



Stratford Gardens Home's Association Fall Newsletter 2009

Greetings to our Stratford Gardens Neighbors! We hope you all are having a wonderful start to the fall.

Oktoberfest

The Association is excited to be hosting our first Oktoberfest on *Saturday, October 3rd, from 4:30 to 8:00pm, on 61st Terrace*. Food will be served starting at 5 pm. Bring chairs or blankets, and a side to share. We will offer beer/wine, brats, music and lots of fun. Hopefully we can turn this into an annual event! Please RSVP to StratfordGarden@aol.com by Sept. 30th, or call 816-444-4134.

The rain date is set for Sunday, October 4th – same time and place. We hope to see you there!

Holiday Party

Once again, Benny and Edith Lee, residing at 6300 Ward Parkway have graciously offered to host the holiday party in their home. It will be in early December. Watch your mail for the date. More details will follow!

Financial Update

As of August 31, 2009, our budget is in balance. Detailed income statements are posted on our association's web site at www.ha-kc.org, under the heading for "Minutes."

A few homeowners – only 9 of the total membership – have not paid their dues for 2009-10. We kindly remind this handful of non-payers that all projected revenue for the homes association is budgeted to meet our basic services, such as regular security patrol, snow plowing, and island maintenance. We encourage everyone to pay their dues so that we may all share in the benefits of our small community.

For further information, send an email to StratfordGarden@aol.com.

Islands and Common Areas

Our maintenance contractor is Constant Care of Kansas City, Missouri. They have done an excellent job keeping our islands and common areas looking beautiful.

In addition to the usual fall cleanup, we have asked Constant Care to trim all bushes as well as to look at replacing the yews at the end of 63rd Terrace along State Line. If you have any questions, suggestions or concerns regarding our islands and common areas, please send an email to StratfordGarden@aol.com or contact Raphael Suarez at rsuarez1@kc.rr.com.

PIAC Update

The PIAC project plans for the island and fountain improvements (State Line at 62nd Street and 63rd Street) have finally been approved! We have submitted the paperwork and are ready to go to bid. This week, we will send out letters to obtain three (3) bids. The work should start early spring 2010.

Membership

It is time to update the membership directory! This project is already underway, and we need your help in our endeavor to make the directory as complete and accurate as possible. Check the current directory and inform us of any updates/changes to your listing. Send any changes to StratfordGarden@aol.com or contact Tom Suther at 816-585-6144.

Also, if you or a family member wishes to offer services to your neighbors (i.e. - babysitting, lawn mowing, elder transportation, etc) let us know. See the Neighbor-to Neighbor section in the back of the directory.

Crime Alerts/ Security Update

A monthly patrol update, prepared by our off duty patrol officers, details the checks and service calls to our area. This was sent to the membership for the first time last month. We will continue to send these updates as they become available.

Our security patrol continues to remind us to be vigilant, which is our best defense as home owners and neighbors. Simple measures can deter crime, such as placing outdoor lighting on motion detectors, keeping doors and windows locked, storing valuables out of sight, not leaving cell phones/PDAs etc, in your car and not leaving your car's engine running without you in it. And, please, look out for your neighbors as well, and *always* call 911 if you see any suspicious activity.

Also, don't forget to place your "NO SOLICITORS" sticker by your door. If someone comes to your door trying to solicit with this displayed, warn them that you will call the police.

Snow Plowing

The Association has contracted again with Mr. Ray Wynn to plow our streets this coming winter. He has offered us a great seasonal rate and all streets will be plowed after a 2" snowfall throughout the 2009/2010 winter season.

Mr. Wynn is aware that he is to plow ALL streets regardless of the city's snow routes (59th, 63rd). If you find your street has not been plowed when others have been, please bring that to the attention of Woody Underwood at 816-523-8356.

Mr. Wynn has agreed to plow driveways on a separate contract when he is in our area. If you wish to speak to him about plowing your driveway, his company name is First-in-Lawn Service and his number is 816-564.1661. This agreement will be separate from the Homes Association, and you will be responsible for payment to Mr. Wynn.

Fall Leaves and Cleanup

Although it is easier to place the lawn bags by the curb as soon as you have finished cleaning up your yard, PLEASE do not place these bags out for pickup until the night before your scheduled day. The paper bags do not hold up well in the gutter, especially when it is raining, and additionally, it is very unsightly for your neighbors. So, please be considerate and put them out of sight until the night before.

Also, please be sure to clean out your gutters and any storm drain on your property every time you mow or rake leaves.

New Members

Please welcome the following members to Stratford Gardens who arrived since the last newsletter:

Michael and Dominica Siragusa 6200 Ward Parkway

Picture of your home from 1940

It is possible to get a digital picture of your home taken in 1940 through the Landmarks Commission. Contact Heather Gilbride at 816- 513-2902 or via email at Heather_Gilbride@kcmo.org to set up an appointment. You will need to visit her at City Hall (14th Floor) and pick out your home from the file. For \$5.00, she will scan the photo and email it to you. Be sure to contact Heather for an appointment before heading downtown, though.

Survey Results

Thank you to all the members who responded to the Membership Survey. We had 55 responses to the 8 questions, with additional comments. An electronic copy of these results was sent to those on the email list, and a copy of the results will be included with this newsletter for those who receive “hard copies” of communications.

To summarize, the Board feels it is on track with what the membership would like to see us achieve. Out of scale of 1 to 10, we ranked 7.6, which indicates a need for some improvement. Security, Crime, Communication and Snow Removal top the list of what the membership would like to see the Board focus its attention and resources upon. The social events, current or planned, are satisfactory with either no preference or Thursday nights as being the best for such events. The venue for the annual meeting is preferred at a country club or with no preference. And, the garage sale will be scheduled for the second weekend in June each year.

Other comments are shown below with board responses:

1) Setting up a Facebook or Twitter page for the association. We will look into this.

2) What is the snow plow policy? See page 2 of the newsletter for details.

Survey Results - continued

3) House improvement/renovation projects and home/yard maintenance oversight. Although the association does not have an architectural review board, we do call the Action Center when a property goes into disrepair. As for lengthy renovation projects, we are not at liberty to get involved. The storing of large vehicles for a long period of time violates city code, and can be brought to the city's attention via the Action Center.

4) The Association does not act as a legal entity and cannot get involved in neighbor disputes, but we can offer suggestions for resources available to end conflict.

This is true, the Association is not a legal entity, and we do not want to get involved in neighbor-to-neighbor conflict. We can direct concerned neighbors to city services, codes, etc. that are available to help resolve such conflict.

5) Lack of security during the holiday period – and concerns about car break-ins.

Unfortunately, this is a constant concern especially during the holiday weeks. If you are planning a party, please contact the Association at StratfordGarden@aol.com and we will see if our security patrol is on duty that night. During the holiday weeks, we add extra security hours, yet we (and our guests) still need to be aware of leaving items within view in our cars. If you wish to hire the off-duty police for your own party, this can be arranged with our lead patroller, Officer Brent Parsons. Contact us for more information.

6) Continued emphasis on common area maintenance. Now that the islands at 61st Street, Huntington and 60th Terrace are in good shape, and the PIAC project is moving forward for the island at 62nd/63rd – we can focus more attention to the common areas at 59th, 63rd Terrace and 64th Street. Plans are in the works to possibly remove the yews at the end of 63rd Terrace and replant. If you have any suggestions or ideas, please contact us.

Additionally, we are looking into painting house numbers on the curb throughout the association, similar to what was recently done in Mission Hills. This is planned for our spring project.

7) Don't make the Association a social entity. The Association will offer the Oktoberfest, the Holiday Party, the Annual Meeting, and a Garage Sale to the members on a yearly basis. We will join with the South Plaza Homes Association in their Hazardous Waste Pickup event each summer. Aside from those events, no others are planned at this time.

Yet, if you would like to have a block party for your street, we can get you pointed in the right direction!

8) The Fire Hydrant on 61st Terrace was damaged last December and calls to the city have not resulted in any action. The Association has also made a number of calls to the Water Department and to the Action Center. We continue to make calls, send emails and next on the list; to contact our city councilwomen.

For More Information . . . Remember to check out the Stratford Gardens website listing at: www.ha-kc.org. Select "Missouri Associations", then "Stratford Gardens".