



THE

CORNER POST

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Working to create safe,
attractive and healthy neighborhoods
throughout Central OklahomaSM

A bimonthly publication of
The Neighborhood Alliance, Inc.
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We are a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization offering education, training and organizational assistance to neighborhoods in Central Oklahoma

The McAtees Service...Above and Beyond!

By Kim Lowe, Ward 3 Community Leader

This year's Neighborhood Alliance Board of Directors' Honor Award will be presented to the Honorable Larry McAtee and his wife JoAnn for their years of joint service to the citizens of Ward 3 and the City of Oklahoma City.

It's early morning. He grabs the newspaper and a cup of coffee. She's in the kitchen getting breakfast. Glancing again at the day's calendar, she sees he has three meetings today, back-to-back, and two meetings this evening. Instinctively she readies a brown bag lunch and plans an early dinner.

He moves onto the computer after breakfast, reading the wave of emails that have arrived. As he replies and handles each communique, he gives his perspective, eases concerns, corrects imbalances, relays facts, gives direction and shares the type of advice and wisdom you'd expect from a parent, a grandparent or a life-long friend. Before many of us have even begun our day, he's already engaging our city and its residents toward making a better tomorrow. Ready to leave the house, she gives him a kiss and a wish for a great day, and hands him his lunch. Now it's time for her day to kick into high gear.

So, you ask, who are these people? They are none other than Oklahoma City's very own Larry and JoAnn McAtee.

Having landed in Oklahoma City in 1969, it's clear to see that the McAtees have made our great city their home. From the day they arrived, they swiftly planted roots in their home and their church and began a life of service.

For the past ten years, Larry McAtee has held a seat on the horseshoe in City Hall representing the citizens of Ward 3, and his wife of 53 years has served right by his side. Councilman McAtee plays an active role in many aspects

of his Ward. From attending nearly every neighborhood association meeting or event, to ribbon cuttings and dedications, Larry McAtee is there whenever he is asked - and whenever it is humanly possible - and the First Lady of Ward 3 is again at his side.



Larry and JoAnn McAtee
Recipients of the 2011 Neighborhood Alliance
Board of Directors Honor Award

Beside being an amazing Councilman, Larry serves on many committees and trusts: for his church, for our city and for organizations who help those less fortunate. He has led the efforts for the 23rd Street Revitalization West Corridor (from 1-44 to the OKC limits) and we shall see that project in all its splendor in a few short years. And his lovely wife, JoAnn, has a schedule that's just as busy! JoAnn is very active in her neighborhood association, Windsor Hills, and last year as President won a Good Neighbor Award for *Neighborhood of the Year*. She hosts many a meeting at the McAtee home and offers groups a comfortable atmosphere to meet and accomplish goals.

I could go on and on with accolades for Councilman and First Lady McAtee, and they are both so deserving of them. And possibly their greatest accomplishment are their three daughters and 11 grandchildren. Did I mention they attend ALL of the grandchildren's events and JoAnn is the Queen of Taxis? I guess I did.

So, humbly I thank Larry and JoAnn for all they do. And should you have the pleasure to talk to them, I encourage you to do the same.

Update on the Update?

Thanks to all the neighborhoods that have completed the Neighborhood Alliance Database Makeover Survey. So far we've received 195 responses! Of the surveys received, 28 are new neighborhoods registering to become part of the Neighborhood Alliance family. In the survey, we asked you to identify some ways you communicate with your neighborhood or community. Here are the top three answers:

1. Paper Newsletter
2. Email
3. Facebook

That tells us to keep supporting your efforts to print newsletters AND step up our Facebook communication.

Remember the benefits of registering with Neighborhood Alliance, you can:

- Receive information about our upcoming events
- Gain access to neighborhood-specific crime statistics
- Receive notices from the City about zoning, construction or development in your area
- Get all the news about OKC neighborhoods

.....
Didn't get a chance to complete your neighborhood survey?

Don't fret, there's still time! Visit our website, nacok.org and complete the **DATABASE MAKEOVER SURVEY** now. To request a hard copy, please contact us at 528-6322 or Ashley@nacok.org.



Reserve Studies

By Matthew Winton, Attorney

Earlier this year, I provided an article on community association reserve funding. Due to changes in Federal government-backed loan underwriting requirements this past summer, it seems fitting to revisit the topic of reserving.

While we all know that improvements to property wear out over time, one might not realize the importance of reserve funding within a community association environment. A "reserve fund" is a dedicated source of assets, usually liquid, from which a condo or homeowners association would fund necessary and needed capital improvements. To guide decisions on how the association should spend or accumulate a reserve, the board typically conducts a "reserve study." A reserve study provides a current estimate of capital improvement expenses for a given period of time, usually five, ten or twenty years. The board then allocates the "reserve assessment" to the members of the association according to their pro-rata share. A proper reserve study will include a list of capital improvements, their current age, and their remaining useful lives.

Oklahoma law does not require a community association to maintain a reserve to the extent the governing documents (covenants and bylaws) fail to require a reserve. For most associations, reserve funding remains discretionary. However, the Federal Housing Administration underwriting guidelines require either a formal reserve study to be conducted by an association every two years, or the association must demonstrate reserving in an amount no less than 10% of the association's annual operating budget. In practical terms, this means that if an association's members wish to obtain government-backed mortgages on their homes, they must meet FHA reserving requirements.

"If an association's members wish to obtain government-backed mortgages on their homes, they must meet FHA reserving requirements."

An example of a reserving issue may be demonstrated by a hypothetical.

For example, a hypothetical association has a brick perimeter fence built to completion in year 0.

For our purposes, assume the brick fence would completely disintegrate in year 30. What choices must be made? First, would the association choose to replace the fence in year 30? Would the association seek to establish periodic maintenance of the fence to extend the life of the fence if possible? Would the association fund the replacement of the fence in year 30 through a special assessment or incrementally each year leading up to year 30?

You see, even though the replacement of a capital improvement may take place many years in the future, the decision to do so affects financial decisions today. If an association does conduct a reserve study, the study should provide the following data on which to base present financial decisions:

- What components are the maintenance/repair/replacement responsibility of the association?
- When were those components installed?
- What is their remaining useful life?
- How much will the repair/replacement of those components cost at the end of their useful life?
- What funding sources are available?

With this information, the association not only may renew its FHA certification if necessary, but will also be able to demonstrate to its members and service providers good financial planning for the present and future. 🏠

Matthew L. Winton is a founding partner of the Vaughn, Winton & Clark law firm. He primarily limits his legal practice to community association law issues. He is admitted to all Oklahoma courts and is a member of the bar in Oklahoma and Texas. This article is one in a continuing series on Oklahoma community association topics. If there is a question you would like to see covered in this column, please feel free to email your question to mlw@vwlaw.net.

**NEED A RESERVE STUDY FOR YOUR HOA?
WE CAN REFER YOU TO A LOCAL RESOURCES FOR ALL
OR PART OF YOUR RESERVE STUDY, CALL US: 528-6322**



Sixty-one Neighborhoods Held Celebrations this Year! Here's how Some of them Celebrated...

Here are some great ideas from Neighbors Night Out events across OKC :

Windsor Oaks presented a certificate of appreciation to Councilman Larry McAtee and his wife, JoAnn McAtee, for their joint years of service to Ward 3 neighborhoods. We think it's fabulous to take the opportunity of a celebration to thank our council members!

Putnam Heights has, for many years, solicited donations from the neighborhood toward a "Gatorade Fund." This year neighbors raised \$1250 which purchased **92 CASES of Gatorade** that were distributed to their Police Division and Fire Fighters.



Marcus Garvey Leadership Charter School sponsored a successful event in the **MLK neighborhood**. Students of the school and residents of MLK came out in support of their community and to enjoy the fun, food, and activities provided by the school. We applaud the school for taking the leadership role and reaching out to this neighborhood; a school makes a great focal point for any neighborhood.



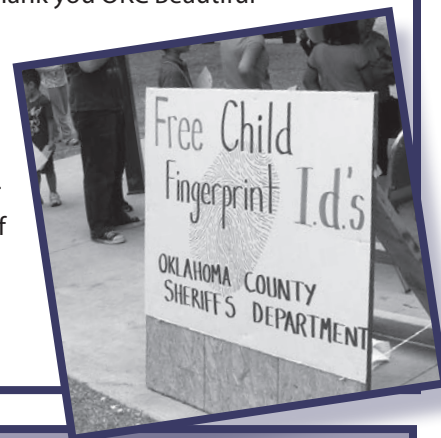
The 1500 Block of NW 29th Street doesn't have a neighborhood association but they wanted to celebrate along with the city, so they organized a block party, showing that it doesn't have to be big or complicated to be successful... and fun!

Go Green! OKC Beautiful loaned out 19 recycle bins for 7 Neighborhood Events. That's a whole lot of paper and plastic that won't be headed for the landfill! Thank you OKC Beautiful

for giving us this great tool for our community!

Riverpark Neighborhood hosted a big blowout with more than 20 booths for local community resources including a free fingerprint ID from the Oklahoma County Sheriff. Over 450 people attended Riverpark's event on Saturday, September 10.

Harvest Hills South Neighborhood Association didn't have a single large area for their celebration so they spread it across multiple lots in the neighborhood, featuring a variety of booths and activities - balloons, face painting, homemade ice cream, and a fire truck.



Did you know that we have over 50 pages of information about neighborhood issues on our website?

Log on and check it out, nacok.org

CULTURALLY DIVERSE NEIGHBORHOODS
CAN BE A CHALLENGE TO UNITE
BUT THE EFFORT CAN PAY OFF BIG
TIME IN TERMS OF RICHNESS AND
DEPTH OF PARTICIPATION

Neighborhood

Neighborhood Hero



This issue's Neighborhood Hero is Mary Sosa of College Hill Neighborhood (SW 25th/ SW 29th/ Walker/ Western) in Southwestern OKC. The College Hill Neighborhood Association was organized in 2007 and Mary reports she was at the mere 2nd meeting of the association. "The group was having a rough time setting the wheel in motion. I asked if I could help them; I had been involved with Possibilities and, through that agency, learned how to communicate with a group. My skills kicked in: I was elected President at the meeting and am still president."

Mary's dedication to College Hill, most notably her successful management of two \$10,000 grants for decorative lighting and landscaping and her efforts to strengthen partnerships with Mount St. Mary's High School, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Sacred Heart Catholic Elementary School and the local businesses contributed to the neighborhood being named a "Neighborhood of the Year" in the 2008 Good Neighbor Awards.

While she admits that working with a culturally diverse neighborhood has its challenges, Mary says she loves Neighborhood work, "I think the best thing is making a difference in my community, getting to know my neighbors, seeing the youth in my neighborhood learning to give to the community, and working with others in various communities."

Mary Sosa
College Hill Neighborhood

Mary has been an Oklahoman since 1966 and moved to College Hill in 1980. She has two daughters Elvira Munoz and Stephanie Armstrong and 4 grandsons, Quincy 20, Zachery 17, Esteban 12, and Cristian 7 and a granddaughter, Crisitina 9. "All my pride and joy." She retired in 2005 after 26½ years working for the City of Oklahoma City. She cites as inspiration, "My mother was a great influence in teaching me to be a giver and not a taker."

Mary serves on the Board of Directors for the Oklahoma County Community Action Agency. With lots of help from her neighborhood she hosts one of the best NNO events in the city. Since her event is on a Tuesday evening, she spends the Saturday before helping both Riverpark Neighborhood and Medical Community with their NNO events. She attends almost all of the workshops hosted by Neighborhood Alliance and served on the Good Neighbor Awards Banquet committee in 2010. Thanks Mary!

d Heroes

Mary's Hero

Ben Davis was honored to be named City Hero by Mary Sosa because he has always respected and admired her work in the community.

Ben is the Neighborhood Planner for the City of Oklahoma City, where he is developing a neighborhood revitalization program called the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI). Ben has worked for the City for almost three years. Previously, he worked as the Programs Coordinator for Neighborhood Alliance. He is also a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, serving four years in the U.S. Army. He is in a committed relationship and has two dogs and two cats. Since moving here in 2005, he has been a resident of the Northeast Oklahoma City neighborhoods of **Medical Community** and **Classen's North Highland Parked**.

Ben believes that strong neighborhoods are the foundation of a great city. He is working as a part of the Planning Department team to develop SNI, a new pilot program that will work with selected declining neighborhoods to implement a holistic neighborhood improvement strategy to address physical, social and economic problems. The goal of SNI is to tip these neighborhoods to self-sufficiency where they will become thriving neighborhoods of choice. Ben stated that a holistic approach is effective because, "neighborhoods are more likely to stabilize when multiple problems are addressed simultaneously, creating a momentum of improvement that encourages private reinvestment."

Ben believes that, across the city, there is a synergy among neighborhoods to reach out to each other and community institutions to work together for positive change. He said, "The strong spirit of volunteerism and cooperation that exists within our citizens is what makes Oklahoma City such a great place to live." He encourages everyone to activate the people power that exists within their neighborhood. He is amazed at what can be done with a small group of dedicated individuals. To help all neighborhoods build their people power, Ben and the Planning Department are working closely with Neighborhood Alliance to roll out new and expanded programs that provide leadership and partnership-building training.

Ben is very grateful for the opportunity to work with community-minded people across the city and is inspired by the hard work and dedication of neighborhood volunteers. Because of the great people he has met through his work, Ben feels that the whole city is his neighborhood!

If you would like more information about any of the Planning Department's programs, you can contact Ben at 297-1622 or by email at Benjamin.Davis@okc.gov.



Ben Davis
OKC Planning Dept.



Would you like more
news from Neighborhood Alliance?
Stay connected!

Join our email list to stay up-to-date on events at Neighborhood Alliance, Oklahoma City and neighborhoods throughout the OKC metro area. To join our email list, click on the "Join our Email List" link on our home page: nacok.org. You can also find us on Facebook: just log in to your Facebook account and search for "Neighborhood Alliance of Central Oklahoma" if you "Like" us, you'll see our updates in your news feed! It's that easy!

Georgie's Corner

Georgie Rasco, Executive Director

When it comes to living in this great City all of us take some things for granted... including public safety. We assume police, fire, and all emergency services will be there when we need them, after all, our taxes pay for the service... they owe us, right? Have you ever thought what we as citizens might "owe" to those who provide our emergency services?

As part of my year-long Leadership OKC (LOKC) training, I had the privilege of going on a police ride-along. Officer Ryan Robertson (2nd shift, Will Rogers Division) and I spent a Monday evening patrolling the near southwest area. I was in awe of his personable approach to the job. He used his PA system to tell a young man his bike tricks were "AWESOME!" and used expert police skills to help return 2 stolen Yorkie dogs to their rightful owner. He knew the people and streets in his neighborhoods like the back of his hand, he stopped to talk to people he did not recognize and waved at those he did.

LOKC also exposed me to the amazing men and women of the OKC Fire Department. The 100 pounds of gear they must wear while fighting fires, the life-saving medical-skills they bring to the job, and arson investigators that must see beyond the ashes to bring justice for us all. It is more than a job for all of them, providing safety is their way of life.

Throughout this experience I realized I owe public safety professionals more than just my taxes! They deserve letters to the editors describing the good deeds I witness or hear about; they deserve letters of support to my City Council member asking for consideration of public safety funding needs; they deserve my careful consideration of state questions and candidates for public office to assure they support public safety efforts; and at the very least they deserve my cards of thanks, my participation in on-line or local projects to raise additional funds, and a friendly wave when I see them around town.

I challenge all of us to think of ways we can provide support to the men and women who provide our public safety. We should all think of one nice thing we can do for a public safety professional between now and the end of the year. From what I have seen first-hand, they deserve it!



Georgie Rasco
Executive Director



Meet Amanda O...

We're thrilled to introduce **Amanda Olszewski**, as our new Development Coordinator. Amanda has an undergraduate degree in Spanish from DePauw University in Greencastle, IN and a Master's in Business Administration with an emphasis in International Marketing and Finance from DePaul University in Chicago, IL.

Amanda was born and raised in Oklahoma, and has moved back after a ten-year absence because she wanted to raise her family here. "I feel blessed to be back in this great city and to be a part of the wonderful changes taking place. I feel even more honored that I have the opportunity to have an impact on the city and its neighborhoods to ensure it continues to be a safe, healthy and attractive city for all of our families to live in for years to come."

Amanda and husband Ben moved back to Oklahoma three years ago. Since then, Amanda has been a stay-at-home mom to their two girls: Helen (4) and Caroline (3). Before leaving the workforce, she worked for DaimlerChrysler Commercial Vehicles Finance as their Operations Manager and in their Strategy and Risk Management division. Since relocating from Chicago, Amanda has served as Putnam Heights Neighborhood Association Treasurer, VP and is currently President. Amanda is a graduate of our 2011 Neighborhood Leaders for Today leadership class.

Amanda's new position will have her working closely with all individual, foundation and corporate donors to Neighborhood Alliance.



Mayor to Appoint Citizen Advisory Team

- Apply Today!

The newest opportunity for involvement in the city's long range planning project, **planokc**, is to apply for the Citizen Advisory Team. Applications will be accepted from October 3 to November 10, 2011. The Mayor will appoint the Citizen Advisory Team, which will be composed of approximately 24 members. Members will represent a cross-section of interests across the community. The team will oversee the collective work completed throughout the planning process and coordinate with stakeholder groups. Participation on the Citizen Advisory Team will continue through the development of the plan, which is expected to be complete in 2013.

"The Citizen Advisory Team is a great opportunity for citizens who have experience or interest in areas like transportation, economic development, housing, public services, land use, environmental resources or cultural resources to make a difference in the future of our city through **planokc**," said Assistant Planning Director, Susan Miller.

Georgie Rasco adds "I hope Neighborhood Leaders apply for this great opportunity! They know what it means to have great neighborhoods and their voice of experience can be an enormous asset."

Details and applications for the Citizen Advisory Team are available at www.planokc.org, or citizens may call 297-2283 to have an application mailed to you. Applications are due by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 10, 2011.

The decisions we make together today affect the choices we will have in the future about places to live, work, learn, shop, and play. Be sure you stay informed and get involved. Here are the current ways you can be involved in planokc:

- Email **planokc@okc.gov** and request to be added to the email distribution list. Mention you're interested in neighborhood issues to be added to the **liveokc** stakeholder distribution list.
- Review information at **www.planokc.org** and submit comments and suggestions online
- Follow @planokc on Twitter
- 'Like' planokc on Facebook
- Apply to be on the Citizens Advisory Team by November 10
- Visit **www.planokc.org** and send in a request from the element you are interested in, you can reach them at **planokc@okc.gov**, or by phone **(405) 297-2283**.



The **Briarcreek Neighborhood** (Briarcreek/Britton/Lakeland Terr/Rockwell Ave) is nestled in northwest Oklahoma City, north of Britton Road and East of North Rockwell. They have a flourishing volunteer Neighborhood Association of approximately 200 members whose mission is to preserve and enhance the unique beauty and residential character of the neighborhood. Their purpose is to combat community deterioration, to preserve and protect the beauty and character of the neighborhood.

In support of both their mission and purpose, Briarcreek has a new 'wild' addition to the neighborhood. Gracie, as she has been named, is a swan that was shot at Lake Hefner. She was taken to Wild Animal Rescue, which saved her life. She was rehabilitated at WILDCARE wildlife sanctuary. Her wing is permanently damaged, so she can't fly. Gracie and her best buddy (a large white goose) were released into the Briarcreek neighborhood lake on March 13th and can be seen gliding across Silver Lake at the east end of the addition. The neighbors feed and care for them. Over the summer the goose found a new mate. While the goose remains at the lake, he is not as close to Gracie as he was when she was first released. The neighborhood is committed to her survival though and is in the process of checking with Wild Animal Rescue to see if they have another injured swan needing a home. Many neighbors have commented on how much they enjoy the beautiful new 'wild' addition to the neighborhood.

2011 - 2012 Board of Directors ELECTED BOARD MEMBERS

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Upcoming Events

Tuesday November 1, 6pm - Organizing Your Neighborhood/New Officer Training

New at the neighborhood stuff? Join us for an informal training and light dinner. You'll learn the basics about how to get your neighborhood organized and how to serve your neighborhood as an officer. You must reserve a seat, call 528-6322.

Thursday, November 10 - Applications due for planokc Citizens Advisory Team

- See page 7 for details.

Neighborhood Leaders for Today Applications

Starting in January, we'll be accepting applications for our seven-week leadership Class. Be sure you are signed up on our email list or "like us" on Facebook to be the first to know when our on-line application form is open. You can find both options on our webpage, nacok.org

for **email addresses,**

valuable

neighborhood tips

and more, go to

nacok.org

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