

## **Council Minutes – November 10, 2015**

COUNCIL CHAMBER, Topeka, Kansas, Tuesday, November 10, 2015. The Councilmembers of the City of Topeka met in regular session at 6:00 P.M., with the following Councilmembers present: Councilmembers Hiller, Clear, Schumm, De La Isla, Jensen, Schwartz and Coen -7. Mayor Larry E. Wolgast presided -1. Absent: Councilmembers Ortiz and Harmon -2.

AFTER THE MEETING was called to order, Rabbi Debbie Stiel, Temple Beth Shalom, gave the invocation.

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by those present in the chamber.

A PRESENTATION on the Topeka Zoo Elephant Program was provided by Brendan Wiley, Topeka Zoo Director. He gave a brief background of the Elephant Program from 2009 to present; pursuing funding for additional space; enhancements made to the elephant sanctuary and the improved health of the elephants. He reported Friends of the Topeka Zoo has created the [www.trunktruths.com](http://www.trunktruths.com) website to provide accurate information about the elephants in response to the social media petition circulated by [www.change.org](http://www.change.org). He gave a summary of daily activity and diet as well as the different enrichment sanctuary techniques, all resulting in excellent health and remarkable transformation of the elephants. He reported the Topeka Zoo continues to receive positive national recognition because of the steps taken to improve the elephant sanctuary and their way of life.

THE CONSENT AGENDA was presented as follows:

BOARD APPOINTMENT recommending the re-appointment of Neil Dobler to the Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority Board for an unexpired term ending December 1, 2018, was presented.

BOARD APPOINTMENT recommending the appointment of Toni Beck to the Topeka Board of Zoning Appeals to fill an unexpired term ending November 1, 2018, was presented.

BOARD APPOINTMENT recommending the re-appointment of Dr. Frank Ybarra to the Topeka Housing Authority Board of Commissioners to fill an unexpired term ending January 1, 2020, was presented.

BOARD APPOINTMENT recommending the appointment of Katrina Ringler to the Topeka Planning Commission for a term ending November 3, 2018, was presented.

MINUTES of the regular meeting of November 3, 2015, was presented.

A Cereal Malt Beverage License application was presented for Walgreens #16314 located at 3900 SW 29<sup>th</sup> Street.

Open After Midnight License applications were presented for the following:

<u>Business Name</u>	<u>Address</u>
Kickstart Saloon	2521 N Kansas Avenue
Pizza Pub	1801 SW Wanamaker Road, #C05

Councilmember De La Isla moved to approve the consent agenda. The motion seconded by Councilmember Jensen carried unanimously. Mayor Wolgast voted “yes.” (8-0-0)

APPROVAL of the Real Estate Report for property located at 5700 SW Valencia Road was presented.

Sasha Stiles, Department of Neighborhood Relations Director, reported approval would transfer property located at 5700 SW Valencia Road to Shawnee County for the use as an existing location of an emergency communications tower site.

Councilmember Clear asked if the City generally sells or donates property declared as surplus.

Sasha Stiles stated each real estate sale was considered on a case-by-case basis. She reported the property houses an emergency communications tower which serves both City and County residents; therefore, staff declared the property surplus and recommended approval of the transaction.

Councilmember Hiller moved to approve the real estate report. The motion seconded by Councilmember Jensen carried unanimously. Mayor Wolgast voted “yes.” (8-0-0)

DISCUSSION regarding Transportation Alternative Grants was presented.

Bill Fiander, Planning Department Director, reported the City of Topeka is seeking grant funding for two projects through the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) Transportation Alternatives (TA) program, (1) Quincy Elementary Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) implementation and (2) Hi-Crest Multi-modal Bridge project. He stated a resolution of support would be presented before the Governing Body for consideration at the November 17, 2015, Council meeting. He gave a brief overview of TA funds and how the money can be used for alternative forms of transportation projects such as recreation trails, pedestrian, bike and transit facilities. He noted the applicant must commit to a 20% cash match for the total cost of the project. He stated the City is requesting a TA grant of \$448,000 for the Quincy Elementary SRTS project with the City’s 20% match being \$112,000 funded through the Infill Sidewalk/Pedestrian Master Plan Program (for a total project cost of \$560,000); and a TA grant of \$428,000 for the Hi-Crest Multi-modal Bridge with the City’s 20% match being \$107,000 funded through the Hi-Crest SORT Neighborhood Infrastructure (for a total project cost of \$535,000). He reported the next steps in the process following approval by the Governing Body, would be to gather support letters from various community partners and have the Metropolitan Planning Organization endorse the applications.

Mayor Wolgast questioned what the next steps would be following submission of applications as well as the anticipated construction timeline.

Bill Fiander reported KDOT reviews the applications and awards the grant funding each spring; therefore, he believes project designs would occur in 2017.

Councilmember Hiller expressed her appreciation to community partners and City staff who have collaborated on the projects.

DISCUSSION regarding the 2016 Neighborhood Empowerment Grants as recommended by the Neighborhood Empowerment Grant Committee was presented.

Sasha Stiles, Department of Neighborhood Relations Director, reported the allocation of \$137,890 would be allocated for seven projects in the Central Highland Park (\$39,050), Central Park (\$16,000), Oakland (\$25,840), Valley Park (\$25,000) and Ward-Meade (\$32,000) areas and provide for a contingency of \$12,110 for an allocated total of \$150,000. She gave a brief overview of the Neighborhood Empowerment Grant process and improving the quality of life in neighborhoods. She stated the grants are not part of the SORT targeted neighborhoods; however, it is included in the City's Consolidated Action Plan. She noted a resolution of support would be presented before the Governing Body for consideration at the November 17, 2015, Council meeting.

Mayor Wolgast provided a brief overview of how eligible neighborhoods could apply for funding.

Councilmember Clear questioned why the City plans to improve neighborhood parks managed by Shawnee County.

Sasha Stiles reported the grant program precedes the Parks and Recreation Department transition by a number of years; however, projects are considered and submitted by

neighborhoods to improve the quality of life in the community. She distributed a list of empowerment projects from 2005 to present and noted a majority of projects are parks or infrastructure improvements.

Councilmember Schwartz asked if the Department of Neighborhood Relations has researched or considered the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas neighborhood programs.

Sasha Stiles stated staff has researched and continues to discuss these programs as well as other opportunities. She expressed the importance of the empowerment grant program and how it relates to neighborhood participation from start to finish.

DISCUSSION for the purpose of providing an overview of the City's 2015-2016 Snow and Ice Removal Plan was presented.

Jim Colson, City Manager, stated snow removal within city limits continues to be an issue every winter; however, he would like to address the City's Snow Plan and provide an opportunity for discussion before the first snowfall.

Doug Whitacre, Public Works Director, provided an overview of the City's 2015-2016 Snow and Ice Removal Plan and stated preparations are made with the objective to clear routes in a reasonable time to protect the city and its residents. He stated City staff has established priorities to help the City provide the most effective and efficient snow and ice control and noted the interstate and highway system snow and ice removal is the responsibility of the Kansas Department of Transportation. He encouraged residents to visit [www.topeka.org/winterweather](http://www.topeka.org/winterweather) for the latest news and reminders during the winter season.

Councilmember Schumm asked if the eight new employee positions added in the 2016 City of Topeka Operating Budget would help assist in a better snow removal plan.

Jim Colson stated the positions would be hired on or after January 1, 2016; however, staff is also looking at ways to gain additional equipment to aid in snow removal.

Councilmember Jensen asked about the possibility of including an interactive map on the City's website to track the location of snow removal trucks so that residents are provided an opportunity to remove their vehicles from city streets.

Councilmember Hiller asked how the snow removal plan is different from 2015, and what funding source would be used for snow removal.

Doug Whitacre stated City trucks are equipped with GPS and the City's Technical Support Group (TSG) is researching ways to add this capability to the map; however, the current map does indicate the locations that have been plowed. He commented on the sources of funding and noted staff has tracked all costs to see how much has been spent per snow season to have background information in case FEMA funding is ever needed.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CITY MANAGER, MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL;

Jennifer Goodrich, Deputy City Clerk, gave a brief overview of the November 17, 2015, Council agenda.

Jim Colson, City Manager, announced City employees would receive a "health holiday" from paying healthcare premiums on November 27 and December 11, 2015, and thanked employees for their hard work and dedication which is reflected through the excellent management of healthcare. He also announced 30 employees participated in the City of Topeka Veterans Day photo. He commented on the 2015 Veterans Gala conducted on November 6, 2015, and noted it was an exceptional event.

Councilmember Schwartz congratulated Councilmember Brendan Jensen and his fiancée, Dr. Amber Beckley for being honorees of Topeka's Top 20 Under 40 award. She announced this week's "gem" of Topeka is the veterans and the local businesses that honor and support them.

Councilmember Hiller thanked Doug Whitacre, Public Works Department Director, for his service. She announced the Veterans Day Pancake Breakfast at Central Park Community Center was well attended. She also announced the Old Buzzard Car Show; a fundraiser for Toys for Tots raised \$516 and collected over 200 toys for the organization.

Councilmember Clear congratulated all the nominees for Topeka's Top 20 Under 40 award. She requested the City Manager distribute a copy of the draft of the fire study to the Governing Body.

Councilmember De La Isla thanked Doug Whitacre, Public Works Director for his service to the community. She requested Brendan Wiley, Topeka Zoo Director, distribute the Elephant Program presentation to the Governing Body to use as a response to individuals that email them about the care of the elephants. She thanked Kim Doman for her work with the elephants.

Councilmember Jensen thanked Doug Whitacre, Public Works Director, for his assistance and patience during his tenure with the City of Topeka. He thanked veterans for their service to our country.

Mayor Wolgast encouraged the Governing Body to attend the National League of Cities Conference every year in November as it is a great opportunity to network with other city representatives. He congratulated Councilmember Michelle De La Isla on her appointment to the Mexican American National Association (MANA), National Board of Directors in Washington, D.C.

Paul Kosmala appeared to speak under public comment.

NO FURTHER BUSINESS appearing the meeting was adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

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Brenda Younger  
City Clerk