

**Hyde Park Neighborhood Association**  
General Meeting Minutes - September 15, 2009

Board Members Present: David Kimmis, Kevin Sullivan, Stephanie Smith, Gene Morgan, Sarah Starnes, Kerrie Tyndall, Rikki Honnold-Helvick, Pat Alley, Terri Hiebert, Dan Mugg, Chris Harper

Excused: Jennifer Berry, Guy Bailey

Others Present:

- Captain Terman and Officer Parks, KCPD
- Michael Schumacher, Kansas City Neighborhood and Community Services Department
- Councilpersons Beth Gottstein, Jan Marcason, Melba Curls
- Scott Burnett, Jackson County Legislator

The meeting was called to order at 7:12 p.m. by David Kimmis. A quorum was present.

This neighborhood meeting discussed the increase in crime along Armour Boulevard in Hyde Park. The goal of the meeting was to identify the issues, apprise the neighborhood of the work being done by HPNA in conjunction with KCPD, the City, and our elected leaders, and develop ideas for long-term solutions to the problem. The meeting was very well-attended.

David Kimmis began the meeting by sharing some crime statistics compiled over the last couple of years. Calls for police service along Armour Boulevard have increased substantially in 2009. The project-based Section 8 properties along Armour account for a highly disproportionate amount of calls for police service and police reports. Particularly troubling are the Bainbridge and surrounding area, which has had over a 300% increase in calls for police service since the property was fully occupied in 2008, and the Armour/Harrison area is a KCPD "Aggravated Assault Hotspot."

Next, Councilperson Jan Marcason briefly spoke about the problem and how the City is trying to address it by meeting with HUD. She referenced the chronic nuisance ordinance and how it can be used against the property owners and managers to facilitate abatement of the crime issues in problem properties.

Michael Schumacher from the Neighborhood and Community Services Department spoke next. He explained how the City initiated the nuisance process against some of the property managers a year or two ago, but the companies developed an abatement plan that included off-duty police officers to serve as security at the properties, more controlled access to the properties, improved lighting, and so forth. In response, the City agreed to call off the nuisance hearing process, and the file was ultimately closed. Since the problem has clearly not been abated, the Department now believes it is time to conduct an investigation into the issue and start the nuisance process again.

Captain Terman from the Kansas City Police Department spoke about the steps that KCPD is taking to remedy the problems in the Armour Corridor. KCPD has one suspect in custody for the Armour/Cherry homicide, and has arrested a suspect who has allegedly committed a number of burglaries in the neighborhood. Captain Terman described how KCPD partners with federal authorities and employs KCPD tactical teams to track felons living or operating in the neighborhood and build strong cases against the felons. Further, KCPD's Crime-Free Multi-Family Housing program has been valuable in establishing inroads in multi-family residential properties in the neighborhood.

The floor was then opened up for questions and comments from neighbors. Highlights include:

- Edward Powell, resident and groundskeeper of the Homestead and Kenwood apartments, asked the KCPD officers what he and other residents could be doing to help the police department. Captain Terman and Officer Parks responded that this kind of community support is exactly what the police needs to do their jobs. They advised that residents should also apply pressure to the property managers to better screen and manage problem tenants.
- Several neighbors brought up the issue of surveillance in the neighborhood. One neighbor suggested a collection to purchase surveillance equipment for the Armour/Harrison area. Another proposed equipment that could provide live, streaming video of areas of the neighborhood on the internet.
- A couple of neighbors suggested that the surest way to gain the cooperation and compliance of the property owners and managers is to influence their bottom line – e.g. try to get their lucrative tax credits revoked.
- A neighbor asked whether Hyde Park has a private security force of its own. David Kimmis mentioned the proposed Hyde Park Community Improvement District and how funds raised by the CID could be allocated to private security.
- Councilperson Beth Gottstein then spoke generally about how the answer is to persuade HUD to distribute the Section 8 housing units across the city.
- An ER physician from Children’s Mercy Hospital stated that we should all remember that many children live inside these apartment buildings and are the primary victims here. These children experience the cycle of violence and criminal activity taking place in and around these properties.
- A representative from the Troost Corridor Community Association mentioned their efforts in cultivating community gardens along Troost. Community gardens give neighbors a stake in the community, increasing neighborhood citizenship and investment.

Rodney Knott, president of the Manheim Park Neighborhood Association, stated his support for HPNA’s efforts in reducing crime along Armour. Mr. Knott also recommended that we approach the problem with community outreach rather than simply moving so-called “bad” people out of the neighborhood.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Chris Harper, Recording Secretary