

Minutes for Kansas City Neighborhood Advisory Council on 2/11/2004

*** Budgetary Meeting ***

KCNAC members in attendance: Lynda Callon, Jay Stock, Greg Hugeback, Steve Eklund, Rodney Sampson, Forestine Beasley, ? Cynthia Canady, Dennis Carroll, and Bruce Pennington were not present. City staff in attendance: David Reynolds, Les Washington, Renea Nash, ?, Colleen Low, Troy Schulte.

Guests: Robert Fischer (Manheim Park), ?

Meeting called to order at 3:40pm.

Jay showed a video to those present regarding neighborhood preservation.

Lynda announced a KC Roundtable meeting after this meeting, where Troy Schulte, the Mayor, and the City Manager should be present to talk about the budget. Colleen and Troy brought figures from the budget, structured to respond to concerns brought up at the last Roundtable meeting. **Troy asked that people try to keep in mind that the City Council gets this presentation tomorrow; he doesn't like seeing inaccurate numbers show up in the newspapers.**

No major changes to the numbers; many of the decreases will be reflections of salary savings that departments are not using all of their salary allocations.

Environmental Management keeps the \$50 dumpsters; administrative costs for this program are going up because the contractor has the City over a barrel with regards to the expense of dropping off dumpsters on a Friday night and picking them up on a Sunday morning. **John Stufflebean would like to see the City get the equipment to do these drop-offs/pick-ups themselves, but that would have about a \$500k initial outlay that we can't afford this year.** It is something that will be looked at in future budget years though. They also are looking at scaling back the hours of operation of the Recycling Centers with the implementation of RecycleFIRST. Lynda brought up that anyone who works Saturdays is going to be out of luck with the new hours for leaf-and-brush pickup, as well as neighborhoods that have cleaned up on Saturdays and moved the materials out on Sundays. **Troy said he believes there is enough money in the budget to open it up may 1st on both Saturdays and Sundays, but he will check on that;** one of the ways they are facilitating that is to propose a \$10/truckload fee, but waiving that for one truckload, once a month, for each household in Kansas City Missouri, as well as for neighborhood cleanups. That will put the cost onto the commercial lawn care outfits that charge their suburban customers for drop-off fees and then go to the I-470 & Raytown Road facility to dump for free. **No one with KCNAC had a problem with that arrangement.** Tire Drop-off program is still going to operate the same way, but it is somewhat of a fluid program. Budgetarily, it is not changing. Council is approving the contract for RecycleFIRST tomorrow; Jay is still discussing some things with John Stufflebean. **Household Hazardous Waste is going to be operated by the Water Department now**, they had some staff capacity that was able to be utilized and Water thinks it can do it cheaper and with better service. Jay asked if the recycled paint generated by HHW currently would still be available. Troy said he didn't think there would be any change. **Illegal Dumping Abatement was doubled as a result of RecycleFIRST;** this means they can add an additional enforcement officer and some cameras to step up enforcement for what they see as a problem that could come out of the implementation of RecycleFIRST. **Clean Sweep is being maintained at the same financial level; it may encounter some logistical challenges though, according to Lynda.**

Weed Abatement was transferred to the Parks & Recreation Department, to consolidate the mowing contracts from three or four departments to one. They are hoping for some economies of scale from consolidating these contracts, and also allowing Weed Abatement to manage the Land trust lots as well. The CCAP crews will still be involved in the program, but they are being wrestled over by both EM (for Illegal Dumping Cleanup) and Parks (for mowing operations). **Les said that they are in discussion for expanding the work crews out of MCI to help address this.** Jay asked if Parks had any access to the labor pool being generated out of the public housing sector by the Federal Government. Lynda said that the program was probably not going to be very useful. Ed Loundes is looking to get a list of projects that can be done without private transportation, either within their neighborhood or along a bus line, that sort of thing. The tenants are upset about the program; but the law does exist and should be utilized if possible.

Neighborhood & Community Services: Codes Enforcement is relatively unchanged due to salary savings. The headcount of staff expected to be in the program doesn't change. They are using \$300k in CDBG funds on a one-time basis to help get through the difficult budget year; Troy has been reminding people that this is not a permanent change. Lynda asked about the rental savings; the City now owns the building at 4900 Swope Parkway by way of local use tax dollars and some insurance settlement moneys. They thought about selling it, but it breaks even currently, being fully rented out between the City, State, and other agencies, and saves the cost of finding a place to put Neighborhood Preservation. It costs about \$260k to heat/cool and maintain it, and they get about \$270k in rent each year. Jay asked if they needed to do anything to make sure that \$300k in savings stays present; staff referred that to members' Council representatives. Jay asked about the City Neighborhood Attorneys; have they changed their mind and are not going to do away with them now? **Troy explained that there are two neighborhood attorneys on the City side that work to resolve delinquent property code enforcement;** there are also attorneys with Legal Aid. Under the revised budget, both are recommended to be funded again. The Legal Aid Neighborhood Attorney is the one that was under fire. Lynda asked why the CAN Center inspectors are broken out separately from NP. Troy said that they have traditionally been itemized separately both on the Police side and the NCS side. **Steve pointed out that this places a big bull's-eye on the CAN Centers, because they look like they are 'costing' \$250k (when they actually get more like \$7k each).** Troy said that is something that was inherited from previous years. Troy said Les deserves credit for keeping the CAN Centers in the budget; Troy looked at the budget and saw that they were funding CAN centers, FOCUS centers, Community centers, Neighborhood Assistance Centers, the Center for Community Solutions, etc. He was looking at whether they were being redundant; Les did a good job of arguing for keeping them. Steve argued that each of the different types of 'centers' performs a useful service; they are not necessarily duplicating each other. When you are looking at a budget document, however, they have the appearance of being repetitious. **Animal Control is getting 10 additional officers;** they are going to make this work by writing a lot of tickets for pet licenses. Center for Community Solutions will still be funded for by an LLEBG; they will have to look at a way to fund it from the general fund in 2005-2006. Les said they have enough to fund it for an additional year if needed. Lynda mentioned that CCS is one of the major ways that people are informed about programs and services are going on at City Hall. **Steve suggested compiling a master list of what 'centers' or agencies are providing what services or programs to which constituent groups;** that would show the lack of overlap. Lynda said that she wants to see a move toward performance measures, where a program has to show that they are actually doing what they are doing. **Jay brought up that budgets are all about dollars; reclaiming dollars, bringing dollars in, or spending dollars.** Neighborhood Newsletter Printing is still coming through the CDBG. Regulated Industries will get a couple of new positions, one of which is for sidewalk cafes. RI is completely fee-supported. **MCI will be the subject of an interesting discussion at the budget hearings, because the salary savings squeezed out of MCI it will force the issue of how it is managed and what it is tasked with.** Two wings are closed now, and an additional wing is being closed this year. Steve asked about whether the City could contract out MCI and make it

into a revenue stream; Les said that they have found it is cheaper to contract out the detainees to other facilities than do it themselves; he's not convinced that MCI should be in that business. **16 positions at the Tow Lot were converted from Contract to Merit positions to save money and improve customer response last year, and it seems to be working. Jay brought up the police cars parked around Headquarters that have not moved since before the snowstorm; Troy said he would look into it.** The Multipurpose FOCUS Center is relatively unchanged. Child & Family Support Services is grant-funded; the general fund support is being reduced somewhat to account for the fact that this is not a core function of the City. Jay asked whether reducing that program, which provides childcare for working parents who cannot afford childcare. Troy countered that the program is relatively narrow in focus and benefits a relatively small number of people; \$100k for childcare for a couple hundred people, versus \$100k for leaf-and-brush collection that affects 450k people. **These are tough budget decisions that have to be made in tough budget years, but the core responsibilities of the City have to come first.** It will probably be a perennial issue, and there is money available if the Council decides to put it back in. Homeless Initiatives and Senior & Adult Services are being consolidated somewhat.

Housing and Community Development's funding is all still up in the air pending the final CDBG allocations. The Weatherization Program is starting a 3-year phaseout of the \$123k that comes from the general fund; there is no requirement for a local match with this program, and the utility companies are required to pay for a portion of it. **This will probably require the program to introduce new fees, or otherwise weatherize about 5 less homes per year.** Again, it is about the needs of the many versus the needs of the few; once you start funding everything, you end up not being able to fund anything properly. Lynda brought up that there are more churches, Christmas in October, Habitat for Humanity, Metropolitan Energy Center, etc all can do weatherization programs, and do.

Health Department is trying to start to bring back the Rodent Control program, with \$50k coming out of the Water Department's budget to deal with the sewers; the abandoned buildings and vacant lots will have to come later. **Les also mentioned that they would be beefing up the enforcement of trash and weed lots, and the education component of the program.** Troy made an example of some houses along Ward Parkway/State Line that were utilizing Rodent Control services for rodents coming out of Brush Creek; he feels that they can pay for this sort of issue themselves. West Nile Virus/Mosquito Abatement will continue to be funded by the City. STD/HIV testing's growth is just reflecting numbers that were not reflected in the budget previously. The City has a fully functioning public health department because the State/County was not meeting that need 80 years ago. The City stepped up and it has created a legacy expense ever since; there is a City health levy and a County health levy, but most of the county dollars go to TMC at Lakewood. Jay said that in Clay County, the City/County split for who could do the job better was fairly even. **The Women's Health Program was eliminated,** the program was created under a resolution by Teresa Loar and **the position was funded by vacant for several years.** In addition, the State was balking at the City using state health dollars for a program that provided pro-choice options; the Federal Government said that they could do it, so there was a conflict.

MAST Ambulance was provided an \$8.5M subsidy; they asked for \$10.1M but Troy believes they will be able to function under the current level of funding.

Parks & Recreation: The Community Centers were able to reallocate some money from salary savings to building maintenance and other needs for this year. **Parks seems to believe that recreation centers should not be combined with things like CAN centers; Troy said this goes back to the definition of 'community centers'.** Lynda brought up the issue of 'needed' overtime by Parks employees who are short on money, and then you have employees are asleep all day and then do the work after 5pm on overtime. The neighborhoods suffer because of this unnecessary waste. They also make bad decisions such as

wanting to charge so much for renting space that they will not be able to utilize the space. Jay pointed out that it is the citizen's responsibility to document these sorts of abuses; you can't just complain about five trucks being clustered around one metal plate/pothole and no one doing anything about it, you have to document and report it so something gets done. **Troy also said that keeping a lid on their budget may force some efficiency issues** if they don't have the option of being wasteful. Boulevards, Streets, mowing operations are all relatively unchanged. The City Manager mandated an increase for the right-of-way mowing and weed abatement and that is reflected in the upcoming budget.

Jay asked if the City Auditor does performance audits in addition to auditing the books of departments. Troy said that they try to get performance measures and accountability, but there is an overall lack of data. They don't go out in the field and collect that sort of information directly from the crews on the street. **Jay asked what it would take; how should they approach the issue of "the City doesn't know what is going on on the street"?** Les said that NCSA has done that somewhat. Jay pointed out that this was an internally-generated process; how do they force the other departments to take similar measures? Greg mentioned that it took the Water Department four trips to replace a water meter on his house. Not only was this an incredible waste of the Water Department's time, but his as well. Someone suggested using the Action Center to keep them accountable; **lots of people said that the Action Center has been less effective lately.** The Action Center has \$200-\$300k in the budget. Greg reflected that people who live along parkways and boulevards are seeing reduced services; Troy said that about \$2M is spent maintaining them, and the \$1/front foot only accounts for about \$300k of that, so it is not a matter of declining services for fees paid. He did acknowledge that there used to be a lot more services provided for living on a boulevard: sidewalk snow removal, parking mowed, leaves and brush service, etc. Jay brought up that we do not fund Parks & Recreation to accommodate the sort of parks system that the citizens say we want. Greg brought up that Parks would also take any land that is offered into the system. **This leads to an incredibly large parks system that we may never be able to afford to fund properly under any budget circumstances;** north of the river alone may be too much. Greg said that there may be a revolt brewing among people along boulevards because they are not feeling that they are getting the services they are paying for. Jay said that to pay for the services people want, the fee would have to be more like \$6/front foot. Some of those services are just not feasible.

City Planning: **The money for the FOCUS centers and the FOCUS implementation was removed.** FOCUS was getting into some things like Youth Ambassadors that did not make sense for Planning to be managing. SafeCity is still funded by an LLEBG. Zoning and Area Plans are still funded by money that has been held in reserves from prior years. Codes are unchanged; they are still fully fee-supported.

Water Services is taking over HHW as mentioned earlier. Catch Basins Replacement has enough money coming out of the storm water fee to do 90 catch basins per year, and there is a backlog of 5000. **If the bond issue passes, then they can catch up the backlog and 90 a year will allow them to keep up with the current need.**

Les asked to back up to tree trimming: Troy explained that a budgetary gimmick used in the past was to charge the salaries against the capital projects budget; now they are backing up and actually charging the 11 tree trimmers against the general fund, and the money from the PIAC allocation will be used for the actual trimming. This is an effective increase of \$350k in resources; he was trying to maintain the \$110M investment in street lights. **Forestine asked about a list of trees which were submitted in past years; how do they check on that list under the new circumstances?** Mark Govea is the person to contact for that question. Lynda brought up that when she first moved to Kansas City, she heard all about how Ollie Gates was not going to go back to the public trough for the Bruce Watkins Center; it was supposed to be a private, stand-alone entity. He went to Jefferson City for funding, and now it shows up on the Parks

Department budget without a public vote; how does that happen? Troy said that the state pays \$100k and the center costs \$300k to run. **Lynda reiterated that it was not supposed to get any of that City funding; Troy said she was preaching to the choir on this one.**

Water Services is getting a 2% increase in the water rates to try to fix the water mains (actually 2% for the water bill and 6% for the sewer bill). Rodney suggested they go to a monthly billing system, and mentioned that their accounting system is absolutely inflexible; Jay said they refuse to change any billing period. **This may be an issue to bring up as they are bringing the new system online.** Steve brought up the appearance of corruption in the Water Department; landlords can get their "drug-dealing tenants off the hook for \$4000 water bills" just by talking to somebody.

Jay asked about the Development Management section under Planning; they are not currently able to keep up with the demand for development, especially up north of the river. **They did vacancy elimination on Planning and closed 8 positions; they are still reeling from that.** Troy is recommending that they go back to their core purpose of development management instead of funding FOCUS centers. **Steve asked about SafeCity going to \$0; Troy explained that they are in the last year of their LLEBG funding and everything they hear says that the LLEBGs from the Federal Government will be going away next year,** possibly in favor of Homeland Security. Troy believes there is enough money left in SafeCity to keep them running for another year. Lynda brought up that they (SafeCity) were supposed to raise their own money from private sources or other government agencies.

No significant changes to Public Works; the only major change comes under Snow & Ice Removal; Troy referred to it as his "Truth in Budgeting" concept. **He said that the \$1.6M from the current year included 28 people being charged out to that account; in actuality the \$1.25M represents a \$125k increase of actual snow removal resources.** The City Manager also gave them some additional resources for Equipment Repair and Asphalt & Rock; this year they ran out in May, less than a month into the summer season. So they ended up charging it against Street Preservation and other accounts, and this will help address the issue and provide more historically accurate data. Rodney brought up Armour Hills getting their curbs and sidewalks done for the second time in 10 years, when he has an alley that has not been touched in 30 years. Greg brought up that Armour Hills did a tax package to get their curbs & sidewalks done. Streetlights now reflects the actual cost of running that system.

Police is unchanged except for the additional 20 officers. Steve brought up the line for CAN Centers: \$52M?? This actually reflects the total Patrol budget. Jay asked how they can only utilize \$52M of their \$159M budget on patrolling; Colleen brought up that this is only the Patrol Division and Community Policing Operations. Investigations, Burglary, Homicide, etc are accounted for differently. Jay doesn't understand why less than 1/3 of the entire police budget is spent on officers out of the streets. **Steve reiterated that the line that says "CAN Centers" needs to be changed so people don't think they get \$52M.**

Lynda adjourned the meeting at 5:20 PM and thanked the Budget staff for making it so much easier to understand.

Next meeting will be on a regular schedule once more, 2nd Tuesday of March (3/9/04).