

# THE COLUMNS

A Publication for the Residents of Mission Hills

Summer 2012

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Statue at 69th &  
Tomahawk

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## Summer in the City



Rick Boeshaar  
Mayor

A lot of activity is obvious around the City! Construction crews are busy behind city hall on a stormwater and bridge replacement project. Engineers told us this bridge had to be replaced and the stormwater improvements are designed to handle increased water flows in the creek and avoid dangerous high water and road closures on State Line, Tomahawk, Mission Drive and 63<sup>rd</sup> Street during heavy rains. Expect disruption in that area all summer, but the 63<sup>rd</sup> Street bridge will be opened before Tomahawk is closed to bury stormwater piping under that road. Other capital projects started or starting soon include 67<sup>th</sup> and Cherokee, Mission Drive (56<sup>th</sup> Street to Oakwood), and 59<sup>th</sup> Street (Oakwood to State Line). In addition to these, the City will be constructing a small garage and outdoor restroom facility behind City Hall. Along with the City's projects, Water One has also begun replacing many of its water supply lines along 63<sup>rd</sup> Street, 65<sup>th</sup> Street, and (later) Ensley Lane. New home and remodeling construction has also increased.

The new Design Guidelines have been published and approved by the City Council in April. The Architectural Review Board and the City staff have already reported positive results from the new guidelines. I hope each of you will go online or request a copy from City Hall and review the new guidelines.

The City Council took the opportunity to refinance the two current City debts while we are still experiencing a low interest rate environment. New long-term bonds, with varying maturities up to 15 years, were successfully placed on May 31<sup>st</sup>, saving the City \$224,000 in interest costs!! In order to achieve those savings, the Council chose to have the City rated by Moody's Investor Services, and we received an AAA rating – the highest rating possible. Only three governmental entities in Johnson County have that high rating and we are among only 66 cities nationwide! That terrific rating was due to the City's conservative approach to budgeting, the size of its reserve accounts, its low debt to asset and low debt to revenue ratios, as well as its history of stable or growing property values, especially in the context of the current economy. Those attributes are nothing new to those who know what a great City we have, but it is very nice to have the external measurement to support what we have all felt.

I was glad to see so many families having fun at the City of Mission Hills Keim Street Fair on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. The weather was perfect, some of the activities were new, and the "old favorites" such as the face painting, the carnival games, the DJ's music, and our Fire Department spraying down the kids made for a very fun family event! It was a great start to a fun summer!

Finally, I want to thank all the volunteers who serve our city on its various committees.

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## Mayor's Comments

continued from page 1

This is the time of year when some step down, some new people step up, and some of our volunteers re-up for a new term. This annual process ensures that we retain needed experience while infusing “new blood” and new points of view, which help us remain vibrant and well run. Please visit our website, [www.missionhillsks.gov](http://www.missionhillsks.gov), to see which of your neighbors are giving their time and talents for the betterment of our City, and then browse around to see all the current and future happenings in your City! Thank you for the privilege of serving as your Mayor! ■

# Emergency Preparedness

**D**isasters can happen anytime and anywhere. When disaster strikes, you may not have much time to respond. In a large-scale disaster, local officials and relief workers will not be able to reach everyone immediately. Help could come in hours, or it may take days. Plan in advance what you will do in an emergency.

### *Family Emergency Plan*

Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so plan how you will contact one another and review what you will do in different situations. Consider a plan where each family member calls, or e-mails, the same friend or relative in the event of an emergency. It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an out-of-town contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members. Be sure every member of your family knows the phone number and has a cell phone, coins or a prepaid phone card to call the emergency contact. If you have a cell phone, program that person as “ICE” (In Case of Emergency). If you are in an accident, emergency personnel will often check your ICE listings in order to get a hold of someone you know. Teach family members how to use text messaging. Text messages can often get around network disruptions when a phone call might not be able to get through.

Watch television and listen to the radio for official instructions as they become available. Consider subscribing to an alert service. Johnson County has a system that will send instant text alerts or e-mails to let you know about dangerous weather or other related emergency management information. To subscribe, text “Follow JOCOAlert” to 40404.

### *Tornado Safety*

Each year, many people are killed or seriously injured by tornadoes despite advance warning. Some did not hear the warning while others received the warning but did not believe a tornado would actually affect them. Timely severe weather watches and warnings could save your life in the event a tornado threatens your area. If a warning is issued or if threatening weather approaches, do the following:

- In a home or building, move to a pre-designated shelter, such as a basement.
- If an underground shelter is not available, move to an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor and get under a sturdy piece of furniture.
- Stay away from windows.
- Get out of automobiles.
- Do not try to outrun a tornado in your car; instead, leave it immediately.

Occasionally, tornadoes develop so rapidly that advance warning is not possible. Remain alert for signs of an approaching tornado. Flying debris causes most deaths and injuries. ■

# ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL PROCESS

To ensure that each new project in Mission Hills will complement our unique community, all major alterations to the exterior of a home or its lot must be approved by the Architectural Review Board (ARB). The ARB is a committee composed of residents of Mission Hills, including design professionals and lay members interested in the City's community design. A short summary of the process is as follows:

1	<b>APPLICANT</b>	Gather all available information on your lot and home, including dimensioned plans, deed information, and zoning designation.	
2	<b>APPLICANT</b>	Read the Introduction and Chapter 1 of the Design Guidelines to determine which of the guidelines are applicable to your lot.	Refer to Chapter 1 of Design Guidelines
3	<b>APPLICANT/CITY STAFF</b>	Meet with our City staff to review your general objectives and your initial conclusions regarding applicable zoning standards and the Design Guidelines.	Refer to Zoning Ord., Design Guidelines & Site Deed Restrictions
4	<b>APPLICANT</b>	Based on the initial evaluation, determine whether your project is compatible with your lot and the neighborhood. This is possible with little design effort or cost.	Refer to Design Guidelines
5	<b>APPLICANT/DESIGNER/ARB</b>	Work with your designer to prepare a conceptual design for the proposed project and submit it for a conceptual review by the ARB.	Refer to Design Guidelines
6	<b>APPLICANT</b>	Based on the ARB's conceptual review, determine whether to proceed with your design as submitted, proceed in a different direction, or invest in a different lot.	Refer to Zoning Ord., Comprehensive Plan & Design Guidelines
7	<b>APPLICANT/ARB</b>	Complete a design that you believe meets the intentions of the Comprehensive Plan, the Design Guidelines, and the Zoning Ordinances, and submit for ARB approval.	Refer to Comprehensive Plan & Design Guidelines
8	<b>APPLICANT/DESIGNER/BUILDER</b>	Based on that approval, complete your plans, provide copies to the staff for code review, purchase your permit, and build your project.	

NOTE: The Zoning Ordinances, Comprehensive Plan and Design Guidelines can be found on the City's website at [www.missionhillsks.gov](http://www.missionhillsks.gov).

# Out on a Limb: Tree Talk

by George L. Eib, City Arborist



George L. Eib

**W**e had very little moisture last fall and winter. The additional lack of moisture this spring has caused some plant material to be under stress. Some trees were late in leafing out and we are seeing some bugs and insects due to the mild winter. When we have a cold winter, it will freeze some of them. Redbuds seem to have more dead wood this year. During drought periods, it is important to water your plant material and lawns, but take care not to

overwater as this can also be damaging. Also, it is important to go into the fall and winter with sufficient moisture for your plants.

We are in the process of planting City trees this summer and through the fall. Planting, landscaping and removal of trees in the City's right-of-way must be approved by the City. The City's right-of-way extends 10 feet back from the back side of the curb in most areas.

I want to again emphasize the importance of protecting City and private trees during construction. I am willing to advise residents and contractors on how to care for trees during construction. Please call me at City Hall to schedule a free consultation.

We have not yet found any Emerald Ash Borer that affects Ash trees in the Kansas City area. Until they get within 100 miles of Kansas City, there is no concern.

As I drive through the City, I am still observing ivy growing up trunks into the interior of plants which damages growth. I recommend you cut out a two-inch section about 8-10 feet above ground and let the vine die.

## Summer Checklist

- Watch for aphids, bagworms and spider mites on your evergreens, burning bushes and other plants. If found, have them sprayed twice approximately 2-3 weeks apart.
- Keep mower blades sharp. A dull blade shreds the end of the leaf blades making them look whitish and makes them susceptible to disease. As weather cools in the fall, begin to cut your lawn to a shorter height.
- Fertilize as needed any broad leaf evergreen plants and all acid-loving plants around the first of July.
- Do not let your dogs urinate on plant material on the parklets as it will kill the plants.
- August 15th to September 15th is the best time to overseed your lawn. It is important to control weeds prior to seeding by spraying herbicide four weeks before.

## Soaping Fountains - Wastes Your Tax Dollars

During the Memorial Day weekend three of the City's fountains were soaped: Belinder Circle, Verona Columns and 59<sup>th</sup> and Oakwood. The cost to clean and repair just one soaped fountain can be \$1,000 or more. Not only is there the cost of staff time, but also the cost of the defoaming chemical, replacement parts for the damaged fountain pump as well as the water to clean and refill the fountain. Please, if you see suspicious activity around the fountains contact the police department at (913) 642-5151, and discourage pranksters from soaping the fountains. It may seem harmless and fun, but it is costly and damaging.



# New Facebook Page

by Matt Boggs, Crime Prevention Officer  
Prairie Village Police Department

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The Prairie Village/Mission Hills Police Department has joined the social networking scene. In March, we launched a Facebook page and have been posting helpful information on safety, community events, and preparedness. We have answered questions from citizens and put bad rumors to rest with the help of this new tool.

If you want to keep in touch with us, go to [www.facebook.com/PrairieVillagePD](http://www.facebook.com/PrairieVillagePD) and “Like” our page. Anyone can communicate with us by posting questions or sending messages to us. We have posted photos of suspects, Police Department vehicles, the CIRT Team, community events, and our Department’s Honor Guard. We have posted stories on emergency preparedness, traffic safety, teenage drinking, toy guns in school, Special Olympic events, and many more informational topics. Please “Like” our page and help us promote it throughout our community.

One example of information you can find on the Facebook page is advice on phone scams. Most scams rely on your belief the person calling is telling you the truth. If the Caller ID reads “MICROSOFT SUPPORT - 1-800-555-1212” or something similar, most people would believe the person on the other end of the line is really from Microsoft. A lot of people do not realize that scammers are using Voice Over IP technology and other tricks to fake or “spoof” Caller ID information. Scammers use Caller ID spoofing to help make their scams seem more believable.

Do not place all your trust in the person calling you based on the Caller ID information. As a general rule, do not conduct any business over the phone where you have not initiated the call. Get a call back number if you are interested in their product or service. Use Google to reverse lookup their phone number and see if it is associated with their company or a known scam. Please contact Crime Prevention Officer Matt Boggs at (913) 385-4613 or [mboggs@pvkansas.com](mailto:mboggs@pvkansas.com) if you have any questions, comments or concerns. ■

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## From the Mission Hills Homes Company

Recently the residents of the Mission Hills Homes Company received a ballot from the Board proposing to amend our organizational documents to remove a limitation on our dues that has been in place since 1914. This proposal was first presented, and overwhelmingly approved, as a non-binding resolution at our January Annual Meeting. The Board believes that removing this limitation is prudent for maintaining the beauty and character of our neighborhood by allowing us to fund necessary deferred maintenance of statues, walls and islands. It also provides a mechanism to deal with unforeseen contingencies.

Currently our homeowner’s dues are capped at an average of \$57.69 per home, far less than most homes association dues in the metropolitan area. This does not allow us to fund the maintenance necessary to maintain the unique and special character of our community.

If the proposal is passed and the limitation is eliminated, the dues structure itself will remain the same. Dues will continue to be calculated based upon the square footage of each of our lots. Also, it should be noted that the Board will not have the discretion to unilaterally increase dues. Any dues increase will require the majority vote of members in attendance at a members’ meeting with a proper quorum.

So far we have received over half of the votes necessary to make the proposed amendment. The ballots also contained great suggestions for projects that should be prioritized. We encourage each of you to return your ballot as soon as possible and include your thoughts on what needs to be repaired in our neighborhood. Please feel free to contact any of the Directors with questions. ■



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*The Columns* is published three times a year for the residents of Mission Hills.

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## In Case You Visit City Hall From July Through November...

As we wrote in the spring newsletter, the City plans to construct a garage, in the same architectural style as City Hall, that will be accessed from the current City Hall parking lot. The new building will also include a public restroom, on the south side of the garage, for those enjoying the playground and City Hall grounds. The garage will provide the City with much needed storage space. The construction of the garage is slated to begin in August and will likely last until November. If you have the occasion to visit City Hall during this time period please know that the parking lot will be congested and there may be times when we ask visitors to park at the First Evangelical Lutheran Church just to the south of City Hall. Additionally, if you venture to City Hall to use the playground, please use extra caution as there will be quite a bit of equipment on site for the construction project.

