



August/September 2023

# THE ROELAND PARKER

Official Newsletter of the City of Roeland Park

## Letter from the Mayor

Neighbors,

Friday, July 14th was an intense day for us here in Roeland Park and Northeast Johnson County. Straight line winds of up to 100 miles per hour were reported in the area and caused significant damage to trees, vehicles and homes. Power outages were widespread and lasted for some residents well into the next week. At its peak, 186,000 Evergy customers were without power. Our hearts go out to those who were impacted by and managed the aftermath of these storms.



However, the darkness allows us to appreciate the moments of light where friends and neighbors come together to help each in difficult moments. I'm also heartened by the hard work and dedication of our City staff who worked through the evening and weekend to clear streets, coordinate debris cleanup, and communicate to our residents. The City also provided free limb and tree collection citywide and free trash bag tags to those who had extended power outages. The Shawnee Mission School District also stepped up and provided cooling shelters and of course our partners at Evergy worked tirelessly to restore power as quickly as possible.

Roeland Park is a city with heart and one uniquely rooted in how it takes care of its residents. In this issue, you will learn more about grant programs for residents, the value of planting native trees, and how our city is investing in capital projects and the equity of those investments across income and racial lines. Speaking of equity, the Racial Equity Committee has changed its name to the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee to help support the diversity of residents that comprise our community on a broader scale. More on that committee is in this issue too!

Finally, it is almost time to get out and vote! This issue provides resources on where to find what you need for the next election. Enjoy this issue of the Roeland Parker!

All the best,

Mayor Michael Poppa

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# ROELAND PARK RECREATION CAMPUS

## 50 Plus Program

### Tai Chi - \$38 (4 Classes Per Session)

Session 3: Sept. 5 - 5:00 pm, Session 4: Sept. 6 - 10:00 am

A Chinese martial art that involves slow and gentle movements with benefits in endurance, flexibility, and muscle strengthening.

### Zumba® Gold - \$40 (5 Classes Per Session)

Session 2: Sept. 16 - 9:00 am

A modified Zumba class with easy-to-follow choreography.

### Special Interest: Money Habitudes - \$5 (1 session-90 minutes)

Aug. 30 - 10 am

A game-like assessment played with a deck of cards to help understand and talk about finances in a fun, constructive way. Pinpoint underlying financial habits, attitudes, and motivations to make behavior changes.

Program presented by K-State Research & Extension.



**Front Desk:** (913) 826-3160

**Program Registration:**  
(913) 831-3359

**Sports Dome:** (913) 362-8700  
Please call for open gym and court rental availability

**Community Center Office and Fitness Room Hours**

Monday - Thursday: 7a - 8p  
Friday: 7a - 5p  
Saturday 8a - 1p  
Sunday: CLOSED

### Keep a Look Out for our Grand Re-Opening Date!

Programs are currently operating at Roeland Park City Hall until further notice. Visit our website or call to confirm program locations. Offices, Fitness Facilities and Childhood Development Center remain open at the community center.

Roeland Park Community Center is nearing the completion of our facility face lift! Newly renovated room rentals will be available this fall! Visit our RPCC Facebook page to learn about our grand re-opening event, updates and activities!

[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/ROELANDPARKCOMMUNITYCENTER](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/ROELANDPARKCOMMUNITYCENTER)

**Weekly Schedule - Registration Required**  
For more information and to register: CALL (913) 826-3160

Monday

HATHA YOGA  
4 p.m.

Tuesday

KNITTING GROUP  
1 p.m.  
TAI CHI - 5 p.m.

Wednesday

TAI CHI  
10 a.m.

Thursday

MAH JONGG  
12 p.m.

Friday

HOBBY GROUP  
1 p.m.

# ROELAND PARK CARES - A GUIDE TO CITY GRANTS

To help offset expenses for our low-to-moderate income residents and encourage positive change for the environment, the City Council has approved several grants to assist homeowners and residents. Below is a comprehensive list of all City grants, eligibility criteria, and how to apply. Additional details can be found at [www.roelandpark.org/390/Grants-Assistance-Programs](http://www.roelandpark.org/390/Grants-Assistance-Programs) where you can find more information on income guidelines. We encourage eligible residents to take advantage of these opportunities.

## Home Maintenance Assistance Grants

- **Neighbors Helping Neighbors** - assists eligible homeowners with exterior home repairs through volunteers and use of contractors. Homeowners who earn up to 93% of the median income for Johnson County are eligible. The city funds this program at \$20,000 annually and homeowners can receive up to \$2,000 in assistance.
- **Habitat for Humanity Home Preservation Program** - helps residents with critical home repairs needed to maintain safety and functionality. Owner-occupant homeowners living in their home for at least one year must meet HUD guidelines for low/moderate income. Recipients must complete 10 hrs of sweat equity. Recipients can receive up to a \$10,000 forgivable loan after three years of completing all program requirements.
- **Johnson County Minor Home Repair Program** - addresses health, safety and accessibility concerns. Must own and occupy the residence and cannot exceed 80% of the County's median income guidelines as established by HUD. Applicant must be current on property taxes and the home cannot be for sale.
- **Johnson County HOME Program** - helps with more significant health, safety and accessibility concerns with a minimum cost of \$1,000, you need to own and occupy the residence and cannot exceed 80% of median household income in Johnson County. This is a forgivable loan over the course of 10 years. Full details on eligibility can be found online through the website above.

## Housing Stability & Support Grants

- **Property Tax Rebate Program** - Rebates 100% of the city's portion of property taxes to those who meet HUD guidelines. Applications are accepted through Sept. 22, 2023 or until funding is exhausted. The city provides \$30,000 annually for this program.
- **Utility and Rental Assistance** - In partnership with Johnson County, the City funds utility and rental assistance for low income residents at \$15,000 annually. Utility assistance is also subsidized by the County. To see if you qualify, call 913-715-6653.
- **Habitat for Humanity Down Payment Assistance** - Up to \$10,000 is available to eligible homebuyers for down payment assistance. This loan is forgivable after three years of living in the home.



## Sustainability Grants

- **Compost Bin Rebate** - Residents can get a rebate of up to \$75 for the purchase of a home compost bin or for the materials to construct one.
- **Contain the Rain** - In partnership with Johnson County, residents can receive reimbursement for installing sustainable landscape solutions that reduce stormwater runoff such as native trees and plants, rain barrels, and installing rain gardens.
- **Residential Energy Audit** - Residents can get up to a \$400 rebate for performing a home energy audit by a licensed contractor.

## Other Grants

- **Neighborhood Block Party Grant** - Get up to \$100 in reimbursement each year toward expenses for your neighborhood block party.

## Equity in Capital Investment



The two-page spread on the next page illustrates the city's infrastructure investments in the last eight years, breaking down those investments by census block. The intent of this map is to show how the city is actively investing in projects throughout the community and communicating how the projects serve historically marginalized residents. Some key elements to note:

- Nearly all street segments have seen improvement in the past eight years.

- In the past eight years, total capital improvement project (CIP) investment is \$26.2 million, \$4k per resident, \$12k per low-to-moderate income resident and \$20k per racial minority resident.
- Some of the census blocks have higher investment due to the Roe Boulevard and R Park improvements.
- The Capital Investment Project List shows all the project investment by census tract and year.

# TEN REASONS TO PLANT A NATIVE TREE THIS FALL

By Melissa Castillo, Sustainability Committee

1. Planting in the fall gives a young tree another growing season before having to withstand the stress of summer heat. With the shortened days, shoot growth slows to a halt, but the soil stays warm encouraging root growth.

2. The cooler temperatures and wetter weather mean less watering is needed. But be sure to water in the warmer winter days.

3. Trees native to Kansas evolved here, along with wildlife native to this area. Planting native means supporting the insects that birds and other animals need to survive. Entomologist Doug Tallamy showed that a native oak tree supports over 500 species of caterpillars, while a gingko tree, native to Asia, supports only five species of caterpillars.

4. A native tree will never be invasive and need to be removed later like Bradford/Callery pear trees or Tree of

Heaven. Plants from other parts of the world are like food deserts for local wildlife, but many of them also become invasive and outcompete native plants for resources. Check out Grow Native's website at [grownative.org/native-plant-database](http://grownative.org/native-plant-database) to determine if a particular tree species is native.

5. Native trees are adapted to surviving in this environment, meaning that they require less water and are less susceptible to diseases than exotic plants. That means they are generally easier to grow; they know what to do and don't need as much coddling.

6. Plants and soil microbes have a symbiotic relationship that is not fully understood. We do know they help provide each other with nutrients. Native tree roots are able to take better advantage of those interactions with native microbes, having evolved alongside each other.

7. Trees sequester carbon by drawing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and storing it in their trunks, branches, roots, and leaves. Planting trees helps reduce global warming.

8. Trees reduce stormwater runoff. Their leaf canopies reduce soil erosion by absorbing rainfall before it hits the ground. Their surface area collects rainwater that then evaporates. Their roots absorb water from the soil. Uncontrolled stormwater runoff creates flooding, leads to erosion, and allows lawn chemicals to enter the water stream.

9. You can be reimbursed up to 50% of the cost of the tree through Johnson County's Contain the Rain program. Check out the details and approved tree list at [www.containtherainjoco.com](http://www.containtherainjoco.com).

10. Trees provide shade and beauty. Several national surveys show that trees enhance property values by 7 to 19 percent.

Now that you've made the decision to plant a native tree, go to [www.arborday.org/trees/planting](http://www.arborday.org/trees/planting) for a step-by-step guide of how to plant a tree for optimal survival. Remember, the mulch around a tree should not be touching the trunk. Think donut, not volcano. Happy planting!

## Local Artists Share Unique Perspectives



Fifteen artists from the Wednesday Figure Drawing Group at Buena Vista Studio will be presenting their work at the George R. Schlegel Gallery. While the Group's sessions focus on the human figure, the artists' interest and pieces encompass abstraction, nature, and portraits as well as the human form.

Jeff Widener has been the facilitator of the Group for nearly 15 years. Several artists have been attending the Group for decades from its earlier days with UMKC's Communiversity education program. Widener credits the group's longevity to the dedication of the artists and to the variety and quality of the models who pose for the Group.

Please visit the Wednesday Evening Figure Drawing Group exhibition from Sept 5 - Nov 3rd at the George R. Schlegel, Roeland Park City Hall, 4600 W 51st Street in Roeland Park, KS.



# DEI Committee

Are you interested in serving on the DEI committee? We have openings for those interested in contributing to our mission. Please email Kelley Nielsen at [kn Nielsen@roelandpark.org](mailto:kn Nielsen@roelandpark.org) for more information.

Our 2023 priority is to encourage Roeland Parkers to attend events in the metro area that celebrate the many different cultures represented. If you are interested in joining us, please email Committee Chair Haile Sims, [hailesims811@gmail.com](mailto:hailesims811@gmail.com) for more info.

In August and September we suggest attending the following events:

- Ethnic Enrichment Festival from 8/18-8/20, This event takes place in Swope Park and features food, entertainment and kids activities from around the globe. Learn more at [eeckc.org/ethnic-enrichment-fest](http://eeckc.org/ethnic-enrichment-fest).
- Fiesta Hispana from 9/15-9/17, in Barney Allis Plaza, downtown Kansas City. Come enjoy musical acts from across Latin America. Learn more at [kcfiestahispana.com](http://kcfiestahispana.com), [facebook.com/kcfiestahispana](https://facebook.com/kcfiestahispana).



## Reminder: Don't Let your Dog Cook in the Summer Heat!

Animals can suffer from heat-related illness too! Please remember to never leave animals in parked cars as temperatures can rise 20 degrees in 10 minutes, even with windows cracked. Also, be sure to provide plenty of fresh water for pets and place it in a shady location. Let's keep our best friends safe!



## City Contacts



Search

City Administrator - Keith Moody  
[Kmoody@roelandpark.org](mailto:Kmoody@roelandpark.org)

Finance Director/Asst. City Administrator -  
Jennifer Jones-Lacy  
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City Clerk- Kelley Nielsen  
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Chief of Police- John Morris  
[Emorris@roelandpark.org](mailto:Emorris@roelandpark.org)

Director of Public Works - Donnie Scharff  
[Dscharff@roelandpark.org](mailto:Dscharff@roelandpark.org)

Mayor - Michael Poppa  
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Ward 4 - Michael Rebne  
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(913) 228-2650





## Get Out the Vote!

### Important Dates

- Tues, Oct 17: Last day to register for the Nov 7 General Election
- Sat, Oct 28: Advanced voting in person begins
- Mon, Nov 6: Advance voting in person closes (12 pm)
- Tues, Nov 7: Election Day! Polls are open from 7am - 7pm.

### Roeland Park Candidates

#### Ward 1:

- Jan Faidley, incumbent
- Stephanie Marriott

#### Ward 2:

- Benjamin Dickens, incumbent
- Haile Sims

#### Ward 3:

- Emily Hage

#### Ward 4:

- Matthew Lero

#### Ward 4 (2 year unexpired term):

- Miel Castagna-Herrera, incumbent

#### Mayor (2 year unexpired term):

- Michael Poppa, incumbent

Hey, RP! Elections happen every year in Kansas (not just the even ones). And this year we're electing our local leaders to the City Council, SMSD School Board, JCCC Board of Trustees and WaterOne Board. Don't sit this one out. Help to shape our community with your Vote on November 7!

### Get Ready to Vote

1. Check Your Registration (Then Vote Early by Mail)\*  
Visit [Voter.JoCoElection.org](http://Voter.JoCoElection.org) to review your voter record or register to vote for the first time. Pro Tip: Skip the line and vote early from your couch! Make sure to apply for a ballot by mail while you're there. Then track your vote [MyVoteinfo.VoteKS.org](http://MyVoteinfo.VoteKS.org) after you return your mail ballot.

#### 2. Know Before You Vote

Visit [KSBallot.org](http://KSBallot.org) to research the candidates on your ballot and make a plan to vote early or on Election Day.

#### 3. Vote!

If you're voting in-person on Election Day, polls are open from 7 am-7 pm. If you requested a mail ballot, it must be received by the County Election Office (via USPS or ballot box) no later than 7 pm on Nov. 7.

*\*If you will turn 18 on or before Nov 7, 2023, you are eligible to register now and vote in this election.*