


The Official Newsletter of The City of Audubon Park



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MAYOR'S MUSINGS

Dorn Crawford

Sometimes elements that seem innocent enough on their own can combine unexpectedly to make a volatile mix. As a new budget dialogue begins for next fiscal year, a series of startling revelations in the last week or so leads to some painful decisions ahead.

1. All the extra money spent last summer on unprogrammed legal, accounting, and personnel turbulence costs has generated open worry about whether sanitation 'credits' planned back then would just have to be replaced with new tax revenue to keep the City afloat. Giving with the left hand, taking back with the right, so to speak.

2. A sudden and unexpected cash flow problem was recently raised by the City's accountant as a potential threat to current obligations. This news showed not only that the City is subsisting hand-to-mouth on monthly and quarterly revenues like franchise fees, insurance taxes, and state grants - but also has no emergency back-up resources of the sort that a sanitation set-aside might represent.

3. The city's annual audit report has been overhauled to add clarity and coherence, and was recently circulated in draft. One seemingly innocent change in this narrative suddenly made it apparent that many of the city's revenues for this fiscal year were used for last year's expenses. In other words, the money in the bank at the start of the fiscal year was nowhere near the revenues projected for the current budget.

Together, these three factors produced spontaneous combustion. Working backwards,

- The audit report shows that some \$669K of taxes and fees were collected for the new fiscal year in the spring of 2013; yet by the beginning of that new fiscal year, July 1, the City's bank balance was just \$367K. This means more than \$300K, representing, among other things, almost the whole sanitation fund, was already spent on previous years' expenses before the new year even started.
- On further questioning, the auditor indicated this had been going on for a number of years, as the next year's tax collections were moved up on the calendar to help meet the current year's expenses. A vicious cycle, growing deeper every year.
- This added a whole new dimension to the budget challenge, which had been focused before just on reducing spending to compensate for the excess sanitation fees.
- The cash flow issue underlined the obvious result of the above cycle: *there is no 'sanitation credit' set aside* for rebate in the next billing cycle. It was already spent before the previous administration's plan was even announced, on August 15 - which makes that announcement look either cynical, or naive, or both.
- The idea of looking to a sanitation 'set-aside' as a possible alternative to tax increases was thus already decided last summer - because you can't return money that's already been spent. The same reason there was never any consideration given to recovering overcharges of previous years - because the money is no longer there.

So, what can be done? Well, by reluctantly writing off this last round of excess sanitation fees already spent; seeing through the cuts applied by the Council

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in the budget finally adopted in September; and leveraging several other cost-reduction steps taken this year, I think we can scrape by. If we have to hold a bake sale or a car wash at City Hall in May or June, so be it. But we absolutely have to stop this cycle of borrowing from the future, if our fiscal health is ever to return.

As a result of all this, you can expect:

- a tax bill at a 'normal' time, probably mid- to late April, with a collection schedule aiming only to have funds on hand in time for the new fiscal year.
- a property tax determined by current PVA assessments, not the previous year's that had to be used when sending bills out early. This means, if property values have gone up, rates may actually go down, since we're bound by the state's 4% cap on any increase in total revenue.
- a waste management (aka, "sanitation") fee about half last year's, since, even without a 'credit,' it will only include the actual cost of our trash collection contract, and a small surcharge for storm damage cleanup. This surcharge will be based on available data on actual average cleanup costs over the last ten years; at first cut this looks like less than \$2 a month per household.
- a surcharge refined every year in the future by using a moving average of the most recent ten years' cleanup expenses, with better and better data collected for this purpose.
- every effort to hold the line on other taxes and fees, including those on motor vehicles, permits, franchises, and fines for parking and other code infractions.
- aggressive pursuit of other revenue sources, including grants, public-private partnerships, park levies, business taxes, surplus equipment sales, and any other opportunities available.

This will still be a very tough slog. City officials, by most accounts woefully underpaid, are showing amazing dedication and determination to make the City's ends meet, just as we do at home. The need is great: in addition to salary shortfalls, chronic neglect

of our infrastructure is obvious to even the most casual observer of our roads, lights, parks, or City Hall itself. But these are things that can only be made right in a healthy fiscal environment. With your support, we'll get there.

FOREST BOARD NEWS

Betty Weise

Tree Restoration Funding Update

The Forest Board is pleased to announce that the \$5000 challenge grant generously offered by Darrell and Nancy Shelton has now been matched. In addition, \$5000 more has been raised from fellow residents. Limbwalker Tree Service has been working in Curlew Park to remove large limbs and trees that have been designated as potential hazards. Cost for this work will total \$6500. The Board hopes that your continued generosity will allow us to develop a 3-5 year maintenance schedule for all mature dogwoods and canopy trees in the City's five public parks. The other pressing concern is for the health of all Ash Trees throughout Audubon Park. Any untreated Ash WILL eventually succumb to the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). Twelve Ash trees are currently being treated, but the cost of upcoming removals will be enormous.

Our City currently lacks the resources to help with these ongoing projects. Donations in any amount are most welcome, and can be made by check to the Audubon Park Garden Club, and forwarded to Treasurer Janet Shumate, 1218 Falcon Dr., Louisville, KY 40213. As a 501(c)(3) organization, the Garden Club will provide donors with a tax deductible letter. And, some employers will match charitable giving.

Spring planting will start soon! If you are interested in being added to our list or if you have any questions, contact Forest Board Chair Betty Weise at [www.bweise1@yahoo.com](mailto:bweise1@yahoo.com). Information on upcoming meetings and workdays can be found at www.treecommittee-apky.org.

Monarch Waystation Program

The Forest Board is partnering with our Garden Club to promote creating Monarch Waystations throughout Audubon Park. These habitats provide "resources

necessary for monarchs to produce successive generations and sustain their migrations. Without milkweeds throughout their spring and summer breeding areas in North America, monarchs would not be able to produce the successive generations that culminate in the migration each fall" (*MonarchWatch.org*).

Of major concern is the decline in milkweeds and nectar species in agricultural landscapes due to development, use of genetically modified crops that allow increased pesticide application, and roadside management plans that promote use of pesticides and frequent mowing.

A Waystation can be created using as little as 100 ft², and can be divided into several areas throughout your property and integrated among existing plantings. While it is desirable to use several species of milkweed, 10 or more plants of a single species is acceptable. These host plants provide surfaces for laying eggs, caterpillar development and chrysalis formation.

Most gardens already contain some nectar plants, but a succession of blooms to provide habitat throughout the breeding season is preferable. Consider these perennials: Bee Balm, Black-eyed Susan, Purple Coneflower, Butterfly Bush, Liatris, Asters, Phlox and Goldenrod. Annual/biennial possibilities include: Blanket Flower, Zinnia, French Marigold, Lantana and Sweet William.

It is important to provide at least 6 hours of sunlight for your Waystation, following planting guides for all species used. Proper spacing insures shelter for monarchs and other butterfly species that will grace your garden. More information is at www.MonarchWaystation.org.

The Garden Club/Forest Board hope to develop 3-4 Monarch Waystations during the upcoming growing season and look forward to offering assistance to any interested residents.

MORE MAYOR'S MUSINGS: "And in Other News..."

Dorn Crawford

Hello again, folks. Those who had a chance to browse the last newsletter (either on the Web, or picked up at City Hall, or the Little Library "info" bin)

got quite a smorgasbord of issues under scrutiny. Hard to believe another three months have gone by, and the list is still long. In fact, it may be getting longer, as new things continue to appear.

Some highlights, again, for your perusal. As before, find the ones that concern you most, and look for more details elsewhere in this newsletter, on Facebook, on the Web site, or in email bursts. Send a message, post a comment, attend a meeting, call on the phone, or just stop by, and be a player.

- Litigation.

- Former resident Suzette Scheuermann recently filed suit against former members of City government for recovery of sanitation fee overcharges dating back to 2007. The complaint arises from a statute that permits any citizen to seek such recovery, back to the City, as a personal liability of the officials involved, if public funds were spent for improper purposes.
 - After a detailed legal review, the Council and I concluded that the City's former pension system was invalid from the outset; so, in order to avoid potential liability (on the same grounds noted above), we are compelled to cease further payments, and seek recovery of funds already expended. The individuals affected have been notified. It seems likely this will involve litigation at some point, either by or against the City.
 - Two other older suits involving police matters are still pending, but are in the hands of attorneys assigned by our insurers, and don't involve anyone still here.
- Waste Management (Inc).* We're continuing to keep careful notes on contract performance, and any individual problems with pickups reported to City Hall. A small boost to the fiscal recovery effort came in January, when we deducted from the monthly bill the costs of the waste and recycling pickups that were missed during the week of January 20. This came after a fairly lengthy, and mostly positive, visit to City Hall by both our customary liaison guy and his District Director. The more serious community discussion of what services are essential and affordable down the road is still to come.
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- *City officials.* The most critical positions have been filled with some care.

- A half-dozen applications for City Attorney were screened, and candidates interviewed by an *ad hoc* group of Council members and me, with the final selection of Steve Emery of Emery & Howell.
- An even more rigorous professional screening process, by a committee including the Director of the Southern Police Institute at UofL, two serving police chiefs, and two citizens, worked through fourteen applications, from all over the country, to identify finalists interviewed by two citizens and me, then leading to the selection of Chief Doug Sweeney.
- Resident Clint Channell, an engineer with Luckett & Farley, and a mayoral candidate last fall, graciously stepped up to accept appointment as City Engineer.

Efforts are ongoing to determine needs for a treasurer, building inspector, and forester, and to repopulate as necessary boards administering code enforcement, ethics, forest management, and airport affairs. Any more volunteers?

- *State audit.* The Auditor of Public Affairs' Oct 21 report, sought by concerned Council members last summer, asked for the City's response within 60 days. I sent a letter on Dec 16 detailing action already under way on the procedural matters covered by their limited inquiry, and expressing disappointment at its lack of coverage of the more substantive legal and administrative issues raised by the Council in its original appeal. The letter closed by inviting the Auditor's further assistance in resolving these matters. There's been no formal response. It's a pleasure to report that no additional funds from our strapped legal or accounting budgets were expended in concluding this action.

- *City audit.* The City's annual audit, by Henson & Associates, is in final stages of completion. Much of the report has been completely reworked to improve clarity and utility. Of particular note is the opening section of the report, "Management Discussion and Analysis," which has not fulfilled its title in past editions, but now does. This discussion covers much of the ground addressed by both the

state and city auditors, and the way ahead. The report will be posted to the City Web site as soon as it's approved.

- *Roads.* Already suffering from neglect, the roads took a real beating in the bad weather this winter. Engineer Clint Channell is seeking multiple bids across a range of options for scope of work, depending on how long the money holds out. This means prioritizing, comparing contract rates, studying proposals, watching the bottom line, and being ready to hit the ground running when the weather settles into the new season.

- *Airport affairs.* Lacking requested information on airport staff's plans to resume its home insulation program in Audubon Park, a flyer and media posts announced an open forum to provide affected residents historical background and current state of play. The flyer emphasized FAA guidance divorcing Federally funded interior noise reduction treatments from any condition requiring the surrender of property rights, through an unlimited air easement, as the airport had been requiring. The day before the forum, target residents received a letter from the airport's project manager, inviting them to make appointments to discuss means to surmount the City's ordinance regulating such easements. Further requests to airport management to explain this move, and its further intentions, have not been answered. Clearly getting this work done properly, without strings attached, will require continued solidarity and resolution to preserve our precious community.

- *Reforestation.* Our most prized resource has been neglected by City government way too long. Through a public/private partnership between the City (through the Forest Board) and the Garden Club, and generous support from leading citizens, a funding appeal seen on these pages and social media raised over \$15,000 to fight the coming ash infestation, through a detailed plan of protective treatment and species replacement. The fund remains open, because the task is large - please look to the Forest Board's column here for details, and give generously as you're able.

- *Citizen mobilization.* One more shout-out for our most potent asset: an aware, energetic and aroused community. In the past several months, neighbors have stepped up out of nowhere to scrutinize City records; broadcast meetings; compose scenic photographs; organize public events; raise funds; and plant public trees and gardens. Most of all, there's the brave crew who stood for Council elections last time, and then pressed their commitment to set the City's governance aright. The repressed energy and dedication of our citizenry are the secret weapons to fuel our resurgence.

- *Communication.* Feedback so far suggests some success at getting everybody from information *starvation* to information *overload* as quickly as possible. Between reinvigorating the City Web site, leveraging social media pages, amping up this newsletter, promoting email bursts, and reinvigorating meeting participation, you should be able to follow, discuss and shape the issues of most interest to you.

- *City administration.* Day-to-day operations in City Hall are catching up - but the overall shape of official records and historical data still needs much work. Property inventories, security procedures, manpower management, personnel accounting and administrative systems, and the condition of City Hall's infrastructure all demand unprecedented effort.

In short, four months in, the end of the tunnel remains distant, but there are glimmers of light out there. Your unflinching support and determination on behalf of our Audubon Park home are, as always, the key ingredients. Please stop by and say hello when you can.

AUDUBON PARK GARDEN CLUB NEWS

Joanne Bader

Festival of the Dogwood Scheduled for April 18-20

This has been a long, cold and snowy winter, but spring is on the way, as is the Festival of the Dogwood, which will be held over TWO weekends in April. The festival itself will take place during April 18-20, 2014, but the annual Sunday concert will be held the following weekend on Sunday, April 27th, at Audubon Baptist Church, so as not to conflict with Easter celebrations the previous Sunday. *The Garden*

Club requests that residents light up their trees, shrubs, flowers and homes whenever the dogwoods start to bloom, but especially from Thursday April 17th through Sunday the 20th! Residents are also asked to spruce up their yards, as this is a major springtime event that draws lots of area visitors to see the splendor of Audubon's dogwood trees. The concert will be held the following Sunday afternoon at 3 pm, at Audubon Baptist Church, 1046 Hess Lane, with music provided by the River Cities Concert Band. This group plays a mixture of patriotic and show tunes, as well as light classical music. Refreshments will be served, and the Mayor, Council and other dignitaries are expected to be present at the event. A separate flyer with more information about the Festival of the Dogwood will be distributed to households in March.

The Garden Club hopes that we can encourage **more** residents to light up their trees, homes or other flowering plants or shrubs this year – and remember, don't wait 'til the last minute to purchase spotlights, as these are often sold out just prior to the festival.

Community Christmas Celebration

Audubon Park hosted another successful Community Christmas Celebration on Sunday, December 15th, at City Hall, from 6-8 pm. This event, sponsored by the Garden Club, ushered in the holiday season, and was well attended – in fact, at times it was packed! Nearly 60 residents joined their neighbors and friends to enjoy hot cider, coffee and delicious holiday cookies! Several members of the Audubon Park Police Department were in attendance to meet and greet residents (thank you Jim Curtis, Ray Patterson and Brian Frederick!) in addition to Mayor Dorn Crawford, City Clerk Janette Mercer and Council members Joanne Bader, Bill Klump, Vince Osbourn, Mark Stevens and Nancy Zinner. In addition to the delicious holiday fare, many residents won door prizes provided by area restaurants and businesses including Chili's, Qdoba, Frank's Meats and Produce, Penn Station and Wildflowers Florist. Members of the Garden Club and the hosting committee generously donated door prizes as well. Two cash prizes were awarded at the end of the evening: a \$50 prize was won by Detective Ray Patterson (who would have

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been happy just with the cookies!), and a \$100 prize was won by resident Julie Dosch.

The Garden Club would like to thank everyone in the community for decorating their homes in the holiday spirit, and they were especially pleased that so many streets decorated their street lamps this year! The Garden Club would like to thank the many residents who help decorate the streetlamps, and to acknowledge those decorating "elves," including (but not limited to) Don Brumleve (Robin), Linda and Victor Perrone (Thrush), Rob Mullen, Rob Gates, Steve Stevens and John Nunnely (Cardinal), Norb Wafzig and John Hornung (Audubon Pkwy), Ernie and Glen Diemer (Linnet) and Susan and Mark Abel (Oriole). If any other "elves" were inadvertently not listed, please call Anita Garrison at 637-8837 so we can add their names to our lists. All in all, it was a very festive start to the holiday season!

Brightside Cleanup Scheduled Sat, April 12 at 9 am

Brightside's Community-Wide Spring Cleanup is scheduled for Saturday, April 12, 2014. Members of the Garden Club encourage residents to come out to volunteer at 9 am that morning to clean up around the Preston Highway entrance to Audubon Park. The timing couldn't be better, as Audubon Park's Festival of the Dogwood is being held the following weekend, and this is a major gateway to our community! Brightside will provide gloves, bags and t-shirts; volunteers may wish to bring along rakes or other gardening tools to help in the cleanup.

The Garden Club helped to sponsor a similar neighborhood cleanup along Preston Highway in conjunction with Brightside on Saturday, October 26th. Coordinated by Garden Club member Cathy Lally, approximately 6 volunteers turned out to pick up trash. The weather was less than welcoming - chilly, windy, and gray, in fact! Despite the weather, nearly 10 bags of garbage were collected by the intrepid volunteers between the railroad overpass and Hess Lane on both sides of Preston. The City owes a great big "thank you" to these helpers!

Audubon Park Garden Tour – Saturday, June 28th

Audubon Park's annual Garden Tour is scheduled for Saturday, June 28th, from 10 am to 4 pm. Although no specific information is available at print time regarding gardens to be featured on the tour, tickets will be available at City Hall on the day of the event. Audubon Park will likely again participate in the Passport Program, which allows interested gardeners to purchase discounted tickets for a "package" of Garden Tours: Audubon Park, Old Louisville's Hidden Treasures Tour (June 14-15, 10 am-5 pm) and Crescent Hill (June 7, 9 am-5pm). For more information about the Passport Program or Audubon's garden tour specifically, please call Gene Stotz at 634-4921, or Mary Miller at 635-7322. We hope you will invite family and friends to join you in touring the local gardens; all proceeds from the event are returned to the community via funds for park maintenance or tree plantings.

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 at 1 pm (unless otherwise noted). Most recently, Jeff Wallitsch of Wallitsch Nursery and Garden Center spoke on March 10, with "*Tips on the Care of Hydrangeas and Crepe Myrtles*." Upcoming programs:

Tuesday, April 15: "*Experience Riverside, The Farnsley-Moreman Landing*". This will be a field trip, with carpooling from Audubon Park City Hall, 3340 Robin Road, at 12 p.m. There is an admission fee of \$4 to enter this site.

Tuesday, May 13: "*Healthy Soil Makes Great Gardens and Trees*" with guest speaker Gary Murphy, Certified Arborist with Limbwalkers Tree Service. This program will be held at Audubon Country Club, 3265 Robin Road, as part of the Spring Luncheon series. The meeting begins at 11:45 am. There will be a charge for lunch; reservations can be made by calling Ann Dyer at 634-3058, or Cheryl Westbay at 634-1239.

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 Club President, Gene Stotz, at 634-4921 for more information.

HELLO - WHO'S THERE?

Hi, I am Joanne Bader. My husband Rob, son Robert and I have lived at 1117 Cardinal Drive for 20 years. Despite our longevity, our house is still referred to as the "Shanklin" house - one of the quirks of Audubon Park where homes are known by the names of their longtime owners! Not sure how many years it will take to be known as the "Bader" home... After working for Humana for 12 years, in 1996 I became a full time "civic volunteer" and mom and spent years volunteering at SSM on the PTO, working with Festival of Trees and Lights, as well as positions on the initial Forest Board and with the Garden Club. I write the Garden Club portion of the newsletter and have helped distribute the newsletters for years to save taxpayer money. My family loves the sense of community in Audubon Park which we believe makes it such a special place to live. I ran for City Council to try to make a difference and to keep this city strong and vibrant. I can always be reached via email at baderlouky@aol.com or by calling my home at 636-2452. I encourage all residents to get involved to make Audubon Park the best it can be!

Hello, it's me. I'm Nancy Zinner. My husband Gil and I have lived at 3315 Wren Road since 1982. Before that we and our five children lived on Eagle Pass.

I'm a registered nurse, graduating from Norton Infirmary School of Nursing, and later returning to college at Bellarmine while attending with four oldest children to get my BSN. I did graduate work at Indiana Wesleyan in Marion, IN, and Graduate Nursing Education Studies at Bellarmine.

All our children are college graduates, with the two eldest girls having doctorates.

I'm studying oil painting with David Schuster, and have my art for sale in Louisville, southern Indiana and coastal Georgia. I enjoy painting the gardens and homes during the Audubon Park Garden Tour, and am willing to do paintings for our Park residents.

I'm on the City Council, a quilter for St Stephen Martyr, and a former PTA and school board member. We are members at St Louis Bertrand Church.

More to come – stay tuned!

Hello - my name is Janette Mercer, and I am your City Clerk. I retired from AT & T, after 29 years of service. I have a 24-year-old son, Tyler. He is an honor student at Indiana University, working on his degree to become a Physician's Assistant. I have a 2-year-old Ocherese (dog), Oliver. I enjoy sunny days and being around people. I'm at City Hall most days during the week. My scheduled time is Monday thru Thursday 8:00 to 4:30. You can find me there after 4:30 and on Fridays most of the time. Come on up to City Hall and meet me.

My name is Jason Payne. I have been employed by the City for about five years. I can be reached at City Hall (637-5066, ext 309) Monday – Friday, 7am – 3pm.

[Our Public Works wizard, Jason's a man of few words. Hope you'll wave anyway. – Ed.]

Greetings, residents of the City of Audubon Park. My name is Mike Minniear, and I am grateful to have the opportunity to serve you as Asst Chief to Chief Sweeney. I'm a Navy veteran, IU graduate, former Corrections Officer, and retired from the Louisville Metro Police Department July 31, 2013. I took one week off and began my career as an Audubon Park Police Officer on August 9th, 2013. My hope is to have the lowest crime rate that this city has ever had in 2014. We started off well, with no crimes in January. Please call me at 637-5066, or email me at mminniear@audubonparkky.org. It takes more than a Police Force to reach my goal, so any input from the community is taken seriously and all advice is considered. APPD is an extended part of your family, as I view it, so never hesitate to call me! See you out on the street!.

WEB SITE LAUNCH

Please visit AudubonParkKY.org first chance you get. The overhauled site, courtesy of Web developer Mike Thompson, is now up and running for your viewing pleasure. Not ready for nit-picking yet, to be sure, as there's considerable tweaking still in progress. But have a look, and send comments on the general layout and content. Praise for the mighty efforts of those involved (Vince Osbourn, Joanne Bader, and Mike) is especially welcome. Browse happy!

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