



President's Letter

Fall 2025

Greetings to all of you, and welcome to the fall edition of the Rockhill Times! We begin with the near completion of the new bike lanes on Rockhill Road. The neighborhood conversations surrounding the bike lanes have stirred strong feelings on both sides of the issue, with each having merit to their opinion.

As you know, our city is on the move with countless new developments, and their "Vision Zero" campaign has been front and center. The comprehensive study that inspired Vision Zero places a major emphasis on improving the safety of citizens as they travel throughout the city. Since 2010, Kansas City has lost 783 lives and has logged over 3,800 serious injuries due to traffic related accidents.

At the national level, Kansas City posted better numbers than St. Louis or Atlanta, but unfortunately, we had significantly higher incidents than larger cities like Austin, Denver, and Minneapolis. So, a movement is now afoot to change the collective thinking from "deaths are inevitable" to "deaths are preventable," and of course, Rockhill fits squarely into the Vision Zero campaign. Our proximity to some of the most desirable attractions in Kansas City made the construction of the bike lanes inevitable as countless visitors explore our special corner of the world. And regardless of how your opinion rests on the final design of the bike lanes, I sincerely hope we can agree that the new addition will go a long way toward keeping both drivers and cyclists much safer.

In other news, we are still awaiting the final green light for the city to complete construction on the island at Brush Creek and Rockhill. Progress often moves in fits and starts when dealing with the city, but we are inching forward, nonetheless. Although we are fortunate to have great relationships with the team inside Public Works, we remain beholden to their schedule as they juggle numerous important projects throughout the city. The same holds true with our recent Neighborhood Empowerment grant which we were recently awarded. Our traffic-calming efforts are moving forward, but I will need to write to you separately with a more detailed update on those plans once we have greater clarity.

Lastly, I had the privilege to represent Rockhill when I spoke at my first Public Improvements Advisory Committee (PIAC) meeting last month, which was held at the WWI museum. I requested \$75,000 - \$80,000 from the committee to further improve Rockhill with a newly proposed traffic-calming island which is targeted at the intersection of 45th and Rockhill Terrace (near Gilham Park). As many of you know, that intersection has been a significant challenge for the neighborhood, but the projected costs to address the problem have made it impossible without the assistance of additional public improvement funds.

The PIAC decision-making process takes time, but I have my fingers crossed that we will be awarded enough money to continue expanding our safety strategy throughout Rockhill. I would

like to publicly thank all of the families who attended the PIAC meeting as a show of support. Your presence was duly noted by the council, and on a personal note, I was very grateful that you were there. More to follow soon, and until then...Cheers.

Lance Harshbarger (rockhillpresident@gmail.com)

Garden Club Plant Giveaway October 18

By Susan Carlson

Gardeners are generous people, and they get joy from sharing. When we moved to Kansas City in 1997, my garden was a blank slate. Many of the plants I have in my garden were gifts from former neighbors, including yellow irises and Stella D'Oro lilies from Monique Irmen, ginger from Sally Rheinfrank, and Lily of the Valley and canna lilies from Lona Harris. Many plants proliferate over the years, so gardeners have an opportunity to pay plant gifts forward.

This is by way of saying that the Rockhill Garden Club will be offering plants for free (and free advice too) at the Pocket Park on Kenwood on Saturday, October 18th from 9 to 11 AM. We hope you will come by, visit with us, and take home some plants for your own garden. We can offer advice about the plants on offer – how big they get, how far apart to plant them, whether they thrive best in sun or shade, how much to water, etc.

As opposed to summer, fall is a good time to plant perennials in your garden that will come back year after year. Many plants spread naturally when placed in their ideal environment, so you don't have to have many initially to cover a much larger area. Moreover, I have found that transplants from neighbors live while plants purchased from a nursery often do not survive. Last, I will mention that the price is right, and if you have been to a nursery lately you will agree!

Please plan to join us in our neighborhood park!

THE PLAZA...stabilize, restore, rejuvenate

By Jim Wanser

These are the words of the Plaza leadership team as they prepare to submit their Master Plan Development (MPD) to the city by the end of the year. If approved, the City's MPD sets out the current master plan for the Plaza property owned by HP Village Partners. There isn't a timeline fixed to the plan as many of the changes are contingent on the City addressing significant infrastructure issues under the streets. When asked about the timeline, a decade or longer was articulated. In preparation for the submission, their leadership group is meeting with various stakeholders for questions, feedback and potential changes.

Having attended an informative three-hour meeting on behalf of Historic Kansas City last week, I thought I would share some of the highlights presented.

- At a broad level, aesthetics is a high priority. To the degree possible the Spanish architecture will be enhanced through restoration, renovation and new buildings. There will be an emphasis on continuity of building materials such as buff-colored brick and tile

work. Details such as signage, lighting and wayfinding are also a priority. The focus is on the pedestrian experience.

- The ownership group has asked the City for sidewalk vacation, which simply means the owners would have responsibility for and control over the sidewalks, making them private property. Again, the focus is on continuity and the pedestrian experience.
- The “Classic Cup” block is identified as a total rebuild starting with the parking garage, which is the oldest parking structure on the Plaza. New storefronts would be added on the parameters with a central courtyard or “Plaza on the Plaza” in the center of the block.
- The Halls building and the Sears {Seville Square} building are identified for demolition and replacement. The architectural style of the Halls building is deemed inappropriate for the Spanish style and accommodates retail on only one side. The Sears building is said to have major infrastructure issues.
- A variety of other partial block sections are identified for demolition and rebuilding including the parking structure and several storefronts where California Pizza was and the Commerce drive-through bank building. All will be replaced with street level retail space with higher residential buildings on top with a setback from the street.
- The base of the bowl is maintained, but it will be smaller, surrounded in part by higher residential buildings. The ownership group wants to have people living IN the Plaza as well as around the Plaza. They identify greater residential density as a key factor in the rejuvenation of the area.
- There was no mention of the tennis courts, property that they don’t own.
- The ownership group talked extensively about the Plaza heritage as a special place and seek to enhance and elevate that experience for years to come. They also understand that the citizens of Kansas City have a sense of ownership of the Plaza and want to respect that shared history.

Again, the current draft MPD can change before submission and amendments can be requested in the future. There will probably be challenges to some of their plans, but we all hope for a prosperous future for the Plaza.

Shibani Mukerje Maulik passing

By Regina Bassa

Amazing how many people didn’t know Shibani, who died on August 10th, shortly after she and her husband, Dr. Dev Maulik, had moved to Minneapolis to live with their daughter, Dr. Devika Maulik (also a former Rockhillian). She is the new director of Maternal-Fetal Medicine at the University of Minnesota. Sunglasses, lipstick and her wonderful saris were Shibani’s trademark, however, Shibani was much more than just a beautiful woman. She was an inspiring businesswoman. As director of Filmalaya Studios in Mumbai, India and a devoted leader of the Durja Puja committee, she brought people together. She was a bridge builder with boundless energy, grace and generosity. She loved without hesitation, embraced without judgment, and inspired all who knew her. Her warmth, her laughter, and her fearless love for all people will remain in our hearts forever. Rest in Peace, Shibani.

Coming Issues of the Rockhill Times

By Susan Carlson

In 2025, Rockhill gained many new neighbors. Sonya Harshbarger will be reaching out to all of you soon, and we hope you will share something about yourself and a favorite photo. I want to devote much of our Winter newsletter in January to introducing you to the neighborhood. Before I became editor of the Rockhill Times, many long-term neighbors were featured. We may have to do another round of old timers soon!

One of the things that we love about our neighborhood is the diversity of our residents. Our cultural interactions are enriching and one of the things that makes Rockhill such a wonderful place to live. For the Spring newsletter, I'd like to feature short stories from neighbors who were born outside of the US. It doesn't matter whether you came to the US recently or many years ago. If this is you, please give some thought to what you might like to share as I will be contacting you soon!

To everyone, the newsletter is always open to stories of you so please don't hesitate to share significant events in your life -wedding photos, new children or grandchildren, awards, etc..

Hidden Sanctuary

Featured in "Kansas City Homes of Style"

If you toured the gardens on our May 2025 "Rockhill Homes and Gardens Tour," you will have seen the wonderful outdoor oasis that Bill and Pat Session created on the east side of their home. Whether or not you saw their creation, you can read an interview with them and see a lot of wonderful photos in a story that was featured in Kansas City Homes of Style if you open the link: <https://share.google/4OQixat8ejNJasQf7>

RHA Annual Picnic photos

The annual picnic occurred on October 5 in the Pocket Park at Kenwood and 45th Street.







Rockhill Garden Club

By Karen Moninger

In the Summer issue of the Rockhill Times, photos of the preparation for planting the what we are calling the “Four Corners” project on the south side of Cleaver II were featured. Last week, yews were planted and a soaker system installed. Bulbs will be planted soon. If you can help with planting, please contact me (kmoninger@gmail.com). Look for a much more attractive area in our neighborhood in spring 2026.

Next Coffee Club Date will be Announced in the January Newsletter

by Jeffie Mussman and Karen Moninger

The coffee club is held each quarter of the year, and it is a great way to catch up with neighbors and meet new ones! We have a volunteer for the winter coffee club and will share specifics in the January newsletter.

If you are interested in hosting future gatherings, please contact Jeffie Mussman at Jeffiemussman@gmail.com or Karen Moninger at kmoninger@gmail.com



So far, the series has been hosted by Rick and Sylvia Crawford, Joy Payne, Jeffie and Galen Mussman, Bill and Pat Session, Reggie and Regina Bassa, and, most recently, by David and Laura Safley. We thank all our previous hosts and hostesses.

RHA Board Meetings

by Galen Mussman, RHA Secretary

RHA Board meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month, except the day before the annual meeting when the Board meets on Monday. The next meeting is scheduled for October 14. Issues may be brought before the Board by contacting either me (mussmang@gmail.com) or our President, Lance Harshbarger (rockhillpresident@gmail.com).

The Winter edition of the Rockhill Times will be distributed January 1. If you have information to share, or notices of recognition or events, please send them to scarlson@kumc.edu Previous issues of the Times can be found at www.rockhillkc.org/archives.html.