adoption during the September 12, 2006, City Council meeting. At that meeting, the City Council directed staff to obtain additional input on the proposed ordinances.

**Schroeder** said it currently takes six or seven years for a tax foreclosure to occur, even though the law allows for a three-year process.

**Legge** said that currently there are around 600 boarded up properties city-wide and 174 of them are in a one-mile area in northeast Wichita, referred to as the 44 Beat. She said they are planning on using the 44 Beat as their pilot area.

**Jody Bennett, 1709 E. 48<sup>th</sup> St. S.**, asked if OCI was going to get enough staff to support the StopBlight initiative. **Schroeder** said the number one reason his staff gets muddled down is because they don’t have the tools (ordinances) to effectively do their jobs. He said if they could get resolution to problem properties in a year, as opposed to several years, it would save staff time. He also said they added another staff member during the last budget cycle.

**Donna Thorton, 2714 Southfork**, said she has two problem properties in her neighborhood where the problem is in the backyard. She wanted to know if StopBlight would help with these properties. **Schroeder** said the focus of StopBlight is abandoned buildings. **Thorton** said the problem is the inspectors say they can’t access the back yard. **Schroeder** said there are remedies for those situations. Inspectors can get an order from the Judge to allow them entry to the backyard.

**Don Parsons, 1609 S. Wichita**, asked how many inspectors OCI has. **Schroeder** said they have 12 and they are assigned geographically. **Legge** said that StopBlight doesn’t add more work for inspectors. She said it adds more tools for addressing problem properties that inspectors are already having to deal with.

**Mike Pharis, 1501 N. High**, asked if the current process had diversion. **Schroeder** said no.

**Gerald Graves, 3801 E. Funston**, said they reported around 50 inoperable vehicles in his neighborhood and they're now down to around 13. He wanted to know how he could find out what is going on with these cases. **Janet Johnson** said she would look them up for him.

**Kerin Smith, 2240 S. Crestway**, said she feels like anything would help. She said her neighborhood turned in a problem property 10 years ago, and it's still a problem. She said the owner died and someone inherited it and the situation got even worse, causing some people to move out of the neighborhood to get away from this problem property. She said the neighbors started attending the court hearings to try and support city staff and last week the Judge thanked the property owner for being in compliance, fined him \$100 and closed the case. **Smith** said the property isn't anywhere near in compliance and she didn't understand why the Judge did that. She also wanted to know how Environmental Services fits into StopBlight. **Schroeder** said OCI can start environmental cases on properties that they are investigating for code violations. He said next year they will have an inspector assigned to follow up on the environmental portion of the case and he hopes that will help.

**Elena Ingle, 2608 Meadow Lane**, said, what are we going to do about the Judge? **Schroeder** said, I don't know.

**Holly Nelson, 2011 S. Terrace Dr.**, asked if OCI would address issues on a vacant lot. **Schroeder** said no, that's Environmental Services.

**Legge** said with OCI getting a new person to address environmental cases, it should help. **Larry Manny, 1116 Alturas**, asked when that person would be hired. **Schroeder** said next year.

**Holly Nelson, 2011 S. Terrace Dr.**, asked how long a property would have to sit vacant under the new proposed ordinance before it's addressed. **Schroeder** said as long as the property is maintained OCI won't get involved, but if it starts to go downhill, then it could fall under the StopBlight.

Referring to the presentation, **Kerin Smith, 2240 S. Crestway**, said she thought a "plan of action" sounded much better than fines and jail. She said she didn't want anyone to go to jail; she just wants them to fix their property.

**Ken Holmes, 2246 Columbine**, said he represented Rental Owners Inc. and he felt Wichita is fortunate to have the group of people working at OCI that we do. He said he felt that some of the fines under the proposed ordinances were very strict and that as property owners they have as much at stake as neighbors. He said he would like to have the property owner put the fine into the property. He said that we need to solve society problems first because who wants to live somewhere that people are being shot at? **Holmes** said the fine structure is very aggressive and all property is registered now, so he doesn't know why it needs to be done a second time. He added that he would like to see the process move faster and said that he didn't have anything against imminent domain.

**Mike Pharis, 1501 N. High**, asked if they had any profiles on the blighted property owners and whether the majority was in or out of town owners. **Schroeder** said they don't have profiles yet, but that 60 percent of the properties that are currently boarded up are not in compliance and there

are 175 boarded up properties in one square mile. **Pharis** said he is not in favor of blight and that he owns 10 properties and wouldn't want to live next door to the property Kerin Smith was talking about. He said he was concerned because under the proposed ordinance an apartment manager could be subject to the same penalties as an owner. He also felt the fine structure was pretty steep and that those fines would buy a lot of paint and siding. He also felt that the proposed ordinances would take away a lot of the Judge's discretion. He believes that if the code enforcement becomes overly aggressive then people will stop buying properties and he would like to sit down with the City staff working on StopBlight and give some input. He said, if an out of town owner won't respond to a summons, what makes you think they will register?

**James Pruden, 2918 E. Morris**, said he bought a house where a meth lab had been functioning and the City inspectors tried to be as obstructive as possible. He said he had electrical problems, but he finally got it resolved. He said if people could buy a house themselves and work on it, it would be better because not everyone can afford to hire a contractor. He said he thinks there are a lot of bad things going on in OCI. **Ward** said that was off the topic of discussion and Schroeder did not need to respond to it.

**Howard McCoy, 2356 S. Terrace**, said as a neighborhood association president, he has 620 homes in his area and he is very upset with what happens in Environmental Court. He said their neighborhood tries to address problem properties and one resident got their tires slashed for turning someone in.

**Foley** said his neighborhood had several concerns. 1. When houses are condemned then lots become overgrown, etc. 2. people don't want to rehab properties if there's no return 3. Court can reduce a fine on a problem landlord to \$50 – are the Judges willing to get on board with this? 4) Rental properties are the detriment to any neighborhood. There should be a different class for owner-occupied. 5) Section 8 houses are a problem because so many criminals live there. **Foley** went on to say that his neighborhood is much improved due to the efforts of OCI. **Schroeder** said that the City Municipal court is on the StopBlight committee and that the City Manager is really behind the initiative.

**Hartig** asked if this initiative would speed up the old cases. **Legge** said yes, that currently there are properties that OCI takes to court on a yearly basis and nothing is ever resolved. She said if there are no teeth in court, what's the motivation to the property owner to adhere to City codes?

**Schroeder** pointed out that there is a lot of "due process" in the StopBlight initiative. He said this initiative is not intended to target a person who has just inherited a problem property; it is designed to target the person who has made a decision not to comply with City codes.

**Cook** asked Schroeder if he would be willing to sit down and talk to the representatives from the renters associations. **Schroeder** said he is willing to talk to anyone.

**Ward** asked Schroeder if he believed that City Council was in support of StopBlight. **Schroeder** said that he couldn't speak for Council members, but he believed there were Council members in support of the initiative.

**Gulick** asked if there was a reason that they didn't include a strong abatement piece. **Schroeder** said it was a matter of cost and that they can achieve the same results through the proposed

ordinance changes.

**Dillard** asked Schroeder if he decided to sit down with representatives from rental associations, would he also sit down with representatives from neighborhood associations?

**Gulick (Cook) made a motion to support the StopBlight initiative.**

**Motion passed 8:0**

**Action: Board approved a motion to support the initiative and also provided comment.**

**Adjournment**

**Foley (Gulick) made a motion to adjourn at 10 p.m. Motion passed 8:0.**

The next regularly scheduled meeting for District Advisory Board III will be held at 7 p.m., November 1, 2006, at the Water Center 101 E. Pawnee.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Johnson,  
Neighborhood Assistant – District III

**Guests**

Donna Thorton	2714 Southfork
Lynda Novotny	1209 Jump
Kathy Manny	1116 Alturas
Larry Manny	1116 Alturas
Jody Bennett	1709 E. 48 <sup>th</sup> St. S.
Mike Pharis	1501 N. High
Claudia Lee	2826 Greenwood
Tom Shackland	1302 Galena
Betty Shackland	1302 Galena
Ron Becker	1822 E. Fernwood
Bill Barnes	2707 S. Hillside
Goldie Barnes	2707 S. Hillside
Howard McCoy	2356 S. Terrace
Donald Parsons	1609 S. Wichita
Elena Ingle	3608 Meadow Lane
Ken Holmes	2246 Columbine
Holly Nelson	2011 S. Terrace Dr.
Mary Smith	307 W. 33 <sup>rd</sup> St. S.
Bernestine Williams	910 E. 54 <sup>th</sup> St. S.
John Dickson	6054 S. Minneapolis
Dale Churchman	1357 S. Broadway
James Pruden	2918 E. Morris
Jeneta Harris	621 S. Pinecrest
Bill Gress	7475 Holyoke
Gerald Graves	3801 E. Funston
Melanie Cox	1525 S. Wichita
Ray Cox	1525 S. Wichita
Kerin Smith	2240 S. Crestway