



June/July 2024

# THE ROELAND PARKER

Official Newsletter of the City of Roeland Park

## The City of Roeland Park Celebrates House Bill 2562

*Signed into law by Gov. Laura Kelly on April 19*

The City of Roeland Park has been working diligently the past few years to remove racist language and racially restrictive covenants from property records in Roeland Park. The City, along with its partners, drafted numerous versions of legislation to provide a simple method for removal of the discriminatory language. The City even amended its municipal non-discrimination ordinance in 2020 to outlaw racist covenants. The work has paid off, and a new state law provides an easier way to remove racist language from property records. Signed into law by Gov. Laura Kelly on April 19, an amended section of House Bill 2562 creates the option to redact discriminatory language from recorded documents and re-record them so that those redacted documents will become the prevailing record going forward.

"We are grateful to our partners who helped make this bill a reality including Senator Corson, Representative Xu, City Attorney Steve Mauer and Stuart Little of Little Government Relations, Johnson County, and other cities with similar discriminatory property records that lent their support to this legislative effort," said City Administrator, Keith Moody. The city has identified the plats and covenants with discriminatory language and will work to redact this language and record new plat and covenant documents without such language.

The bill's amendment states that any restrictive covenant in property deeds that violates state housing discrimination laws is "void and unenforceable." The amendment also allows individual property owners to remove racist deed restrictions through a certificate filed with the register of deeds. The City of Roeland Park will update the community as it works through the process to remove the discriminatory language from property records within the City.



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## June/July City Events & Holidays

- **Aquatic Center Now Open** - May 25th
- **Juneteenth** - June 19th - *City Offices Closed*
- **Fireworks Display** - July 3rd
- **Independence Day** - July 4th - *City Offices Closed*

## 2024 Roeland Park Aquatic Season Updates

Just a reminder to get your pool passes! We have decreased our rates for individuals and families! This year, individual season passes are only \$35 for residents and \$45 for non-residents. Those 60 years and older can get a resident pass for only \$30 or \$40 for a non-resident. The family season passes are \$125 for residents and \$165 for non-residents for up to a family of five. Additional household members can be purchased for an additional fee. We hope these savings will allow more community members to enjoy the RPAC!

Purchase your season pass online now by visiting [www.roelandpark.org/154/Aquatic-Center](http://www.roelandpark.org/154/Aquatic-Center).



## Letter From Mayor Poppa

Neighbors,

The city of Roeland Park was founded in 1951; unfortunately, drive-in theaters and Elvis dancing in his Blue Suede Shoes weren't the only things happening at that time. Racial tension and violence were continuing to spread like wildfire throughout the United States, including Kansas. These racially charged actions were not only evident in daily living, but they were also prevalent in education, transportation, medicine, financial institutions and housing. It is difficult to imagine that the close-knit community we are today, was possibly involved in former Federal Housing Administration (FHA) practices that ostracized and alienated people of color who wanted to build their family legacy here. One example of this was FHA lending discrimination laws such as redlining, which limited black families' access to homeownership.

We have come a long way against these racial injustices, but with humility, can admit that society still has a long way to go. Today, it is an honor to announce that the City of Roeland Park has helped pass legislation at the state level that makes it easier to remove racist covenants from official plats and deeds in Kansas.



As your mayor, it is my responsibility to ensure that our city evolves into a "melting pot" filled with diversity, equity and inclusion for all people, both residents and visitors. As a community, it is our duty to keep being neighborly and cultivating an atmosphere that feels inviting and welcoming to all. With society rapidly progressing, I am fully committed to moving this city forward by continuing to make decisions that will positively impact you and your family; and extend the legacy of Roeland Park now and moving forward.

All the best,  
Mayor Michael Poppa

## Come and Play at the Fireworks Display

Grab your family and friends and come join us at our annual fireworks display! The event will take place at Bishop Miege High School located at 5041 Reinhardt Drive on Wednesday, July 3rd, beginning at dusk. With an expected turnout of 3,000-4,000 people, it is best to arrive early for a convenient parking spot, as street parking is prohibited. Bishop Miege and St. Agnes Catholic School will allow public parking in their lots on a first-come

first-serve basis.

While there are no food vendors, visitors are allowed to bring outside food and drinks, as well as coolers, but there is no alcohol allowed. Drones are also prohibited. Bring your own chairs but leave your personal fireworks at home, they are not allowed at the event. If rain is in the forecast on July 3rd, the fireworks display will be moved to July 5th. We look

forward to seeing you there!

### A Note on Personal Fireworks

Only basic firecrackers, sparklers, snakes and snaps are allowed in Roeland Park and are limited to July 3rd and 4th from 8 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Fireworks are not allowed to be set off in the streets or any public property. Bottle rockets or fireworks that are shot into the air are not allowed in the city limits.



# ROELAND PARK COMMUNITY CENTER

## Upcoming Program Highlights

### Nutrition Made Simple

July 1, 1 pm, 1 - 1.5 hr. class  
\$5 / \$6 nonresidents

Does healthy eating confuse you? This presentation breaks down myths and provides strategies to help you understand real nutrition so you can start eating healthy today. Learn how to read food labels, identify diet traps, and make small lifelong changes. Program presented by K-State Extension

### New 50 Plus Drop-In Course!

### Board Game Bonanza

Mondays, 1 PM  
Free

Our meetup is a haven for board game enthusiasts of all levels and offers a space to play, connect, and discover new favorites! Come alone or bring a friend! Play one of our games or bring one of your own!

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**Program Registration and Front Desk:**  
(913) 826-3160

**Sports Dome:** (913) 362-8700

Please call for open gym and court rental availability.

**Community Center Office and Fitness Room Hours**

Monday - Thursday: 7am - 8pm  
Friday: 7am - 5pm  
Saturday 8am - 1pm  
Sunday: CLOSED

### Zumba Gold

June 22, 9 am, 6 - 50 min sessions  
\$48 / \$53 nonresidents

Perfect for active older adults who are looking for a modified Zumba class. Easy-to-follow choreography focuses on balance, range of motion, coordination, and fun!

### Workshop for Buying & Selling Online

July 16, 10 am, 1 - 2 hr. class \$21 / \$25 nonresidents

This class focuses on which sites are helpful for buying and selling items online, how to post an item for sale, and how to search for items to buy.

Newly renovated spaces are now available to rent!  
Call (913) 826-3160 for more information.

## Preschool

### Sunny Days Picnic Party

July 26, 10am, 1 - 45 min event  
\$6 / \$7 nonresidents; per child

We invite your little to come explore and engage the world around them through their senses! This fun and lively program promotes cognitive development, creativity, and social skills. Program includes snack. Ages 1-5, no charge for adults.

### Summer Sensory Play

June 14, 10:30, 1 - 1 hr. session  
\$8 / \$9 nonresidents; per child

Bring your little ones and let them bask in the sunshine as we celebrate the joys of summer treats, games, and delightful summer activities. Ages 2-5, no charge for adults.

Visit us at [JCPRD.COM/ACTIVITIES](http://JCPRD.COM/ACTIVITIES) to register.

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

## 50 Plus Program Weekly Schedule

Programs held at 4850 Rosewood Dr., Roeland Park KS

50 Plus programs with an \* must register in advance

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
BOARD GAME BONANZA 1pm HATHA YOGA* 4pm	KNITTING GROUP 1pm	TAI CHI* 10am DROP IN PAINT GROUP 12:30pm	MAH JONGG 12pm HATHA YOGA * 4pm TAI CHI * 5pm	HOBBY GROUP 1pm

# Invasive Plant Species

By Melissa Castillo, Sustainability Committee

According to the Kansas Department of Agriculture, 23% of the plant species in Kansas are invasive. Invasive plants are those that came from other regions of the country or world and whose introduction causes economic or environmental harm, or harm to human health. They become a problem because there are no natural predators to control them. Why does that matter? Once established, they can permanently alter the soil structure, disrupt native plant communities, reduce dependent wildlife populations, and impact long-term forest productivity (see [www.kansasforests.org](http://www.kansasforests.org)).

Invasive plants prevalent in Roeland Park include Bush Honeysuckle, Callery Pear trees, Tree of Heaven, and Winter Creeper. For a complete list of invasive plant species in Kansas, see <https://www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org/>

InvasivePlantFactSheet. Bush Honeysuckle (*Lonicera spp.*) grows into a dense shrub that can reach 20 feet tall. They are typically found at forest edges, along roadsides, and in fence lines. They are spread by birds and small mammals that eat the berries and distribute them. They leaf out earlier in the spring than most natives. The leaves are opposite (as opposed to alternating) and 2-3 inches long with smooth edges. They flower in early spring with flowers that start out white and turn yellowish. Small red or orange berries appear along the stem, typically in pairs, during the fall.



Bush Honeysuckle Berry



Tree of Heaven



Winter Creeper

Callery Pear Trees (also sold as Bradford, Aristocrat, and Cleveland Select) (*Pyrus calleryana*) were widely planted in Kansas for use in residential landscapes. They were supposed to be infertile, but cross-pollination has allowed them to reproduce. Birds carry the fruits and disperse the seeds. Callery pear trees are spreading rapidly and are very difficult to eradicate. They have taken over roadways, woodlands, and grasslands. Their threat to local ecosystems far outweighs their use as a decorative lawn tree. Callery Pear trees flower early in the spring with five-petaled white flowers that don't overlap at the bases. The leaves are alternately arranged, rounded or teardrop-shaped, thick, waxy, and approximately 1½ to 3 inches long and wide. The leaf edge is finely toothed and has a distinct ripple or wave. The trees are small, usually less than 40 feet tall with trunks

less than 1 foot thick. The fruits are tiny hard brown pears about ½ inch in diameter.

Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) grows very rapidly, can grow in very poor soil, and is drought tolerant. At maturity it can reach 60-75 feet. The leaves are from 1 to 4 feet long with 10-40 leaflets oppositely arranged along a central stem. The leaves have a repugnant smell like burnt peanut butter. In late spring to early summer, yellowish greenish flowers appear, which also have a foul smell. The female flowers then produce reddish seed pods called samaras. A mature tree can produce 300,000 seeds per year. Tree of Heaven is invasive in 30 of the 50 states. Not only does it grow everywhere and quickly, but it also produces toxins that prevent native plants from growing nearby.



Honeysuckle Blooms



Callery Pear Blossoms



Winter creeper Vine

Winter Creeper (*Euonymus fortunei*) is a woody perennial with evergreen leaves that can grow as a groundcover, a shrub, or a vine. It spreads rapidly by vine and from birds spreading the seeds. It can grow in full sun or full shade and can tolerate almost all soil conditions. It covers the ground, choking out native spring ephemerals, and it climbs trees, eventually killing them. Even if you have never planted Winter Creeper, check your trees for vines. Many of the vines start at the base of mature trees, in between the root flares where it's hard for lawnmowers or weed eaters to reach. That is also where bush honeysuckle can start.

For all four of these invasive plants, small plants can be pulled by hand. Larger shrubs and trees will need to be cut down and the stumps immediately treated with an herbicide, because they can easily resprout from untreated stumps. Read and follow the label on any herbicide treatment. Don't wait more than five minutes after cutting the stump to apply the herbicide, as the tissue will close and make the herbicide less effective or ineffective. Be vigilant in pulling sprouts that may come up around the treated stump. You may have to reapply the herbicide for a few seasons before the plant dies completely. Several cities in the metro area offer Callery Pear buyback programs in the spring, where they will donate a free tree to replace a Callery Pear that you cut down from your property. See <https://climategkc.org/callery-pear-buy-back-programs-in-greater-kc-topeka/>.

## Composting Made Easy with KC Can Compost

"The average Kansas City resident produces 102 tons of garbage in a lifetime - up to 60% could be used to create soil instead of methane." ~KC Can Compost

The City of Roeland Park is partnering with Price Chopper and KC Can Compost to make it easier for you to compost your food scraps and reduce your personal carbon footprint. For \$12.99/month, Roeland Park residents can subscribe and receive a 5 gallon bucket with a compostable liner where you can dispose of any food product - we're talking produce, meat, bones, bread product, in addition to plants, paper towels, pizza delivery boxes, and uncoated paper take-out boxes, just to name a few.

To get started, sign up at [kccancompost.com](http://kccancompost.com) where you can select a 5 gallon bucket and/or a countertop container. Use coupon code RP COMPOSTING to get 20% off your first month's subscription. Then bring your receipt to Roeland Park City Hall where you can pick up your containers and compostable liners. You can drop off your compostable liner filled with kitchen scraps as much as you need to at Price Chopper on Roe Blvd. The KC Can Compost bin is located outside the store on the northeast corner.



In addition to diverting waste from landfills, KC Can Compost also trains people with barriers to employment for work in green industry jobs. Through their Green Core Training program, participants learn environmental literacy and work readiness as well as assistance obtaining a job or internship in the sustainability sector.

For questions on the program, contact Jennifer Jones-Lacy at [jjones-lacy@roelandpark.org](mailto:jjones-lacy@roelandpark.org).

## Earth Day Clean-Up Success



Hardworking volunteers gather outside City Hall

The Roeland Park Sustainability Committee hosted a citywide cleanup on Earth Day, April 20th. The number of volunteers tripled from 2023 and they collected a total of 29 bags of trash! A big thank you to the Sustainability Committee and our dedicated volunteers for helping to keep RP Clean!

## Education Enrichment: A Summer Program for Your Kiddo

With summer right around the corner, it's common for some families to wonder about what to do with their children when school's out. Well, there is good news if you are one of those families! The Shawnee Mission School District (SMSD) is offering their Summer Enrichment program that has been operating for 30+ years. Summer Enrichment classes are for students currently in grades K-7 (2023-2024 school year) and are offered to non-SMSD kids as well. Additionally, for students meeting class age requirements, there is a pre-k class for early learners. All classes are designed to develop new interests and skills through participatory learning activities. These classes are opportunities for students to enjoy new learning that is not based on school district regular curriculum.

This program will be held at Westridge Middle School located at 9300 Nieman, Overland Park, KS 66216 and it runs from June 10th-July 19th. **The deadline to apply is June 7th.** For more information on tuition, lunch options and the program class catalog, visit [www.smsd.org](http://www.smsd.org) or contact the program's principle, Linda Long at [LindaLong@smsd.org](mailto:LindaLong@smsd.org) or 913-993-8725.

# Find Community with the Senior Arts Council

The Senior Arts Council was founded in 1977 and is dedicated to the increased understanding of the contributions that experienced creative adults can make to the community. Their goal is to encourage and develop the talents of all the members and to expand their horizons in all aspects of the arts.

The Senior Art Council is a group of artists in the Kansas City area who are over 50 years in age. Artists work in a variety of artistic mediums including oils, acrylics, watercolor, photography, and other art forms.

The group displays its works in several exhibits each year in the Kansas City area. The council has shown at the Endres Art Gallery in Prairie Village, the Tim Murphy Art Gallery in Merriam, the Lenexa Art Gallery, the Johnson County Library, the Kansas City Kansas Library, the George R. Schlegel Gallery in Roeland Park and various other locations in the greater Kansas City area.

Many of the members have a lifetime of experience in the arts and have received awards in local and national art shows. We are very active in promoting and exhibiting our artwork in the Kansas City area.



Monthly meetings are held at the Roeland Park Community Center, 4850 Rosewood, Roeland Park, Kansas 66205. Meetings are held the last Monday of the month unless that day falls on a holiday. Then the meeting is held on the third Monday of the month. Reach out with questions to 913-236-4343.

## 2025 BUDGET TIME

City staff are in the thick of budget planning for next year. New this year, we now have an interactive tool to allow residents to be more involved in the budget process by sharing your thoughts and more. This is a developing tool so stay tuned to [www.roelandpark.org/440/2025-Budget](http://www.roelandpark.org/440/2025-Budget) for updates. Below is a list of key dates in our budgeting process.

<b>June 3rd and 17th:</b>	City Council meeting to review the preliminary line item budget
<b>June 20th:</b>	Community Forum on the 2025 Budget
<b>July 15th:</b>	Council sets public hearing on budget adoption and revenue neutral rate
<b>August 20th:</b>	Public hearing on exceeding the revenue neutral rate and adopting the budget.



## The Lemonade Stand That Influenced The Buena Vista Traffic Calming Analysis

By Malia Johnson

On July 15th, 2023, a speeding driver struck a 9-year-old girl who was selling lemonade at 51st and Buena Vista. When Corporal Magee and Sergeant Stamper responded, the child was lying in the grass with injuries to her legs and feet.

"The next thing I remember was one of my friend's screaming and I saw our lemonade sign blowing out into the street. At that point, I was lying in the grass and had no idea what happened to me." the victim told Cpl. Magee. She was taken to the hospital and has since recovered from her injuries.

Fortunately, officers were able to use video footage to locate the suspect, but he alluded arrest for several months. Officers were able to arrest the suspect after recognizing the vehicle at the Roeland Park Quick Trip.

(Cont. on pg. 8)



# DEI Spotlight

- **Community Event Spotlight:** The Roeland Park Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee is thrilled to spotlight upcoming Pride and Juneteenth events in our community. As Pride Month approaches, we're excited to support the LGBTQ+ community by participating in the Kansas City PrideFest, hosted by the KC Pride Alliance from June 7-9. Additionally, as we honor the significance of Juneteenth, we invite you to commemorate freedom and equality at one of two Juneteenth Overland Park Celebrations on June 15. Let's come together to promote unity within our community. Your participation makes a difference!
- **To learn more about these events, check out:**
  - KC PrideFest - <https://kcpridealliance.org/>
  - Juneteenth Overland Park Celebration: 9:30a-1p at Prairie Fire, [visitoverlandpark.com/event/juneteenth-overland-park-celebration/1595/](http://visitoverlandpark.com/event/juneteenth-overland-park-celebration/1595/)
  - Advocacy & Awareness Group Peace March & Rally: 10a-1p in Downtown Overland Park, [aagjc.org](http://aagjc.org)
- Looking for another local way to celebrate Juneteenth? Check out the new Merriam Plaza Library's Webb Family Meeting Room, dedicated to the family that integrated Johnson County

Schools. In the late 1940s, the Webbs, along with other Black families, filed the lawsuit *Webb v. School District 90*, which alleged that the local school for Black children was not "separate but equal" to the new elementary school for white children only. The 1949 decision for the Webbs desegregated South Park (now Merriam) schools and laid the foundation for 1954's *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decision, which outlawed school segregation nationwide.

- **Reminder:**

- Gender-neutral bathrooms are available at the pool and community center. Roeland Park has a non-discrimination ordinance that prohibits discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity. This ordinance ensures the availability of individual privacy in all restrooms, showers, and changing areas.

- **Call to Action Spotlight:**

- Calling all Roeland Park residents passionate about diversity, equity, and inclusion - Join our DEI Committee and make a meaningful impact in our community. With just a monthly hour-long commitment, you can contribute to fostering a more inclusive environment for all. Sign up today and be a part of something impactful. Email [racialequitycommittee@roelandpark.org](mailto:racialequitycommittee@roelandpark.org) for more information.



## City Contacts



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## The Lemonade Stand That Influenced The Buena Vista Traffic Calming Analysis

By Malia Johnson (Continued from pg. 6)

RPPD received 23 official traffic enforcement requests in 2023 and 12 thus far in 2024. The lemonade stand incident triggered an urgency to address speeding concerns on Buena Vista. At the behest of a group of residents, the Council directed the City Engineer to conduct a traffic calming analysis for Buena Vista. Traffic calming is when physical design and other measures are used to improve safety for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists. This particular analysis is focused on improving pedestrian safety.

The first step of this process, was surveying residents to determine the preferred calming element design options. The City held an additional neighborhood meeting to further discuss traffic calming on Buena Vista in late May 2024. The next step, per the City Traffic Calming Policy, requires a minimum of 60% support from the property owners along a corridor where traffic calming elements are proposed. The proposed design concept will be mailed to the impacted property owners seeking their response. If 60% of property owners are supportive, the Council will then be asked for direction on when a project should be planned. City engineers are recommending raised crosswalks and traffic

circles for Buena Vista. If you live on Buena Vista, please be sure to provide your thoughts on the proposed improvements. Your voice counts!

The city is committed to improving the safety of the Roeland Park community one step at a time. If you want more information on this project, please contact City Hall at 913-722-2600. To increase traffic enforcement in your area please call the non-emergency police line at 913-677-3363 or complete a traffic enforcement form on our website.



Example of a traffic circle