




The Official Newsletter of The City of Audubon Park

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FROM THE DESK OF MAYOR WILLIAMS

Tony Williams

This year is the 50th anniversary of the Festival of the Dogwood. There is no way I could start the newsletter without giving the dogwood tree and the festival its proper respect. A separate flyer was sent out a few weeks ago but to recap- it was decided to celebrate the whole month of April this year by lighting up resident dogwood trees, landscaping, homes, and parks of Audubon Park. If you have a dogwood tree located in your front yard, please make an extra effort to shine a light on it for the entire month of April.

As I start my third year as mayor, I am grateful of everything that has been accomplished and all the people that have helped along the way. It has certainly been a team effort. Now that all the roads have been paved, the focus has shifted to sidewalks. For the last 25 years, it has been the homeowner's responsibility to maintain and repair the sidewalk. Since many sidewalk areas are in need of repair, we are looking at offering a one-time grant to help selected homeowners with any sidewalk repair costs which the costs may be split 50/50 with homeowners and the City of Audubon Park. The City of Audubon Park would take care of permitting, insurance, selecting a contractor, and performing repairs and the homeowner would be responsible for 50% of the costs of repair. Stay tuned for further developments.

Your property will be reassessed by the Jefferson County PVA this year. You can expect a notice in the mail around April 23rd regarding your reassessment. It was supposed to happen last year, but the pandemic delayed it a year until now.

The Jefferson County PVA is responsible for applying a fair and equitable assessment to residential and commercial properties as of January 1 each year. The PVA has a statutory responsibility to assess your property and you, as the property owner have a right to appeal. The 2021 PVA Online Conferences for property owners to appeal their valuation will begin April 23rd at noon and continue until May 17th at 4 p.m.

Those age 65 or older, or permanently disabled may be eligible to receive a tax exemption that reduces the taxable assessment by up to \$40,500 for 2021. Property owners become eligible for the Homestead Exemption on their primary home beginning the year they turn 65, if they owned and occupied the home on January 1st. The exemption can be claimed on one property. Property owners who have been declared totally disabled for the previous twelve months by the federal government or any public or private retirement system and have occupied the home on January 1st may be eligible to receive the Disability Exemption on their primary home.

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Additionally, parents of disabled children or legal guardians of disabled people may qualify for the exemption by placing the property in a legal trust for the benefit of the disabled person. To receive homestead or disability exemptions, you must apply. For more information, contact the Jefferson County PVA at 502-574-6380.

Once again, I thank you for your continued confidence and support as we work together to continue to move our great City forward!

FOREST BOARD NEWS

Michael Blum- Chairperson

One of the many wonderful attributes of our neighborhood is its beautiful tree canopy. As the forest board chair, I feel great responsibility in caring for our urban tree canopy and ensuring that we all have a healthy and beautiful ecosystem in which to live. As mentioned in the Fall newsletter, our city forester recently completed a neighborhood wide inventory of the tree species in the right of way areas of the neighborhood. Such an inventory is a great investment in that it provides the forest board with the details necessary to ensure that as we plan for the future tree canopy of our neighborhood, we are doing so in a manner that promotes the overall health and wellbeing of the trees. With much gratitude to our city forester, Ryan Lewis, who completed the survey and Audubon Park resident Aaron Morris who assisted with the data analysis, I am excited to share some of our learnings.

Throughout the neighborhood, nearly 900 trees have been surveyed in right of way areas. These trees add a tremendous amount of beauty to our neighborhood and continue to contribute to our mental and physical health in numerous ways. However, of those 900 trees, approximately 110 of them are a species of ash. As many of you are aware, the emerald ash borer has arrived in our area over the past several years and will unfortunately kill most of these trees. Speaking with residents who grew up in our neighborhood, I often hear remarks about how beautiful our tree canopy currently is, but

how the tree canopy used to be so dense that entire streets were shaded all day during the summer.

The prospect of losing over twelve percent of our urban canopy due to the emerald ash borer is daunting. However, each of us as residents has the power and responsibility to actively rebuild what we will lose. As part of the survey, the city forester included the number of available locations along the street easement in which a tree could be planted. According to his count, there are 237 locations available for tree planting, indicating that over 20 percent of the right of way area is open for planting. Even if you already have a tree in part of the right of way area of your yard, you may have space for another tree.

In order to assist our residents in reforesting our neighborhood, the Forest Board is offering free tree seedlings to interested residents. Seedlings are typically planted in late fall or spring, as the weather during these times of the year reduces stress on the trees through the transplanting processes. In addition to purchasing and planting the seedling, the Forest Board will provide a one-time application of mulch, a protective wire mesh fence, and a watering bag during the first summer after the tree has been transplanted. If you are interested in planting a tree or might be interested in planting a tree, please contact Forest Board Chair Michael Blum via phone call, text message, or email at 502-396-4029 or Michael.blum13@gmail.com.

Upon hearing of your interest, a Forest Board representative will meet with you to discuss options for your site. In doing so, we will help you choose the best tree for your wants as well as ensure we have a diverse population of trees in the neighborhood. Such diversity ensures that the next natural disaster to eradicate a species of tree will not leave our neighborhood barren.

It is our responsibility to plant the trees in our neighborhood now that the next generations will enjoy in the future.

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Below is a visual reference breaking down the percentage of trees by species that are currently planted in the neighborhood right of ways.

It is hard to believe that it has already been a year since our lives were altered by the coronavirus. Throughout that time, the Forest Board hasn't been able to meet in person. However, through the dedication of City Forester Ryan Lewis and volunteers Leah Netherland and Marie Eff and their willingness to communicate virtually and work independently, all Forest Board tasks have been completed for the year. The work that these three have completed continues to astound me, as they have continued to prune hundreds of trees in our parks and right of way areas, process tree removal and pruning permits, arrange for mulch delivery and spreading in our city parks, and plant over twenty trees in city right of way areas, including many along Cardinal Drive near the country club. If you see Ryan, Leah, and Marie, please thank them for their dedication to maintain the health of our neighborhood and urban tree canopy.

As our hope for the future abounds with the growing light of spring, I often find myself marveling at the prospect of the barren trees of today becoming the leaf filled shade trees of the summer. While the trees may still appear dormant to our eyes, many of them have already begun to awake for the year. Excess energy from photosynthesis last growing season has been stored in the trees' roots over the winter. The process for converting those starches back into sugars has begun, and sap will carry those sugars to the leaf and flower buds that are already visible on our trees. Soon, those buds will swell and break open with the first leaves and flowers of the year!

While the leaves are small at first, they soon will provide so many of the benefits of urban trees. The many benefits of these shade trees include cleaning the air from urban pollutants and reducing the air temperatures between three to twelve degrees

Fahrenheit. This reduction in air temperature coupled with the shade that trees provide may reduce energy needs by thirty percent. The leaves that provide this shade help to absorb nearly 330 pounds of carbon dioxide annually, and the roots that supply these leaves with water and nutrients help intercept over 5000 gallons of rainfall per year. Additionally, tree ecosystems provide homes to hundreds of native animals and insects, increasing biodiversity while also increasing our own home values by up to 20 percent! <http://www.fao.org/3/a-c0024e.pdf>

As weather fluctuations and storm strength continues to grow, the benefits of these trees will help our community become more resilient in challenging times and have the potential to slow down or reverse such climate change. If you are interested in planting a tree or might be interested in planting a tree, please contact Forest Board Chair Michael Blum via phone call, text message, or email at 502-396-4029 or Michael.blum13@gmail.com.

AUDUBON PARK POLICE

Assistant Chief Teddy Laun

Welcome, Spring!!! We are so excited to see everyone out and about in this beautiful weather. We are anxious to see the spring projects and landscaping taking place. Audubon Park is such a beautiful place when everything is in bloom.

Unfortunately, crime rates also bloom in the warmer weather. There have been a few residential burglaries in the surrounding area. The burglars have been going to the rear of houses and breaking windows to make entry. Keep entryways clear and easily visible. If you are opening windows to invite the fresh air inside, use window stops so the windows cannot be opened completely. On older windows and sliding doors, a dowel rod cut to size will work great. If you are out doing yard work, make sure that the doors that you cannot see are locked to prevent someone from slipping in while you are busy and possibly distracted.

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You may have also heard about some thefts of vehicles and some thefts of items from vehicles in the area. You can take simple steps to protect yourself from these types of crimes. Never leave an extra set of keys or a key fob in the vehicle. If the extra key fob is in your car, it can be started even if the thief never actually finds the fob. Don't leave purses, wallets, electronics, weapons, medications or other valuables in your car. Take a few extra seconds each night before bed to make sure that there are no valuable items visible and check to make sure that your doors are locked.

Telephone scams are also on the rise. NEVER give personal information to anyone that you do not know over the telephone. If someone asks you to tell them your social security number (even the last 4 digits) to confirm your identity, IT IS A SCAM. If someone demands immediate payment over the phone, asks you to purchase gift cards or tells you to give them bank account information so they can deposit prize money, IT IS A SCAM. Some telephone scammers can be quite convincing and some make threats of arrest or suspension of your social security number. Law Enforcement will never call you to tell you that you are going to be arrested. Government agencies, such as the Social Security Administration, will never call you to demand a payment.

Computer scams are also on the rise. Some of these scams are very sophisticated. You may receive an email from a bank saying that you have an issue with your account and include a link for you to log in. The webpage may look almost identical to that of your bank. If you click on the link and enter your user name and password, the scammer is now able to log into your bank or credit card account. Simply type your bank's information into your search bar and go directly to your bank without using the link. If there is a true problem with your account, you will be able to see it there and you will know that your information is secure.

Hopefully, these tips are helpful and we all enjoy a beautiful and crime free Spring. Remember if you need an immediate police response dial 911 or call

the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office Dispatch at (502)574-5471. Tell them that you need the Audubon Park Police Department to respond and they will quickly get an officer on the way to help you. Enjoy the weather, be safe and see you all around the Park!

AUDUBON PARK GARDEN CLUB NEWS

Joanne Bader

Audubon Park Garden Club News

Many residents think of the dogwood as the "unofficial" tree of Audubon Park because we celebrate it by holding an annual festival each year (except during pandemics!) However, many residents might not be aware of how the festival began – 50 years ago – during the third weekend of April in 1971. Initially, the plantings of dogwoods in Audubon Park began during World War II, when residents were encouraged to plant the trees in honor of family members serving in the Armed Forces. The Garden Club continued to encourage planting these trees in both resident yards and our many public parks long after the war ended.

In 1971, then Garden Club president Marjorie Davis, proposed the idea/tradition of spotlighting the trees during their peak blooming period to accentuate their beauty at night and thus began the genesis of the Festival of the Dogwood which has drawn visitors from throughout the Louisville community and beyond to drive or stroll through our city to admire their beauty.

This year, due to the pandemic, our tribute to the city's dogwoods will again have to be "socially distanced", thus unable to hold the usual festivities held in years past. However, City Hall is asking all residents to recognize the 50th year milestone by spotlighting your dogwoods and any other blooming trees and plantings for the *entire month of April*. So once spring finally exhibits its glorious weather, we ask that you spruce up your yards and spotlight the flowering beauty of your gardens! Undoubtedly Audubon Park will welcome many from outside our community and we'd like to put the beauty of our small city in the spotlight!

Have You Thought About the Importance of Caterpillars Lately?

The Garden Club has had to cancel most of its educational programs throughout the pandemic, but was able to host a small gathering in February with a program on "*Choosing and Using Native Trees in Public Landscapes*" with guest speaker Jacquelyn McGrail, a Master Gardener, Landscape Design Consultant and long-time featured speaker at Audubon's monthly programs. While the title may not grab you initially, her program was fascinating when it discussed the importance of caterpillars and their greater density in native trees!

Caterpillars are critical to our bird population which is important in Audubon Park due to its designation as a Bird Sanctuary. And native trees are critical to providing a habitat to support many species of caterpillars, providing up to 500 times more than non-native trees. While most of you are envisioning the hideous and sometimes pervasive "bagworms" often found in trees, the caterpillars described in this program are largely native insects that have "been evolved to live in a balanced ecosystem with native trees, feeding on them without damaging them", and can feed on them without defoliating their leaves. These caterpillars provide food to nesting birds to feed their chicks, thus supporting our bird populations.

Not all native trees are equal in supporting caterpillar populations. Oaks are the most valuable in that they can support up to 557 different species of caterpillar. Among large trees, besides the oak other strong habitats for caterpillars are Black Cherry (454), Birch (411), Poplar (367), Maple (297) and Hickory (235). Specific native large tree varieties recommended in her talk included: Willow Oak, Black Oak, White Oak, River Birch, Red or Sugar Maple, Shellbark or Shagbark Hickory, disease resistant cultivars of American Elm, and either American Linden, Beech or Chestnut trees. In smaller trees, the varieties that most support the caterpillar species are Willow (455), Plum (454),

Crabapple (308), and Alder (255). In highlighting recommended small flowering trees providing good habitats for caterpillars, she noted the American Wild Plum, Crabapple, Dogwood (but not the Asian Kousa cultivar), Glossy, Washington or Green Hawthorn, and Serviceberry.

Therefore, when thinking about changes to your landscapes with the addition of trees, strongly consider planting native trees which are often more disease resistant yet add to the wealth of nature in its entirety. Considerations for selecting native trees should include sun exposure, soil texture, soil moisture and drainage, as well as acidity or alkalinity of soil. With the exception of sun exposure, a soil test can provide information helpful to selecting the best type of tree for your site; soil tests are available through the Jefferson County Extension Office which can be reached by calling 502-569-2344 or going to their website.

Interested in Joining the Garden Club?

While we don't yet know when we can begin to hold regular Garden Club meetings again, we are hopeful that the time is nearing with the continued and wider distribution of the Covid vaccines. Garden club programs are typically held from September to May, with some exceptions during the winter months. If you would like more information about the Garden Club, please call Janet Shumate at 636-0111.

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 AM and 6 AM. There is also no parking

permitted on the grass. Please inform your visitors of this important information.

- Pets must be leashed or otherwise under their owner's absolute physical control when outside. We now have Dog Waste Stations at each of our parks so please use them when dog walking *and picking up after your pets*.
- Building permits are issued through City Hall and the form can be downloaded from our website under "Building Permit." If you have a project in mind, please call or come by City Hall for more information on obtaining a permit.
- Yard sale, parades, use of public parks, and other general permits can be applied for online at the "Permit Form" section of our website. Final permits are issued through City Hall. Please call or come by City Hall for more information on obtaining a permit.
- There is a link at our website under "Links" where you can report any streetlights that are out of order directly to LG&E for repairs under "Streetlight Outage Online Form."
- Permits are required for any work on city street easement trees including pruning or removal. Permits allow for the city to confirm tree companies are insured and to ensure the work being done will contribute to the overall health of our urban tree canopy. If you are unsure if your tree is in the easement, contact our Code Enforcement Officer Otto Mock at Audubonparkcodeofficer@gmail.com or 502-554-6105.
- Going on vacation? Leaving town for business? Whatever the reason may be, being away from your home for any length of time can lead to anxiety if you have security concerns. The Audubon Park Police Department House Watch program is designed to provide you with peace of mind by placing your address on a stepped-up patrol list for those living in the City limits of Audubon Park. Officers in your area will be instructed to keep a close eye on your property and

to conduct area checks more regularly while you are away. There is a link at our website under "Form/Signups" where you can complete a house watch request.

<https://www.audubonparkky.org/house-watch-request.html>

- There is a link at our website under "Links" where you can "Report A Problem" to MSD regarding stormwater waste issues.
- A resident Code Enforcement Complaint Form is located at the website so concerned residents can electronically report garbage, debris, graffiti, abandoned vehicles and property, parking, and overgrowth violations. Our Part-Time Code Enforcement Officer is Otto Mock and he can be reached at Audubonparkcodeofficer@gmail.com or 502-554-6105.
- 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 Forest Board's archive Web site, *TreeCommittee-APKY.org*.
- Waste of all types – garbage, recycling and yard waste – is collected on Tuesdays (with occasional exceptions for holidays which is usually a day or two later). Garbage is picked up from behind your house, while yard waste and recycling items are to be placed at the curb. **Trash can only be set out the day prior to pickup and must be returned by the evening following.** Remember, the green cans should not be visible from the street.
- 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 your safety so accidents don't occur – you may be harder to see than you think!

- MSD offers rate assistance for senior citizens that are age 65 or older, have a gross annual income of \$35,000 or less and are both Louisville Water and MSD customers. An application can be made for a 30% discount on wastewater charges and the EPA surcharge by calling 502-540-6000.
- Kentucky's Constitution allows property owners who are 65 or older to receive the Homestead Exemption on their primary residence. If you are eligible to receive the Homestead Exemption, the exemption amount is subtracted from your property's assessed value, reducing your property tax liability. The Homestead Exemption for 2020-2021 is \$40,500. Only one exemption (Homestead or Disability) is allowed per household. Once approved for the Homestead Exemption, you are not required to reapply annually. You are eligible for the Homestead Exemption on residential or commercial property as long as you own and occupy the property as your primary residence and meet all other qualifying criteria.
- Audubon Park has a Little Free Library located at the intersection of Wren and Audubon Parkway. The Little Free Library is a book/magazine/DVD/CD exchange for adults and children where you are free to drop off or take materials located in the outdoor book holder. The library steward is Amanda Thompson. Amanda is currently taking monetary donations to build a new library for expansion. If you would like to donate or have questions, concern, or comments, please feel free to call, text or email her at 502-931-0790 or amt924@hotmail.com.

COMMUNICATIONS

The City of Audubon Park is committed to informing and encouraging 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, email subscriber list, and now delivered 4 times a year in print.

- 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.
- **Two Social media** pages on Facebook are in use to make announcements, schedule activities and events, exchange ideas, and promote dialogue: **Audubon Park City Hall**, the main civic page and **Audubon Park Police Department**, focusing on law enforcement and public safety. Be sure to like both pages in order to receive communication from them, as they are the only official social media pages from the City.
- **Nextdoor** is social networking site that brings back good old-fashioned neighborhood chatter between your neighbors across the street and you. It puts you in touch with folks down the block and even people a few miles down the road. Nextdoor is also like Facebook, where you can scan through your contacts' posts and photos, and you can post your own messages and photos. You might alert those neighbors to prowlers you spotted in the neighborhood. Your neighbors might recommend a good plumber or mechanic. They could also tell you about yard sales or appliances they're giving away. Or you can alert them to a stray dog you found.
- An **email subscriber list** distributing the newsletter and notices of City activities and events. Please sign up on the Web site, under the Resident Information tab, at "Audubon Park News."
- **ReachAlert** is 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 are listed on the **Web calendar**.
- Or, just dropping by **City Hall**, for information or an informal chat (when COVID-19 is over).

Always be sure to let the mayor or your favorite council member know your thoughts and ideas!