



CITY OF WESTWOOD, KANSAS

NEWSLETTER

Fall 2023 4700 Rainbow Blvd, Westwood www.westwoodks.org

A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Friends and Neighbors,

Fall has certainly arrived in Westwood, and as the weather begins to change, that can bring with it more people staying inside, bundling up, and the beginning of perhaps more winter isolation from each other. However, we certainly try to find opportunities to be with each other as a community, from our Oktoberfest, trick-or-treating on our streets, our annual holiday tree lighting, and in-between, our celebration of Thanksgiving. In that spirit, with my message for our community this Fall, I would like to touch on how we can continue to be good neighbors to each other, and to give thanks for those that continue to work to make Westwood such a good and tight community.

By the time this newsletter is published, our City will have had a new round of elections for our City Council. Of course, I am honored to have the opportunity to continue to serve as your Mayor. I am very thankful—as our entire City should be—for those who have volunteered their time and efforts to run for Westwood City Council, Holly Wimer, Laura Steele, and Melinda Garcia. Of course, I offer my thanks as well to Jeff Harris, Jason Hannaman, and Andrew Buckman, our other members of the City Council. In recent years, putting oneself out there to volunteer for our cities has become more and more difficult, especially post-Covid and with the rising partisanship infecting local matters. I must be honest with you, that the last year has been difficult for me at times, especially with—more and more—public comment periods and social media channels being used to level accusations against me and other members of the Governing Body and the Planning Commission in regard to the now-approved Karbank and feature park project.

On October 24, 2023, the Kansas Leadership Center published an article in its Journal/Civics Issue Magazine an article titled “Political anger driving candidates, voters in more local Kansas races” (<https://klcjournals.com/political-anger-driving-candidates-voters-in-more-local-kansas-races/>). The overriding theme of the article is the rising use of anger as a moti-

vating factor in running for office, the normalization of confrontation as the appropriate way of engaging with volunteers, and the disillusionment of elected officials with their volunteer service. I am thankful that, by and large, Westwood has avoided the heavy partisanship that pervades issues in other cities, and I am also thankful for all of our residents and volunteers that have continued to serve our city, discussed and disagreed without being disagreeable, and accepted that all people of good faith can work together for our community.



I certainly understand that some of this division has come from the City's recent consideration and approval of the Karbank proposal at 50th and Rainbow, a project that would establish a new commercial development on the City's existing property (including vacant property) and allow the City to triple the size of its parkland in the City on the adjacent former Westwood View Elementary School site. The City has attempted to provide a tremendous amount of information on this project for our residents, and to maintain the high standards of transparency which they expect. Updates on this proposal have been provided in nearly every weekly Westwood Buzz email for the past several months. It has been included in our newsletter. Numerous updates have been shared on the City's Facebook page. Renderings have been on display in City Hall. The City has a webpage dedicated to information on the proposal, with updates as they have been received from Karbank (<https://www.westwoodks.org/home-page/page/new-feature-park-development-consideration>).

Ultimately, in September and October of this year, the City's Planning Commission and City Council approved development plans and rezoning for the project. These steps were taken with significant input from the public and involved numerous meetings and public hearings.

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In considering these issues, and in preparing to make decisions on these issues, the City Council and Planning Commission have been guided by long range planning and community engagement efforts, including a 2015 Urban Land Institute (ULI) Technical Assistance Panel Study, our 2017 Comprehensive Plan, a second 2021 ULI Technical Assistance Panel Study, and a 2022 City Facilities Assessment and Feasibility Analysis, all of which came with impressive public participation.

Those measures—and the input received on the Karbank and new feature park proposal specifically—reflected broad public support for increasing our City's green space and allowing development that would make the City's goals financially possible.

I understand that there are residents, particularly in adjacent cities, that would prefer not to see the City of Westwood improve and develop with this project. Their and your concerns and input were absolutely considered as well, and through the process plans were changed and improved to address many if not all of these worries. The City also accepted a "protest petition" requiring a supermajority vote of the City Council for approval, which was met.

We are now very excited to begin work with our residents on planning for our new and much larger city

park and to continue to further the City's goals of increasing green space, putting vacant properties to productive use, expanding our tax base so as to lessen the burden on our residents, and providing amenities desired by our residents. To that end, we are excited to announce the creation of a Park Planning Steering Committee which will help select a professional park design partner, solicit and provide input on the park features most desired by the community, and otherwise guide the fun work of visioning a much larger, safer, and usable City park. This steering committee is intended to be made up of residents representing all of Westwood. As Westwood furthers its commitment to being a Community for All Ages, we want to be intentional in seeking input that will enhance park experiences for children, teenagers, young adults, families, and seniors—we want this to be a park for everyone to be able to enjoy. Look for additional details on these opportunities in the Westwood Buzz or other City social media channels.

I wish everyone a safe Autumn and a wonderful holiday season. Please know you can always reach out to me with any questions about or ideas for our City. Please continue to take care of each other!

Sincerely,



Mayor David E. Waters

FEATURE PARK PLANNING COMMITTEE— CALL FOR INTEREST

A group of around 10 or 12 individuals is being recruited to aid the City in the following ways to plan and design the new park site set to be acquired by the City from USD 512 next year:

- Review a Request for Qualifications and scope of work for a park planning consultant to transform the community's vision for the park into an actual design;
- Provide input on mapping out a broader community engagement strategy to ensure anyone and everyone in the community has multiple opportunities to share their vision, hopes, and dreams for the park;
- Guide the park planning consultant's work over the next year; and
- Ultimately make a recommendation to the Planning Commission and City Council on the best design and amenities for the park.

The best candidates to serve on this park planning steering committee will:

- Be able to commit to one meeting a month for the

entire calendar year of 2024;

- Represent strategic audiences the park is intended to ultimately serve as highlighted in the Message from the Mayor in this month's newsletter; and
- Submit a statement of interest or cover letter/resume to Abby Schneweis, City Clerk, either electronically to abby.schneweis@westwoodks.org, or in-person at Westwood City Hall, 4700 Rainbow Blvd., by **Sunday, November 26th**.

The statement of interest should include the following information:

- Name, address, phone number, and email address;
- Reasons for interest in serving on the park steering committee; and
- Length of residence in Westwood and applicant's goals for the park.

Depending on the volume of interest, candidates may be invited to interview further with Mayor Waters, other members of the Planning Commission or City Council, and/or City staff.

2024 MARKS WESTWOOD'S

75TH ANNIVERSARY

Article by Karen Johnson

The 75th anniversary is known as the traditional diamond anniversary based on the diamond's ability to withstand scrutiny along with its well-deserved appreciation. What better way to celebrate the city's contribution to our citizens' enjoyment of life than to profile its people, its history, and its progress since 1949 and to gather for that well-deserved show of appreciation.

To do all this, we need your help and ideas. We will be collecting pictures and stories of Westwood's past, and for a celebration in 2024 via email at westwoodks75@gmail.com.

It's our diamond anniversary! Let's sparkle!

FEATURED STILES GALLERY

ARTISTS

The Stiles Gallery is dedicated to the memory of Art Coordinator Shirley Stiles. For almost ten years, Ms. Stiles arranged for a monthly display of works by different artists to hang in the art gallery in Westwood City Hall. Ms. Stiles was an accomplished artist and each Friday would meet at City Hall to paint and share techniques with a circle of fellow artists and friends.

Kathy Butler, Ms. Stiles' daughter, continues the work of showcasing local area artists. Thank you, Kathy, for your dedication to the Gallery and for helping make Westwood beautiful!

Penny Sharp—October 2023

Penny Sharp is a native of Kansas City, MO and currently resides in Parkville, MO. Her interest in photography began at age seven when her parents gave her a Kodak Brownie camera for Christmas. Her father, an "avid hobbyist" photographer, was her first of many teachers.

Penny spent many years following in her father's footsteps learning to "see" light and composition in the physical world. In her 20s she took several Community university photography classes at UMKC, learning how to develop her own black & white images while enhancing her technical skills using 35mm film

She halted her photography of a few decades after all her photos and albums were destroyed in a flood and responsibilities of single parenting took priority. Finally, when she was 68 years old, she purchased a new digital camera and joined the Northland Photography Club in Kansas City and rekindled her passion for photography.

Penny is most interested in landscape, scenic, wildlife and Milky Way photography. Thanks to the freedom of time, continuous learning and travel opportunities she has become an "avid "hobbyist" always on the lookout

for that next great image.

Senior Arts Council—November 2023

The Senior Arts Council of Kansas City was founded in 1977 is an organization of artists over 50 years of age. There are some 60 members. The group holds meeting the last Monday of each month at the Roeland Park Community Center. Election of officers is done annually. The group includes oil, acrylic and watercolor artists, along with photographers and artists working with various other art mediums. The group puts on a number of exhibits each year and has had exhibits at the Tim Murphy Art Gallery at the Merriam Community Center, The Endres Art Gallery in Prairie Village, Johnson and Wyandotte County libraries, Unity Spot Light Gallery, and many other locations in the Kansas City area. For those wanting further information on joining the group they can contact Bryce Moore at 913- 642-1447.

Larry Butterworth—December 2023

Larry Butterworth grew up in Kansas and Nebraska and earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from the University of Kansas in 1975. After that Larry moved to California to live and pursue his artistic goals. Larry developed a style and method of approaching his work.

Painting and drawing have always been his favorite traditional media since discovering them as a child. Later in life Larry began to experiment with other media such as photoshop and illustrator and also photography. Larry has learned to mix them up and play with them creatively. Lately Larry has been circling back around to basic drawing and enjoying it very much.

Larry believes art is a journey and he chases after images with a butterfly net, always careful to preserve what he has found not wanting to pin it down. Larry also believes his work has always felt like visual storytelling, stories he can't tell verbally, narratives that speak to each person in a different way. Humor, satire, whimsy, foreboding, social comment and spirituality all come into play.

2023 FALL LEAF PICKUP GUIDELINES

Fall is here and with it brings the Westwood leaf pick up program, those who wish to participate please take note:

Leaf pickup will begin on Wednesday, November 1st.

Westwood Public Works will conduct leaf pick up operations in Westwood the entire month of November through early to mid-December of 2023. Public Works personnel will make passes through the City starting at 51st Terrace & Mission Road and will work their way north to 47th Street. Once they have passed your residence, City staff may not be back for a week or more depending on the volume of leaves to be gathered, the weather, and/or unforeseen issues.

To ensure the collection of your leaves, please remember the following:

- No sticks or trash - only leaves. Piles containing an abundance of sticks will be left until the sticks are removed.

HOLIDAY TRASH COLLECTION INFO

With the holiday season approaching, it is important to keep the following information regarding GFL waste collection in mind:

- GFL will collect trash, recycling and yard waste on the regularly scheduled collection day of Wednesday, November 22nd.
- GFL will collect trash, recycling and yard waste on Wednesday, December 27th.
- Wednesday, December 27th will be Amnesty Day. Westwood residents will be able to exceed the normal 96-gallon limit of solid waste pick-up without having to purchase a \$1.25 extra bag tag. Please note that Amnesty Days do not apply to Bulk Item pick-up.
- GFL will collect trash, recycling and yard waste on Wednesday, January 3rd.
- Holiday trees can be set out by the curb on any collection day. Trees must be cut into 4 foot segments, and all lights and decorations must be removed.

WESTWOOD WOMEN'S CLUB UPDATE

Our Holiday Luncheon will be held at the Classic Cup (301 W 47th St, lower level) on December 13th at noon. This is always a well-attended event where members can socialize and enjoy drinks and a nice meal. There is a \$20 charge.

It's a wonderful opportunity for anyone new to our neighborhood to make new acquaintances. Please join us and feel free to bring a friend or two. Let us know if

- Rake leaves into as narrow a pile as possible.
- Avoid raking the leaf piles directly under low-hanging tree branches as the leaf collection equipment gets tangled in the low overhanging limbs. A minimum of 14 feet in height, from the ground to the lowest limb is needed to operate the equipment. If this condition is found to exist, your leaves will be left until the pile is moved to a location that is accessible.
- Rake just to the curb or edge of the sidewalk but not into the streets, gutters, or onto the sidewalk so as to not force pedestrians into the street.

After the final pass through the city, Westwood staff will sweep the streets and gutter lines a final time. Residents may use GFL's yard waste program by bagging leaves in paper bags or rigid containers designated for yard waste. Yard waste collection runs year round and there is no limit on the amount of yard waste that can be collected on a Wednesday per residence per week by GFL. To watch the crews' progress visit <https://www.westwoodks.org>

you plan to attend by contacting us at: westwood-womensclub@gmail.com. We look forward to seeing you there!

STORMWATER UTILITY FEE INCREASE— PLANNED FOR 2024

In 2024, residents and businesses will see an increase in their Stormwater Utility Fee. This fee is collected as an assessment on the property tax bills, in the same manner as the residential solid waste fees are collected. The Stormwater Utility Fee was first enacted and collected in 2014. Since its enactment, the fee increased once, in 2020, from \$1 per 500 sq. ft. of impervious surface on a property to \$1.25.

During the 2024 budget process, the Governing Body approved increasing this fee again, to support the City's curbside leaf pickup program and increasingly expensive maintenance costs for the City's curbs, gutters, and other stormwater system needs. The new fee of \$2.50 per 500 sq. ft. of impervious surface ensures repairs and maintenance needs will save residents money in the long term. For more information visit: <https://www.westwoodks.org/resident-resources/page/stormwater-utility>

MAYOR'S HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY ON NOVEMBER 30TH

Join us on Thursday, November 30th at City Hall to spread your holiday spirit! More details to come!



CONTACT US:

Leslie Herring

City Administrator

913-942-2128

leslie.herring@westwoodks.org

OPINION SURVEY #2

COMPLETE STREETS TRAFFIC PLAN FOR RAINBOW BOULEVARD



COMMENT TODAY

A second opinion survey for the *Rainbow Boulevard Complete Streets Traffic Plan* is available through November 30, 2023.

Visit publicinput.com/rainbowboulevard to comment. Share your thoughts on important transportation improvements you'd like to see along Rainbow Boulevard. Your feedback will help the City of Westwood, Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas (UG), and the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) make the roadway more comfortable for all users.

BACKGROUND

With the University of Kansas Medical Center/University of Kansas Health System (KUMC/UKHS) campus as its anchor, the three-mile stretch of Rainbow Boulevard from I-35 on the north to Shawnee Mission Parkway on the south is booming. Economic development and growth are expected to continue for the next decade. In response, Westwood, UG, and MARC are developing the *Rainbow Boulevard Complete Streets Traffic Plan* to enhance the corridor with safe and improved transportation options. The planning process began during summer of 2023 and will conclude by early 2024.





CITY OF WESTWOOD NEWSLETTER
FALL 2023

CITY OF WESTWOOD

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MAYOR

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COUNCIL MEMBERS

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Holly Wimer.....holly.wimer@westwoodks.org

CHIEF OF POLICE: Curtis Mansell

SERGEANT: Marcus Burke

PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS: Chris Bishop, Tim Filson,
Chase Metcalf, Gianfranco Roque, Kurtis Stone,
Sharon Taylor

COURT CLERK: Shelley Floyd

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: John Sullivan

SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC WORKS: Mitch Landis

PUBLIC WORKS STAFF: Richard Fatherley, Nick Finck

CITY ADMINISTRATOR: Leslie Herring

BUILDING/CODES OFFICIAL: Eddie McNeil

CITY CLERK: Abby Schneweis

CONTACT INFORMATION

Emergencies	911
City Hall.....	(913)362-1550
Public Works.....	(913)432-1550
Public Safety.....	(913)362-3737
JoCo Sheriff 24-Hour Dispatch.....	(913)782-0720
Municipal Court.....	(913)362-3737
GFL Disposal	(816)380-5595
Kansas Gas Service	1(800)794-4780
Evergy	(816)471-5275
WaterOne	(913)895-5500
JoCo Wastewater.....	(913)715-8590
Animal Control.....	(913)782-0720
JoCo Commissioner Becky Fast	(913)715-0725
JoCo Information.....	(913)715-5000
Driver’s License Bureau	(913)826-1800
JoCo Election Office	(913)715-6800
JoCo Appraiser	(913)715-9000