



THE COLUMNS

A Publication for the Residents of Mission Hills

November 2020

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The Annual Holiday Tree Lighting is Sunday, November 29th, 5:30pm-6:30pm. Please see page 6 for event details.

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A Letter from Mayor Dickey



Fellow Residents:

Autumn in Mission Hills is a beautiful time of year. The glorious tree canopy that sits over our City shines brightly with color that symbolizes the wind down of one year, the arrival of winter, and the moment of rest before the new year begins.

So while it has become trite, it is no less true that we have experienced a year like no other. I want to thank you all again for your resilience, patience, flexibility and communication. We began the year celebrating the first Chiefs Super Bowl victory in 50 years, spent the Spring in the depths of the pandemic, and now will spend the next several months continuing to thoughtfully deal with the pandemic. So again, thank you.

I want to share five important messages with you as we head into the Thanksgiving holiday.

First, our City continues to be safe and crime remains low. Any one crime is too many, but the partnership of residents, our exceptional police force and staff continues to help ensure our City leads the metro in low crime rates. But we still need your help and vigilance. Approximately 90% of auto thefts and burglaries are from vehicles that are unlocked and/or have the keys in them. Please lock your cars. Please don't leave valuables in sight. Close your garage!

Second, the City's finances continue to be strong. The Council passed a budget that leaves the mil levy flat once again, as has been true for more than a decade. Our bond rating remains AAA and our reserves strong. We will continue to be conservative in our budgeting while delivering exceptional City services.

Third, I want to thank every resident who has submitted feedback on the work of our two ad hoc committees – Tomahawk Safety, Beauty and Connectivity (Tomahawk SBC) and Comprehensive Water Policy. I also want to sincerely thank those residents who braved our two chilly, outdoor public meetings on Tomahawk SBC to provide their feedback.

letter continued on page 2

Letter from the Mayor (continued)

Over the next two months the Council will give final guidance to staff on what, if any, changes to incorporate into the engineering plans. Definitely more to come on these two topics!

Fourth, the pandemic is still with us. The City has extended its State of Emergency to ensure alignment with the County and State. This ensures we can continue to coordinate well with County and State agencies in this crisis. I want to urge you and your family to stay vigilant and not lose track of the following key defenses against the virus:

- If you are sick (no matter with what!), please stay home!
- Social distance. Social distance. Social distance!
- Wash your hands frequently.
- If you are in public spaces, indoors or out, and cannot maintain social distance, please wear a face covering or mask.

Finally, as most of you know, our long-time City Administrator, Courtney Christensen, is retiring at year-end. I want to thank Courtney for her two decades of service to our community. My mom always told me to “leave the campground cleaner than you found it.” Courtney has done that in our City and then some. She leaves our community with exceptional financial strength, solid (and current) infrastructure, great services and processes, and a strong team. If you have a chance prior to the end of 2020, please feel free to give her a word of thanks!

That begs the question of who will be our next City administrator! Assuming all goes well, by Thanksgiving the search committee (comprised of the Council, all current Board chairs and our two previous mayors) will have completed final-round interviews and we will likely have the next City Administrator named and working on transition!

So I thank you again. Please continue to provide us feedback on how and where we can do better. As always, you are welcome to call City Hall at 913-362-9620 or email info@missionhillssks.gov. You are always welcome to email me directly at mayor@missionhillssks.gov.

Thank you. Stay safe. Have a wonderful autumn and happy holidays!

P.S. Please see the enclosed calendar article about our safe, socially distant tree lighting plan! We hope to see you there (with a mask please!).



Out on a Limb; Tree Talk

By: Jesse Kirk, City Arborist

As fall approaches now is a great time to prune your trees. Oaks especially should only be pruned during the dormant season to minimize the risk of oak wilt. We maintain a list of licensed Contractors with the City so please call and I can email you the up to date list. Starting January 1st we will be plan to prune the street and right of way trees in the Indian Hills Homes Association. Depending on the bids, we hope to also prune Peetwood and Hiawasse Park. The City continues to try to prune one complete homes association each year, meaning the entire City is pruned on a 3-year cycle.

Green infrastructure is an important component in managing storm water runoff. The City partners with Johnson County to administer a cost share program to reduce storm water runoff. Residents are eligible for up to 50% of the costs (within program limits) to plant buffers or swales, install native tree species, or add cisterns, pervious pavement or rain collection barrels. The time for the 2020 program has come to an end, but if you're interested in starting to plan for 2021 I would be happy to get you more details as well as an application.

George Eib's Fall and Winter Checklist

- Do not blow or dump leaves or snow into the street or drainage channels as these are violations of City ordinances.
- Continue to mow grass as long as it grows, as the weather cools cut it shorter. Keep leaves off the lawn during fall and winter. Remember to keep your blades sharp on your mower.
- You should not prune spring flowering shrubs now as they set their buds in the fall. Wait until after they flower in the spring.
- Clear overhead utility lines (house drops) of dead or hazardous overhanging limbs to prevent damage during storms. You will need to hire a licensed tree contractor to perform this work. It is not Evergy's responsibility to maintain the drops.
- Plant spring blooming bulbs. It is important to water them in at planting and during dry periods this winter and into spring.
- If we are experiencing dry weather this fall and winter it is important to continue watering your trees and shrubs. Concentrate your watering efforts on the area within the dripline of the plant.
- Before using your fireplace this season it is important to have a chimney sweep inspect it for creosote buildup to prevent a potential fire. Avoid burning pine to minimize residual buildup.
- Keep gutters clear of debris that cause water to spill or pool. Debris buildup can force water under shingles resulting in interior damage.
- Disconnect hoses from exterior faucets once freezing temperatures arrive to prevent freeze damage to plumbing.
- It is important to not 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.

Letter from Courtney Christensen

By: Courtney Christensen, City Administrator

Dear Resident of Mission Hills,

While I do not retire until December 31, this is the last newsletter that we will produce in 2020 and I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve you for the last twenty years. I will not suggest that I have met all of the residents of Mission Hills. That in many ways is a good thing. When your government is working well, the average person will have no reason to interact with City Hall unless they are working on a project, planning an event, serving on a board or participating in a meeting. Further, the capable staff at City Hall will typically assist you with your needs. Thus, interaction with me was often the result of negative circumstances and yet, overall, the residents of Mission Hills have been warm, kind and understanding, as we have talked through issues, concerns and City ordinances.

Mission Hills has been an enjoyable place to work. Your elected officials are dedicated to democracy in public service, the employees are intelligent, professional and hardworking, and the board members are generous with their time, thoughtful in their decisions and courteous in their interactions with the public, the staff, each other and me. I have found a sense of comradery between all of these groups as we have tackled the hard job of balancing the desires of the individual with the common good.

As I write this, I do not know who my replacement will be but having seen the finalist list I know that they will be a consummate professional who will dedicate their time and energy to serving Mission Hills. I hope you will give them the warm welcome I received over twenty years ago.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you.

Courtney

Virtual Meetings

All City meetings are being held virtually on a GoToMeeting platform. Login information for each public meeting can be found in the calendar event for the meeting on our City website at www.missionhillsks.gov

All residents are welcome to attend any public meetings by joining on their computer or by phone.

If you have difficulty logging in to join a meeting, please call City Hall at (913) 362-9620

City Calendar

This year we've had to postpone or cancel many Community Engagement events due to the COVID-19 virus and the State of Kansas's requirements for social distancing. The City Council and Community Engagement Committee continue to monitor COVID guidance as we receive updates from the County and State. At this time, we are planning on hosting the annual tree lighting ceremony on November 29th. Please see page 6 for more details on this event!

City Hall Holiday Calendar

November 26th-27th - City Hall is closed

November 29th - Annual Holiday Tree Lighting at City Hall Park 5:30pm-6:30pm

December 25th - City Hall is closed

January 1st - City Hall is closed

You can sign up for text notifications to receive information on City Events at www.notifyjoco.org

Projects Requiring Building Permits

Please let this serve as a reminder that building permits are required for many projects besides new houses, additions, or interior remodels. Exterior projects that require a building permit include, but are not limited to, new or replacement:

- Driveways and walkways
- Patios
- Pools and spas
- Outdoor kitchens
- Fences, walls, and gates
- Deck, pergola and arbors
- Windows and doors
- Flagpole
- Generators and pad
- In-ground trampoline
- Invisible fences
- Most play equipment
- Sport Courts
- Roofs
- Solar panels
- HVAC/generator units and pad
- Radon systems
- Irrigation systems
- New sump pumps
- Foundation repairs

There are penalties for working without a permit, so please contact City Hall at 913-362-9620 before starting any building project. City staff is more than happy to help you determine if your proposed work will require a building permit, and what is required to submit with an application in order to receive approval.



**MISSION
HILLS**
KANSAS

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

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2020 Holiday Tree Lighting

The COVID-19 virus has caused us to change many of our plans during 2020. While this year's tree lighting celebration will look a bit different than past events, we're looking forward to hosting the annual tree lighting ceremony with Santa on Sunday, November 29th. Please join us from 5:30 PM to 6:30 PM to see the City Hall tree lit for the 2020 Holiday season!

City Staff will be offering holiday cookies that are pre-packaged for safe sharing. Children are encouraged to bring their letter to Santa with any holiday wishes. Clipboards and stationary will be available for anyone wanting to write Santa a letter during the event. Residents are encouraged to bundle up and bring their choice of hot beverage, such as hot chocolate, as City Hall will not be open to the public.

We look forward to seeing everyone for a safe and happy kickoff to the 2020 holiday season!

