



President's Letter

Summer 2025

Summer is here and things are happening throughout Rockhill! During our annual neighborhood meeting in May, I announced that the main focus for the board would center around the addition of “traffic-calming” measures to help improve the safety of our streets. The hope is that these “islands” will serve a dual purpose. The first is to slow drivers seeking a shortcut on their way to their destination, and the second is to further enhance the beauty of our neighborhood. I genuinely believe our plan can achieve both.

The next time you drive through Mission Hills, or Prairie Village, or perhaps take a cruise down Ward Parkway, you will notice a constellation of traffic islands that tie those various neighborhoods together. They are beautifully landscaped with a variety of florals, urns, and ornamental statues, and they announce the entrance to each neighborhood in a way that is stately yet inviting. Our aim is to bring that same energy to Rockhill with island designs that are welcoming, and that also enhance the quality of life for the residents of Rockhill.

The first island template was recently installed at the intersection of Brush Creek and Rockhill Road. While the final design elements are still being negotiated with the city, a new monument will soon commemorate the original entrance to our neighborhood.

So, what's next? Well, I'm happy to report that Rockhill recently received a “Neighborhood Empowerment Grant” for \$15,000 to further our traffic-calming efforts. While that is not enough money to fully underwrite the cost of an island, the grant does provide us with enough seed money to make it attractive for us to financially partner with the city on the completion of a *second* island. Our current thinking is to add the second island at the intersection of Brush Creek and Charlotte. This will help slow drivers who are traveling North/South from Cleaver Blvd., and it will bookend one of our main thoroughfares as it completes the initial stage of our planning.

From there, we will shift our focus to the North/East intersections, which are much larger in scope of design and will require significant funds from PIAC (Public Improvement Advisory Committee). Therefore, this week, I submitted our PIAC application to the city, complete with photos, case studies, and a number of supporting documents, with the hope that Rockhill will be awarded additional funds to continue addressing the most problematic areas of our beloved neighborhood. I will keep you updated on our progress.

I realize that not everyone is cheering for the recent developments throughout our city, or within Rockhill. I want you to know that I hear you. In fact, I walked door-to-door up Brush Creek Blvd and spoke with nearly every family who might be impacted by the changes we are discussing. While the feedback I received was overwhelmingly positive, it was not unanimous, and I understand that change is always met with apprehension. Your board has been chosen to

represent the best interest of the entire neighborhood, and we are respectful of all opinions. So, please consider this an open invitation to provide constructive feedback on our efforts.

For now, the data remain pretty clear. Our city continues to quickly evolve, and in response, we remain committed to protecting and preserving the Rockhill way of life. Cheers!

Lance Harshbarger Lance Harshbarger (rockhillpresident@gmail.com)

Rockhill Road Bike Lanes Update

by Jim Wanser

The Public Works Department of the City of Kansas City has shared that the funding for the completion of the bike lanes on Rockhill Road has been budgeted. The work from Cleaver II Blvd up the hill and down Gillham Road West to Gillham Road is set to begin in August or September. While no final designs have been shared, department liaisons have indicated that the design, as requested by the neighborhood, will be consistent with what has already been built on Cleaver II Blvd. and Rockhill Road south of Cleaver II Blvd. They also shared their goal of improving the safety of the intersection at 45th and Rockhill Road. Specifically, two enhancements were in the preliminary planning stage.

The first would convert the three-way-stop into a four-way-stop. The conversion has had prior consideration but there has been a concern that traffic would be backed up for vehicles heading south from Gillham Road West. But for the residents of Rockhill we have all experienced the confusion at the intersection by the current configuration. Secondly, to enhance the separation of the traffic from the bike lanes, the concrete divide that would separate vehicles from cyclists would be elevated to several feet for the curves that transition Rockhill Road down to Gillham Road.

Again, we look forward to seeing the actual design details and bringing a degree of closure to the ambiguity created by the partially completed bike lanes on Rockhill Road.

PIAC: August 21, 2025

by Jim Wanser

Please mark your calendar and plan to attend (see Lance's President's letter)...

The Public Improvement Advisory Council (PIAC) for the 4th District is meeting Thursday August 21st at 6 p.m. in the auditorium at Liberty Memorial. PIAC is one of the very few funding sources open to residents of Kansas City to request improvements on public property. On behalf of the neighborhood, the Rockhill Homes Association has submitted an application for additional traffic calming islands. The public meeting allows applicants to present their request to the two 4th District PIAC representatives and hopefully both Councilmen.

Having served as a PIAC member for eight years, it always makes a strong impression when members of the community attend to support an application. Parking is typically easy; presenters are limited to five minutes and it's interesting to hear the requests of other applicants.

Hope you can attend.

RHA Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of homeowners occurred on May 13 at 7PM in Epperson Hall at the Kansas City Art Institute. There was an excellent turnout and a many of our new neighbors in Rockhill were present and had a chance to meet longer term residents. Our neighborhood "first lady," Sonya Harshbarger, made sure there was plentiful food for all. A few photos are below, with my apologies for not catching more in attendance.



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 July 8. There is no meeting in August. Issues may be brought before the Board by contacting either me (mussmang@gmail.com) or our President, Lance Harshbarger (rockhillpresident@gmail.com).

Gardens and Architecture Tour of Historic Rockhill

By Pat Session and Sonya Harshbarger

May 17, 2025 dawned as the day of our long planned Gardens and Architecture Tour of Rockhill. The tour was planned by the Rockhill Garden Club to help our neighborhood celebrate 50 years as the first nationally designated historic neighborhood in Kansas City. The weather on May 17 could not have been more perfect. [May 18 was the designated rain day, but May 18 and 19 brought torrents of rain.]

The tour featured over 30 homes and 8 different garden, and included vendor booths, musicians, a food truck, and Betty Ray ice cream (they sold out). We sold almost 600 tickets, with many more tickets given to volunteers and sponsors. We know this as we purchased 700 tour booklets, and more had to be purchased by a volunteer, who wanted to ensure that each home in Rockhill received a booklet.

We could not have been more pleased with how neighbors stepped up to make their property show at its best. Throughout the spring there were an unusually large number of homes painted and tradesmen of all sorts on the streets. A visitor to the neighborhood on the evening of May 16 commented that she heard lawn mowers throughout the neighborhood as everyone prepared to make sure even the grass looked its best. Our neighborhood never looked so beautiful!

We want to thank the neighbors who volunteered to welcome guests and to help us in our gardens. A special thanks to Karen Moninger, who secured a large group of Master Gardeners as volunteers.

Volunteers at our welcome booths reported glowing comments from guests, many of whom returned to the welcome booths after the tour with high praise. One person was quoted as saying she goes to many garden tours, but ours was the BEST she'd ever attended. Gardeners commented on how visitors were friendly, grateful and respectful of their property. There were a couple of outliers, such as the ladies who insisted on posing for photos in rather interesting positions by the Sessions' pool. More than a few guests made themselves very much at home as though imagining a life of leisure in our gardens.

A frequent question from visitors was, "Are you doing this again next year?" The answer to that question is no; however, in 5 years, maybe?

Rockhill Garden Club

by Susan Carlson

A special thanks to Pat Session, who, with the able assistance of Sonya Harshbarger and the garden club members, led us through a very successful Gardens and Architecture tour. We are now hoping to have less work and more fun. One of our first "fun" projects is to organize a plant giveaway for neighbors sometime in October. Many of us have some nice volunteer plants in our gardens that need to be thinned. The date and location will be announced in the future so please stay tuned and plan to come.

Karen Moninger's friend provided many nice photos of the Gardens and Architecture tour, which I've attached at the end of this segment.

We have a lot of new neighbors, and this is also a good opportunity to mention that we are happy to have you join us regardless of how long you have been in the neighborhood. If you want to join or have questions, please contact me at scarlson@kumc.edu.

A bit of history related to the just completed tour. The decision to have this tour was made in early 2022, so you understand this has been in the works for some time. One of our first conversations as a Club was how to address much needed improvements on our borders.

In fall 2022, we worked with Alice Hannon, an arborist with Parks and Recreation, to plant 24 trees on the median on Rockhill Road. With a donation for trees, and the able assistance of a young man who prepared the holes, Jim Sager, Ellis Thigpen and I planted those trees on Halloween 2022.

We also agreed that the Narrows at Brush Creek and Harrison Street needed an upgrade. That happened this year with the addition of a donated urn and evergreen shrubs (yews and boxwoods).

You may have noticed dirt in two locations south of Cleaver II. This is the 3rd location we have taken on for improvement. Called the 4 Corners, it will be planted in fall 2025. You can see from the cardboard in the photo on the previous page, the initial effort to do the project "on the cheap." After several hours of sweat, it was decided to hire truckloads of topsoil and mulch.

The shrubs at the Narrows and the 4 Corners project are funded in part by a gift from the RHA board.

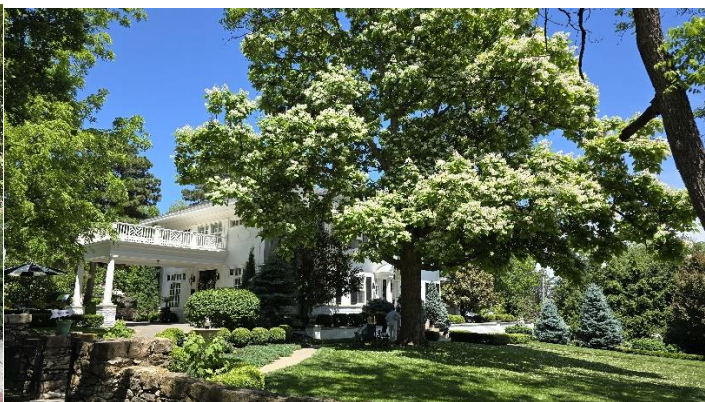
Photos from the 4 Corners Project





Photos from the Gardens and Architecture Tour







A Photo from the Neighborhood Tree Planting Day



Thanks to \$30,000 of PIAC funding secured by Tom Winter, our neighborhood and surrounds received another 42 trees in April. We were particularly pleased that a large number of trees could be planted on Harrison and Campbell Streets. Driving by Harrison and Campbell, you will notice that they have changed the look of those streets tremendously. This is another improvement on the eastern side of Rockhill.

As mentioned in the last Rockhill Times, perhaps the best part is that most of them will be watered and, if necessary, replaced by Heartland Tree Alliance for the next several years. The exception is that neighbors who had trees planted in front of their home agreed to water regularly for the next 2 years. Neighbors came out to assist Heartland Tree Alliance staff with the planting.

Next Coffee Club, Saturday, September 13 @ 10:00 am

by Jeffie Mussman and Karen Moninger

The coffee club is a great way to catch up with neighbors and meet new ones! You're invited to the home of Laura and David Safley, who have graciously offered to host the event in their home at 4541 Kenwood Avenue, to enjoy coffee and conversation with the neighbors you know and the ones you're yet to meet!

RSVP to Laura at laurasafley@yahoo.com or text 816-210-8501.

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



This is the latest in a series that has been hosted by Rick and Sylvia Crawford, Joy Payne, Jeffie and Galen Mussman, Bill and Pat Session, and Reggie and Regina Bassa. We thank all of our previous hosts and hostesses.

The Fall edition of the Rockhill Times will be distributed October 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.