

Many thanks, Courtney Commons!

5th District Newsletter

News and announcements from
around our community



Council Recess Edition Details for the District

July 19, 2013

Updates and Dates to Remember

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Bullet Point Reminders:

- The Division of Waste Management will be giving away mulch this Saturday, July 20th. The mulch is made from yard waste collected in Lexington over the last several months. The mulch will be available for pick up from 8 am until noon, on a first-come, first-served basis, and is limited to one pickup truck load per person. The mulch can be picked up at the former city landfill site at 1631 Old Frankfort Pike. For more information, click [here](#).

With the conclusion of the July 9th Council Meeting, Council is now on summer recess and will not meet again until August 13th. Upon our return in August, we will have a number of issues to deal with. This edition of the e-newsletter will give you a quick preview of some of these issues. Upcoming discussions include property tax rates, the allocation of the fund balance, streetlight funding, a new senior center, and several zone changes.

Prior to August 13th, I am working with the Division of Water Quality to hold a neighborhood meeting regarding the Ecton Park Sewer Project. Free Contracting, Inc. has been chosen to perform the work and before they begin let's plan to meet to discuss the proposed schedule, talk about any special conditions and address any questions or concerns you may have regarding the project. A representative from Free Contracting, Inc. will also be asked to attend the meeting, which is tentatively scheduled for the evening of August 6th at 6:30 p.m. at Christ the King. I will update you here when that plan is finalized. For now, mark your calendars. Currently, easement signing and check disbursements are still being finalized and should be completed within two weeks. Your comments and thoughts will be much appreciated.

After several incidents of vandalism in Ecton Park related to the baseball fields, I was part of a meeting with the league, parks and others about those crimes. There is now much more focus

there by the police, especially after dark. As a reminder, this and all city parks close at dark. Please be careful and aware.

The meeting was good and I believe will lead to better ongoing communications and the opportunity for the guests of the park and the neighborhood to better understand each others needs.

As you can tell from the photos here the good folks of Courtney Commons went out of their way to welcome me this week. I was humbly honored for my ongoing service to their area. Mr. Bill Smith was instrumental in these events and provided me with the warm feeling of good service to that and all of the Fifth District. Thanks to them for a great meeting and kind compliments.



Editor's Hint: Bill's birthday is Monday, so this sign is quite timely!

Even though the Council as a body will be on break, my office will continue to be available to assist you throughout the summer recess. Give us a call at (859) 425-2283 or send us an e-mail by clicking [here](#). Also, please be sure to let us know if your email has changed. As Time Warner Cable begins to transition customers onto their system, many of you are switching from your old insight broadband e-mail accounts. If you have already informed us of your new email address, our list has been updated accordingly. If you have not yet let us know, click [here](#) to do so now. Enjoy your weekend, as always.

My best,
Bill



Council to Hear Zone Changes

Council will hear several zone changes after the break. The zone change process begins with the Planning Commission, which votes on proposed re-zonings and sends their recommendation to Council for final approval. Council serves in a quasi-judicial role, meaning they are only allowed to consider the evidence presented at the Planning Commission and their own hearing, if they choose to have one. Council then decides whether the zone change complies with specific state and local laws and regulations on the topic.

Council has scheduled a public hearing for August 13th to discuss the zone change associated with the expansion of the Kroger on Euclid Avenue. The Planning Commission voted 8-0 in favor of the proposal on May 23rd.

The Planning Commission also recommended a zone change for the Fritz Farm Property, at Man O' War Boulevard and Nicholasville Road, on June 27th, by a vote of 9-0. This will be heading to the Council for a final decision in the near future.

Finally, Council was recently notified of a plan to rezone the part of the property near English Station Drive on Harrodsburg Road for residential development. The Planning Commission will hear this item on

Property Tax Rates to be Set

Shortly after returning from summer recess, Council will be tasked with setting local property tax rates for the coming year. Council sets rates for urban services like streetlights, trash collection and street cleaning, as well as the general city rate. Council also approves rate adjustments requested by local property tax-funded entities, such as the Health Department, LexTran, the Soil and Water Conservation District and the Extension Service. It is important to note that the Fayette County Public Schools rate is set by the Fayette County Board of Education, without input from Council.

After rates are set the County Clerk calculates the tax bills and sends the information to the Sheriff, who is responsible for sending out bills and collecting the taxes. Most taxpayers will receive their bills in the first week of October. Bills paid by November 1st will receive a 2% discount and the final due date is December 31st. Payments made after December 31st will include a penalty.

Funding for Streetlights to be Discussed

Back in April, Mayor Gray proposed to increase the franchise fee for electric and gas utilities from 3% to 4% in order to help Lexington fund the deficit in its streetlight fund. For several years a dedicated property tax used to fund streetlight installation and ongoing costs has been running at a deficit. The fund needs an additional \$2.5 million in the current fiscal year to keep up with costs. While the Council chose to table this fee increase for the time being, this issue will have to be resolved shortly after the Council's return from summer recess.

Council has several options for balancing the streetlight budget. We could divert funds allocated for other purposes, accept the Mayor's recommendation to raise the franchise fee to 4%, increase the property tax rate for streetlights or some combination of the three.

One of the drivers behind this problem is that while the streetlight property tax rate has been lowered two times in the last ten years, the cost of the electricity to power the lights has increased. In order to fully fund streetlights using a property tax increase, the rate would need to be increased to 3.4 cents per 100 dollars of property value, up from its current rate of 2.1 cents. This would be a \$19.50 per year increase for a \$150,000 home.

The franchise fee is charged to utility companies for the right to operate in Lexington. The utilities then charge this fee to their customers as a percentage of utility consumption. The benefit of the franchise fee solution for streetlights is that it is tied to energy prices and will keep up with any increases in electric costs. For a household using on average \$160 worth of natural gas and electricity per month, the 1% increase would cost an additional \$19.20 per year. Keep an eye out for updates as Council discusses this topic upon returning from break.

L FUCG has partnered with the Bluegrass Waste Alliance Transfer Station to offer free household waste disposal to Fayette County residents on Saturday, July 20th. Residents can drop off a pickup truck load of bagged household waste and up to four, off-the-rim tires, between 6:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., at the transfer station, located at 1505 Old Frankfort Pike. Click [here](#) for more information.

Dwayne Rice—Making a Difference in the District at the Kenwick Community Center—Retires Today

It is with heavy hearts that we celebrate today the retirement of Dwayne Rice, Director of the Kenwick Community Center. He will be spending more time with family, and he certainly feels like family to us. In 2011, we asked Dwayne to be our Gem of the District. It seems fitting to run that piece again today.

Q. Tell us a little about yourself and how you landed in Lexington, KY.

A. I am a native of Bourbon County, and I graduated from Eastern Kentucky University in 1984 with a degree in Parks and Recreation Leadership. I began working as a program director in the Paris, Kentucky Parks system. Then I moved to Lexington and began working for LFUCG. I've served in the Division of Youth Services for 23 years; 10 years in Youth Services and 13 in Parks and Rec.

Q. How did you come to make the commitment of running such a center?

A. While I was working at the YWCA in the Career Development Program, I heard that there was an opening at KCC. I knew it would be a tough challenge working with low-income kids who didn't have the same advantages and opportunities that many others did; but I wanted to make positive changes there. We enhanced the building, opening it up and making it more people-friendly.

Q. What kind of programs are there and what are the costs involved?

A. Most of the activities and programs are free. We do have some that come at a small cost, such as our Karate program, which is \$50 per month, and some of our offsite field trips. We are lucky enough to have Tubby's Klubhouse, which is an 8-week computer course where kids can take a computer completely apart, learn how to put it back together and in the end, keep the computer. [Funded by Parks & Rec. and the Tubby Smith Foundation.] We also have an adult baseball league; free Zumba classes on Wednesdays at 5:30 pm; a weight room open to adults and kids 12 and up; an open computer lab where adults and kids can access the internet for job searches or homework; cooking classes that teach healthier eating and living; and an arts and crafts program that meets Mondays and Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. We'll also have a Summer Fun Camp in two-week sessions from June 6th through July 29th. The cost for that is \$50 per session.

One of the most successful programs is our after school program and homework club. It meets from 4:30 until 5:30 p.m. Volunteer students from other schools come in and tutor kids who are struggling with their homework assignments.

We have seen great improvements in our kids' grades since we started that program. We are grateful to the Kenwick Neighborhood Association, Fayette County Public Schools and the Division of Youth Services for providing the funding to make that happen. We also have special events throughout the year, such as our Kenwick Flea Market—the next one will be April 16th from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. at the center. We will host the Annual Kenwick Spring Carnival in May, take field trips in the summer, and we always have our big screen TV ready for UK games or movies on pizza nights.

Q. What kind of success stories have come out of KCC?

A. The best thing, the thing I am most proud of, is our community center library. We realized with our homework club that the kids needed books, so Meredith Hall organized donations through the neighborhood, local schools, Transy, UK, Georgetown College and DISMAS charities for books and bookshelves here at the center. Adults and kids can check out books without paying fees. Kids who might not have otherwise had the opportunity to go to the library have access to books they need to study. We've also been able to organize career fairs for kids who might not have

even thought college was an option. We're also very proud of our newsletter, where we feature one neighborhood kid and point out the good things that child has experienced and done.

Q. Do you rely on volunteers?

A. Oh, yes. Without a doubt. We couldn't operate without them. My staff does a wonderful job. My assistant William Gill helps me immeasurably. Megan Hambrick does a terrific job organizing volunteers and donations. But without the donations of funds and snacks for our after school program from the Kenwick Neighborhood Association, we wouldn't be where we are. Others like Victory Christian Church, UK students, the Fayette County Diversion Program, and several local schools have been instrumental in helping us in the community. There are so many people who make this happen.

Q. How can we find out more about volunteer opportunities or how to make a donation?

A. We're on the Parks and Recreation website. Or you can always call the center. The phone number for KCC is (859) 266-6405.



Rice has spent 29 years in the Recreation field.

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Rupp District Architect and Builder Selected

On July 10th, Governor Steve Beshear, Mayor Jim Gray, and the Lexington Center announced that internationally acclaimed architects NBBJ have been selected to redesign Rupp Arena and a new convention center, and that Hunt Construction Group, the original builder of Rupp Arena, has been hired to complete the construction. NBBJ will partner with local architects EOP.



Governor Beshear described that announcement as “a significant step forward in the reinvention of Rupp Arena and the downtown business district, which will strengthen the area’s ability to attract tourism, investment and jobs.”

The Lexington Center Board voted to hire the architect and construction manager after a rigorous selection process. The Lexington Center plans to work together with the University of Kentucky on the project.

Rupp Arena will now stand alone, detached from the new convention center. The reinvented arena will feature expanded concourses, chair-back seats throughout, suites, and a new scoreboard. Rupp Arena will remain the nation’s largest college basketball arena.

While there is no specific design for Rupp yet, NBBJ has designed several similar projects, including the renovation and expansion of Pauley Pavilion at UCLA, the Staples Center in Los Angeles, and Hangzhou Olympic Stadium in China.

The Lexington Center’s convention space will be expanded to at least 100,000 square feet, doubling the space for exhibitions, and adding a new ballroom and more meeting rooms. In addition, the Town Branch Commons will run through the Rupp District as it follows the path of Town Branch through downtown.

The announcement is the next step in a process that began when Mayor Gray appointed a citizens task force in March 2011 to re-imagine the city’s core, Rupp Arena, and the 46 city-owned acres that surround it. In December 2011, the task force approved a master plan by Gary Bates and SPACE GROUP for the district that included a free-standing and reinvented Rupp Arena and a new convention center.

The 5th District Newsletter is distributed via e-mail to any Lexington resident. I encourage leaders of the 31 active neighborhood associations in the 5th District to provide input for the newsletter and to distribute the newsletter to their members. Anyone wishing to receive the newsletter may contact the 5th District Council office via e-mail at bfarmer@lexingtonky.gov. If you wish to unsubscribe to the newsletter, e-mail jgies@lexingtonky.gov.



Eat Around!

Beyond Grits: Lexington Restaurant Week

Lexington's explosive cuisine scene kicks into high gear July 25 - August 3!

Downright decadent \$25 multi-course dinners at Lexington's best locally-owned hot spots.