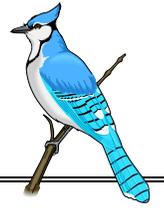




The Official Newsletter of The City of Audubon Park



Dorn Crawford, Mayor
Janette Mercer, City Clerk

City Hall: 3340 Robin Road
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 Audubon Park Residents



City Council:

Joanne Bader
Drew Perkins
Darrell Shelton

Laura Stevens
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Nancy Zinner

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MAYOR'S MUSINGS

Dorn Crawford

As 2015 draws to a close, there's plenty of reason to pause for a deep breath. But while much has been done, much still remains. Still, it's been quite a year, and a brief reflection might help focus the way forward. City government has remained relatively stable, though with a couple of important exceptions noted below. Stability in regular day-to-day business has helped free up efforts to tackle some of the longer-range challenges facing us. Your City Council, two-thirds of them new in office this year, has worked hard to make reconstitution and regeneration possible. It seems safe to say we're on our way.

City Staff. While this still seems like a 'new' group, it's been on station long enough to become a cohesive team. They are energetic enough that it's sometimes hard to remember that there are only four full-time employees: clerk/treasurer Janette Mercer, police chief Doug Sweeney, public works operative Jason Payne, and police sergeant John Porter, who generally covers night patrols. The rest of the police force has continued to perform admirably with a cadre of experienced part-time officers already vested with employee benefits from previous assignments. Other principals are either on retainer or unpaid, many sharing City time with their 'day jobs.' Staff policies and procedures continue to evolve around a strong service ethic, personal responsibility and close community relations.

The City's bookkeeping function has passed through several hands as we've sought a stable and affordable quality solution. Finally resorting to the *Accountemps* service this year, we appear on the

fourth try to have a good fit in Susan Gordinier, who's earned strong marks from auditors, Councilors and the management. Her conversion to a regular part-time employee is in the works, with high hopes for getting long-awaited system development under way.

Other City Officials. Most of the City's board appointments have been filled, including the ranks of the Code Enforcement, Ethics and Forest Boards, and our new Parks and Recreation Board. Vacancies will continue to come up in these important positions, of course, so please be alert to announcements inviting you to pitch in. At present, we are seeking to replace Code Enforcement and Ethics Board members (one each) due to relocation. Let us hear from you!

Civic Action. Citizens' willingness to step up informally when things need doing has proven an inspiration. Participation keeps increasing in Park Beautification Days, Brightside entrance cleanups, spontaneous trash patrols and drain clearance, Garden Club planting and caring, Christmas decoration of public places, and of course the inimitable Elves who magically appear whenever mass mailings or hand distribution of essential community information are needed. If you're looking for that special something defining the spirit of Audubon Park, look no further.

Budget. A large volume of City government's work this year has focused on continuing to restore our financial health. As reported in last year's annual audit, the City ended fiscal year 2014 with a cash deficit of some \$70,000. This year's audit, recently released in draft, takes the figure from there to end FY 2015 at \$5,000. Had we not insisted on retaining an old due-out from the General Fund to the Road Fund, we actually had a surplus of nearly \$10,000.

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We kept this due-out on the books as a kind of promise to reinforce the Road Fund when we can, which will be critical as gas prices, and thus tax revenue feeding this fund, continue to fall. Meanwhile, the City remains solvent, due in large measure to superhuman penny-pinching and forbearance by the staff and City Council, and in particular tireless Clerk/Treasurer Janette Mercer.

The audit report, which is presently in final draft for review by the staff and Council, contains one other noteworthy result: *zero deficiencies* in internal controls and management procedures. This is a welcome sign that the City's fiscal health is sound in the capable hands of Janette and Susan.

Legal matters. The City's spirit has been tested several times this year, either by legal action or threat, challenging its authority to govern, and thus its viability as a civic unit. Cases involving building codes, drainage regulation, nuisance abatement and pension policy have unfortunately persisted, while older and more troubling cases of employee discrimination, whistleblower retaliation, police mistreatment and tax/fee policy have largely been resolved. It's ironic that the older cases, generally just involving money damages, are handled largely by our insurer, while the more recent cases of principle we must defend on our own. The nuisance and pension cases are both tied up in appeals, embodying the old adage that it's a marathon, not a sprint. But our fortitude is at stake. Perseverance and focus will remain the keys to preserving the integrity and character of our City.

Recodification. This critical project, updating our Code of Ordinances to incorporate newer laws, eliminate inconsistencies, and conform to changes in state and Federal law, is well along this year, with most state grant funds expended on professional packaging and limited conforming of contents. Major efforts have proceeded internally to produce a rational structure and coherent and consistent content, aiming for a readable, understandable and enforceable Code we can be proud of. Final results will also depend heavily, of course, on the results of the legal matters outlined above.

Records and Archives. Closely related to getting the City's ordinances in order is getting its records in order - out of uncatalogued folders in unnumbered boxes, and into a state-prescribed file structure in secure containers. On-site and off-, paper and electronic, the whole must provide a clear, complete, searchable and retrievable archive of the City's business. Because of the magnitude and indefinite duration of the effort, a new City official, the Archivist, was established to put together the necessary manpower, equipment and regulatory effort to undertake this work, at minimal expense. Laura Kelty has bravely tackled this challenge, and continuing City advocate Anne Braun arranged a donation of lockable file cabinets from Brown-Foreman surplus stock.

City Infrastructure. City Hall still has many neglected areas of upkeep, though its automated systems have now been updated, with some persistent residual bugs to work out. Limited funds have been budgeted for capital projects like window replacements, paint and HVAC; these are being prioritized as updated bids and estimates are collected, and we continue to work with what we have as long as it holds out.

Some money has also been set aside for restoration work and power supplies at the City's entrances. Solicitation has been broad, and as documentation is compiled and evaluated we should be in a position to stretch resources as far as they'll go - anticipating more will likely be needed, through one or more of the means we've talked about, both traditional and innovative, to finish the job.

Roads. Like the internal systems in City Hall, the roads define the network that connects the City, and had been in an equal state of neglect. The repairs and replacement undertaken last year used all the resources available to shore things up without taking on massive new debt. A new project has been let to do essential sealing, filling and selected resurfacing this fiscal year.

Keeping the roads clear, with minimal collateral damage, is the approaching-winter topic right now, of course, so after several close calls with various maintenance problems last year, it's especially

comforting to have a new truck and plow on hand to face the coming season. This was a major investment, but a critical one.

Waste Management. Several ups and downs have been reported in this space during the first 2 years of a 3-year contract with Waste Management, Inc, including a couple of missed pickups in bad weather not made up; excess charges from failing to update the bill from the previous contract; failure to pick up selected waste in accordance with the contract; an incident of theft from a resident by an employee; and no implementing guidance on revised Metro yard waste policy. Company executives have engaged with City Hall to discuss these issues, but have taken only limited steps to correct them – a problem, given that we’re paying nearly \$15,000 a month for these services.

Along with a careful review of what services are essential to citizens, and how best to provide them fairly and equitably, community dialogue is needed to see what changes may be in order in our next contract, in both size and scope.

Reforestation. The Forest Board has done phenomenal planting and maintenance to restore our urban canopy, and help counter the effects of nearby barren areas like the Fairgrounds and the airport. It’s an inspiration to watch their work, and a privilege to pitch in when they call for help. Some City revenue has been made available this year to support the Board’s work, and has helped pay for major projects like cabling and pruning of older trees in the parks. In addition to age and urban environment, the emerald ash borer has joined other insect and disease threats to complicate the Board’s work, so they deserve special thanks and support for their steely determination to restore and sustain this defining feature of the Audubon Park landscape.

Parks Development. Because our small parks are public spaces, in addition to maintaining their natural beauty, it’s important they attract people, especially our children, with facilities they want to use. The Forest Board began a ‘playscapes’ initiative to plan fun things that blend smoothly into a natural environment: tire swings, log hops, treehouses,

underbrush fortresses, etc. They’ve worked closely with the Parks & Rec Board to identify suitable locations and facilities for the new generation. Tire and infant swings now hang in Wren and Oriole Parks, and a higher swing awaits installation in Curlew Park.

Community Activities. The Parks and Rec Board has closed around an array of neighborhood fellowship activities that have been either discussed or conducted over this past year by various groups and individuals, providing a City government resource for planning, communicating, supporting and documenting. There have been obvious successes with the Forest Fest, Independence Day parade, and Auktoberfest; other prospects discussed have included collateral support for other existing events (e.g., Dove Road block party, Memorial and Veterans Day flag ceremonies, Community Christmas); and new activities like movie nights, concerts, farmer’s market, a 5- or 10K run event, and similar prospects. This board will need all the help it can get!

In short, once again, it’s been quite a year. It’s been an honor to be part of it, and I look forward to more excitement ahead in the renaissance of our precious community. See you around The Park!

ROADS AND FACILITIES

Brad Derrick

We are continuing to see progress on the pavement repair contract; work is ongoing and won’t all be complete until the spring, so please bear with us.

A solution for the current holes in Henderson Park has been devised, and the Public Works Department has filled a cistern discovered in the course of digging out one sinkhole in the park. We are hopeful that this will eliminate the problem in the immediate area, but we should expect others nearby in the future. Please let the City know when you see anything like that.

The entrances project awaits a final compilation of masonry bids, and consultations with LG&E and/or electrical contractors on repairs or replacement and restoration of power supplies.

AUDUBON PARK GARDEN CLUB NEWS

Joanne Bader

Christmas Community Celebration Open House

Audubon Park Garden Club welcomed all residents to its annual Christmas Community Celebration at City Hall on Sunday, December 13th from 6-8 pm. Neighbors and friends joined at this event to usher in the holiday season and focus on fellowship and community spirit! There were refreshments including hot cider, coffee and delicious holiday cookies! Several residents also won door prizes, including donated gift cards and other smaller items awarded between 6 and 8 pm on the half-hours.

Residents have done a great job decorating doorways and homes for the season, ensuring that Audubon Park looks its best for the many visitors who enjoy driving or strolling through our city during the holiday season to see the beautifully decorated homes in our historic neighborhood.

The Garden Club would also like to thank the many residents who help decorate the lampposts along Audubon's streets and to encourage those streets that don't currently decorate to join in! The beautifully decorated lampposts add to the festive atmosphere and definitely help everyone get in the holiday spirit. The Community Christmas Celebration (and city newsletter) would like to acknowledge those decorating volunteers; if you know who decorated the lampposts on your street, please call Anita Garrison at 637-8837 so we can add their names to our lists.

Hardy Residents Help Brightside Clean Up in October

Eight hardy resident volunteers came out on a chilly and damp Saturday morning for the semi-annual Brightside cleanup effort held on October 24th. Under the direction of volunteer coordinator, Cathy Lally, seventeen bags of trash, weeds, and leaves were collected as the group beautified the City's western entrance on Preston Highway. Special thanks to Cary Campbell for bringing his son Patrick to the event – teaching the younger generation the satisfaction of caring for the environment as well as the importance

of volunteering! The next Brightside clean up will be held in late April 2016. Hope you can join us then!

Festival of the Dogwood

Although it is still several months away, please mark your calendars for the upcoming Festival of the Dogwood, which will be held during the weekend of April 15-17, 2016.

The Garden Club hopes that we can encourage more residents to light up their trees, homes or other flowering plants or shrubs next year – and remember, don't wait 'til the last minute to purchase spotlights, as these are often sold out just prior to the festival, held traditionally during the third week of April! More information will be provided about the festival in the spring newsletter which is delivered to resident homes in March.

Audubon Park Loses Long Time Resident and Garden Club Member – Edith Owen

The Garden Club would like to express its sympathy to the family of Edith Owen, a longtime member of the Audubon Park Garden Club who was also a resident of the city for over 50 years. She will be fondly remembered as an avid gardener – and even after she was no longer able to garden herself, she always made her home on Audubon Parkway a showcase of color every season. She will be missed by many!

Christmas Ideas for the Gardener

The Garden Club is selling Palm-flex garden gloves for \$6/pair – a wonderful stocking stuffer for your favorite gardener! They also offer a Soil Knife, which is a stainless steel tool that can be used for cutting plants or small branches as well as used in weeding or digging. Both items can be purchased from Club Member Gene Stotz. Please call him at 634-4921 regarding purchase and pickup of either item.

Upcoming Garden Club Programs

The Garden Club hosts a monthly program series from September to May. These monthly programs are open to all residents and their guests, and are held at Audubon Park City Hall, 3340 Robin Road, beginning

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at 1 pm (unless otherwise noted). Upcoming programs include:

Monday, January 11, 2016: "Hellebores" with guest speaker Anne Cartwright, a member of Hostas of Kentuckiana.

Monday, February 8, 2016: "Native Trees and Shrubs" with guest speaker Jacquelyn McGrail, a Master Gardener, Landscape Design Consultant, and Past President of The Rambler Garden Club. This program is held during the annual winter pot-luck luncheon to be held at Audubon Baptist Church, 1046 Hess Lane at 11:00 am. There is no charge to attend the luncheon but reservations should be made by calling Grace Worful at 375-9041.

Monday, March 14, 2016: "Pollinators and the Million Garden Challenge" with guest speaker and Club Member Gene Stotz.

Monday, April 11, 2016: "Earth Boxes – A New Way to Garden" with guest speaker and Club Member Grace Worful.

Tuesday, May 10, 2016: "Bonzai – An Ancient Technique for Today" with guest speaker Russ Stevens of the Louisville Bonzai Society. This program will be held during the spring luncheon at Audubon Country Club, 3265 Robin Road at 11:45 am. Reservations are required and information about the luncheon can be obtained by calling Grace Worful at 375-9041.

Remember – membership is no longer restricted to Audubon Park residents only....If you know of someone interested in joining the Garden Club, please have them contact Membership Chairman Gene Stotz at 634-4921.

PARKS & RECREATION

Laura Jones

On a picturesque October afternoon in Oriole Park residents and friends of Audubon Park celebrated our first annual Auktoberfest. Bluegrass music from the Potluck Ramblers filled the air while kids painted pumpkins and enjoyed the Squallis Puppeteers, neighbors enjoyed brats, burgers and BBQ and some craft beer, building community in our beautiful park

setting. We were thrilled with the turn-out and appreciate the continued support.



As we wrap up our events of 2015, we are turning our focus to newest additions to our parks, the new swings courtesy of the Forest Board. We will be spreading mulch to protect the host trees and swing-riders and exploring options for additional recreation. If you would like to contribute an hour or two to assist with this infrastructure for the enjoyment of future generations of Audubon Park residents by helping with these projects, please contact Laura Jones at LauraAJones@hotmail.com to volunteer.

With winter quickly descending upon us, we're already looking forward to warm spring and summer days of 2016 and planning future events. Mark your calendar to enjoy the exquisite natural surrounding we are blessed with in our neighborhood at the following events:

- Light Up Audubon - the kickoff event of the Festival of the Dogwood, with live music, food, and children's activities on Friday April 15, 2016 in Henderson Park (*previously "Forest Fest"*)
- Independence Day Parade on Saturday July 2, 2016
- 3rd Annual Block Party on Saturday August 6th
- Auktoberfest - date to be determined

More details to come on all of these events, which would not be possible without the effort of our volunteers or donations from generous sponsors. If you are interested in volunteering for the many tasks to be done before, during, and after our events, or if you would be willing to provide financial sponsorship for an event, please contact Laura Jones at LauraAJones@hotmail.com.

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WASTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

We've reached the last year of our three-year solid waste collection contract. Before inviting bids for the next round, we need to talk about what services you really want, and what you're willing to pay for them.

Right now our collections are on Tuesdays and Fridays. Garbage is collected from backyard cans on both days; recycling from the curb on Tuesday; and yard waste from the curb on Friday.

The annual waste management fee paid with your tax bill is \$303 right now, or \$25.25 per month. \$23.61 of that pays for the contract services listed; the remaining \$1.64 goes into a reserve fund for storm damage recovery and repair, based on the average storm damage costs over the last ten years.

The services broken out in the contract include \$18 for the two back-door garbage pickups; \$2.55 for recycling; and \$3.06 for yard waste. In the bid for this contract, the vendor indicated that the added cost of the second weekly garbage pickup was \$6.50 – a single weekly back-door pickup would be \$11.50.

There was no information sought in that bid on the relative cost of garbage pickup at the curb, rather than the back. We'll certainly get that this time – just looking at the relative cost of recycling and yard waste at the curb (\$2½ or \$3, versus \$11½), the difference should be large.

Comments at regular Council and town hall meetings, as well as social media dialogue and Web feedback, have included many calls for reducing garbage pickups and/or moving them to the curb; increasing container size and/or frequency of recycling; fixing the pickup day for services where that matters, like yard waste after the weekend; and considering other services that may be especially valuable to our neighborhood, like seasonal curbside leaf collection.

Fairness in the billing scheme is an ongoing issue as well. Up to now, the annual fee has been the same for every dwelling – house, multiplex, condo, apartment, and the few businesses along Preston. We could set proportional rates for the different dwellings – but of course there can still be big differences in service needs within each category.

Another suggestion has been to go to a franchise system where customers could select their own services, à la carte. But such a complicated system would add administrative costs yet to be determined.

The most important elements are your ideas and preferences. Let City Hall hear from you through one or more of the communications channels now in use. Then, look for a survey this winter aiming to lay out the options and costs as they can be estimated, and do your part to help give a clear picture of what the community wants and needs.

HELLO - WHO'S THERE?

Audubon Park continues to attract talented people, in both its resident volunteer officials and its employees. The bad news is, this creates turnover, as people of this caliber are actively sought in other challenging assignments. The good news is, we've been very fortunate in finding equally skilled and motivated replacements. Here's the latest you should meet:



Drew Perkins
Councilor

I have lived in Louisville within a 6 mile radius of Audubon my entire life with the exception of my 3 years of service in the U.S. Army. I have been a fan of the Park since I was very young and my parents and I would ride through enjoying the beauty of the seasons. I have shown my commitment to the neighborhood by volunteering for numerous events, most recently Auktober Fest and neighborhood beautification projects. Also, I have worked with the Forest Board, delivering the newsletters and I was on the committee that selected the current police chief.

I sought this position on the Council because I would like to be a part of making improvements to the city and believe I have a lot to contribute. In addition, I feel if you don't participate you can't help make a positive change.

I work as a property manager at two estates and deal with people of varying economical ranges on a daily basis. I look forward to working together to make Audubon Park the best place to live in Louisville.

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Scott Sturgeon
Police Officer

Scott is a Louisville native, and attended St. Polycarp School and Doss High School. He currently lives near Iroquois Park with his two teenage children.

He entered the Army after high school, and is a Cold War veteran!

Scott was present in Berlin when the Wall fell. Scott also served in Desert Storm, in Military Intelligence.

He began his law enforcement career after returning home from active duty in 1992 (though he remained in the National Guard), and has served with

- KY Dept. of Corrections
- Jefferson County Sheriff's Office
- Louisville Division of Police (Louisville Metro Police Department)

Scott was assigned to the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Districts in patrol, and also served on the Mounted Patrol unit, and the Crime Information Center, as an Intelligence Specialist. Scott also served on the Rapid Anti-Disturbance Unit, the Special Response Unit, and Joint Emergency Services Unit, and the Honor Guard.

Scott's "reserve" career took him to combat assignments in Iraq. His specialty in the military as well as law enforcement has been in counterterrorism. He is a patriot who loves serving his country and community.

The community of Audubon Park is close to his heart, as his mother used to clean homes for a living in Audubon Park, and considers many of the residents family.

FRIENDLY REMINDERS

In addition to community calendars, event notices, meeting schedules, and official information, the entire City Code of Ordinances is available on the Web site, AudubonParkKY.org, with provisions on parking, permit requirements, nuisance abatement, and all the rest. Please visit often!

- Speed limits and other traffic control measures are strictly enforced, for your safety and security. The City speed limit is 25 mph.
- There is no parking permitted on the street between 2 A.M. and 6 A.M. There is also no parking permitted on the grass. Please inform visitors of this important information.
- Pets must be leashed or otherwise under their owner's positive control when outside. Please pick up after them.
- Building, tree, and property sale permits are issued through City Hall. If you have a project in mind, a tree you would like to trim or remove on the easement, or if you would like to have a yard sale, please call or come by City Hall for more information on obtaining a permit.

Be Safe While Walking, Biking or Running

Please wear reflective clothing or other reflective gear – or, better still, carry powered lights – if you are out running, biking or walking in reduced light. It can be very difficult to see you if you are wearing dark clothing! Please take personal responsibility for this so accidents don't occur – you may be harder to see than you think!

- Report any streetlights that are out of order or malfunctioning to City Hall, at 637-5066. This input will be relayed to LG&E for repairs.
- Please discourage children and others from climbing trees in the various City parks, out of concern for both safety and potential damage.
- Information regarding ash trees and the emerald ash borer is available at City Hall, and on the Tree Committee's Web site, TreeCommittee-APKY.org.
- Trash collection days in the City are Tuesdays and Fridays (with occasional exceptions for holidays). Recycling is collected on Tuesday, and yard waste on Friday. Garbage is picked up from behind your house both days, while yard waste and recycling items are to be placed at the curb. Be sure to report any missed collection to City Hall.

COMMUNICATIONS

The City is committed to a maximum flow of information and civic dialogue, and has a variety of platforms for these purposes:

- This quarterly **newsletter** with updates, reports and discussions of City programs, events, services and facilities. The newsletter is published on the Web site, social media, and email subscriber list, and every other issue is delivered on paper to all residences.
- The **Web site**, *AudubonParkKY.org*, which is the City's open archive of municipal reference data – organizational, historical, fiscal, legal, and social. Links are also provided to the other media listed.
- **Social media** pages, used to make announcements, schedule activities and events, exchange ideas, and promote dialogue. Three Facebook pages are in use: *Audubon Park Residents*, the main civic page; *Friends of Audubon Park*, with smaller subscription but generally the same content; and *City of Audubon Park Police*, focusing on law enforcement and public safety.
- An **email subscriber list** distributing the newsletter and notices of City activities and events.

Please sign up on the Web site, under the Community/Resident Information tab, at "Audubon Park News."

- An urgent **notification system**, with email, text or voicemail options, for emergency and other alert messages. Please subscribe to this system, on the same page, at "ReachAlert."
- The variety of regular public Council and board **meetings**, listed on the Web calendar.
- Or, just dropping by **City Hall**, for information or an informal chat.

Please take advantage of all these resources for civic awareness and engagement.

State law also requires ordinances and some other official notices to be published, either by newspaper, or first-class direct mail. With current newspaper circulation, and rates, mailings are a much better choice – so you may see things like this in your mailbox from time to time.

Beyond those mandates, we're on our own, and just want to find the channels that do the best (and cheapest!) job of getting the word out. What are your thoughts and ideas?



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