

THE COLUMNS

A Publication for the Residents of Mission Hills

Winter 2013

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Holiday Tree Lighting
Ceremony Sunday,
Nov. 24 at 5:30pm

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DEFENDING OUR TREE CANOPY



Rick Boeshaar
Mayor

The ambiance of our City is frequently cited as one of its most valuable assets. The trees, the parks, the statuary, and the care and investment each homeowner gives to landscaping affect the desirability and the value of homes in Mission Hills. Our terrific Park Board and the three homes associations work diligently each year with the City to maintain and enhance our parks and islands. We are one of very few cities our size with an arborist on our payroll. But our staff and volunteer



committees cannot keep Mission Hills' tree canopy healthy without assistance from you and your neighbors.

There are well over 20,000 trees in our city. City trees in parks, on islands, or within 10 feet of curbs number over 3,800. In a typical year, we might have damage or complete loss of 2-5% of those trees. Since the severe drought began 2 years ago we are experiencing twice that rate of loss. The effects of the drought will be long-lasting. Despite more rain this year, the KC metro area remains "abnormally dry" according to the National Weather Service. Even if the drought ends this fall, we will continue to see high loss rates for a year or two because trees can take 2-5 years to show the ultimate damage.

To keep the effects from getting worse, we must all water our trees – even through the winter! In the fall, homeowners with sprinkler systems shut off and winterize those systems, and many of us disconnect and store our garden hoses. We need to keep those hoses handy, then reconnect and use them through the winter when the temperature is moderate enough to moisten the soil around the drip lines of our trees.

The cost to remove a dead tree can be thousands of dollars. Planting a new tree can cost hundreds. A little extra effort to keep our current trees watered can save you those costs. Our city budget includes \$30,000 to plant 100 new trees per year in the public areas; however, for a new tree to take root and survive, it needs plenty of water. The City spent over \$30,000 to water new trees in 2012. Due to the drought, tree experts have recommended that we do not risk planting new trees until the moisture content of the soil improves.

The City's tree maintenance budget is already strained from dealing with ash trees threatened by the Emerald Ash Borer. The spread of this insect has been widely publicized and on the day I am writing this, the KC Star ran an article announcing that the EAB infection has spread throughout Missouri and Johnson and Wyandotte Counties in Kansas. Our City staff has assessed and marked each of the 330 ash trees in parks and along street easements. If you have an ash tree along the street in front of your house, one pink dot indicates it is

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Mayor's Comments

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currently healthy, two pink dots indicate it will be removed by the City, and three dots indicate that it is in such good shape that it will be treated with a borer repellent. That is an expensive treatment, and it must be repeated each year. This treatment will be reserved for only a few ash trees.

A third threat to our tree canopy exists from home remodeling and new construction. As homeowners we all have an interest in preserving the ambiance of the tree canopy. If you are undertaking a building project, be sure to state your preference to your architect and your builder to prevent unnecessary removal of existing trees. ■

Emergency and Disaster Kit Readiness

With colder temperatures and the potential for snow and ice storms looming ahead, we thought this would be a good time to remind everyone to prepare or inspect your current emergency or disaster supply kit. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the basic disaster supply kit should be kept on hand year-round and should include items to assist in the event of a natural disaster or home emergency. Your supply kit should contain the following items:

- Water - one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days
- Food - at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Radio - battery-powered or hand crank and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags, and plastic ties
- Wrench or pliers
- Manual can opener
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers

Snow and Ice Control on City Streets

by Jennifer Lee,
Assistant City Administrator

Please remember the following regarding the City's snow and ice control efforts:

- Every snow/ice event is unique and the plan for each storm is directly related to the duration and severity of the storm.
- When we have enough warning and it is appropriate, the City streets are pre-treated.
- Plowing will generally begin after 2" of snow has fallen.
- All streets in the City have been prioritized for snow/ice removal. Priority One streets are the arterials and will be cleared first. Arterials include 63rd Street, Mission Drive, Tomahawk Road, Mission Road, Belinder Avenue, State Line Road, and Indian Lane (Mission Road to 63rd Street).
- The remaining streets and cul-de-sacs will have one lane cleared after the priority streets are completed, and then generally within eight hours after a three to four inch storm has ended, these streets should be cleared curb to curb. In the case of heavy snowfall, it can take longer than eight hours to plow the snow on every street in the City. ■

WINTER CRIME PREVENTION

by Matt Boggs, Crime Prevention Officer
Prairie Village Police Department

Daylight savings has come and gone and it is dark before you get home. Winter time presents some new challenges to protect yourself and your property. Here are several tips to keep yourself safe this season:

- Keep presents away from windows and keep blinds closed so no one can see the presents in your home.
- Lock your doors and windows at all times. Even if you are away for a few minutes, an unlocked door can end your holiday season.
- Do not open the door to anyone you do not know and trust.
- Use security lights to help light the outside and warn away intruders. Use lights on a timer to make it appear someone is home at night.
- When vacationing, hold the newspaper, mail, and other regular deliveries to your home.
- Set timers on lights, radios, and TVs to give the appearance that someone is home.
- Sign up for a house watch on your residence at www.pvkansas.com.
- Do not post your travel plans on social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace, or Twitter.
- Ask a neighbor to make tire tracks in the driveway when it snows to give the appearance someone is home.
- When shopping, do not leave your handbag or wallet unattended or in the shopping cart - it can be stolen very quickly.
- Pay attention walking in parking lots, especially when talking on your cell phone, and walk facing traffic.
- Keep valuables out of sight in your vehicle - put them in the trunk or hidden under the seat. Do not leave any trace of navigation systems including cords, cradles, and ring marks.
- When taking out the trash after the holidays, avoid taking product boxes out to the curb. Leaving a TV, Wii, Computer, or laptop box on the curb tells everyone who drives by what there is to steal in your home.

Please take a few minutes of your time now to help safeguard your home and family. Please be safe and have a great winter season. If you have any questions, please contact Crime Prevention Officer Matt Boggs at mboggs@pvkansas.com or 913-385-4613. ■

Out on a Limb: Tree Talk

by George L. Eib, City Arborist



George L. Eib

Although we have had some rainfall this year we are still below the average that is needed for plant materials to thrive. Therefore, it is very important that we continue to water our yards and plants even as the days grow cooler. Please include the trees and plantings in the City right-of-way in your watering plans as the City must depend on you to keep these healthy.

As the drought continues we are seeing record numbers of trees, boxwoods, and yews dying on City property as well as on private property. This pattern will continue for several years after the drought ends due to the long term effects of the drought on the plants. In addition to dying plants we are seeing other signs of the drought such as increased limb drop. The City is continually pruning out deadwood and monitoring dead and dying trees. We will be removing 35 trees in the near future that are not going to survive the drought. While it was the City's intent to plant some 100 new trees in 2013, we were unable to do so due to the drought. This money will be saved and added to in 2014. Once the moisture content in the soil is at an acceptable level we will plan to plant the budgeted trees. If you are looking for a new tree or a replacement tree, please know that you will receive a letter from the City before the new tree is planted so that any concerns can be addressed and so that we may ask for your help in caring for the new tree by watering it regularly.

As many of you are aware, the emerald ash borer, EAB, has been found in Johnson County. The City has surveyed its public ash trees and is putting together its plan to deal with the devastation that this insect inflicts on ash trees. Please see the Mayor's article for more details about the City's plan. I am available to consult on your private tree care and also as regards EAB. Just call City Hall and I will schedule an appointment with you. ■

Fall & Winter Checklist

- ✓ You should not prune spring flowering shrubs now as they set their buds in the fall. Wait until after they flower in the spring for shaping.
- ✓ Plant spring blooming bulbs. It is important to water spring blooming bulbs that you plant this fall during dry periods this winter and into spring.
- ✓ If you have overhead utility lines from your house to the power pole (called house drops) now is the time to have those cleared of overhanging limbs to prevent them from falling onto lines during a storm. It is not the responsibility of KCP&L to clear them. You will need to have a private tree company do this.
- ✓ It is important not to allow vines and ivy to grow up into the interior of plants as this can be damaging to the full development of trees and evergreens.
- ✓ It is a violation of City ordinance to blow or dump leaves or snow into the street or into drainage channels.
- ✓ Mow grass as long as it continues to grow and as the weather cools, cut shorter.
- ✓ It is important to have a chimney sweep check to make sure you do not have creosote buildup that can cause a fire. It is important that you not burn pine.

Holiday Cards/Gifts For Deffenbaugh Driver

Many residents show their thanks to the Deffenbaugh driver for his excellent service by leaving checks or cash taped to their trash/recycling bins during the holiday season. Unfortunately, over the past several years, many envelopes with financial gifts have been stolen from the cans.

In an effort to curb this type of theft, the City has offered to allow residents to drop off holiday cards and gifts for the Deffenbaugh driver at City Hall. City staff will hold the gifts for the driver to pick up at his convenience. ■

Snow...

by Jennifer Lee, Assistant City Administrator

It Will Be Here Before We Know It

Winter still seems to be far down the road to think about, but we wanted to take the time to share information with you regarding snow removal.

- When clearing snow from your driveway, do not place the snow from your driveway back into the street as it causes problems for drivers on the street and is a violation of City ordinance. Additionally, if you have a private contractor remove the snow from your driveway and they push the snow to the street opposite your driveway, please ask them to be sure and clean up all snow left on the roadway.
- If you are using a snow blower to clear your driveway or sidewalk, please do not blow the snow onto the street, as this too is a violation of City ordinance.
- When snow is expected, we always encourage residents to park their vehicles in the driveway and do not allow vehicles to extend into the roadway. Cars in the roadway slow snow removal operations and result in cars being buried behind the plowed snow. If parking on the street is unavoidable, please park on the side where the addresses are odd numbered (on some streets the fire hydrants are on the odd numbered side of the street so you will have to park on the even numbered side). Having cars parked on just one side of the street will allow the plows to at least clear one lane.

We certainly understand that snow removal can be a challenge, but helping us keep additional snow off the roadway ensures safer travel conditions and eliminates additional snow removal costs. ■

Reminder: Unlimited Trash the Week After Christmas and Christmas Tree Pick-Up

The week of December 30, 2013 there will be unlimited trash collection - no overage stickers are required for trash items that are outside the rolling cart on your pick-up day that week. This includes large boxes and packing materials.

Deffenbaugh will be collecting live Christmas trees on both Monday, December 30 and Monday, January 6. Please be sure to remove all decorations prior to placing your tree at the curb.

Holiday Safety Tips

- Do not put large gift displays in view of your windows
- Do not leave your car warming unlocked and unattended
- Be discreet about gifts you received. Flatten empty boxes and place them in trash receptacle.
- Do not leaved items of value in your car where they can be seen



6300 State Line Road
Mission Hills, KS 66208

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

Mayor:
Rick Boeshaar

City Council:
Lisa Creighton Hendricks
David Dickey
Roy Farchmin
Barbara Nelson
Dan Sullivan

City of Mission Hills
Ph: 913-362-9620
Fax: 913-362-0673
www.missionhillsks.gov

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City to Begin Using Notify JoCo January 1 to Eliminate Paper Mailings

Beginning January 1, 2014, the City will no longer send postcard mailings for event invitations/reminders, but will instead use the Notify JoCo application and the City's website to deliver information to residents. If you have not already done so, the City encourages you to sign up for Notify JoCo before the end of 2013.

To sign up, residents should go to www.NotifyJoCo.org to register their personal contact preferences, and to sign up for emergency and non-emergency communications from the City of Mission Hills. They will be asked to provide their contact information. Users can then identify multiple locations they care about (home, work, or their child's school, for example), and choose which messages they would like to receive. Residents who do not have internet access may call 913-826-5555 to register their information. All information provided will be kept confidential and only used to contact residents about emergencies and topics in which they have expressed interest, such as City events, trash pickup and street closures. ■

City Calendar *at a glance*

November 24	Tree Lighting Event
November 28-29	Thanksgiving Holiday CITY HALL CLOSED
December 24-25	Christmas Holiday CITY HALL CLOSED
January 1	New Year's Holiday CITY HALL CLOSED
January 20	Martin Luther King Jr. CITY HALL CLOSED