

The visions stated in this Strategic Plan have been developed through the efforts of the following individuals:

#### Elected Officials

Mayor Mike Swoboda  
Council Member Joseph E. Godi  
Council Member Timothy E. Griffin  
Council Member Connie Karr  
Council Member Michael H. T. Lynch  
Council Member Arthur J. McDonnell  
Council Member Thomas J. Noonan

#### Administrative Staff

Michael G. Brown, Chief Administrative Officer  
John Adams, Finance Director  
Claire Budd, Public Information Officer  
Kim Butts, Purchasing Director  
Kevin Carpe, Management Information Systems Director  
Paul Hauser, Electric Director  
Betty Montano, City Clerk  
Thomas Openlander, Fire Chief  
Jack Plummer, Police Chief  
Donna Poe, Executive Director - Special Business District  
Murray Rounds, Parks and Recreation Director  
Timothy Rajchart, Water Director  
Georgia Ragland, Assistant Chief  
Administrative Officer  
Rosalind Williams, Community Development Director  
Kenneth Yost, Public Works Director

#### Special Participant

Steven Powell, Chair -  
Kirkwood Citizen's Finance Committee

The City of Kirkwood is interested in effective communication for all persons. Upon request, information included in this publication can be made available within two working days in an alternative format, such as audio tape,

by calling 314-822-5894.

www.ci.kirkwood.mo.us

## "Top 10" Strategic Plan Accomplishments 2001-2005

- 150th anniversary celebration.
- Transportation needs addressed including local bus shuttle and long-range funding for passenger rail service.
- Investment in historic downtown through new light standards, flower planters, Farmer's Market improvements, Station Plaza revitalization of vacant Target site.
- Historic appreciation: 4 new landmark properties, 17 new properties named to National Register, including Turner School and Olive Chapel AME Church.
- Acquiring railroad property and historic train station, preserving and protecting Kirkwood's founding history for generations to come.
- 11+ acres of additional parkland added to city's park system.
- Meacham Park Neighborhood Redevelopment.
- Continued attention to financial planning of the city reflected in two years of awards for excellence in financial reporting, and with comprehensive reviews by several citizen committees of city's present funding structure and recommendations for ways to improve provision of city services and how those services should be paid for.
- Comprehensive city planning. Includes a new Comprehensive Plan, a Park Master Plan, and a Downtown Urban Design Plan.
- Solving utility concerns: sanitation funding, long-term water supply, and electrical infrastructure upgrades.



WHERE COMMUNITY AND SPIRIT MEET

# Strategic Plan

Fiscal Years 2005-2009

*including:*

Mission Statement

Vision Statement

Core Values

Five-year Goals

*A vision without a task is a pipedream.*

*A task without a vision is a chancygery.*

*A vision with a task*

*is the hope of the World.*

March 2005

printed on recycled paper

# Five-Year Goals

## Mission Statement

*The City of Kirkwood strives to provide quality services responsibly and ethically, respecting traditional values and promoting citizen involvement while sustaining thriving neighborhoods and successful businesses.*

## Vision Statement

*The City of Kirkwood will continue to be the St. Louis region's premier residential community with a distinctive, traditional setting in an ever-changing world.*

## Core Values

The City of Kirkwood is guided by the following core values:

- Responsiveness**  
We provide services which address our citizens' wishes and needs.
- Stewardship**  
We prudently and efficiently manage financial, environmental, and human resources.
- Family**  
We design services and facilities that enhance a family atmosphere.
- Tradition**  
We honor our community's historic past.
- Involvement**  
We involve our citizens in all local government activities.
- Respect**  
We value the contributions and needs of all members of our community.
- Integrity**  
We foster the highest ethical standards.

- A. *Improve relationships with our citizens* through communications and by seeking volunteer opportunities for government and community needs.
- B. *Reduce costs of operating city government* by identifying more efficient methods of providing services and reshaping the city's overall budget through reductions in staffing levels and services.
- C. *Enhance city revenues* by reviewing tax and revenue options and sales tax classification alternatives.
- D. *Enhance retail economic development* by identifying economic development opportunities that blend with goals of the city's Comprehensive Plan, "Vision 2015."
- E. *Enhance quality of life through parks, recreation, culture, and the arts* by implementing the Park Master Plan and identifying resources and promoting opportunities for cultural enhancement such as theater arts, instrumental and vocal music, visual arts, summer stock theater, literature, public art displays, and Chatauqua-type events.

March 28, 2008

*Meacham Park Neighborhood  
Improvement Association  
Harriet Patton President  
229 New York St.  
Kirkwood, Mo. 63122*

*March 25, 2008*

*U. S. Justice Department of Community  
Relations Service  
C/O Mr. William Whitcomb  
1100 Main Street Suite 1320  
Kansa City Mo. 64105*

*On behalf of the Meacham Park Neighborhood  
Improvement Association's officers and members we  
extend an open invitation to your department to  
participate in a series of Community Meetings. The  
initial meeting date is set for April 28, 2008 at 7:00pm.  
At St. Mathew's Methodist Church 312 Attucks St. In the  
north east section of Meacham Park . As we discussed by  
telephone , the purpose of this important meeting is to  
work on ways to meet the needs of this community  
following the Feb 7, tragedies in the city of Kirkwood.*

*We wish to include the following issues:*


- 1. What Meacham Park citizens want?*
- 2. Who has the power to make it happen?*
- 3. What exactly is possible?*
- 4. How do we get started?*
- 5. How do we know if the plan is working?*

*We believe that we should plan for a series of at least three meetings, the initial meeting; 2 months later, then a final meeting 6 months later. This is only a suggestion to be reviewed by your department for a decision.*

*The format is to be set up as a panel discussion among the residents of Meacham Park primarily. In addition to your participation we have invited two other agencies the Kirkwood Human Rights Advocacy Commission, and Community Conflict of Metropolitan St. Louis.*

*Our community is looking forward to this very important opportunity for additional communication. We look forward to receiving additional details and suggested plans soon.*

*Sincerely,*



*Harriet Patton*  
Harriet Patton  
President



NEWS RELEASE

## **Community and City Find Common Ground Through DOJ Process**

**Kirkwood, Missouri – Tuesday, June 16, 2009** – City officials in 2008 after the tragic city hall shooting were contacted by staff from the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Relations Service with an offer to come to Kirkwood and facilitate a productive dialogue process between representatives of the community and Kirkwood city government to address perceived racial issues. Last summer the city passed a resolution endorsing the dialogue process and the Department of Justice, assisted by the Alternative Dispute Resolution Program at Washington University's School of Law, began working to help select a team of individuals to identify and address areas of concern.

A diverse community team, consisting of Reverend David Bennett, Lois Bliss, Reverend Vernon Gundermann, Ron Hodges, Charles Howard, Cynthia Isaac, and Harriet Patton, began meeting together in October, 2008. They met several times to identify, consolidate, and research issues and in April, 2009 began meeting with their city counterparts including CAO Mike Brown, Mayor Art McDonnell, Police Chief Jack Plummer, Asst. CAO Georgia Ragland, and Councilmember Iggy Yuan.

In order to foster candid and open discussion of issues, the DOJ facilitators have requested that discussions be treated confidentially by the participants. A final report, including recommendations, will be made, but until then all the participants have agreed to not discuss the content of their meetings and to make public only agreed upon summaries through press releases.

Thus far the two teams have discussed home repair programs that were supported by TIF funds, police/community relations, and opportunities to strengthen the work of the city's Human Rights Advisory and Awareness Commission. Both teams agree that they are finding common ground and hope to be able to report on substantive progress by the end of the summer.

#####

RESOLUTION 70-2008

A RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE RESOLUTION PROCESS PROPOSED BY THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE FOR THE PURPOSE OF ASSISTING WITH COMMUNITY SPIRIT, COMMUNICATION AND INVOLVEMENT.

WHEREAS, the Community Relations Service of the United States Department of Justice, with the assistance of the ADR Program at Washington University School of Law, has offered to assist the City and Community in creating a process designed to improve community spirit, communication and involvement, and

WHEREAS, the process proposed by the United States Department of Justice will include members from the Kirkwood Community and Kirkwood City officials who will be committed to a team-oriented conflict resolution process, and

WHEREAS, the City Council endorses and embraces a process that will encourage cooperation, communication, and involvement, and

WHEREAS, the City Council is prepared to engage a team consisting of the Mayor, a Council member, the Chief Administrative Officer, the Assistant Chief Administrative Officer and the Chief of Police, and

WHEREAS, the ADR Program at Washington University School of Law, is working with members of the Community to form a Community Team to work within this process, and

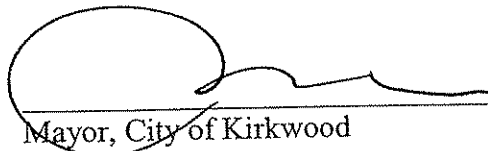
WHEREAS, the City Council is eager to engage in this cooperative process and looks forward to meeting with the community team.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KIRKWOOD, MISSOURI, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The City Council of the City of Kirkwood hereby endorses the resolution process proposed by the Community Relations Service of the United States Department of Justice for the purpose of assisting City wide community spirit, communication, and involvement.

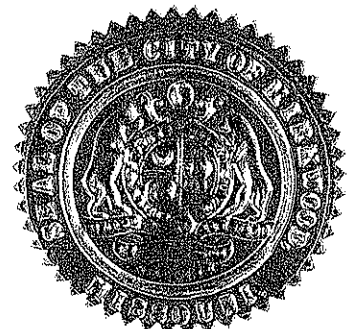
SECTION 2. This Resolution shall be in full force and effect after its passage and approval.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 21<sup>ST</sup> DAY OF AUGUST 2008.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor, City of Kirkwood

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk



**Qualifications of Community Team Members**

Commitment of Time and Effort

Interest

Community Trust

Open-Minded and Objective

Cooperative and Collaborative

Well-Informed on Community Issues

Kirkwood Resident, Business or Service Provider (preference to Resident)

Good Listener

Good Communicator – Within Team and to Community

Conflict Resolution Skills

Willing to Follow Consensus Decision-making Process

**Composition of Community Team**

Meacham Park Neighborhood Residents, Businesses or Service Providers (Preference to Residents)

Kirkwood Residents, Business or Service Providers (Preference to Residents)

Gender Diversity

Racial and Ethnic Diversity

**Composition of City Team**

Kirkwood Mayor and One Council Member

Kirkwood Chief Administrative Officer, Assistant Administrative Officer, and Police Chief

## **Process of Community and City Team Selection**

[DOJ Team=William Whitcomb (DOJ) and C.J. Larkin (Washington University)]

DOJ Mediation Team meets with City and Community Members to identify issues and discuss process options (Completed.)

DOJ team solicits nominations of community and city team members. (Completed.)

DOJ team requests nominees to complete nominee information form. (Pending)

Community Team Members are chosen based on Qualification and Selection Process Guidelines. (Pending.)

City and Community Teams receive orientation on Resolution Process Model from DOJ Team. (Pending)

## **Resolution Process Model \***

Community Team meets to review community issues, and to consider factual information and expert opinion in order to prioritize issues to be submitted to mediation process.

Community Team generates initial list of issues for agenda and shares list with City Team.

City Team meets to review list of issues.

City and Community Teams meet to prioritize issues and set agenda for mediation sessions (following DOJ mediation process model).

Community and City Teams meet in mediation session(s) to seek solutions of issues and concerns.

A by-product of this process will be a written memorandum of understanding outlining the good faith efforts of the participants to address and resolve the issues presented and documenting any recommendations agreed upon by the participants.

(\* All Team meetings will be confidential and facilitated by DOJ Team.)

DOJ Document

COMMUNITY TEAM MEMBER  
NOMINEE INFORMATION FORM

Please send this completed form to C.J. Larkin by fax at 314-935-5356 or by mail at Washington University School of Law, Campus Box 1120, One Brookings Drive, St. Louis, Missouri 63130 or scan and send to larkin@wulaw.wustl.edu.

NAME:

ADDRESS:

PHONE: (home, work and cell)

EMAIL:

PLEASE CHECK THE CATEGORIES WHICH APPLY TO YOU:

KIRKWOOD RESIDENT \_\_\_\_\_

KIRKWOOD BUSINESS \_\_\_\_\_

KIRKWOOD SERVICE PROVIDER \_\_\_\_\_

MEACHAM PARK NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENT \_\_\_\_\_

MEACHAM PARK NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS \_\_\_\_\_

MEACHAM PARK NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICE PROVIDER \_\_\_\_\_

EXPERIENCE OR EXPERTISE YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE TO TEAM:  
(Please include relevant work or volunteer experience and involvement in local community issues.)

YOUR AVAILABILITY (Please check all time slots that apply – if you are available for some but not all of the time slot, please indicate your available times.)

MONDAY

8 a.m. – 12 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

12 – 1 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

1 – 5 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

5 – 9 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

TUESDAY

8 a.m. – 12 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

12 – 1 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

1 – 5 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

5 – 9 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

WEDNESDAY

8 a.m. – 12 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

12 – 1 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

1 – 5 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

5 – 9 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

THURSDAY

8 a.m. – 12 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

12 – 1 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

1 – 5 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

5 – 9 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

FRIDAY

8 a.m. – 12 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

12 – 1 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

1 – 5 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

5 – 9 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

SATURDAY

8 a.m. – 12 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

12 – 1 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

1 – 5 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

5 – 9 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

SUNDAY

8 a.m. – 12 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

12 – 1 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

1 – 5 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

5 – 9 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_



WHERE COMMUNITY AND SPIRIT MEET

Via E-mail and Commercial Courier

March 24, 2008

Mr. William Whitcomb  
Region VII  
U.S. Department of Justice  
Community Relations Service  
1100 Main Street  
Suite 1320  
Kansas City, MO 64105

Dear Mr. Whitcomb:

I want to thank you on behalf of the community of Kirkwood for your interest and willingness in assisting the residents of the City and its local government in identifying points of controversy regarding the relationship between their local government and the African-American minority population. The neighborhood of Meacham Park is of particular concern due to the extensive changes that have taken place in that neighborhood over the last decade ranging from a mutually agreed upon annexation, economic development, and extensive neighborhood renovation on the part of the city.

When contact was made with the United States Department of Justice (DOJ), Community Relations Division we were pleased that the DOJ initiated its own reconnaissance of various activities and conflicts that, despite efforts on the part of the residents of the neighborhood and their city government, appeared to be irreconcilable for a variety of very complicated reasons. The neighborhood and the city are now one and any possibility of that relationship changing is virtually impossible. Certainly, the city government does not wish to see any divergence between the neighborhood and its local government. The city leaders believe they have a mandate to serve all residents fairly and equally. The history and social bonds between the residents of the neighborhood and the residents of the remainder of the city are too strong and the history too intertwined for anyone to seek such a civic divorce.

The community of Kirkwood needs the DOJ's help in identifying solutions to these problems. The city has no interest in pointing blame at any individual or group that may have brought us to an unpleasant impasse. To the extent that there is blame at all it should

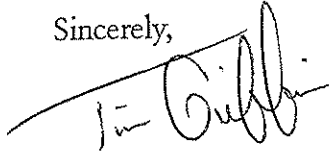


be shared between the residents and their city government. The City Council is committed to working with an open mind with the residents and the DOJ to resolve these issues.

Last Thursday evening at the twice monthly City Council meeting the Council unanimously voted to authorize me as Deputy Mayor to take whatever steps are necessary to cooperate with the DOJ and following DOJ protocols to rectify the current situation. You have indicated that if DOJ were to involve itself that an individual city contact person would need to be identified for effective communication and coordination. The Council is prepared to make that decision quickly. We also understand that from the viewpoint of the city, DOJ's media relations specialists in Kansas City would be the spokesperson for the work being done. The city is fully committed to following these directions.

The City Council would like to begin the process without any unnecessary delay. Consequently, if there is any additional action required of the city at this point we are prepared to move quickly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Griffin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

Timothy E. Griffin  
Deputy Mayor  
City of Kirkwood, Missouri

c: City Council (via fax)  
Michael G. Brown, Chief Administrative Officer  
Department Managers



AA April 8, 2008

WHERE COMMUNITY AND SPIRIT MEET

April 4, 2008

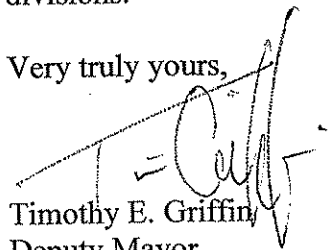
William Whitcomb  
U.S. Department of Justice  
Community Relations Service  
1100 Main Street, Suite 1320  
Kansas City, MO 64105

Dear Mr. Whitcomb:

At last night's council meeting the city council discussed the need to identify an individual to be your point of contact for effective communication and coordination. The council chose Chief Administrative Officer Michael G. Brown to be your contact. I am enclosing his business card with his contact information.

Again, on behalf of the community of Kirkwood, thank you for your interest and willingness to assist the council and residents of the City in identifying and reconciling divisions.

Very truly yours,



Timothy E. Griffin  
Deputy Mayor  
City of Kirkwood, Missouri

Cc: Michael G. Brown, CAO  
City Council

Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association  
229 New York St.  
Kirkwood, Mo 63122  
Harriet Patton President

May 19, 2008

U.S. Justice Department of  
Community Relations Service  
C/O Mr. William Whitcomb  
1100 Main Street Suite 1320  
Kansas City Mo. 64105

June 12, 2008  
Turner School  
1099 Milwaukee St  
6/12/08

Dear Mr. Whitcomb:

The citizens in our Kirkwood/Meacham Park community would like to thank you for attending and sharing your time at the Town Hall meeting which was held April 28, 2008. As we search for and address peaceful, nonviolent solutions to the challenges that has presented itself.

Everyone who attended the meeting felt that it was very informative and we would like to follow up with you, to see when we can schedule our next meeting (*possible dates to consider, June 30, 2008, July 21, 28, 2008*).


We would like you to address the key issues and responses to Kirkwood city officials. The challenge and concerns of residents run deep and are not something that started with the "Charles Lee Cookie Thornton's" tragedy.

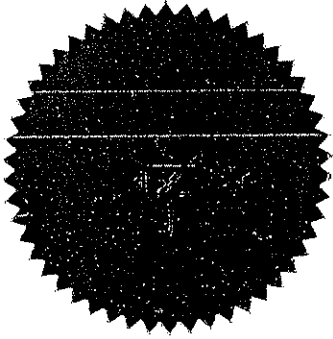
We have analyzed the information from the forum and are forwarding it for your review. Our desire and request is that your mediation yield, hiring a neighborhood stabilization officer from Meacham Park, budget for an office in the community. Assign a neighborhood Police Officer to Meacham Park, who could also utilize the office for completing his written report.

Before the community can effectively communicate together about issues as complex and difficult as oppression, racism. Etc., we need common language and frame of reference. Our goal is to build an inclusive community and with your help we can do that in the near future.

Enclosed is an informational packet, with citizens concerns. Your prompt response will be most appreciated

Sincerely,

  
Harriet Patton  
President



Categorize / elected officers \*  
were not invited

Bill of particulars  
on agenda

crucial domain - status  
NRC - structural change -  
promote election

Look @ impact in city services  
Comments - wide impact  
Contract compliance

Letter of  
Commitment  
Purpose )  
Thank Harriet Patton  
& Kauri - what she  
will do  
- C.J. Larkin -  
Will log out the  
process -

**Agenda-2**  
**U. S. Justice Department**  
**Town Hall Meeting**  
**April 28, 2008 7:00pm-10:00pm**

- 7:00 Opening..... Minister Eddie Wade**  
**Office of President.....Harriet Patton**  
**Introduction .....Moderators**  
**-Pastor Miguel Brinkley.....**  
***Kirkwood Church of God***  
**-Pastor Craig Worsham.....**  
***Jabez Christian Center***  
**-Pastor Larry Addison.....**  
***Douglas Memorial COG***  
**-Pastor Renee Johnson.....**  
***St. Matthew CME***

**Denotation of Feb 7, 2008 Kirkwood City hall shooting**  
**By Pastor Miguel Brinkley**

**Introduction of Depart. Justice .....Minister Eddie Wade**  
**U. S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service**  
**WILLIAM WHITCOMB.....Overview**

**1-hour**

***Written Question to be submitted .....***

**1-hour**

***Oral Questions to be submitted by community.....***

**RESOURCES ON THE PANEL -**

**\_Human Rights Commission David Freeze**

**-Community for Conflict Mary Hell wig**

**Resolutions**

**Recommendations**

**Submission to the City of Kirkwood**

**Sponsored by Meacham Park Neighborhood improvement Association officers and Members**

Itinerary for Bill Whitcomb

April 28, 2008

*Jim Linn*

11:00-12:00 noon

-Historical Meacham Park Tour

By Ms. Pat Clark- Editor of Park News

4:00-5:30

Welcome Dinner

Sun Set 44 Restaurant

118 W. Adams

965-6644

Web site: [Sunset 44.com](http://Sunset44.com)

*6/12/08*

*Selection process*

*Training in consensus building*

*funding of a task force*

7:00pm- 10:00

Town Hall Meeting with the  
Meacham Park Community

10:00-10:30pm

Return to Hotel

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**U. S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service**  
**WILLIAM WHITCOMB.....Overview**  
**1-hour**

***Written Question to be submitted ..... 1-hour***

***Oral Questions to be submitted by community.....***

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**Sponsored by Meacham Park Neighborhood improvement Association officers and Members**

**U.S. Justice, Kirkwood Human Rights Advocacy  
Conflict Advocacy – April 2008**

Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association presents  
Residents' complaints, and/or grievances with the City of Kirkwood

Name: "Eddielawt@aol.com"

Address:

Telephone:

Email: Eddielawt@aol.com

**Complaint:**

1. Why was there no investigation to prove or disprove Cookie Thornton's allegations of harassment from the City of Kirkwood, or any other discriminatory act against him? Who should I talk to to have an investigation don regarding this matter?
2. Is it normal practice and legal to erase a crime scene with such a magnitude, within 24 hours of the crime, before it seems a thorough investigation could be performed?
3. Could the parents of Cookie Thornton or concerned individuals ask for an autopsy report of Cookie and the victims shot to determine if they were all shot by Cookie?
4. Lastly, in a court case can the request be made by the family of the defendant, or the public for a copy of the transcript?

**Grievance:**

**Resolution:**



Many people have the courage to speak against Meacham Park, or to condemn its citizens when any perceived wrong attaches itself to its community. And they seem to speak out with much clarity and boldness—including those of Meacham Park. But I must pose the question, “Where are those same individuals when those in Meacham Park are doing right? Or when Meacham Park needs someone to speak up for her? All of a sudden they are stricken with either fear or hatred, or both. Many in Meacham Park are quick to condemn their own, with no reservations or fears. But when it comes to speaking up for Meacham Park for justice and what is right, they sneak around in corners and closed in areas, mumbling among themselves and filled with fear. This seems to be a parody of the worst kind—pretending to be something that one is not. Perhaps, pretending to be for Meacham Park but all of their actions are clearly after the nature of condemnation. **“No praise for the good.”** Only evil is in their tongues. Therefore, it is quite evident to me that the enemies of Meacham Park are not white people, but anyone who inappropriately condemns her, her citizens, or those who are at least trying to better her borders and subjects. That being said, Harriet Patton is doing a phenomenal job—in my opinion and hopefully of those who work with her—in doing what she can to help make a better tomorrow for Meacham Park and her citizens ... for whatever reasons she does it; for self-glorification or sincerity in heart toward others is not as important as at least some work is getting done. Some criticize her for her efforts—but where are their efforts? She may not be perfect and neither is any of us, but she is certainly committed—even more so, perhaps, than we are. The Apostle Paul (of the Holy Bible) said it best when he said, “It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice...” Philippians 1:15-18. The crab-in-the-barrel syndrome (pulling each other down) should cease among Black America, in Meacham Park and everywhere. In saying that, Harriet Patton has my support, as president of the Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association, in trying to improve conditions and social platforms in Meacham Park ... and so do you—whoever you may be. In the words of the Apostle Paul, I submit to you, “The commandments, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not commit murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not covet,’ ‘and whatever commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’

Observations on social justice issues

Residents expressed their dissatisfaction about several situations where they felt they were unfairly treated, or where they were disrespected, or were discriminated against. All the residents felt that these mistreatments were either because their African-American race, or because they reside in Meacham Park. Following is a list of issues I wrote down.

1. City officials very reluctant to admit any mistakes or wrongdoings when it comes to issues regarding Meacham Park. This makes Meacham Park residents lose their enthusiasm to bring issues in front of city officials.
2. Apparent racial profiling when making traffic stops in and around Meacham Park; this was mentioned regarding younger African-American residents who seem to be stopped more often than white residents.
3. Meacham Park has no location dedicated for voting, and this forces residents to go to other voting locations. When the act of voting is made difficult, the residents lose their will to participate in elections.

*Confidential*  
4. One resident described that the city repeatedly refused their request to reopen a family business that have been part of Meacham Park in earlier years. Such actions are interpreted by residents as an attempt by the city to make it uncomfortable for African-American residents to nurture an entrepreneurial spirit.

*Economic Dev. opportunities*

5. Many residents felt that the planning and the process of Meacham Park redevelopment by the city (especially the use of eminent domain) were not explained to them clearly, and they feel that the plan and the process were carried out in an unfair manner.

*This needs to be done.*

*School Inequality*  
6. There was a mention of an example when an African-American resident of Meacham Park was discouraged to take a class held in a public school. Meacham Park residents conclude that the city of Kirkwood doesn't believe that Meacham Park residents are fully part of the Kirkwood system when it comes to equal access to public education.

7. One resident reported that her repeated requests for help with a leaking sewage line were ignored for weeks, because the leak was in Meacham Park.

*Def. the status*

MPNIA – DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE MEETING:

April 28, 2008

St. Mathews CME Church

The meeting was called to order @ 7:00 p.m. by our President, Harriet Patton. Rev. Brinkley offered prayer. Mrs. Thornton was seated up front. Rev. Wade gave words of encouragement. Mr. Wade gave homage to Harriet Patton who is the founder and chair person of this assembly. Mr. Wade spoke about “us” (the residents of Meacham) to speak out, now is the time and let there voices be heard. “Speak out from your heart and conscious: “A time comes when your silence is betrayed or misunderstood and now is the time”. He stated he was alarmed about the lack of participation and speaking out.

Harriet : thanked the audience for there attendance. “Your story, ideas, feedback, support, is much needed. We want results from your ideas. State your concerns and offer your opinion of solutions. The quest is: Dept. of Justice is to go from here to the City of Kirkwood with our concerns and then return to this group within the next (2) months with an additional follow-up within (6) months from that time.

The CFHU (Community For Healing and Understanding) which was organized and put into motion from our president, Harriet Patton, chairs were introduced. We encourage you to read the signs that are posted to stay informed of upcoming events. It was also requested that we need volunteers for the planned neighborhood cleanup which has been scheduled for May 25, 2008. Other request went out towards seeking computers for every home. Introduction of MPNIA officers was made and the fact that this organization has been in existence since 1992. Homage was given to all the local church who have opened their doors to the community for meetings, conferences, and dialogues that have gone forth to this present time. We are seeking a better and safer community. Make a move to “help somebody this year”. The panel was introduced as well; David Freeze; Mary Herlwig; Rev. Larry Addison (who wasn’t present); Rev. Miguel Brinkley; Mr. William Whitcomb; Harriet Patton; Rev. Eddie Wade; Craig Worsham; and Rev. Renee Johnson.

Rev. Brinkley gave honor to Mrs. Thornton and spoke about Cookie. “A person should “NOT” be judged by (1) act. He gave an example about he w/o a fault cast the first stone”. He continued with an example from a film class and splicing it out to make it fit the need, subject or message at that time. Was Cookie taken advantage of? Did Cookie do the right thing? What Cookie did in City Hall; Question: Does (1) action govern or control another? Would this dialogue be going on if Cookie hadn’t done this horrific thing? Where and what is the Human Rights Commission’s duties?

Mr. Bill Whitcomb was then introduced.

Mr. Whitcomb explained how the Dept. of Justice operates and what there purpose is. Anytime such a “thing” like this happens in a community the Dept. of Justice comes and meets with the City Officials to try to address the racial tensions and seek workable resolutions for ALL involved. Mr. Whitcomb noted that he had tried to reach the City Officials (4) times and his request was denied. He reported back to his superiors and an

guns. She responded that she had no knowledge of any guns and no idea what they were talking about. She stated that from the report she received there were no gun power on his body anywhere, that there were (2) shooters. Mrs. Thornton went further to say that if it comes out that there were two people what will be done then and who will pay then. A final letter was read, very strong language. Will the truth ever be told and the process of the Cookie Thornton story?

- Michael Cowler: waterline down New York St. she said that since MSD ran pipes down the street last year that she has had trouble with her plumbing every since. She has contacted the City of Kirkwood who sends her to MSD and the Water Company who in turn sends her back to the City of Kirkwood and no one is taking responsibility for the problem, nor a resolution or avenue for help and resolve.
- Ed Gordon: His organization says the City is refusing to talk. We as citizens should demand resolution and resolve. It's up to us.
- Tom Stokes: City of Kirkwood has been pushing people down for the past 25-30 years through out Kirkwood and we need to stand and make a difference. "This is our town and "we" elected these officers and they work for us"
- Randy North: land- grab. How the City wouldn't give him commercial rates for his property and only paid \$2.00 per square foot.
- Bobby Patterson: spoke about the shabby work that was done on the houses and said that the St. Louis County was responsible. Correct was made to that stating that actually the work using St. Louis county was done in 1996 and we had a choice of contractors at that time but the work done in 2000-2003 was done by contractors that the City of Kirkwood chose for us and we had no recourse but to choice from whom they sent to us. It turned out that the Contractors were sloppy, poor work performance, and complaints feel on def ears. As of this date and the contracts against your property is almost over and the persons in charge of all this is no longer employed by the City and no recourse is present.
- Rev. Brinkley : spoke about change, getting involved, hurry-up now, large numbers and consistency brings about change.
- Someone also suggested wards to be the answer for blacks being involved with Kirkwood government and Mr. Whitcomb spoke up about that saying we don't want wards because they bring about additional divide. We might want districts that represent the people and we need to obtain that by or from our election board.

The meeting was adjourned after several announcements were made:

- Meacham Park Homecoming is scheduled 6/7/08
- Information about a back-to-school rally in August. Date to be announced
- Contact information about getting up to \$5,000.00 work done on your homes from the St. Louis County government. Anyone needing additional information contact Harriet Patton or Genevieve Hodges. The notice was listed in the Webster/Kirkwood Times issue April 28-May 1, 2008.
- Michael Moore's group, (Advocates for Joseph) will be holding a meeting at Douglas Memorial Church 5/20/08.

official note was sent. He finally go a call from Chief Plummer with information from the acting Mayor at that time who was Tim Griffin. Finally the City was receptive. The acting Council finally agreed that they were willing to work together and make a positive effort with a structural formed process as a result.

Mr. Whitcomb states the following objectives:

- Identification of key commissions
- He will train the Commissions
- Calculation of the issues
- Verification of folks to get things done. Seek persons from the local Colleges & Resource groups for help.
- What happens if the people don't respond?
- Let's give this process a chance to work and grow from there.
- What is structural and institutional racism and how do we deal with those biases?

Rev. Johnson read the complaints that were submitted and those concerns will be compiled and addressed by Mr. Whitcomb and the committee.

The meeting was opened to the floor and comments and concerns were as follows:

- Why do the Police only ride when it's hot or something happens?
- Why is there crime/crime against blacks?
- Why does the "City" officials act as if "they" did No wrong?
- We need Police \* Residents relations *Police / community relations*
- How do we effectively create "Equality"?
- We need a Police substation back in the neighborhood.
- Residents need to take control of their kids.
- Figures were given about property values and money taken from TIF and the figures don't match.
- Where did the horrible contractors come from and why is it that it seems that the City chose poor contractors and "we" couldn't seek out our own contractors we had to choose from what/whom was presented to us? What is the check and balance on this and do we have any recourse at this point? Upon the numerous complaints when the work was going on it fell on def ears and "we" had no recourse.
- Bud McCullough asked questions about his property here and stated that he had been to the City numerous times with concerns and complaints with no results. He was referred to contact HUD.
- People again spoke about activities for their kids at the Community Center. They were referred to go to the Parks Board meetings with their request and to offer their time as well.
- We want appointments on the varies boards to reflect out black citizens as well.

Special thanks, was given to Rev. Johnson and St. Mathews Church for opening their doors, Mr. Bill Whitcomb, all persons on the panel, narrators and everyone who came. Also once all information is compiled and submitted to the City officials Mr. Whitcomb will come back with those results and feedbacks with dates to be announced.

Benediction was given and the meeting was adjourned.

**U.S. Justice, Kirkwood Human Rights Advocacy  
Conflict Advocacy – April 2008**

Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association presents  
Residents' complaints, and/or grievances with the City of Kirkwood

Name: Bob Williams

Address

Telephone: 314-367-7145 E-Mail:

**Complaint:**

No one under oath have said that they saw Cookie shoot someone, not even the people who attended the Feb 7<sup>th</sup> meeting at City Hall.

**Grievance:**

Without an investigation, we may never know who else could have shot others at the meeting.

**Resolution:**

*see attachment*

# FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

Inspite of the fact, that the U.S. Constitution; Especially, its Preamble, was written by "slave" owners, and have historically been used to inspired the oppressed of the World, to fight the legacy of slave masters. And the protection of the first Ten Amendments.

Furthermore, their struggle for peace and justice, has been non-negotiable.

It was this hitorical cause that burned in the heart of Charles Lee (Cooky) Thornton in his pursuit of life, liberty and happiness.

And those of us who also believe in the Constitution, must also protect his rights.

The events surrounding the City of Kirkwood Council meeting appears to be a cover-up of a deeper truth. Thornton appears to have made an agreement with some in Kirkwood, to encourage some in Meacham Park to either stay, or move out. The City Fathers would be fair. May be more? But the agreement was broken, and they would not set it right.

There is no evidence that Thornton fired a shot; no power marks on his hand(s). (Ask Mary Case, medical examiner).

The St. Louis Jounalism Review(March/April, '68), printed interviews with four reporters who were allegedly at the Feb. 7th City Council meeting in Kirkwood. Yet, they never interviewed any of the 20 to 50 people that allegedly were at the meeting, too.

There were others involved in the shooting, only an investigation can help.

Compiled by Bob Williams

P. O. Box 4827

St. Louis, Mo. 63108



Gregory Caldwell  
324 Rose Lane  
Kirkwood, MO 63122  
(314) 966-6930 Home

November 12, 2004

Mike Brown  
Chief Administrator  
City of Kirkwood  
139 S. Kirkwood Road  
Kirkwood, MO 63122

### APPEAL TO TERMINATION

I, Gregory Caldwell of the Street Department for the City of Kirkwood would like to request an appeal the decision made by Ken Yost on Wednesday, November 10, 2004 at approximately 12 noon to terminate my employment with the City of Kirkwood Street Department.

Series of events that lead up to my dismissal:

On Wednesday, November 10, 2004 around 6:35am I was sitting in my truck with my eyes closed head resting on my headrest, listening to my radio. Jim Link approached me at the driver's side window of my truck. I rolled the window down and Jim Link asked me if I had taken a picture of him because he saw a flash. I told him I had no reason to take a picture of him and I didn't want to be a part of the games he and his friends are always playing. He said, OK and returned to his conversation with his friend Dave Brigman.

Tony Bonastia came to the break room to distribute or assignments for the day. He told my Crew that they should be more productive while picking up leaves. And when the truck goes to the dump they need to find something constructive to do with their time until the leaf truck returns. He also stated that he didn't want the guys sitting around in front of the residence home waiting for the leaf truck to return. I told Tony that my crew doesn't sit around the residence waiting for the leaf truck to return, they move around or go to the maintenance building until I call them on the radio announcing my return, and we continue leaf removal at the point we left off at or continue to the next location.

Jim Link mentioned to Tony Bonastia that he should try to cut down the drive time to the dump. But, I am not supposed to speed because I could get a citation for speeding or this would be against the City of Kirkwood safety rules. The trip to the dump takes approximately one hour round trip. This includes driving to the dumpsite, signing a ticket at the entrance of St. Louis Compost, dumping the leaves and returning back to the original or the next work area. During this process, I give the City of Kirkwood my 15 minutes break, which should be used for my personal, to ensure the job is done in an efficient and timely manner.

I asked Tony Bonastia, "why is my crew always under scrutiny for every job that we do?" I stated to Tony that, "we do whatever is required to get the job done, and we work well together to ensure that the job is done." I told Tony that we do whatever is required of us and we still get accused of poor production." Why do we get accused of poor production regardless of what we do?" Tony didn't give me an answer. When the meeting was over, I proceeded to Jim Link's office to ask him, "Why do we get accused of poor production regardless of what we do or how well we do it? Jim Link stated, "I know you took my picture

this morning and I don't like it." I reiterated to Jim that I had no reason to take his picture. I proceeded to take my cell/camera phone out to prove to Jim that I didn't have a picture of him on my phone. Jim Link stated, "You probably already erased the picture." I asked Jim Link again, "Why do we get accused of poor production regardless of what we do or how well we do it?" Jim Link stated, "This is just the way it is and if you don't like it, find another job!" I asked him, if I was being fired, and he said, no. I then asked if he was threatening me, and he said, no. I told him that he shouldn't speak to people with so little respect, and he said, I didn't do anything wrong. I asked Jim Link if I could have a meeting with Ken Yost. He said he would be talking to him about 8:30am. I left Jim Link's office and went to work.

Ken Yost was able to see me about 9:00am at our Maintenance yard. I asked Ken Yost if he had a moment to speak with me and he said that this was his reason for being at the maintenance yard to find out what happened between Jim Link, Tony Bonastia and Gregory Caldwell. I told Ken Yost, I asked Jim Link, why was my crew always being scrutinized on the work that they do. Ken Yost said, "Did you yell at the supervisor?" I told him I didn't yell at him but my voice may have elevated slightly out of frustration from asking him about my team. Ken stated he would investigate the situation and get back with me.

~~Around 12 o'clock noon, Ken Yost reappeared at the Maintenance yard. He started asking me questions.~~ Ken Yost asked, "Where did you just come from?" I told him, "the doctor's office." Ken asked, "You went to the doctor's office in the City Truck?" I stated, "Yes". He said, "You know you are not supposed to go to the doctor in the city truck". I said, "I have gone to the city doctor on several occasions in the city truck." Ken Yost asked, "Where was your doctor?" I told him on Kirkwood Road next door to Long John Silvers Fish Restaurant. Ken stated, "You know you are not supposed to take the City vehicle to see your doctor." I said Jim Link has let me take the city truck to the doctor's office on several occasions. Ken said, "The city doctor released you yesterday". I said, "This doctor was in our health care book and I used him for a second opinion and I have even had an MRI done on my right shoulder. The MRI shows damage in the right shoulder and I have been scheduled for surgery on my right shoulder on January 10, 2005. Ken said, "I have told you about using your time like this." Ken then mentioned the situation about me buying lawnmower blades and picking the blades up on City time. I told him this was done on my lunchtime. Ken stated, "Yea so you say." Ken then said, "After thinking about this, my decision is you are terminated; turn in your badge and keys!" I asked Ken, "What am I being terminated for?" He said, "Insubordination." Then I asked him, what did I not do?" He said, "You yelled at your supervisor."

*Gregory Caldwell*  
*Proceed*

I turned in the badge and keys, went home picked up my uniforms and turned them in to the break room and left.

Mr. Brown, I feel that I am a very valuable employee to the City of Kirkwood. I wouldn't do anything to jeopardize my job nor to obtain personal gain from the City of Kirkwood. I have given the City of Kirkwood 120%. I am a perfectionist in the field of lawncare, tree trimming and other facets of the business designated by my job description. I have too much to lose by risking my livelihood for such remedial situations I have been falsely accused of. I feel the reason I was terminated – Insubordination – is bogus. I am a man just like Ken Yost, Jim Link and Tony Bonastia. They feel they can speak to me in any tone of voice they want to, discredit my integrity, but if I respond the same way, I am terminated unjustly.

If you need examples or situations that have happened to others in my crew along the same lines as mine, please feel free to contact me or them for verification. Some of my crew members have been suspended multiple times for things much worse than yelling at their supervisor and they have been reinstated.

I feel confident and I pray that you will assist me in reacquiring my position as Lead Equipment Operator for the City of Kirkwood. I love my job, and I really enjoyed my team.

Sincerely,

Gregory Caldwell

# Meacham Park Residents Have Hope

By DANAH BROWNE  
St. Louis Argus Contributor

Residents of Meacham Park, along with other Kirkwood residents, are hopeful that a recent meeting between themselves and a member of the U.S. Justice Department from Kansas City, Mo. will bring about many changes in Kirkwood.

Annie Thornton said she has faith that her son Charles Lee "Cookie" Thornton's death is not in vain.

Thornton was one of those from Meacham Park who attended the meeting last week that was put together to bring all of Kirkwood together as one. She said she feels like the city of Kirkwood "is making an honest effort to make things different.

"If the new mayor wants to be the one to break all the tension that has existed in the past between Meacham Park and the other part of Kirkwood, he can be the one," she said.

Police said Charles Thornton went to city hall the night of Feb. 7 and shot six city officials - killing five, including two police officers. The mayor and a sixth person, a newspaper reporter, were wounded. In the attack other police officers shot and killed Thornton.

Since her son's death in February Thornton said she is calm "because I know he's been to me in the spirit." She said her son only wanted to work where he lived and that opportunity was not given to him. She is hopeful that no other Kirkwood resident will have to face the things her son went through.

Bill Whitcomb, from the U.S. Justice Department, told the people he was at last week's meeting as a mediator.

"I think it's good timing for him to come ...," Thornton said.

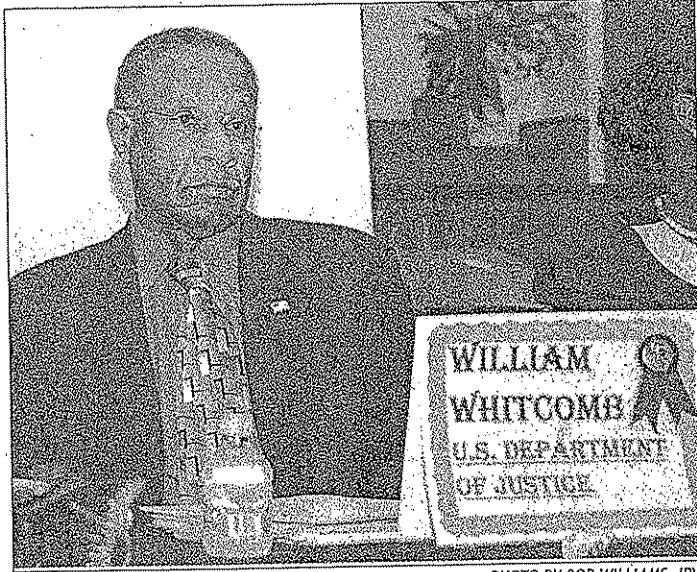


PHOTO BY BOB WILLIAMS, IPVA

Bill Witcomb of the U.S. Justice Department

"I know it will take some time to turn things around. But, I want them to make Kirkwood a place where we all can live, work and play together. This is the way the world is supposed to be."

A number of residents from Meacham Park complained about their land being taken and they were not paid the proper amount for it. Some complained about police abuse and others complained about a need for more black teachers in the classrooms. Some residents said there have always been a black and a white Kirkwood.

Harriet Patton, president of the Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association, said, "We've worked very hard on our neighborhood reputation, our goals and objectives."

"This meeting was called to hear residents' complaints, to make recommendations and find solutions to the complaints," Patton said. "We wanted everyone to have the opportunity to have their feelings heard."

Patton said she heard the

complaints that were being raised and left the meeting "hopeful for a better community and a better lifestyle."

Patton said she would like to see young people do better in school, support from community base and a fully functional Neighborhood Association office that includes phone, desk, staff and other needed equipment. "And, we want some representation from Meacham Park on the City Council," Patton said.

It was standing room only and many who couldn't get inside hung around on the outside. "I was very pleased with the turnout," Patton said.

Whitcomb brought forms for people to fill out, detailing their complaints. After the forms have been filled out, they are to be forwarded to the neighborhood association and then on to Whitcomb's office.

Patton said she and several others she had spoken with are willing to give the new mayor, Arthur McDonnell, a chance to

turn things around in Kirkwood.

Pastor Miguel 'Brinkley,' of the Kirkwood Church of God, observed various people in the room and said he was reminded that "many people from Meacham Park have a lot of concerns about people who've been placed in office to help them and in some situations "land grabbing and not giving them fair market value for their land."

Some of the other issues they are concerned about are "equality in schools and more African-American teachers. "They want teachers who're concerned about educating their children," Brinkley said.

Brinkley's church is located at 345 Meacham St. He also said he is optimistic that McDonnell will take a look at all of Kirkwood and work with all of the people who live there.

"Whenever you have injuries that's been done against a group of people, the only way to have healing is people first have to recognize that an injury has been committed. Until then, you'll have a soft scab," Brinkley said.

Also, Brinkley said the community was disrupted when city officials moved to put a shopping center in the place where homes were. He said in some cases, people have been given 99-year mortgages.

Brinkley said he left the meeting hopeful that the situation in Kirkwood would get better for all of the residents there.

Brinkley said he knows it will take time for things in Kirkwood to change, but he is happy that Whitcomb came to the city and dialogue for a change is underway.

Whitcomb, who said he could not be interviewed by a reporter, referred all calls to his media department. No one from that department returned phone calls.

*Quality of Life  
Issue*

**Agenda-2  
U. S. Justice Department  
Town Hall Meeting  
April 28, 2008 7:00pm-10:00pm**

- 7:00 Opening..... Minister Eddie Wade**  
**Office of President.....Harriet Patton**  
**Introduction .....Moderators**  
**-Pastor Miguel Brinkley.....**  
***Kirkwood Church of God***  
**-Pastor Craig Worsham.....**  
***Jabez Christian Center***  
**-Pastor Larry Addison.....**  
***Douglas Memorial COG***  
**-Pastor Renee Johnson.....**  
***St. Matthew CME***

**Denotation of Feb 7, 2008 Kirkwood City hall shooting  
By Pastor Miguel Brinkley**

**Introduction of Depart. Justice .....Minister Eddie Wade**  
**U. S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service**  
**WILLIAM WHITCOMB.....Overview**

**1-hour**

***Written Question to be submitted* .....**

**1-hour**

***Oral Questions to be submitted by community*.....**

**RESOURCES ON THE PANEL -**

**Human Rights Commission David Freeze**

**-Community for Conflict Mary Hell wig**

**Resolutions**

**Recommendations**

**Submission to the City of Kirkwood**

**Sponsored by Meacham Park Neighborhood improvement Association officers and Members**

**TRIP**  
Trespass  
Incident

How + got in value  
Something about DOJ/CRS

Acknowledges  
Kam  
Oakh  
C.J. Lake

Meeting to Comments:  
- Feb 28, through Mr. Hodge/  
Harriet Patten - Command dialogue  
Several unsuccessful attempt to  
hear out -

- The result of that meeting -  
Letter of commitment

Acknowledges Kam Austin - AOC  
C.J. Lake -



**U. S. Justice Department  
Is Coming  
To  
Meacham Park Neighborhood**

***When:*  
April 28, 2008 7:00pm**

***Where*  
St. Mathew's Church  
Pastor Renee Johnson, 312 Attucks**

***Why:*  
To identify the roots of tension in the  
community following the Feb. 7, 2008  
Kirkwood City Hall Shootings**

***What:*  
This is an opportunity for each citizen to  
voice their concerns to the professional  
Mediation Team of the Community  
Relations Division at the United States  
Department of Justice.**

***How?*  
Meacham Park Resident's can  
1) Fill out an interview sheet and  
forward it to the MNIA or  
2) Come to the Turner School,  
1099 Milwaukee on Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup>  
From 5:pm to 8:pm to be or  
Saturday April 19, 2008 2-4pm to  
be interviewed and have your  
concerns typed up by a team.**

***Purpose:*  
To hear from the People here in Meacham  
Park**

**This Meeting was requested solely by  
concern Residents of Meacham Park  
Sponsored by Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement  
Association. Thank You!**



WHERE COMMUNITY AND SPIRIT MEET

April 4, 2008

Kenneth Gordon, President  
Coalition 4 Unity  
7753 W. Ranken Avenue  
St. Louis, Mo 63117

Dear Mr. Gordon:

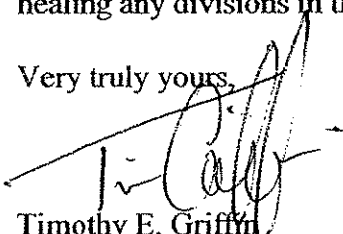
Thank you for your letter of April 1, 2008. We appreciate your interest in participating in the community dialogue following the events of 2/7/08.

As you may know, the community relations service of the U.S. Department of Justice has agreed to assist the City of Kirkwood and its residents in identifying points of controversy between the city and the African-American population. The city leaders believe we have a mandate to serve all residents fairly and equally. The City Council is committed to working with an open mind with the residents and the DOJ to resolve these issues.

I will pass along your letter and contact information to Mr. William Whitcomb who is the DOJ's point of contact as they begin this process of facilitation.

Again, thank you for your letter and be assured the City of Kirkwood is committed to healing any divisions in the community.

Very truly yours,

  
Timothy E. Griffin  
Deputy Mayor  
City of Kirkwood, Missouri

Cc: William Whitcomb  
City Council

April 1, 2008

City of Kirkwood  
Timothy Griffin, Deputy Mayor  
139 S. Kirkwood Road  
Kirkwood, MO 63122

Realizing that there have been changes to the City Council due to the recent tragedy of Feb 7, 2008 the business of the City of Kirkwood must be maintained. On February 22, 2008 there was an invitation extended to the City of Kirkwood to discuss the problems of racism and discrimination occurring against the residents of Meacham Park (*a copy of the letter is attached herewith*). And what is apparent is that the City of Kirkwood seems to have maintained its current policy of ignoring the residents of Meacham Park, this after numerous interviews with the media in which the City of Kirkwood has expressed a profound desire to promote racial healing and understanding among all of its residents.

One month after the shootings the City of Kirkwood has not responded to our invitation and it is incumbent upon the City of Kirkwood to do so. This delay on behalf of the city only increases the tension, rumors, misunderstandings and anger within the Kirkwood community. This lack of response from the City of Kirkwood to our invitation, indicates that the City of Kirkwood seems to have absolutely no interest in meeting.

Therefore, if this organization does not receive a response within five (5) business days of being in receipt of this letter, we along with other organizations will be prepared to demonstrate. This organization will move forth with its efforts to engage in peaceful demonstrations in and outside of City Hall. In addition, we will appeal to other minorities' residents and non-residents of the City to boycott businesses located in Kirkwood Commons, until the City of Kirkwood agrees to participate in meaningful goal oriented discussions.

Our contact person is Michael Moore and he can be reached at the following telephone number 314-482-8445.

Sincerely,



Kenneth Gordon, President  
Coalition 4 Unity

cc: Bill Whitcomb, United States Department of Justice



February 22, 2008

City of Kirkwood  
Honorable Deputy Mayor  
Timothy Griffin  
139 S. Kirkwood Road  
Kirkwood, Mo 63122

Dear Deputy Mayor Griffin:

This letter is to inform City officials that it is of urgency that we come to the table and collectively seek understanding of the effects that is causing Meacham Park to feel racially discriminated and segregated apart from a community since its annexation in 1992. In addition to understanding, we must also come up with solutions to stop the violence that has plague the community for over a three-year period. The City of Kirkwood along with the Meacham Park community has openly expressed its interests in healing after the tragic event of February 7, 2008; however, in the past, we made the same vows concerning the tragic events on July 5, 2005, September 25, 2005, and September 8, 2007; those vows and promises were never implemented.

Concerning healing, we must never apply bandages over dirty wounds; to do so would not be progress towards healing, but only cause the infection to spread. Before we can apply bandages over the wound, we must diagnose the problems that inflicted the wounds to start with; then clean the wounds with the medicine of truth. The truth, if applied will destroy the infections of racism and discrimination; then and only then, the bandage of forgiveness can be applied to start the healing process.

However, the Statement made by attorney John Hessel on February 20, 2008, were indeed inappropriate.

*" I Plan on wearing the same suit, the same shirt, the same tie. Cleaned of course, " says Hessel. "That's my way of sending a message and standing up and telling Cookie Thornton that we are moving forward. He didn't stop us. He's not going to stop us. And that's my small way of telling him what I think."*

That statement is not one of promoting peace neither is it a statement for promoting healing. This statement from a man who represents the City, who, in my opinion has a personal vendetta with a man who is deceased. Wearing the same suit, shirt, and tie to show a man who is deceased that he did not stop the daily operations of the City, alerts me that the City's attorney needs more time off to seek counseling. This tragedy has clearly affected his professional ability to advise the City. If Mr. Hessel still has anger in his heart for a man that is deceased, then he clearly has anger in his heart for Mr. Thornton's family and anger for the community in which Mr. Thornton lived.

Although, we must never forget what happen on February 7, 2008, it is very vital that we

forgive and learn from this tragedy to make sure that we secure the future by never having a tragedy of this magnitude happen again.

If the City of Kirkwood is genuine in its efforts to promote peace, justice and equality then the City shall exercise its good faith by accepting our request for a meeting to address the issues regarding Meacham Park.

I look forward to your timely reply regarding this matter.

Very Truly Yours,

Michael Moore

CC: Michael Brown  
Betty Montano  
Iggy Yaun  
Arthur McDonnell  
Joseph Godi  
Chief Plummer  
John Hessel  
Paul Ward  
Dave Freese  
Terry Cullen Bryant  
Rev. Larry Addison

# Kirkwood Communication Committee Report

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## *Introduction*

Communication is a two-way street. Citizens cannot effectively communicate with local officials unless they have accurate information and know whom to approach about a particular situation. Local officials may not have sufficient facts and may not understand the ramifications of their decisions unless they know what citizens think about a particular problem or proposal.

Recognizing this, the Kirkwood City Council (the Council) approved a proposal in the summer of 2006 to review the City of Kirkwood's (the City) methods of communication with the public and the public's methods of communicating with the City. Two co-chairmen were named who in turn selected five additional residents to serve on an ad hoc Kirkwood Communication Committee (the Committee).

**The Committee's goals were to propose recommendations which would:**

1. Assist in strengthening and improving communication between the city and the public;
2. Increase understanding of how Kirkwood government functions;
3. Provide for non-threatening avenues for citizens, the Council and officials to interact for the greater good of Kirkwood; and
4. Help citizens overcome reluctance to become involved in community issues.

In presenting this report, the Committee wishes to thank the Council for undertaking the study, the City Administrator, the Public Information Officer, and department heads for the insight and assistance they provided. We commend the 1,202 Kirkwood residents who took the time to complete the Communication Survey and share their views. Finally, we gratefully acknowledge the volunteer service of the members of the City's boards and commissions. They routinely give generously of their time and talent for the benefit of all of us.

What follows is a description of the Committee's research, findings, recommendations, and commentary. The report also includes appendices that provide lists of all current information material and avenues available to the public, survey results, communication concerns and suggestions for improvement.

## *Research*

### The Committee:

- ✓ Reviewed a substantial amount of material and information already provided to citizens by the City;
- ✓ Observed several meetings of the Council and boards and commissions, as well as “Saturday at the Station” gatherings;
- ✓ Heard a report on the Kirkwood R-7 School District’s Communication Audit and Website Development;
- ✓ Received comments and suggestions from the public;
- ✓ Reviewed city surveys back to 1988;
- ✓ Sought information from the National League of Cities, the Institute for Local Government and other communities;
- ✓ Interviewed City department heads;
- ✓ Participated in a GovDelivery webinar on Communication Best Practices; and
- ✓ Developed, distributed, tallied and analyzed a survey for the public.

The survey, enclosed with the City of Kirkwood January 2007 utility bills, reached approximately 12,000 homes. It sought to determine the level of satisfaction residents have with existing communication between the City and its residents. It asked for suggestions on how communication might be improved. The survey received a 10% response rate.

In writing the survey, the Committee was interested in learning if there was a significant difference between respondents who had attended a Council, board and or commission meeting during the past 12 months and those who had not. Survey results showed no significant difference.

It is important to note that the survey respondents were self-selected. As such, the results do not carry the same weight as random survey responses. However, it is the view of the Committee that the respondents’ views do reflect a reasonable cross section of the community.

If a survey was returned with a specific question and included the name and address of the respondent, this information was given to staff who contacted these respondents with the requested information.

## *Findings*

The research provided a wealth of information. This section of the report notes significant findings and highlights themes that emerged throughout the study, and lays the groundwork for the Committee's recommendations.

Overall, the study shows that the City receives high marks for the many ways it communicates with Kirkwood residents. On the other hand, it points out some practices that could be improved. Conclusions drawn from the survey and meetings with City staff are:

1. The City is seen as generally accessible and responsive by survey respondents. There is less agreement as to whether the Council listens to the public.
2. City staff have done a remarkable job of creating an abundance of written material covering all aspects of city government. More needs to be done to disseminate these valuable sources of information.
3. A not-insignificant number of citizens expressed concern that the City Council appears to demonstrate little interest or concern about comments made by citizens at Council meetings.
4. With regard to City-generated communication pieces, the monthly utility bill insert is the communication vehicle read most by respondents and received the highest rating, followed closely by "Eye on Kirkwood," which appears once a month in the *Webster-Kirkwood Times*. In terms of general news sources, the *Webster-Kirkwood Times* is the preferred print media for residents.
5. The City's website [www.ci.kirkwood.mo.us](http://www.ci.kirkwood.mo.us) is an under-utilized gold mine of information. Some felt the site could benefit from more frequent updating. The website was designed nine years ago and has some limitations.
6. The importance of courtesy, respect, and timely response to citizen inquiries and comments cannot be overestimated.
7. Communication during the recent emergency situations was viewed as inadequate by many.

8. Recognizing that the City Council is essentially a volunteer body (elected officials receive small stipends) that already contributes a great deal of time toward the betterment of the community, nevertheless, there may be additional benefits if residents could meet with the entire council in more informal settings.

ARC

✓ 9. In the past five years, there has been a significant increase in calls complaining about neighbors to the city staff. As a result, staff spends an increased amount of time attempting to mediate disputes.

10. E-mails have been a plus for communication, allowing for more timely responses by staff to individuals contacting the City.

11. E-mails circulated among citizens have become a standard method for disseminating information (and misinformation) about City issues.

12. There is a high level of interest in planning and zoning with requests for more and earlier notification and information, which requires more staff time.

13. Most residents are not routinely involved with City government and are unaware of how local government is organized and functions. This is particularly true in understanding the different responsibilities of the Council as policy makers and the administration and staff that are responsible for policy implementation and the day-to-day operations of City government.

14. A continuing Citywide goal for staff is to provide customer friendly service. Staff at all levels is trained to view each contact with the public as an education opportunity.

**The Committee identified the following themes as central to improving and enhancing communication:**

1. Communication should be an open, honest and respectful exchange between all parties (elected and appointed officials, City staff, and residents); even when there is disagreement.
2. Communication by elected and appointed officials, City staff, and citizens must be timely, clear and informed.
3. Questions and concerns raised by residents require timely responses.
4. Communication strategies must be varied to meet the different needs and expectations of residents.

5. The expanding use of communication technology by the public creates increased opportunities for the City to reach the public with a broader array of information. It also provides a challenge in insuring that incorrect information is countered.

### *Recommendations*

These recommendations, a result of the Committee's research and deliberations, meet the test of the initial goals established for the project. Implementation of many would be easy. Some require further research and evaluation. With one or two exceptions, cost would be minimal. It is the view of this Committee that the City and the community would benefit from their implementation.

1. Clarify at Council, Board and Commission meetings how inquiries from the public will be addressed and by whom.
2. Information should be provided that explains the roles of the City Council, City Administrator, City staff, and those citizen volunteers who serve on Boards and Commissions, including the legal constraints under which they operate.
3. Recognize that diverse views and opinions can be valuable to the Council, staff and boards and commissions even when there is disagreement or rejection.
4. The Council should consistently provide explanation of their actions and decisions, as should boards and commissions.
5. Whenever practical, residents should be given timely notification of emerging issues and those matters which affect them by other jurisdictions, e.g. MSD, St. Louis County, Missouri Department of Transportation.
6. Provide orientation sessions which include a communication skills component for all members of the Council, boards and commissions.
7. To help insure that staff customer service goals are maintained at a high level, provide periodic customer service training for all employees with emphasis on those having direct contact with the public.
8. Improve communication for emergency situations including consideration of a reverse 911 system where the City initiates calls to residents. Note: A test of this system is underway.

9. Improve telephone system response capability making it more user friendly. Note: The City is aware of this need and steps are being taken to improve the service.
10. The city's website system, which was designed more than nine years ago, is seriously outdated, inadequate, and needs to be updated. A new web platform would allow increased interaction from the public, the ability to post updates in a more timely and efficient manner and manage city E-mail list serves (E-mail groups organized by a specific topic of interest, such as residents interested in zoning issues and residents interested in greenspace issues). Updating the website is not without cost, but would maximize the communication opportunities that this piece of technology offers to the community.
11. Continue and expand promotion of the website. Note: The Kirkwood Public Library computers are available to the public and can be used to access the City's website. Free computer classes are offered by the Library.
12. All City staff who record personal voice mail messages should update those messages on a daily basis (ideally). At the very least, the messages should be changed when the staff person is out of the office for an extended period of time or when offices are closed for holidays. Auto-E-mail responses should be kept current and activated during these times as well.
13. Expand periodic information and listening sessions in various locations throughout the city. The "Saturday at the Station" meetings are a great example of this.
14. Explore the development of Citizen Academies, a program established in several cities around the country whose aim is to expand participation and familiarize residents with their local government.
15. Provide and update monthly an information book about the City to be placed in the Kirkwood Public Library, Chamber of Commerce, and senior citizen residential facilities.
16. Place city information kiosks in central locations such as train depot and Station Plaza.
17. Locate an electronic message board in front of City Hall, similar in style to that located in front of Fenton City Hall.
18. Publish City Council E-mail addresses either personal or assigned by the City.



*Commentary*

✓ Controversy is an inherent component of government at any level. It is especially heightened at the local level. There is always going to be a certain level of discontent or disagreement over city decisions and policies. It is impossible for city officials to please all the people all of the time. No amount of "good communication" will resolve all issues and conflicts because there will always be citizens with competing objectives. However, it is important that such conflict be resolved in an atmosphere of respect and in reliance on information that all participants recognize as accurate.

Rumor and misinformation will lead to distrust in the process and in the final resolution of the conflict. However, prompt accurate information should serve as a brake on the possibility of false information being used to create misunderstanding, turmoil and conflict.

The manner in which a public body chooses to meet these communication and information challenges is crucial to building and maintaining a positive relationship with the community it serves. Equally important to a positive outcome is that citizens have a fundamental understanding of the function and processes of local government.

The Committee believes that this report's recommendations will assist the City in meeting communication and information challenges.

Respectfully submitted,

Lois Bliss, Co-chairman  
Jane Bond  
Clyde Farris  
Bob Hall, Co-Chairman  
Michelle Knudsen  
Romona Miller  
Dana Spitzer

Submitted <sup>June 14,</sup> MAY 2007

## APPENDIX A

### Current Information Material & Avenues

#### *Brochures/Pamphlets*

1. **New Resident Brochure** - includes brief history, description of city government, how to contact the City Council, City Administration, city's website, list of boards and Commissions, a description of the city, voter information, and special events.

#### 2. Series of informational pamphlets on:

- Boards and Commissions
- ~~Bike Route Information~~
- Residents' Guide To Board Of Adjustment
- Consumer Confidence Reports – issued annually; requirement of having our own water utility
- Self-guided Tour Of Kirkwood City Hall
- Dusk-to-Dawn Lighting Services
- Kirkwood Fence Code
- Residents' Guide To Remote Water Reading Devices
- Human Rights Advisory & Awareness Commission
- Residential Occupancy Inspections
- Kirkwood Electric: 100 Years of Service
- Historic Kirkwood Landmarks
- Notice to Contractors: Safety & Traffic Regulations
- Residents' Guide To Planning & Zoning
- Police Department Programs & Services
- Protect Yourself & Your Property: What You Should Know When You Build, Model Or Repair
- Sanitation & Recycling Services
- Residents' Guide To: Sewer Lateral Insurance Program
- Authorized Plumbing Contractors for Kirkwood's Sewer Lateral Insurance Program
- Kirkwood Sign Code
- Strategic Plan
- Street Tree Selections For Kirkwood
- Tree Trimming Policy

Handouts prepared, maintained and available from the Building Commissioner's Officer are available on the following topics:

- Driveways & Sidewalks General Information
- Demolition Permit Information
- Excavations
- Swimming Pool Building Code
- A Guideline For: Residential Standby Generators
- A Guideline For: Retaining Walls
- A Guideline For: Detached Utility Sheds

- A Guideline For: Residential Attached Carports
- A Guideline For: Residential Attached Garages
- A Guideline For: Residential Detached Garages
- A Guideline For: Prefabricated Wood Burning Fireplaces or Stoves
- A Guideline For: Stairs, Handrails & Guardrails
- A Guideline For: Residential Finished Basement
- A Guideline For: Sundecks
- A Guideline For: Patio Covers
- A Guideline For: Room Additions

3. **Utility bill inserts** - the monthly issues cover a variety of topics e.g., Financial facts about Kirkwood, Residents Guide to Board of Adjustment, Utility Survey, Communication Survey, Sanitation Service including holidays/Recycling/Yard Waste/Collection, Direct Dial Phone Listings.

4. **City Newsletters** - *Eye On Kirkwood* last Friday of each month in WK Times; *E-News*, the city's online newsletter (printed quarterly); *Public Works Update*, an internal publication that is available online at the city's website for public viewing; *Community Services Newsletter*, printed by the Police Department; *Fall/Winter Parks & Recreation Guide* and the *Spring/Summer Parks & Recreation Guide*, mailed to all households in Kirkwood; *Kirkwood Connection*, an online publication from the Parks & Recreation Department, e-mailed monthly to subscribers.

5. **New Resident information packet** – 500-700 distributed each year to people moving into Kirkwood (home, apartment, or condo). Features brochures listed above, copies of most recent *Eye on Kirkwood*, and other helpful information pieces that are available, such as magnets listing all direct dial telephone numbers.

### ***Electronic Information***

1. *E-News*, an online publication started in January 2006, e-mailed four times a year to subscribers

2. *Kirkwood Connection*, an online publication from the Parks & Recreation Department, e-mailed monthly to subscribers

3. *Kirkwood City website* - [www.ci.kirkwood.mo.us](http://www.ci.kirkwood.mo.us) - provides detailed information about the city including current elected officials; how to contact city staff; programs and services from various city departments; latest city budgets; PDF files of long-range planning documents including the Park Master Plan, Comprehensive Plan, and Downtown Urban Design Plan; calendar of events held on city property such as downtown, Community Center, and city parks; meetings and events calendar, detailing meetings and agendas for upcoming City Council and Board and Commission meetings, including subcommittee meetings of Planning & Zoning and the Kirkwood Park Board; PDF files of frequently requested current brochures.

4. *E-mails* - in 2006, the Planning & Zoning Commission initiated an e-mail notification system for people interested in being notified about planning and zoning matters occurring within the city.

### ***Signage***

1. An electric message board at the corner of Geyer and Adams in Kirkwood City Park displays current information about park and city activities.

2. Large banners are posted at the train station announcing "Saturdays At The Station Meetings" and SBD events.

3. Large banners are hung across Kirkwood Road advertising city events.

### ***Public Meetings***

All city meetings are open to the public and the city adheres to the sunshine law.

1. **City Council** - the council meets two times a month to conduct city business, hold hearings and receive comments from the public. Members of the public may speak to an agenda item, at the public hearing or make a general comment. Statements are limited to three minutes.

2. The City has 21 **Boards and Commissions**. Meeting dates, times, and agendas of those which meet on a regularly scheduled bases are available on the City's web site and are listed in *Eye on Kirkwood*. Council members serve as liaisons on one or more of the boards and commissions. A staff member also serves as a liaison on Boards and Commissions. Membership of these groups is open with the exception of those whose membership in whole or in part is determined by the City Charter, ordinance or formal Cooperative Agreement. Members are nominated by the Mayor for the consideration of the City Council. Persons in interested in serving on a Board or a Commission are encouraged to complete a "Volunteer Profile Form." One hundred twenty-nine people serve on the following City Boards and Commissions.

- Aquatic Advisory Committee
- Architectural Review Committee
- Board of Adjustment ✓
- Civil Service Commission
- Civilian Pension Plan
- Downtown Special Business District Advisory Commission
- Finance Committee
- Greentree Festival Committee
- Human Rights Advisory and Awareness Committee ✓
- Industrial Development Committee
- Landmark Commission
- Library Board
- Local Housing Authority ✓
- Market/Commons Committee
- Park Board
- Planning and Zoning Commission

Police and Fire Pension Board  
Public Facilities Authority  
Relocation Appeals Board  
Train Station Task Force  
Urban Forestry Commission

In addition to these board and commission, the city from time to time creates additional committees to address specific issues. An example is the Comprehensive Planning Committee. Any of these additional committees also adhere to the sunshine law. Members are appointed in the same manner as boards and commissions.

3. **Public hearings** are an opportunity for the public to express opinions regarding issues under consideration by the city. Meeting times and places for hearings are listed on the city's web site, published in local papers as required by law, and posted at the sign board at City Hall as required by law.

4. **Saturdays At The Station**, begun in 2006, are held on the first Saturday of each month from 9:30 to 11 a.m. at the Kirkwood Train Station. City staff members present overviews of their department's operations and answer questions.

5. **Neighborhood Watch Program** - A program of the Kirkwood Police Department that brings local residents together by neighborhood to increase awareness of area crime patterns and to deter crime in their neighborhoods. An annual dinner recognizes these volunteer efforts.

6. **Surveys** - The city conducts surveys to determine public opinion on a variety of matters. Outside surveying firms were retained to conduct seven surveys of citywide issues between 1988 and 2007. Ongoing surveys are conducted internally by staff for new residents, users of EMS services, and other city services and programs. The utility inserts have been utilized to conduct two non-scientific surveys including a survey on utility services provided by the city in 2002 and a survey on communications in 2007.

### ***Contacting Kirkwood City Government***

The City of Kirkwood Direct-Dial Telephone Directory, which also includes City Staff E-Mail addresses and other helpful city numbers, is mailed once a year with the City's utility bill.

Appendix B

## Consolidated Recap Of Survey Comments

The following is a recap of the survey comments (answers to #11). While it doesn't capture every comment and suggestion, it shows the predominant response. The comments were sorted by 7 categories. Those comments/suggestions that spanned more than one category are shown with multiple numbers. The key to the categories is at the bottom of this document. Opinions/comments are in regular type; suggestions are bold.

- 1     **be responsive (return phone calls, acknowledge emails)**  
voice mail – don't like it. Too long, confusing  
**want initial call answered by a person**  
**publish email addresses for council and department heads**  
lack of dialog at council meeting  
**create ombudsman – human contact**  
**public relations training for elected and appointed officials**  
**advance notification of things that affect citizens (e.g., zoning)**  
like public forums  
like questionnaire  
**suggestion box**  
utility bill inserts are good  
**want more information in varied sources**  
**vary times and places of meetings for better accessibility**  
**Website needs to be easier to navigate and updated more often**  
**create a blog**  
**list of available pamphlets**  
**voice mail – want 24/7 access during emergencies; replace with a person**  
**reverse 911**
  
- 1.2    lack of information during power outages  
uncertainty of whom to contact in power outage  
felt alienated during power outages  
**local cable network**  
lack of concern, empathy
  
- 1.3    **want information and input on infill housing**
  
- 1.3.4  **more notification, and to more people, regarding zoning, variances, etc.**
  
- 1.5    **be polite**  
**less condescension**  
**listen better**  
**respond to correspondence**

- 1.6 like utility bill inserts and Eye on Kirkwood  
like Sat. at the Station. eNews, utility bill inserts  
magnet with contact information – do it again
- 1.7 more details on city's financial status and tax increase

Key to comment categories:

- 1 Communication
- 2 Power Outage & Boil Order
- 3 In-fill Housing
- 4 Condo/Commercial Development
- 5 Council and Staff
- 6 Positive comments
- 7 Miscellaneous

NO.	Description		
1	Do you know who to contact when you have a problem with city services?	Yes	79%
		No	21%
		Totals	100%
			1177
2	Have you contacted the city in the past year in person, by phone, by email?	Yes	77%
		No	23%
		Totals	100%
			1179
2a	If yes, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the contact?	Good	70%
		Fair	22%
		Poor	8%
		Totals	100%
			1050
3	Have you attended City Council, board and/or commission meeting in the past year?	Yes	16%
		No	84%
		Totals	100%
			1202
3a	Were explanations of the council, board and/or commission procedures provided?	Yes	76%
		No	24%
		Totals	100%
			186
3b	Were the meetings conducted in an orderly and professional manner?	Yes	89%
		No	11%
		Totals	100%
			176
3c	Were council, board and/or commission members attentive?	Yes	80%
		No	20%
		Totals	100%
			176
4	Are city officials and employees open and receptive to public input?	Yes	78%
		No	22%
		Totals	100%
			858
5	Have you visited the city's website during the past year?	Yes	43%
		No	57%
		Totals	100%
			1166
	If yes, were you able to find the information you sought?	Yes	84%
		No	16%
		Totals	100%
			496



NO.	Description		
5	There are a variety of ways for residents to receive information about the city. How would you rate those with which you are familiar? (Please only rate those you are familiar with)		
6a	Eye on Kirkwood city newsletter in the Webster-Kirkwood Times		
	Good	522	74%
	Fair	205	24%
	Poor	15	2%
	Totals	842	100%
6b	E-News quarterly online city newsletter		
	Good	158	57%
	Fair	90	33%
	Poor	28	10%
	Totals	276	100%
6c	Utility bill inserts		
	Good	854	77%
	Fair	225	20%
	Poor	25	2%
	Totals	1104	100%
6d	Conversations with friends/neighbors regarding city issues		
	Good	454	53%
	Fair	321	38%
	Poor	78	9%
	Totals	853	100%
6e	"Saturdays at the Station" meetings coordinated by the city monthly		
	Good	80	41%
	Fair	62	32%
	Poor	54	28%
	Totals	196	100%
6f	City Council meetings		
	Good	111	41%
	Fair	110	41%
	Poor	50	18%
	Totals	271	100%
6g	City board and commission meetings		
	Good	99	43%
	Fair	57	38%
	Poor	44	19%
	Totals	230	100%
6h	Letters to the Editor in local papers		
	Good	356	55%
	Fair	220	34%
	Poor	71	11%
	Totals	647	100%

NO.	Description		
6i	Webster Kirkwood Times news stories		
	Good	758	79%
	Fair	176	18%
	Poor	21	2%
	Totals	955	100%
6j	Kirkwood Webster Journal news stories		
	Good	526	67%
	Fair	221	28%
	Poor	34	4%
	Totals	781	100%
6k	St. Louis Post Dispatch news stories		
	Good	396	49%
	Fair	296	37%
	Poor	110	14%
	Totals	802	100%
7	Would you be interested in other types of communication? If yes, please check which of		
	Advisory committees	141	17%
	Focus groups	193	23%
	Polls	186	23%
	Task forces	137	17%
	Citizen academies	138	17%
	Other	30	4%
	Totals	305	100%
8	State your general agreement or disagreement with the following statement: "Kirkwood city government is generally accessible to the public."		
	Strongly agree	125	11%
	Agree	691	62%
	Disagree	114	10%
	Strongly disagree	36	3%
	No opinion	154	14%
	Totals	1120	100%
9	State your general agreement or disagreement with the following statement: "Kirkwood city government is generally responsive to the public."		
	Strongly agree	91	7%
	Agree	682	56%
	Disagree	211	17%
	Strongly disagree	81	7%
	No opinion	159	13%
	Totals	1224	100%

NO.	Description
10	State your general agreement or disagreement with the following statement "The Kirkwood City Council generally listens to the public."
	Strongly agree 64 6%
	Agree 494 43%
	Disagree 304 27%
	Strongly disagree 93 8%
	No opinion 191 17%
	<u>Totals 1146 100%</u>

## APPENDIX C

### Communication Issues and Concerns

This list includes all communication issues and concern which were identified throughout the period of the Communication Committee's study. They are not listed in priority order.

- ✓ Lack of timely and definitive information about developing issues
- ✓ Need to counter mis-information
- ✓ Lack of response to concerns raised by individuals during three-minute period for citizen comment at Council meetings ✓
- ✓ Lack of understanding about planning and zoning processes
- ✓ Frustration with lack of opportunities for two-way dialog with the Council
- ✓ Lack of resident understanding about City's financial matters
- ✓ Lack of understanding & confusion about the responsibilities, financing and autonomy of Park Board, Housing Authority and Library District
- ✓ The speed with which misinformation and rumors spread though e-mails
- ✓ A need to focus on the positive
- ✓ Need help in identifying who to go to in city with specific problems/concerns ✓
- ✓ Negatives seem easily communicated. How surface the positives?
- ✓ Lack of respect shown individuals who raise concerns
- ✓ P & Z sub committee meeting times inconvenient for the general public ✓
- ✓ Some residents are not pleased with the behavior of elected officials at Council meetings. These persons tend to see officials as dismissive even during formal scheduled citizen feedback occasions.
- ✓ Significant increase in number of calls to the city by neighbors complaining about neighbors and wanting the city to fix "the problem"
- ✓ Software supporting the City's website has limitations
- ✓ City's website needs more frequent updating
- ✓ There is a lack of understanding of the distinction between the City Council as policy as policy makers and the City Administration as implementers of policy
- ✓ Lack of information during power outages
- ✓ Need more user friendly phone service
- ✓ Question qualification of some people appointed to boards and commissions

*where to turn  
explain*

## APPENDIX D

### Suggestions for Improving Communication

This list contains all the suggestions and improving and enhancing communication identified throughout the Communication Committee's study. They are not listed in priority order.

- ✓ Reverse call system for emergencies
- ✓ Citizen academies
- ✓ Billing inserts to solicit information about communication and suggestions
- ✓ Series of informational and input meetings held throughout the city (school sites)
- ✓ Establish a kiosk at Station Plaza with info about the Plaza & the city
- ✓ Campaign to promote E-News and city's web site
- ✓ Periodic community surveys on communication and issues.
- ✓ Have copies of board/commission roles/responsibilities available at meetings
- ✓ Provide list of City information sources
- ✓ Review and adapt organizational chart on St. Louis City's web site for Kirkwood
- ✓ Video tape or televise city council meetings
- ✓ Internet forum/blog
- ✓ Provision for residents unable to attend city council meetings to submit letters to be read by City Clerk and distributed to the Council at their meetings. Note: City Clerk routinely distributes correspondence to Council to council members.
- ✓ Clarify at all council/boards/commission meetings, how responses to public will be handled and by whom
- ✓ Vary format on utility inserts to grab recipient's attention. Use brightly colored paper
- ✓ Increase interface between the city, the school district, and other groups - a civic affairs committee with opportunities to meet 2-3 times a year.
- ✓ Increase comfort level at all council, board and commission meetings.
- ✓ Using available technology, arrange for materials presented to the Council and Boards and Commissions to be seen by all attendees
- ✓ Provide drafts of proposed ordinances on web site
- ✓ Update front page of web site regularly with current/immediate news and make easier to navigate
- ✓ When work is to be done within the city by another jurisdiction, the city should provide information as far in advance as possible that the work will be done, by whom, for what purpose and who to contact for further information
- ✓ All exchanges with residents by Council/Board/Commission members and staff should be timely, accurate, polite, respectful and fair
- ✓ Several suggestions re phone service - be responsive (return phone calls, have phone answered by a person, voice mail - have 24/7 access during emergencies
- ✓ Create public relations training for elected and appointed officials
- ✓ Have periodic customer service training for staff who regularly interact with the public
- ✓ Provide more information on city finances

- ✓ Have suggestion boxes located in public buildings
- ✓ Be polite and less condescending
- ✓ More questionnaires like the communication survey
- ✓ Publish e-mail addresses of Council members
- ✓ Provide a magnet with City contact information - have done it before - very helpful
- ✓ Want more information in varied sources
- ✓ Solicit residents for topics at "Saturdays at the Station"
- ✓ More notification, and to more people, regarding zoning, variances, planning and zoning sub-committee meetings

# The Work of Understanding and Healing

Do you ever find yourself talking and not being heard? Effective communication is very difficult today. Communication is especially difficult when it comes to communicating with people who have racial, ethnic, or cultural values that are different than your own. We don't talk and listen well to each other.

Our Kirkwood community has a lot of talking and listening to be done around the issues of race and diversity. In the aftermath of the shootings on February 7<sup>th</sup>, there are many issues still unresolved in our community. Change is needed. How will we share our needs and values? How will we make changes?

The fact is, people have many points of view with contrasting agendas that are deep seated and entrenched. It's no wonder we have so much difficulty communicating. The lack of effective communication is the cause of most problems today.

**How can we communicate our emotions and values to make changes for a greater good?**

**This is A Community for UNDERSTANDING and Healing.  
Understanding requires Reflective Communication.**

**Reflective Communication** is a style of communication that enters a dialogue with respect and dignity for self and the other. It acknowledges that each party has treasured values that support specific agenda. Reflective Communication enters into dialogue with trust and a commitment to change and be changed because the present is just too untenable for all parties.

**This is A Community for Understanding and HEALING.  
Healing requires forgiveness.**

As well as seeking understanding, we also gather to find Healing. Our Kirkwood community has suffered violence. We anguish in the loss of life and feel grief for our community. As time has past since February 7<sup>th</sup>, we have come to accept what has happened, but there is still a need for the healing of ourselves and our community.

In our grief we are prone toward anger that kindles hatred and revenge. But that is not who we are. This one act does not define us. We are better than that. We are a community that lives by a higher standard. We are a community that stands in the face of violence to model a better way. Our faith moves us to work for healing and to live with hope. Healing is desired and required.

**Healing begins with acts of forgiveness.** Forgiveness takes time. It's extremely hard work. It requires surrendering our hurt, our anger, our fear, and our right to revenge. The consequences of neglecting this work result in a life of bitterness. Here are a few steps to start your healing process.

**When you forgive . . .**

1. You surrender your right to get even.
2. You revise your picture of the person or organization that harmed you.
3. You claim the freedom to wish goodness for that person or organization.
4. You are open to change.

This kind of forgiveness is about your health and freedom. This kind of forgiveness is about reshaping our community to be better than it was.

Forgiveness is hard work, but necessary work in order to heal and move on. Moving on does not disrespect the past and those we love, it honors their best wishes for our lives in the future. Let us pray for one another that we may move through acts of forgiveness that lead to healing and wholeness. How we forgive determines who we become.

Rev. David Bennett  
Kirkwood United Methodist Church

## 5 C's

### Calling, Confidence, Character, Courage, Commitment

That's what a Mayor should have.

- A Mayor** is a Leader should strive to create awareness among its citizens in the community.
- A Mayor** should be able to work and protect the freedom and civil liberty of its citizens through its recourses and humanitarian efforts.
- A Mayor** should dedicate his effort to the cause of justice and equal treatment of every Citizen
- A Mayor** must be versatile to adapt to all situation and circumstances
- A Mayor** should be for all seasons and all reasons
- A Mayor** should have a vision of an eagle
- A Mayor** should have the wisdom of an owl
- A Mayor** must be compassionate, dedicated to the welfare of its community And its all Citizens
- A Mayor** should have the disposition of an angel or of a saint

Our leaders in History who has put the welfare of the country, Family and God First, they were extremely successful. That's why We are the most blessed Nation today.

We are the Champion of Peace, Most just, the fairest and the kindest of all Nations.

We should protect the Freedom and Civil liberty of our citizens Especially the Poor, the elderly and the children. And to those who experience Injustice, Prejudice, Discrimination, Racism, Rejection in any form by our city policies and city Officials, Allow me as a Candidate for Mayor of the City of Kirkwood to express My Sincere Apology.

Sincerely,  
Milad Abou-Nader





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10.16.2009 10:16 am

Kirkwood Police Chaplains Make a Difference

By: Rev. Dr. Daniel O'Connell

Special to the Post-Dispatch

Some Kirkwood Police Chaplains

Police Chief Plummer called the Kirkwood Police Chaplains into existence after the horrors of the shootings at City Hall in February 2008.

Since then, other municipalities have formed police chaplain associations, including Ballwin.

You can see Chief Plummer on the right in this photo. He's the man standing on the far right. The Chief is smart, listens well, and he thinks big picture— everything you want in a Chief.

Oh, and he has excellent officers working for him (the ones that aren't excellent don't stick around very long).

In the middle, standing with the black chaplain's jacket, is the Rev. David Bennett of the Kirkwood United Methodist Church.

He is our chief chaplain. This photo only shows about half the chaplains, but we're all local clergy who answered Chief Plummer's call.

Despite our theological differences, it is an extraordinary privilege to work with the other Police Chaplains. We meet monthly and work together gladly.

We show up at the Green Tree Festival in Kirkwood. We go on ride-a-longs. We meet with the Chief or his deputies to get updates on what's going on in the community and with the officers. We sign up for various civic events— like the police department providing hot dogs & soda in Meacham Park last summer.

One of the many eye-openers you can participate in with the Kirkwood Police Department is all the things you can discover by doing a ride-a-long where you ride-a-long with an officer for a couple hours, or a whole 8 hour shift. You don't need to be clergy to do this, anybody can do it. And believe me, it is an education!

One of the things you learn on ride-a-longs, is exactly what our police officers go through— they are the thin blue line separating us (mostly) suburbanites, from people who respect no boundaries.

The police know that ours is a world where literally everyone may be hiding a gun, and where the officers have to regularly qualify in continuing education. They are at once, private people, and persons who are always on public display (kind of like ministers).

Many religious people have heard a variation on a prayer where they are urged to live as if they will live forever and to live as if today were their last day.

I have seen an officer make sure they put their fingerprints on a car they stopped for a routine traffic violation. Why? in case they are killed and someone needs to prove the officer was actually there. Putting their fingerprints on a car is a ritual.

A police officer never knows whether a routine traffic stop will be the result of a forgetful citizen; or an encounter with someone violent enough to try and kill the officer or whoever happens to be standing around. Can you imagine living every day like that? Me neither.

These are the men and women we entrust our lives with. How easy it is to forget the thin blue line. How easy it is to take them for granted. How easy it is to become immediately resentful of those who would call us to account for speeding or misplaced parking or otherwise declaring that no, actually, our personal convenience does not supersede the law we expect other people to obey?

One officer put it to me this way:

"No sheep likes the sheep dog. Until the wolf shows up. Then the sheep remember the sheep dog's job. Which is to get in the way— to get in between— the wolf and the sheep."

To which the only thing that I could think of to say was— Amen, brother.

Amen. And thank you and your family!

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Article printed from Civil Religion: <http://www.stltoday.com/blogzone/civil-religion>

URL to article: <http://www.stltoday.com/blogzone/civil-religion/youth/2009/10/kirkwood-police-chaplains-make-a-difference/>

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# FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

In spite of the fact, that the U.S. Constitution; Especially, its Preamble, was written by "slave" owners, and have historically been used to inspired the oppressed of the World, to fight the legacy of slave masters. And the protection of the first Ten Amendments.

Furthermore, their struggle for peace and justice, has been non-negotiable.

It was this hitorical cause that burned in the heart of Charles Lee (Cooky) Thornton in his pursuit of life, liberty and happiness.

And those of us who also believe in the Constitution, must also protect his rights.

The events surrounding the City of Kirkwood Council meeting appears to be a cover-up of a deeper truth. Thornton appears to have made an agreement with some in Kirkwood, to encourage some in Meacham Park to either stay, or move out. The City Fathers would be fair. May be more? But the agreement was broken, and they would not set it right.

There is no evidence that Thornton fired a shot; no power marks on his hand(s). (Ask Mary Case, medical examiner).

The St. Louis Journalism Review (March/April, '08), printed interviews with four reporters who were allegedly at the Feb. 7th City Council meeting in Kirkwood. Yet, they never interviewed any of the 20 to 50 people that allegedly were at the meeting, too.

There were others involved in the shooting, only an investigation can help.

Compiled by Bob Williams

P. O. Box 4827

St. Louis, Mo. 63108

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## Community Development - Meacham Park

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[New Market Rate Home Construction](#) ||

[2000-1990 Census Comparison](#) || [J. Milton Turner School Offices](#) ||

[Community Development Home](#) ||

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### Meacham Park: A Neighborhood with History and a Growing Future

#### A Brief History

Purchased in 1892 by Elzey E. Meacham, a real estate broker from Memphis, Meacham Park was a total of 158 acres surrounded by open fields and forests. The streets were simple dirt paths and Meacham subdivided his land, creating a grid pattern of streets with 25-foot wide lots.

Meacham Park was a cohesive and self-sufficient community throughout the early and mid-twentieth century. Many residents grew their own vegetables and raised chickens and pigs for food. Following World War II, the population was over 1,365 with five groceries, five beauty salons, two service stations, one dry cleaner, an auto repair shop, a radio/television repair service, a trash disposal service and six churches. However, basic water and sewer services were sorely lacking. Local concerned citizens began lobbying for improvements in the early 60s and finally, in 1968, the Metropolitan Sewer District and the St. Louis County Water Company installed water and sewer systems via a Federal Grant from H.U.D.

In 1988, Meacham Park was still an unincorporated area of St. Louis County, suffering from crime, drug problems, and inadequate housing. But within the year, the County Planning Department initiated a study of how residential and community

improvements could be made. In addition, the County hired the Urban League to survey Meacham Park residents regarding their interest in redevelopment, annexation and general concerns. The consensus from the survey was that residents were in favor of redevelopment and annexation. In response to this interest, the County Planning Department appointed a committee to develop a redevelopment plan ... the Meacham Park Community Study. Monthly open meetings were held with residents to determine land uses and a plan was finalized in July of 1990. The highest priority was elderly housing, which was suggested in several different locations. In addition, commercial development was proposed for the area adjacent to South Kirkwood Road along with single-family housing sites and community service facility locations.

During this same time, the City of Kirkwood was seriously considering annexing Meacham Park. The annexation proposal was placed on the ballot in November of '91 and it was overwhelmingly approved by both residents of Meacham Park and Kirkwood. Following annexation, the Meacham Park Community Study was adopted as part of the city's Comprehensive Plan. Based on the Study, the City of Kirkwood compiled a Request for Proposal and distributed it to numerous developers in the Midwest. Over seven responses were received and OPUS Corporation was selected in March 1994.

### **The Redevelopment Plan**

The Meacham Park Redevelopment Plan, originally created by the OPUS Corporation, is multi-faceted and will benefit both the Meacham Park neighborhood and the city of Kirkwood. OPUS pulled out of the project in the Spring of 1995, but the DESCO Group is now successfully completing the plan. Out of the total land area of 106 acres, a total of 55 acres was commercially developed, the core of which includes a 522,500 square-foot retail mall with four major retailers: Lowe's, Wal-Mart, Target and T.J. Maxx. Also included in this commercial development are smaller outlot businesses: Uno's Pizza, Eagle Bank, and Payless ShoeSource, O'Charley's, and Sonic. In order to preserve the character of the residential areas, a large, landscaped buffer zone was placed between the retailers and the homes.

Meacham Park neighborhood, the City of Kirkwood and DESCO will benefit from Tax Increment Financing (TIF). A total of \$17 million in TIF revenues was used by DESCO for demolition, buy-outs and commercial construction. In addition, a total of \$4 million in TIF revenues went back into the residential portion of

Meacham Park neighborhood for residential rehabilitation, single-family home construction, streetscape improvements, landscaping and demolition.

### **The Housing Plan**

A total of 62 homeowners were relocated due to the commercial development. Of those 62, six residents chose to have a new home constructed in Meacham Park neighborhood. Replacement housing was priced in the \$90,000 to \$100,000 range. And, as an example, if a resident was displaced from a \$20,000 home and relocated into a \$90,000 home, he/she did not pay the difference in the valuation. The primary goal of the Housing Plan is to encourage home ownership versus renting.

Those homeowners outside of the buyout area, but still within the neighborhood, were eligible for up to \$37,000 in forgivable loans from the City of Kirkwood for interior and exterior renovations. In addition, the Housing Authority of St. Louis County renovated 35 single-family public housing units and made them available for purchase.

In response to the need for affordable elderly housing, a new facility was built on Rose Hill Avenue by the Lutheran Altenheim Society, not far from Meacham Park neighborhood.

Kings Gate, a large private apartment complex was completed on 5.5 acres on the southside of Big Bend Road. And, the Housing Authority replaced a deteriorated multi-family public housing complex with a gated 85-unit townhouse development with swimming pool in 2002.

### **Additional Services and Benefits**

Beyond the obvious commercial and residential development, Meacham Park neighborhood is realizing additional services and benefits. A brand new daycare facility, Educare was opened in the spring of 1997; park areas have been consolidated into one large neighborhood park; 600 to 700 new jobs have been created, including construction jobs; goals were set for minority participation by suppliers, businesses and individual jobs; and major commercial tenants have been practicing a First Source policy, providing first notice of new jobs to residents.

Meacham Park neighborhood has been a strong and cohesive area for over 100 years. And, with this commercial and residential

redevelopment, this neighborhood will continue to flourish well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



## Community for Understanding and Healing

<http://cfuh.org>

[info@cfuh.org](mailto:info@cfuh.org)

### Executive Summary of Dialogue Sessions

The purpose of this document is to summarize the key outcomes of four public open forum meetings sponsored by the Community for Understanding and Healing. The public meetings were held at various Kirkwood locations between February 23<sup>rd</sup> and May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008. Notes from group discussion facilitators and verbatim comments from participants were collected following each meeting and will be summarized below.

### History of CFUH

In effort to foster understanding and healing throughout the Kirkwood community following the tragedy of February 7, 2008, the Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association initiated a call for the formation of a community reconciliation group. The group formed in February 2008 and chose the name "Community for Understanding and Healing" (CFUH), and it is led and peopled by community volunteers who believe that any problem in America can be solved if caring Americans respect the dignity of all other human beings in our society and work together in a journey for peace, healing, and reconciliation. (Steering committee members are listed on the CFUH.org website.)

### Mission of CFUH

The steering committee identified the following mission statement:

*"In the quest to transform the Kirkwood Area into a prejudice-free community of highly respectful individuals, CFUH will initiate ongoing dialogue and social interaction to create an environment of understanding and healing." -- Community for Understanding and Healing, May, 2008*

### Dialogue Session Attendance

The first objective of CFUH was to provide an open forum for Kirkwood residents to meet and talk with each other about the February 7<sup>th</sup> tragedy in order to seek understanding and to identify ways to heal, move forward and grow. To date, four open dialogue sessions have been achieved and the dates and attendance data are listed below.

Date	Location	Large group attendance	Small group dialogue attendance
Feb. 23, 2008	Kirkwood Baptist Church	200	163
March 8, 2008	St. Louis Community College, Meramec Campus	250	243
April 12, 2008	Kirkwood United Methodist Church	260	247
May 3, 2008	Grace Episcopal Church	170	158

**Summary of Dialogue Sessions**

The first two CFUH dialogue sessions were structured as an open discussion format with only two rules: (1) be honest, (2) be courteous. At these initial two dialogue sessions, three primary themes were identified as issues affecting the Kirkwood community requiring action or additional understanding/discussion or solutions: 1) relationships between citizens and the Kirkwood city government; 2) racism; 3) Meacham Park history and land annexation issues; 4) other.

Based on the discussion in the first two dialogue sessions regarding the perception in the community that the February 7<sup>th</sup> tragedy involved racial issues and the proximity of April 2008 city elections, the CFUH steering committee arranged for the third and fourth dialogue sessions on April 12<sup>th</sup> and May 3<sup>rd</sup> to focus on racism. Additional dialogue sessions are planned to address additional themes.

Date	Dialogue Topic	Outcomes
Feb. 23 and March 8, 2008	Open forum, whatever participants wanted to talk about.	Three key themes emerged: 1. Issues regarding relationship between citizens and city government. 2. Issues regarding racism. 3. Issues regarding Meacham Park History and land annexation.
April 12, 2008	Racism	
May 3, 2008	Racism	



**Theme 1: Kirkwood city government**

Participants in the dialogue sessions identified a number of concerns and suggestions related to citizen interaction with the Kirkwood city government. The key comments included:

*Summary of concerns offered by dialogue participants*

1. There is a perceived heavy-handedness, arrogance of power, and lack of listening/understanding by officials.
2. There is a perceived lack of representation for all Kirkwood neighborhoods. Pros and cons of a ward system were discussed.
3. There is a perception of elitism and "old guard" power structure, not open to newer residents.
4. Boards/committees/commissions: There is poor communication exchange between residents and boards/commissions; Mayor and administration control committee and commission appointments and unfairly block certain people; Mayor/council rejects committee recommendations.
5. Problems reported by citizens left unresolved. Lack of follow-through from city boards and commissions.
6. City attorney being perceived as biased, polarizing figure.
7. Citizens being rude to city officials during public meetings.
8. Rules and regulations followed inconsistently by city officials.
9. Bureaucracy, too many hurdles to get something done.
10. Harassment (not just against Blacks) by city government, for example, with making home improvements.

*Summary of suggestions offered by dialogue participants*

1. Establish ombudsman/mediator position or committee to deal with citizen complaints more effectively than current system.
2. Form a blue ribbon commission/panel to research issues and propose solutions.
3. Provide diversity, communication, sensitivity, and win-win negotiation training to city council and government employees.
4. City council to sponsor town hall meetings, focus groups, etc. to air citizen concerns with follow-through. Periodically hold City council meetings in Meacham Park.
5. Inform city council that citizens want diverse community and businesses.
6. Establish new city position to help citizens navigate city government bureaucracy.
7. Consider impact of "McMansions" as a threat to diversity and cultural mix.
8. Find ways to empower Human Rights Commission.
9. Revise Kirkwood charter. Change rules/laws.
10. Provide a "citizen's attorney" or funding for legal representation for residents who can't afford.
11. Video tape council meetings for transparency.

## Theme 2: Racism

Participants in the dialogue sessions identified a number of concerns and suggestions dealing with racism in the Kirkwood community. The key comments included:

### *Summary of concerns offered by dialogue participants*

1. Historical and institutional discrimination towards Blacks in Kirkwood never gets duly addressed regarding treatment of residents by city officials and local businesses, and this causes distrust of city government.
2. There is a concern about the lack of black-owned businesses in Kirkwood.
3. Education system: lack sufficient numbers of Black teachers; lack sufficient Black parent participation (perhaps because they feel they are not welcome). The "Black experience" is not taught in schools. Schools and many teachers do not take on social interaction and integration issues.
4. Segregation: voluntary segregation exists in everyday social interaction, church congregations, in the business district and in the schools (for example, at the lunch table).
5. Perception that Kirkwood's affluent resident majorities do not understand or fully recognize "white privilege".
6. Black youths in Kirkwood perceived as having a sense of hopelessness, apathy, and discouragement, less so for athletes; Black youths perceived as not feeling as comfortable at Community Center.
7. There is a perception that the local media may be biased, portraying Blacks negatively.
8. There is a perception that Blacks are more frequently harassed by police and the perception that this may be ordered or encouraged by city officials.

### *Summary of suggestions offered by dialogue participants*

1. Provide tools and resources to inform and educate community residents on racism (for example, use tools and resources from groups like the Anti-Defamation League, Focus St. Louis, Diversity Awareness Partnership, book bibliographies, recommended reading lists and web sites).
2. Provide community social events to encourage cross-racial interaction especially in one-on-one settings.
3. Encourage social integration in churches, businesses and schools.
4. Hire more Black teachers.

**Theme 3: Meacham Park history and land annexation issues**

Participants in the dialogue sessions identified a number of concerns and suggestions dealing with Meacham Park history and land annexation issues in the Kirkwood community. The key comments included:

*Summary of concerns offered by dialogue participants*

1. Perception that the annexation of Meacham Park to Kirkwood negatively impacted residents of Meacham Park. For example, property values increased and there is limited affordable housing; some homeowners ended up with 3 concurrent part-total 30-year mortgages which carried termination restrictions and perceived them as 90 year mortgages; some homeowners feel they were not justly compensated for land buyout and allege possible eminent domain/TIF abuses.
2. Perception that Meacham Park is separate and isolated from Kirkwood. Big Bend creates a dividing line between the two communities. Local newspapers and food not delivered.
3. Issues of Meacham Park are not just racially based. Economics plays a big part. Less affluent need jobs, education opportunities and health care opportunities.
4. Perception that Meacham Park residents take less pride in their community than Kirkwood residents. Majority of Meacham Park residents are renters and less likely to participate in neighborhood association.
5. Perception that Meacham Park is haven for crime and drugs.
6. Perception that redevelopment of the Turner School does not serve the Meacham Park community.

*Summary of suggestions offered by dialogue participants*

1. Compile and publish history of Meacham Park and annexation and include Meacham Park residents in the process.
2. If wrongdoings occurred regarding land annexation, provide acknowledgement and seek reconciliation.
3. Find ways to change perception that Meacham Park is a crime and drug haven.
4. Find ways to encourage greater access and connection to Meacham Park to eliminate separation and isolation.
5. Provide programs on violence prevention.

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# Community for Understanding and Hope

## Bridges Across Racial Polarization

Many of you have told us you would like some action or social opportunities as our dialogue continues. Offered through a regionally-based nonprofit called FOCUS St. Louis, the Bridges Across Racial Polarization ♦ program will give Kirkwood residents an opportunity to create small dialogue groups which would meet regularly, generally while sharing a meal at a restaurant or in each other's homes. The aim would be similar to that of the CFUH dialogue sessions - to discuss relevant racial/social issues and gradually build trust and friendship across racial lines.

The Bridges program has been recognized nationally as a *Solution for America* by the Pew Partnership for Civic Change. The CFUH hopes Bridges might provide a meaningful ongoing experience for some Kirkwood residents looking to broaden the diversity of their social circle and create a stronger, more peaceful community for all of us. Bridges groups are supported by a FOCUS staff person and a Bridges Steering Committee. Bridges members are provided with other organizational support, some large-group networking opportunities, and electronic reference materials. Read more about the Bridges Across Racial Polarization ♦ program in this brochure and think about signing up to be part of what we hope will be several Kirkwood-based groups. Or, contact us today and let us know of your interest.

## Agreements for Great Conversations

- Listen ... with respect and curiosity
- Suspend judgement as best you can
- Be open to the ideas of others
- Speak what has personal heart and meaning
- Invite and honor diversity of opinion
- Go for honesty and depth ... without going on and on

## History

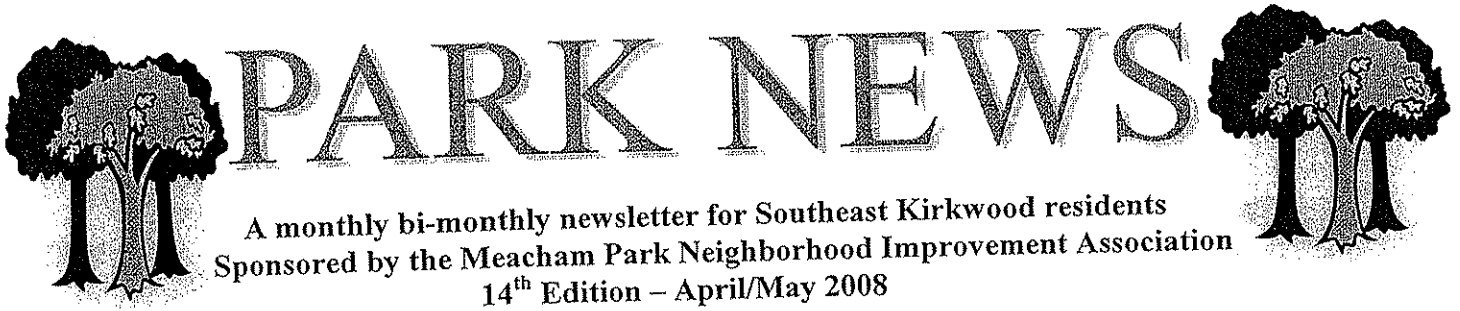
This effort was initiated by the Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association in order to foster understanding and healing throughout our community following the tragedy of Thursday, 7 February 2008. It is led and peopled by community volunteers who think that any problem in America can be solved if caring Americans respect the dignity of all other human beings in our society and work together in a journey for peace, healing, and reconciliation.

Our first task is to meet and talk with each other across every boundary: race, color, creed, religion, age, gender, economic status, physical challenge, etc. We start with dialogue meetings in which people share personal and cultural experiences -- with two rules: (1) be honest, (2) be courteous.

Four Dialogue Sessions were held earlier in 2008 (February, March, April, and May). An Executive Summary has been prepared outlining the results of those first four dialogues.

We want to thank STLCC-Meramec and Kirkwood Baptist, Kirkwood United Methodist, Grace Episcopal, and St. Peter Catholic churches for their generous support, providing their facilities at no charge in order to help the community in this effort.

In future meetings, as we begin to know and trust each other, we will continue to dialogue in our quest for understanding, and we will explore actions we can take to put us on the path to our preferred future.



# PARK NEWS

A monthly bi-monthly newsletter for Southeast Kirkwood residents  
 Sponsored by the Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association  
 14<sup>th</sup> Edition – April/May 2008

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Come to the May 19, 2008 of the MPNIA at Turner School Office Building at 7:00 p.m.,

**START PLANNING YOUR HOUSE AND YARD CLEAN UP**

Saturday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, from 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon, will be our "Big Community Wide Clean Up Day".

For questions, call 965-6163 Pat Clark. A limited number of garbage bags will be available on a first come first serve basis on May 23, 2008.



**Editor's Message**

Patricia Clark

These past-two months have been the busiest I've ever been in a long, long time. The Saturday dialogue groups were informative and interesting to all who attended. The neighborhood meetings were also invaluable in hearing concerns of the community. Those persons who were unable to attend have a second chance in the fall when they start again. I strongly urge that if you are not part of the solution...you might be part of the problem! Also please, read the flyers attached to the newsletter – The Saturday wide May 24, 2008 Neighborhood Clean-Up needs your participation to make it a success.

**From the Desk of our President:**

*"Listen to the People They Deserve to be Heard"*

On April 28, 2008, at St, Matthew C.M.E. Church many residents from Meacham Park and from the many other municipalities, participated in an open meeting with the U.S. Department of Justice. I want to compliment all those who came and all of those who sent messages to be heard. The essence of the messages reflected pain, frustration, and depression along with desperation. We must realize that these negative legacies are not simply a state of mind but a ladder to climb towards resolution, opportunity and change. Several issues were placed on the table for the Justice department to revisit. Listed below are only a few key elements, which were shared by residents.

- One way into Meacham Park/One way out (excluding the exit of Lowe)
- Need for a polling place
- In-adequate education
- Racially Divided city
- Police Concerns
- Recreation activities in the community
- Other miscellaneous concerns
- Employment

We did indeed learn from each other, that when it's time to act, no one could prevent one from claiming his/her own empowerment. Now what we must do is this, make a commitment to be apart of the solution and

not a part of the problem. The Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association has invited the Department of Justice to make another visit within the next 2-3 months. You will be notified of their return date. The ark of injustice is long but it bends universally towards justice. Some people identify justice as a dream deferred. The question is where do you stand?

**EDITORIALS FROM**  
**COMMUNITY**  
**RESIDENTS:**  
**Mr. Eddie Wade**

Many people have the courage to speak against Meacham Park, or to condemn its citizens when any perceived wrong attaches itself to its community. And they seem to speak out with much clarity and boldness - including those of Meacham Park. But I must pose the question, "Where are those same individuals when those in Meacham Park are doing right? Or when Meacham Park needs someone to speak up for her? All of a sudden they are stricken

with either fear or hatred, or both. Many in Meacham Park are quick to condemn their own, with no reservations or fears. But when it comes to speaking up for Meacham Park for justice and what is right, they sneak around in corners and closed in areas, mumbling among themselves and filled with fear. This seems to be a parody of the worse kind - pretending to be something that one is not. Perhaps, pretending to be for Meacham Park but all of their actions are clearly after the nature of condemnation. **"No praise for the good."** Only evil is in their tongues. Therefore, it is quite evident to me that the enemies of Meacham Park are not white people, but anyone who in appropriately condemn her, her citizens, or those who are at least trying to better her borders and subjects. That being said, Harriet Patton is doing a phenomenal job - in my opinion and hopefully of those who work with her - in doing what she can to help make a better tomorrow for Meacham Park and her citizens...for whatever reasons she does it; for self-glorification or sincerely in heart toward others is not as at least some work is getting done. Some criticized her for her efforts--but where are their efforts? She may not be perfect and neither is any of us, but she is certainly committed--even more so, perhaps, than we are. The Apostle Paul (of the Holy Bible) said it best she he said, "It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of good will. The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ preached. And because of this I rejoice...Philippians 1:15-18. The crab-in-the-barrow syndrome (pulling each other down) should cease among Black America, in Meacham Park and everywhere. In saying this, Harriet Patton has my support, as president of the Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association...and so do you--whoever you may be. In the words of the Apostle Paul I submit to you, "This commandments, "Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not commit murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not covet,' "and whatsoever commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself. Love *works no ill* to its neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law." Romans 13:9-10.

**OPPORTUNITIES TO VOLUNTEER**

**Bridges.** Many thanks to all who expressed interest in "Bridges" groups on April 12. 45 people signed up, but only 6 were from the Black community. To obtain the diversity balance required to accommodate everyone, we need about three-dozen Black citizens to participate. We also need people to volunteer to be co-leaders in their group. See Mr. Drew at the MPNIA meeting for more details.

**City Council, Boards and Commission Observation.** Many people have asked how to get involved in city government, from boards and commissions to the city council. Attending meetings will give you a better idea of how local government operates, what current issues are being addressed, and if participating in local government is an in interest for you. You would be regular observer and share pertinent information.



**Meacham Park Homecoming Parade.** Mark your calendar, put on your walking shoes, and join CFUH as part of the MP parade and homecoming Saturday, June 7. After the parade mingle with old friends and meet new ones while snacking on Bar-B-Que. More Information to come.

## SUMMER EVENTS

**Community for Understanding and Healing.** (CFUH) will resume in September. Appreciating the fact that we are getting to know each other better. Here are some opportunities to promote understanding, friendship and healing this summer.

**Summer Book Club.** CFUH will be co-sponsoring a summer book club in conjunction with the Kirkwood Public Library. Three books have been selected; each is a platform to stimulate discussion about race relations. The book club will meet at the library, in June, July and August. See the attached flyer for more information.

**Summer Hope.** What can you do this summer to make a tangible difference in the lives of Kirkwood youth? You can become involved in A Summer of Hope reading program that gives teens an incentive to open a book - they can earn up to \$100 for school clothes and supplies. Ms. Antona Smith would love for you to match her \$100.00 as she marches toward her goal of \$2,500 for 25 kids (See attached flyer).

**Social at the Magic House.** Come bring the family, children and grandchildren and share in a free evening of fun with other CFUH members. The Magic House is making this free evening available as a way of supporting understanding and friendship among all community members. Date and more information to be announced.

**Theater at the Black Rep.** You and your friends are invited to join "*Women's Voices Raised for Social Justice*" an evening of theater at the Black Rep. Come enjoy the Tony award-nominated musical "*Sarafina.*" **Thursday, June 12. Tickets are \$30.00 per person and must be purchased by May 15.**

**Community Gospel Choir.** The Community Gospel Choir is made up of a group of people from different churches and they come from many

different parts of the St. Louis area. Though their spirited interpretation of the rich tradition of African-American gospel music, the choir is working to break down racial, cultural and economic barriers in our community. For more information, check out the website at [www.communitygospelchoir.org](http://www.communitygospelchoir.org).

## An Editorial Summary submitted by Geraldine Caldwell-Phillips of the following Meetings:

Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association Committee Meeting, Meeting with US Justice Department Representative, Mr. Bill Whitcomb and a Meeting held at St. Matthew C.M.E. Church in Meacham Park on April 28, 2008.

To Whom It May Concern:

I thought this meeting was quite informative. It started out a little slow with introductions of the members assigned to the Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Committee and others that attended.

As this meeting, I learned that there was more racial injustice in the City of Kirkwood system, than I suspected. Some of the issues that came to my attention are as follows:

- **A lady wanted to open a Barber Shop in a residential area.** There use to be a Barber Shop and Confectionery store at the corner of Attucks and Milwaukee Street when I was growing up in Meacham Park. There was never any problem with the two small businesses operating in this area. But when the City of Kirkwood told her it couldn't be done, and instead they in turn (Kirkwood)



built a home on the property, and I was out done.

- **An elderly gentleman mentioned he had 6 lots of land in Meacham Park and the City of Kirkwood wanted his property.** They paid him \$33,000.00 for all 6 lots. This is ludicrous. My parents received \$25,000.00 per lot when they sold their property in Meacham Park. He was later told he owed the city some money for some reason. I didn't quite understand his statements regarding this issue.
- **Job Situation.** How unfair the black were treated at the City of Kirkwood. Most of the black individuals that work for the City of Kirkwood have been fired for bogus reasons and then later re-hired after a grievance process. But, they were never given the pay they lost while they were in the fired status. Some are still without the job they were hired for and the parties that blatantly discriminated against them are either dead (Ken Yost) or moved on to a position elsewhere (Jim Link-City of Ballwin).
- **How the property appraisals are low if they the appraiser finds that the occupant is black, then the property value are low.** If the occupant is white, the property is high. I sold my home for \$98,000.00, which was worth \$169,000.00 in 2001. The white guy that bought the home from me did very minor cosmetic modifications and resold my home for \$169,000.00. I couldn't get that amount if my life depended on it. But he was able to get that price. This is a profit of \$71,000.00 on the same property that I sold to him.
- **Blacks are sited constantly about the neglect of our property.** But if the City of Kirkwood owns the property it is okay for them **NOT** to maintain their property in the same area. I guess one day we will all be treated equally. I just hope I am around to witness this scenario. Our money is green and it can be taken freely, but if we need

something that requires us borrowing money, we can't get it without jumping through hoops and bounds.

### **More Reflections from the Town Hall Meeting, submitted by Ben Martin**

Many important issues were identified at the meeting and the great value of such open dialogue meetings were made clear. Three of these issues that need to be acted on as soon as possible are:

1. The need for an ombudsman with an office in Meacham Park Turner School or City Hall with a phone, and computer capabilities and a full time secretary. Authority to speak at City Council meetings as a city official and not time limited. Professional training, authority to consult with all city officials and to obtain copies of city documents without cost.
2. A polling place located in Meacham Park for the August election and thereafter.
3. Improved police community relations with an officer designated to fulfill this important task and to set up a program to have clergy ride with police officers in patrol cars, a program in cooperation with the junior college district with students studying for a career as a public safety officer. The purpose of this program would be to establish trust and positive relationship with the young people of Meacham Park and the community at large.

It would be extremely helpful to have official participation by members of the City Council and the City Department heads in future meetings conducted by Department of Justice Community Relations Service.

**Reflections From the Meacham Park  
Town Hall Meeting, submitted by  
Renee Johnson-Pastor**

The Town Hall Meeting held at St. Matthew C.M.E. Church was a wonderful opportunity to bring the community together to not only voice concerns but to seek resolutions in an effort to ~~im~~erate change. Although some unfortunate situations catapulted the need to have the meeting. There was a positive spirit of cooperation, concern and community in the air. Mr. William Whitcomb from the U.S.

Department of Justice did an excellent job serving as a mediator. He was able to help us prioritize and identify individual versus community concerns. Mr. Whitcomb will share the results of the meeting with the City of Kirkwood. We look forward to our follow-up meeting in two months. I believe the people of Meacham Park-Kirkwood want change and with continued leadership, support, perseverance and prayers, we will be a better community. I thank the Lord for thee opportunity to host the meeting and for the support by the members of St. Matthew.

**Church Corner**



**St. Matthew C.M.E. Church Renee T. Johnson-Pastor.** “**Congratulations!!!** The St. Matthew C.M.E. Church family is proud to announce that Pastor Renee T. Johnson's daughter, Jessica L. Johnson was inducted into thee KAPPA DELTA PI International Honor Society in Education in the MU Delta Chapter and the TAU SIGMA Honor Society on May 4th, 2008 at the University of Missouri in Columbia. Pastor Johnson and her mother were able to attend the ceremony.

**Men and Women of Faith Ministries- Minister Harry Jones-Elder.** Nicole Franks, Reporter. An out door revival at the Jones family picnic area is planned for early summer. More news to come. This local ministry that formerly met at Rose Hill House now meets at Turner School Office Building on Sundays. 10:00 a.m. to 11:30a.m. Sunday School, Worship Service ll: 45 am to 1:00 p.m. .

**First Baptist Church of Meacham Park. - Darren K. Smotherson-Pastor. Anne Gordon-reporter.** On April 13th, 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008, the members of First Baptist celebrated their Pastor's 2nd Anniversary Celebration. The theme was "Boldly Building Up the Body of Christ". Ephesians 4:11-12. The afternoon speaker was Minister Melvin Smotherson, Pastor of Cornerstone Institutional Baptist Church-St. Louis, MO., along with his congregation and choir. Both Pastor and Sis. Smotherson received gifts, and words of encouragement. Sis. Anne Gordon, Glenda Gordon and Maria McMiller were chairpersons.

**F.B.C. observed Mothers Day, Sunday, May 11, 2008** during Morning Worship Service by presenting gifts, words of adoration, encouragement and praise to mothers past and present. Minister Raymond Abernathy was the morning speaker.



**Upcoming Events;**

- June 7th, - Youth Rally/Children's Day - Minister Raymond and Tina Abernathy-Chairperson.
- June 15, 2008 “Father's Day” - Deacon James Brooks-Chairperson
- June 29, 2008 - Usher and Health Unit Day - Sis. Maria McMiller-Chairperson.



# "MEACHAM PARK NEIGHBORHOOD WIDE CLEAN UP DAY"

Sponsored by the Meacham Neighborhood Improvement Association and Wal-Mart

Saturday, May 24, 2008

8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

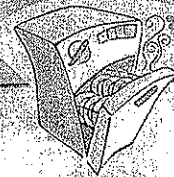
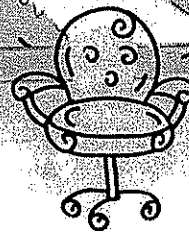
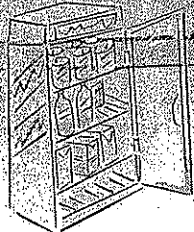
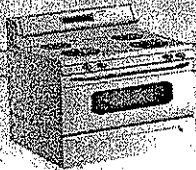
Tee shirts and supplies for clean up will be available for volunteers at 8:00 am, on a first come, first serve basis. Use your tee shirt for the homecoming parade.

## Clean your yard, clean our neighborhood.

Prizes for clean up participation will be awarded at 12 noon at Memorial Park

Dumpsters (for Meacham Park residents only) to dispose of large items such as chairs, bikes, couches. Will be at strategic locations

Batteries, tires, refrigerators, air conditioners and other appliances will be picked up by Wal-Mart and Lowe's if left on the tree lawn



# CFUH's Summer Book Club

Co-Sponsored by  
Community For Understanding & Healing  
and the Kirkwood Public Library

*Thursday, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 7pm-8:30pm*

- A Bound Man-Why We Are Excited About Obama and Why He Can't Win  
by Shelby Steele, a conservative African-American Republican (2008)

*Thursday, July 24<sup>th</sup>, 7pm-8:30pm*

- Life on the Color Line: The True Story of a White Boy Who Discovered He Was Black  
by Gregory Williams current President of The City College of New York (1996)

*Thursday, August 14<sup>th</sup>, 7pm-8:30pm*

- White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son by Tim Wise (2005)

The Book Club will meet @ the Kirkwood Public Library located @  
140 E. Jefferson, in the Auditorium, on the Lower-Level.

Books available @ the Library.

Books are appropriate for Adults and Teens.

[www.cfuh.org](http://www.cfuh.org)

# Want to get INVOLVED?

Ready to give back?

Need something tangible?

Aching to make a difference?

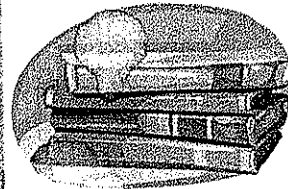
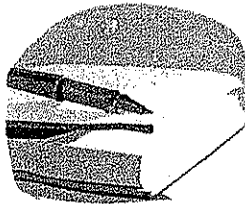
*Tayé Foster Bradshaw and Community for Understanding and Healing present*

## *A Summer of Hope*

*A special summer reading program open to all North, Nipher, and KHS free and reduced lunch eligible students*

10 weeks of reading

June 1st - August 9<sup>th</sup>



What's in it for them?

Beyond great literature...gift cards toward new school clothes and/or school supplies for the new year!

They have to read a minimum of three books and write a one-page essay on it to be counted as participants and earn prizes with each book...maximum is

**\$100!!!**

How can YOU get involved?

1. Match Antona's \$100\* (or more!) toward the gift cards and tell people!
2. Donate books...your bookshelves...bookfairs...local stores!!
3. Donate small (\$5) gift cards from local businesses for weekly prizes.
4. Help raise funds - goal of at least \$2500 for 25 kids!
5. Spend Tuesdays from 5:30-7pm at the weekly read-in, held at the Kirkwood Public Library Teen Room!

**\*Suggested match! Smaller donations welcomed!**

Checks: Kirkwood Baptist Church, 211 N. Woodlawn Ave., Kirkwood 63122

**IMPORTANT:** Note it is for A Summer of Hope and CALL Antona Smith 816-878-3935 or EMAIL [fosterbradshaw@gmail.com](mailto:fosterbradshaw@gmail.com) to have your name added as a sponsor and to tabulate funds for gift cards!



**B**ringing together singers from all backgrounds, the Community Gospel Choir seeks to build bridges that restore unity to "community". Through the rich tradition of African-American Spirituals and the energy of Gospel Music, we deliver the messages of hope and joy found in the Good News.

The choir was formed in the summer of 2007 under the direction and vision of Cecelia Stearman. The choir has grown

to more than 70 members and has brought audiences to their feet during its performances.

The choir rehearses weekly and performs approximately 10 concerts per year. The choir is available for concerts and presentations throughout the year.

Through our spirited interpretation of the rich tradition of African-American gospel music we are working to:

- Break down racial, cultural and economic barriers in our community
- Model community and reconciliation
- Perform to the highest musical standards to further a knowledge and appreciation of Traditional Spirituals and contemporary Gospel Music
- Be a gift to the entire community through regular public concerts and participation in community events

### **Upcoming Concerts**

- May, 2008 – Fundraiser for Club 44
- June 10, 2008 – 7 PM – Fun after Fifty Five concert at Kirkwood Baptist
- September 18, 2008 – Concert at St. Martins Episcopal
- September 27, 2008 – Hands on Kirkwood Community Event
- December 3, 2008 – Concert at Glendale Lutheran

**Rehearsal Schedule** - The Community Gospel Choir has two seasons:

- August-December
- January-May

During that time, we rehearse weekly, Sundays, 4-6 PM at Kirkwood Baptist Church, 211 North Woodlawn Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63122

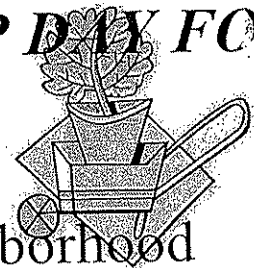
### **Contact Us**

If you are interested in singing with us or setting up a concert, please contact us:

Email: [communitygospelchoir@gmail.com](mailto:communitygospelchoir@gmail.com)

Phone: (314) 965-2349

[www.communitygospelchoir.org](http://www.communitygospelchoir.org)



# **NEIGHBORHOOD WIDE CLEAN UP DAY FOR MEACHAM PARK**

Sponsored by the Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association (MPNIA) and Wal-Mart

SATURDAY, MAY 24, 2008 FROM 8:00 a.m. to 12:00  
noon,

Tee shirts and supplies for the clean up will be distributed to volunteers on a first come, first serve basis. Volunteers receiving tee shirts are encouraged to wear their tee shirts for the homecoming parade.

Prizes for the clean up participants will be awarded at 12:00 noon. Refreshments of hot dogs and lemonade will be served at the Memorial Park Pavilion at noon.

Dumpsters (for large items such as bikes, mattresses, couches or other large furniture items) will be located within the community. Old appliances will be picked up (if placed on your tree lawn) and recycled by Lowe's (refrigerators, stoves, or dishwashers).

Tires, batteries and used oil will be collected and recycled by Wal-Mart.

***No toxic waste will be accepted***



# Update

Vol. 1, Issue 3 • November 1996

## Churches Help Weave Social, Moral Fabric of Community

It's 7 p.m. on a Thursday evening and many Meacham Park residents in the proposed buyout area are gathered again at the New Covenant Full Gospel Church at 220 Chicago St. As they have been doing for much of the past two years, the group is holding a prayer session.

"We pray that everyone will receive justice under the buyout plan," says Rev. Roy McGown, pastor of New Covenant.

The DESCO Group is proposing a shopping center and major renovation of housing in Meacham Park as part of a redevelopment plan for the area. The plan includes purchasing homes in a portion of the area designated for the Kirkwood Commons Shopping Center.

Although McGown and his wife, Karla, both favor The DESCO Group project, they say what they really want is to help the people of Meacham Park find jobs, do well in school and to keep drugs out of the neighborhood.



Rev. Roy McGown

They believe the proposed project will help accomplish those goals.

New Covenant is just one of five churches within the boundaries of Meacham Park. The other four churches are: Meacham Park First Baptist Church, St. Matthews CME,

Church of God and Douglas Memorial Church of God and Christ.

What follows is a brief description of the churches and some of their activities.

### First Baptist Church

The 89-year-old church started a senior citizens program in October. On Tuesday and Thursday mornings, seniors can read and discuss scripture or other spiritual books and magazines.

First Baptist, with about 220 members, also offers a youth program under the First Baptist Youth Council. The young adults hold fund-raisers, such as car washes, to pay for group trips.

The "Better Than Ever" Tutoring Program for school-aged children also meets once a week at the church.

"It's been a success," says First Baptist Pastor Oliver Lemmie. "We're very proud of the program."

*Continued on page 4*

## Residents Provide Feedback to the City

During the Meacham Park Redevelopment Open Houses held in September, Meacham Park residents gave their opinions about the services provided by the Kirkwood Police Department. A brief look at the survey shows that most residents who participated in the survey:

- have lived in Meacham Park for more than 10 years
- are between the ages of 36 and 55
- think police services have improved since the 1992 annexation
- are aware of the community policing program
- are aware of the Eagle Eye on Crime Neighborhood Watch program

*Continued on page 2*



# Project Q & A

Many residents attended the public meeting on October 24 at the Kirkwood Inn to ask questions of DESCO and City of Kirkwood representatives. While not all residents were able to attend this and other meetings, we made note of the most commonly asked questions and provided the answers below.

## Who in the buyout area is eligible for a new home?

Any of the existing approximately 60 homeowners residing in the buyout area are eligible for a new home in the residential portion of Meacham Park as well as others who qualify for financing.

## What if there are multiple families renting a house in the buyout area? Will they be allowed to relocate within Meacham Park under existing Kirkwood occupancy ordinances?

Multiple families can rent a single house as long as members of the household are all related and the number of persons does not exceed those permitted under current Kirkwood occupancy ordinances.

## Title Company to Help Property Owners in the Buyout Area with Sale Process

The title company working in conjunction with The DESCO Group to handle the transfer of property in the proposed buyout area is already hard at work. That's the word from Richard Grab, manager of St. Louis operations for Commonwealth Title Co., which will handle the closing on the sale of homes and lots in the commercial buyout area of Meacham Park.

Commonwealth is doing the leg work to make the transfer of property for residents as hassle free as possible, Grab says. Commonwealth is currently identifying and locating property owners in the buyout area.

"It's a huge undertaking," Grab says. "But we're doing it so that property owners don't have to worry about it."

Once DESCO receives all the necessary approvals to proceed with the shopping center and redevelopment of the remaining residential area in Meacham Park, the purchase of homes and lots will begin. At that time, Commonwealth will start contacting home and lot owners to

## Under what circumstances will DESCO use eminent domain to acquire property?

DESCO will make every reasonable attempt to negotiate a purchase price with the property owner. Eminent domain will only be used if there is no other alternative to acquire the property.

## Do I have to pay the capital gains tax on the sale of my property?

Meacham Park property owners are subject to Internal Revenue Service requirements for the reporting of capital gains on the sale of real estate. DESCO recommends consulting the IRS or another tax adviser on questions regarding the capital gains tax.

## What benefits do Meacham Park homeowners outside the buyout area receive?

At a minimum, homeowners will be eligible for a \$15,000 grant for renovating the interior and exterior of their homes regardless of their income level. Depending on a homeowner's individual situation, other benefits may be available.

arrange a date to complete the sale to DESCO.

All owners of a piece of property will have to sign the transfer of deed papers in order for the sale to be complete. Commonwealth also is in the process of determining if any owners are deceased so that the proper steps can be taken to assure a smooth transfer of title.

In addition to locating property owners, Commonwealth also will be researching any tax liens, mortgages or other amounts owed on the property. These amounts will have to be paid off prior to the transfer of a home or lot.

Money DESCO is paying to acquire property can be used to satisfy these outstanding debts. Commonwealth will inform property owners of any outstanding bills on the property prior to the closing.

If a property owner has a mortgage on a home or lot in the buyout area, this will be paid off at the time of the closing. Any real estate taxes, judgments or unpaid sewer bills also will be paid upon the purchase of the property by DESCO.

## Just The Facts

### Did you know:

The city of Kirkwood will use tax dollars generated by The DESCO Group's Kirkwood Commons Shopping Center to:

- Consolidate and enhance park areas to serve a variety of age groups. New parks will serve as transition areas. These will be developed in such a way as to combine existing parks into larger, more usable park space.
- Beef up crime prevention efforts. At the request of the residents, the community policing program, which provides a visible police presence in the Meacham Park neighborhood, will be continued and expanded.
- Include an area in the neighborhood for cultural and historic information on the neighborhood. A suitable location will be determined once all residential relocation and new construction plans are final.
- Pay for landscaping, planting of trees and shrubs, and installation of sidewalks and walkways as a part of the residential redevelopment.
- Continue to enhance multi-family housing. Exterior improvements to buildings and landscaping will be made.

**Survey** —from page 1

- are satisfied with the length of time it takes an officer to arrive on the scene
- feel Kirkwood police officers are helpful
- feel the sale of drugs and related problems have remained the same since annexation
- feel the biggest concern today is people standing on the corners late at night
- feel crime is a serious problem in the United States
- feel crime will greatly increase in the United States
- feel crime will decrease in Meacham Park in the future

Below are the responses to the survey questions asked at the open houses. Some surveyed did not answer all questions, so the percentages for some responses do not equal 100%.

**How long have you been a resident of Meacham Park?**

Less than 2 years	0%
2-5 years	13%
5-10 years	6%
More than 10 years	69%

**How old are you?**

18-25	0%
26-35	13%
36-55	62%
Over 55	25%

**How do you think the police service has changed in the past four years since annexation?**

Much better	44%
Better	44%
About the same	12%
Not as good	0%
Much worse	0%

**Are you aware of the community policing program where residents and police work together on crime and other area problems such as trash, litter, noise, etc.?**

Yes	69%
No	31%

**Are you aware of the Eagle Eye on Crime Neighborhood Watch?**

Yes	56%
No	31%

**If you have called the police, have you been satisfied with the length of time it took the police to arrive?**

Very satisfied	25%
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Satisfied	62%
Somewhat satisfied	13%
Not satisfied	0%

**Anytime you have observed the police, how would you evaluate the helpfulness of the officer?**

Helpful	81%
Unable to help, but explained why	13%
Unable to help, but referred to others for help	0%
Not helpful	6%

**How has the sale of drugs and related problems changed since annexation four years ago?**

Much less	19%
Not as much	25%
About the same	56%
More	0%
Much more	0%

**Which is your biggest concern today?**

People standing on the corners late at night, curfew	56%
Noise problems	0%
Drug sales	31%
Crime in general	13%
None of the above	0%

**Kirkwood**  
*Happenings*

**Nov. 7:** Kirkwood City Council Meeting, Kirkwood City Hall, 139 S. Kirkwood Road, 8 p.m.

**Nov. 8-9:** Salvation Army Craft Show, Kirkwood Community Center, 111 S. Geyer. For information call 822-5855.

**Nov. 17:** Open Door Sanctuary Craft Show, Kirkwood Community Center, 111 S. Geyer Road. For more information call 822-5855.

**Nov. 20:** Kirkwood Planning and Zoning Meeting, Kirkwood City Hall, 139 S. Kirkwood Road, 7:30 p.m.

**Nov. 21:** Kirkwood City Council Meeting, Kirkwood City Hall, 139 S. Kirkwood Road, 8 p.m.

**Nov. 23-24:** St. Louis Harmony Craft Show, Kirkwood Community Center, 111 S. Geyer. For information call 822-5855.

**Nov. 30/Dec. 1:** Woodcarver Show, Kirkwood Community Center, 111 S. Geyer. For information call 822-5855.

**Dec. 5:** Kirkwood City Council Meeting, Kirkwood City Hall, 139 S. Kirkwood Road, 8 p.m.

**Dec. 7:** Swedish Christmas, Kirkwood Community Center, 111 S. Geyer. For information call 822-5855.

**Dec. 19:** Kirkwood City Council Meeting, Kirkwood City Hall, 139 S. Kirkwood Road, 8 p.m.

**Calendar**



# Henry Autrey Disregarded Stereotype to Become a Judge

In eighth grade, Henry Autrey took an aptitude test that was supposed to single out his strengths and help plot his future career. There was only one glitch, though. Autrey trusted in his own abilities.

"I was supposed to be a mechanic," recalls Autrey, who lived in Meacham Park from junior high school to his senior year in college. "Never believe anybody who says you can't do anything you want with your life in a positive vein."

Today Autrey is a judge for the 22nd Circuit Court in the City of St. Louis. A 1977 graduate of St. Louis University Law School, Autrey served as an assistant circuit attorney until 1986 when he put on his judges robe. Initially hearing only criminal cases, he has been overseeing civil disputes the past three years.

Autrey bought his parents home on Attucks Street shortly before his parents died. He still owns the home, which he rents to his cousin, Stance Eskridge.

"I'm out at the house at least once a week," he says. "I like to work around the house fixing things up."

Autrey, 44, grew up on a small farm in what is now the City of Wildwood. His parents rented the home until the Missouri Highway Department bought out the landlord to make way for improvements on Manchester Road. After moving to Meacham Park, Autrey attended DeSmet High School. He obtained his undergraduate degree from St. Louis University before attending law school there. When he's not on the court bench, Autrey does volunteer work for the St. Louis Area Food Bank and Human Energies, Inc., a not-for-profit organization which helps welfare recipients to find training and jobs. He concedes he isn't involved in Meacham Park as much as he would like to be.



Henry Autrey

"It's a good and solid community overall," Autrey says.

## Churches —from page 1

Lemmie, who has been pastor for the past seven years, says he listens to all his members' views on what's best for the future of Meacham Park.

"We're concerned about every member in Meacham Park," he says. "I'm trying to be as objective as possible."

### New Covenant

Roy and Karla McGown founded New Covenant in 1975, holding the first services at the Kirkwood YMCA. In 1976, the church bought the ground at its current location.

The site is home to two education programs as well. Educare uses the church's Meacham Park Resource Center to give pre-schoolers a head start. Another program, Hope Unlimited, tutors school-age children.

New Covenant, whose members number about 100, also offers a gardening program, which instructs participants how to grow their own food. The church plants gardens in vacant neighborhood lots.

The McGown's support the redevelopment plan, although the church is in the buyout area and would have to relocate under the plan. They say the opportunities and benefits of the plan outweigh the need to relocate.

"We really pray this will go through," Karla McGown says.

### Church of God

For the past 23 years, Rev. Sherman Drane has presided over services at the Church of God at 345 Meacham Street. Rev. Drane counts 75 members in the congregation.

The church offers a Sunday school for children and sponsors a youth group, which meets several times a month under the leadership of Dorothy Simmons. Church of God also helps those in real need with a small food pantry in the basement of the church.

### St. Matthews CME

Elmos Eldridge is the pastor at St. Matthews CME located at 310 Attucks. The church conducts Sunday services for the congregation.

### Douglas Memorial Church of God and Christ

For the past 17 years, Elder Eugene Jones has led the 75-member congregation. Douglas Memorial first opened its doors in 1945.

In addition to Sunday services, the church conducts Bible studies on Wednesday evenings. Douglas Memorial also offers a youth program for toddlers through teen-age years. Among the activities is a regular scripture study group, Elder Jones says.

## Public hearing on widening Big Bend

Residents of Meacham Park will be able to express their views on the proposed improvements to Big Bend Road between S. Kirkwood Road and Interstate 44 at a public hearing on Tuesday, Nov. 26. The hearing will be held at Nipher Middle School, 700 S. Kirkwood Road, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

St. Louis County is seeking approval from the Federal Highway Administration for location and design changes for the street, which borders on the north side of Meacham Park. Specifically, the plan provides for the widening of Big Bend Road from four lanes to five lanes from S. Kirkwood to I-44.

Maps and other information are available for public inspection and copying at the St. Louis County Department of Highways and Traffic, 121 S. Meramec Ave in Clayton. Telephone: 854-6543, for the hearing impaired, TDD 854-6527.

# Update

Vol. 1, Issue 1 • September 1996

## Meacham Park Update Debuts

Welcome to the first issue of *Meacham Park Update*. The periodic newsletter will be sent to you courtesy of The DESCO Group in conjunction with the City of Kirkwood, which chose DESCO as the preferred developer for the Meacham Park redevelopment plan.

*Meacham Park Update* is designed to keep you informed about the development of the proposed Kirkwood Commons Shopping Center and the proposed redevelopment of homes, streets and parks in the remaining 84-acre residential part of Meacham Park. It also will provide insight into the people involved in the redevelopment plan as well as information about various government programs available to the residents of Meacham Park.

We hope you will enjoy *Meacham Park Update*.

## Relocating in Meacham Park

*Shields, other families in buyout area plan to stay in the neighborhood*

**L**ike many residents of Meacham Park, Retha Shields' childhood memories center on the friends made and the activities at Turner School.

Retha moved to Meacham Park from the city of St. Louis when she was 10. Thirty years later, she and her husband Herbert plan to stay in Meacham Park with their son and daughter, Daniel and Angelique, under The DESCO Group's proposed redevelopment plan.

"I like the locale," says Retha, a nurse at Barnes Hospital. "Many of the people I went to school with are still here."

The Shields home on Big Bend Road is in the proposed buyout area where DESCO plans to build Kirkwood Commons Shopping Center. Tax money from the shopping center will provide for improvements in housing, streets and parks in the 84-acre residential redevelopment area of Meacham Park.

Residents in the buyout area are being offered a choice of relocating within Meacham Park or taking



Retha Shields

the money from the purchase of their home and relocating elsewhere. "We hope residents choose to stay," says Rosalind Williams, director of planning and development for the City of Kirkwood.

Retha isn't the only resident in the proposed buyout area who intends

to remain in Meacham Park.

"I'm staying because I've lived here for more than 60 years," says Eldridge Bernard, 68, who lives on Alsobrook Street. "I've never lived anywhere else."

Those sentiments are echoed by Celeste Johnson, who lives on Meacham Street.

"I was born here and I just like it out here," says Celeste, who's lived in Meacham Park for 23 years.

*Continued on page 4*

## Kirkwood, DESCO Invite Residents to Ask Questions at Open Houses

**T**he City of Kirkwood, along with the DESCO Group and the St. Louis County Housing Authority, invite you to come to any of the three open houses to be held Sept. 4-6 at the Meacham Park Community Center, 434 Aldridge. Representatives from DESCO, Kirkwood and the St. Louis County Housing Authority will be there to answer questions about the proposed commercial and residential redevelopment of Meacham Park.

The City of Kirkwood will have representatives from the parks, police and community development departments on hand. The police department

representative will answer questions about the community policing program in Meacham Park. A representative from the St. Louis County Housing Authority will be available to answer questions on purchasing a renovated housing authority home in Meacham Park.

An open house will be held on each of the following dates:

- Sept. 4: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Sept. 5: 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- Sept. 6: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

## About The DESCO Group

The DESCO Group's name is fairly new to the St. Louis real estate scene, but the company has been building shopping centers since the late 1960s. Many of those retail centers are home to a Schnucks supermarket.

DESCO leases and manages shopping centers in five states. It has developed seven centers using the same financing method that is being used to help build a new shopping center and make improvements to homes, streets and parks in Meacham Park.

Joe Maloney, vice president of development for The DESCO Group, is heading the Meacham Park project for DESCO. Maloney and Mike Anthon, a retail leasing specialist for DESCO, have met with many of the residents living in the buyout area. Maloney has 14 years experience in the St. Louis commercial real estate business, primarily in developing shopping centers.

DESCO has been working closely the City of Kirkwood on the plan to spend \$4 million from the taxes generated from the proposed Kirkwood Commons Shopping Center to make investments in the 84-acre residential part of the proposed Meacham Park redevelopment plan.

## Meacham Park Steering Committee

Many of them are your neighbors. Some may go to your church or teach your children or do business in Kirkwood.

They are the members of the Meacham Park Steering Committee, 11 men and women who helped shape the \$4 million residential redevelopment plan for Meacham Park. The plan calls for a combination of new homes and major home improvements for current residents. The plan also provides for better parks and streets in the 84-acre residential part of Meacham Park.

The Meacham Park Steering Committee meets twice a month. Residents should feel free to contact any of them to ask questions, share concerns or tell them what you'd like for your neighborhood. They will continue to work with the city as the entire redevelopment project unfolds. The following is a list of committee members:

### Glen Appelbaum

*President, Kirkwood Area Chamber of Commerce 1995*

Mr. Appelbaum has been active in the Chamber of Commerce since 1989. He formerly owned Mail Boxes, Etc. and served as a director for the Circle of St. Joseph Hospital. He and his wife Betty are retired.

### Steven Campbell

*Senior Vice President, Commercial Lending Group, Citizens National Bank of Greater St. Louis*

Mr. Campbell's service to the Kirkwood community includes four years as a Commissioner of the Kirkwood Housing Authority. Mr. Campbell and his wife have lived in Kirkwood for 19 years.

### Josephine Chambers

*Assembly Packer, Sunnen Products*

Ms. Chambers, a Meacham Park resident, is a member of St. Matthews CME Church in Meacham Park and works closely with her church, directing its choir and singing in the group as well. She is a member of the Meacham Park Homeowner's Association and the Meacham Park Homecoming Committee.

### Patricia Clark

*Director of Social Services, National Benevolent Association*

As Chair of the Meacham Park Steering Committee, Ms. Clark has been active in the Meacham Park redevelopment plan. A former social worker, she works in the development of minority management training programs and helps develop leads for HUD sponsored housing. The Kirkwood resident is a member of the Meacham Park Homeowner's Association.

### Wanda Cohen

*Full-time mother of two*

Ms. Cohen is secretary to the Resident Council of Meacham Park. This organization serves as a not-for-profit bridge between management and tenants involved in the St. Louis County Housing program. She lives in Meacham Park.

### Rev. Jeffrey G. Croft

*Pastor, Harrison Avenue Missionary Baptist Church, Kirkwood*

Rev. Croft coaches for the Meacham Park Boys Club in the Kirkwood Basketball League. Rev. Croft lives in Webster Groves with his wife Roslyn (a Kirkwood native) and their three daughters.

### Harriet Patton, R.N.

*Professional Nurse, City of St. Louis Board of Education*

Ms. Patton is a founder of the Meacham Park Homeowner's Association, current president of the Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association and an officer of the Kirkwood High School Parents-Teachers Organization. She has lived in the Meacham Park neighborhood since early childhood.

### Erma Reid

*Educator, Westchester Elementary School, Kirkwood*  
Ms. Reid, a Kirkwood resident, has served 30 years as an educator in the Kirkwood schools. She received a degree in education and journalism from Lincoln University.

### Charles "Cookie" Thornton

*CEO, Cookco Construction*

Mr. Thornton, who lives in Meacham Park, is a member of the Kirkwood Area Chamber of Commerce; the Kirkwood-Webster YMCA, and the Kirkwood Housing Authority.

### Elizabeth Walker

*President, Kirkwood School Board*

Ms. Walker has served as President of the Kirkwood School Board since 1994, a term which runs through 1996. She lives in Des Peres.

### Stephen Woodard

*Managing Director, Piper Jaffray, Inc.*

Mr. Woodard, a Kirkwood resident, serves on the Kirkwood City Council and the Kirkwood Park Board. He served as Co-Chairman of the "1-2-3-4 Kids and Community" campaign, which promoted ballot items for the improvement of the Kirkwood R-7 School District.





## Relocating — from page 1

Her family moved back to Meacham Park after living in Arkansas.

DESCO is seeking to redevelop the Meacham Park neighborhood. Their proposal calls for building a shopping center stretching from Big Bend Road to Interstate 44 along South Kirkwood Road. At its widest point, the shopping center will extend east to Milwaukee Street.

About \$4 million in tax money generated by Kirkwood Commons Shopping Center will be used to build new homes and renovate existing homes in the residential part of Meacham Park. The redevelopment plan also calls for street and park improvements.

For Retha Shields, the redevelopment plan offers the prospect for a better home than her current house. She says she'll be able to get a much nicer home in Meacham Park than she would be able to afford in other parts of Kirkwood.

## H.O.P.E. Makes Homeownership Happen

**Y**ou may have noticed throughout Meacham Park that the homes owned by the St. Louis County Housing Authority are getting "face lifts." The exteriors of 35 St. Louis County Housing Authority homes in Meacham Park are being updated and renovated.

But even more exciting, these 35 homes are now available for purchase by the Meacham Park residents who are currently renting them. Already, five of the homes have been sold. Prices for the homes range from \$20,000 to \$45,000.

No down payment is required for purchase of these homes. Interest rates will vary, but all loans will be 30-year fixed mortgages. In some cases, the monthly payment could be less than your rental payment to the St. Louis County Housing Authority.

Homeownership of St. Louis County Housing Authority houses in Meacham Park is open to anyone that is considered low to moderate income and who lives in the St. Louis area. People can apply for homeownership via the H.O.P.E program. To qualify, a family must have a household income



A St. Louis County Housing Authority renovated home

of at least \$18,000, one year prior to applying for the home loan.

The lender for purchasing these homes is Boatmen's Bank. Potential homebuyers will be required to go through the normal credit screening process. Credit and home-buying counseling are available.

For more information, please call Pat Hughes at 739-6184.

## William Jones was a true leader

**W**ith the death of William J. Jones on Saturday, July 13, 1996, the City of Kirkwood and the Meacham Park neighborhood lost a long-time community leader. Mr. Jones worked for many years toward the development of a neighborhood plan for Meacham Park. He was one of the founders and served many years as president of the Meacham Park Homeowner's Association.

Mr. Jones, 75, ran a newspaper serving Meacham Park. He told the Webster-Kirkwood Times in 1986 that his newspaper, In Our Opinion, was "kind of militant. It gave our people a voice for the first time."

In 1970, Mr. Jones founded Sprog, a non-profit group providing counseling for underprivileged youth. In the early '90s, he became a deacon assigned to St. Peter's Catholic Church in Kirkwood.

The City of Kirkwood and The DESCO Group pledge to work hard to make Bill's vision for a better Meacham Park a reality.



William Jones

# THE FALLEN

By Stephen Deere, Elizabeth Holland and Doug Moore • ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH  
KIRKWOOD

WILLIAM  
BIGGS



TOM  
BALLMAN



CONNIE  
KARR



MICHAEL  
LYNCH



KENNETH  
YOST



MIKE  
SWOBODA



The silver-gray handgun looked like a prop to Cindy Burquin, just part of another stunt by her former high school classmate. She watched him raise the .44-caliber revolver, expecting a flag with the word "Bang!" to unfurl.

Even after the first shot, she tried to rationalize the moment.

*Those have to be blanks. He's just trying to scare the City Council.*

But the bloodied police officer was lifeless in the chair, and people in the council chambers were diving out of the way, screaming. Burquin found herself on the floor, wondering if she should stand up.

*Maybe I should talk to him. Maybe he'll listen. Maybe he'll stop shooting.*

People ducked under desks and chairs, ran from the room, curled into fetal positions. Many could hear the gunman's breathing between the shots.

They had come to Kirkwood City Hall focused on a proposed medical building, zoning ordinances, contracts for wireless service and other minutiae of municipal government.

Suddenly, they were moments away from losing everything.

Ken Yost, the public works director, was the second person in the room to be shot. Then two council members and Mayor Mike Swoboda.

Burquin couldn't comprehend what was happening. She looked across the floor and saw her missing shoe. She thought about the expensive orthotics inside it.

*I have to get that shoe.*

But then the gunman's black jeans appeared at her feet. She pressed her face against the carpet and covered her head with her hands.

*If I don't look, he won't see me. If I cover my eyes, he can't see me.*

PLEASE SEE KIRKWOOD | A8

## EDITOR'S NOTE:

Charles Lee "Cool" Thornton was a long time gadfly and protester of Kirkwood city government. On evening of Feb. 7, 2007 Thornton took his rage against the city an unimaginable leap just as the City Council convened, Thornton shot and killed five Kirkwood public servants before police killed him. Mayor Mike Swoboda, critically wounded, died seven months later from complications.

The Post-Dispatch reached out to the 3 survivors who were inside or near council chambers when the attack took place. Most of them shared their reflections about that night and the month that followed.

Throughout the week, the Post-Dispatch will present stories about the Kirkwood community and the **one-year anniversary of the City Hall shootings, which is Saturday.**

The shootings that rocked the entire St. Louis area. [STLtoday.com/kirkwood](http://STLtoday.com/kirkwood)



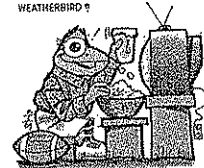
### SUPER SUNDAY

Geared up for the big game? Get ready with our complete Super Bowl coverage and updates.

[STLtoday.com/sports](http://STLtoday.com/sports)

### Huddle up

POST-DISPATCH  
WEATHERBIRD



## State of the race

We take a look at several facts and figures to mark the beginning of Black History Month.

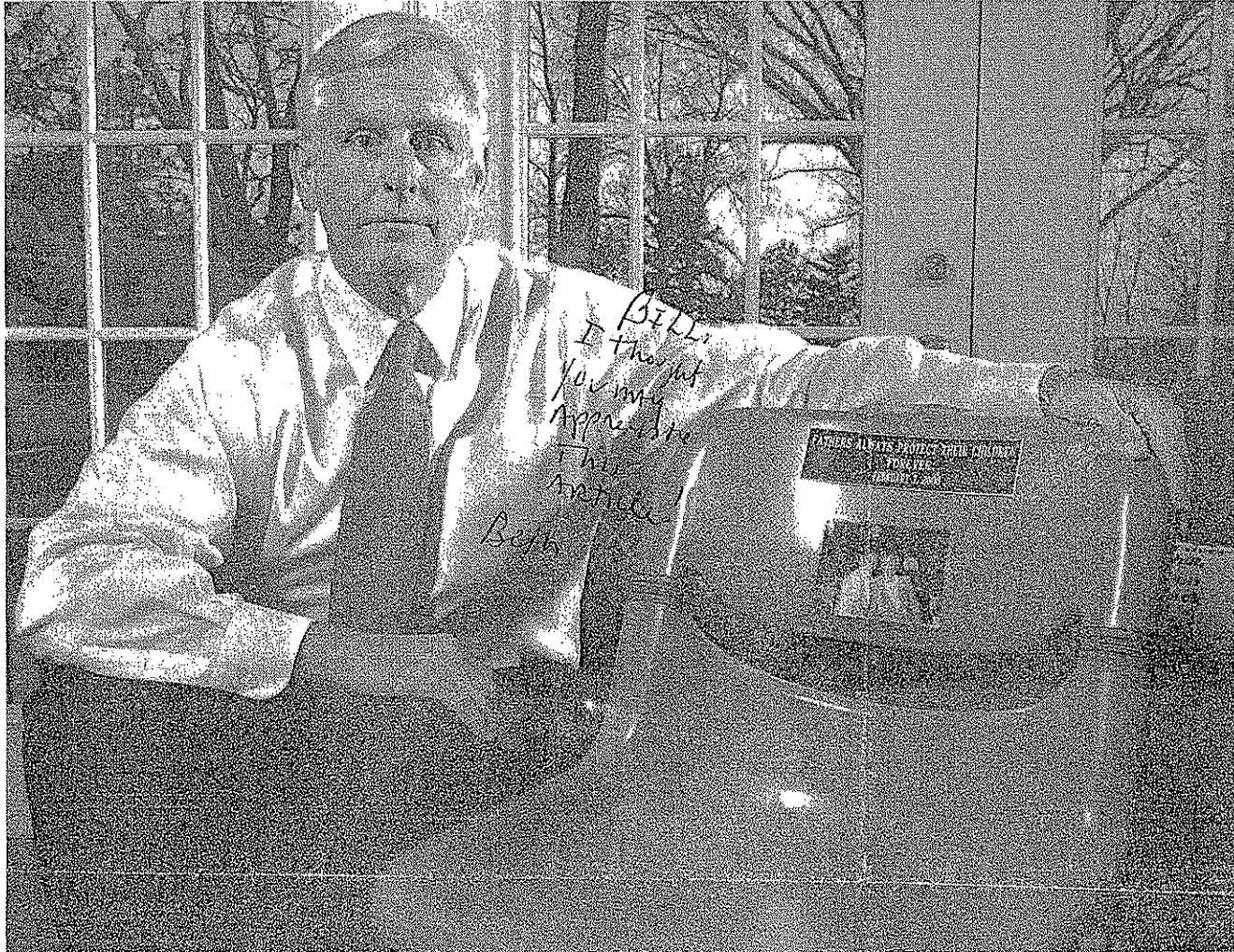
NewsWatch

COMPLETE INDEX ON PAGE A2 | WEATHER • SUNDAY 41° ☀ SUNDAY NIGHT 32° 🌙



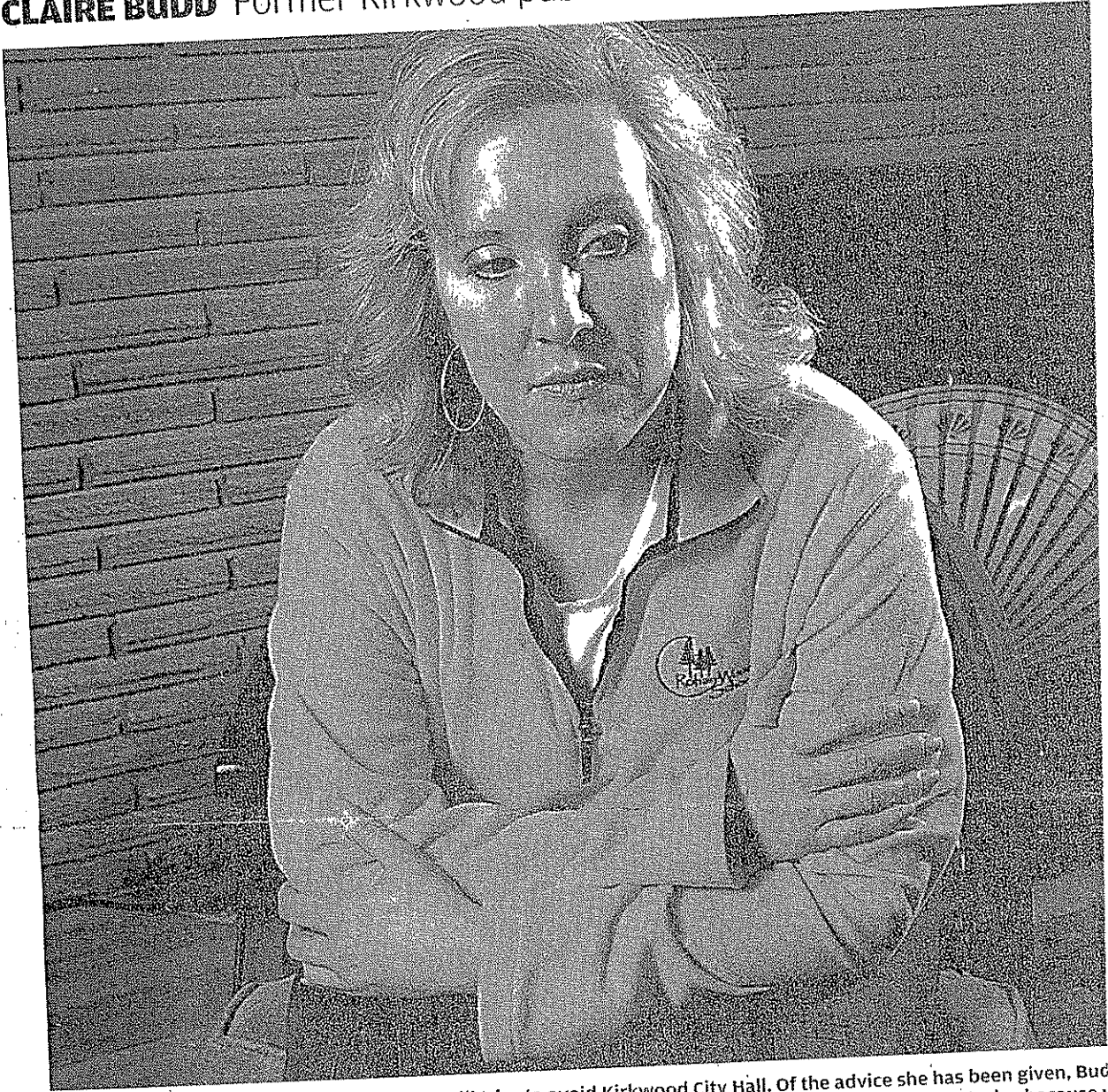
## KIRKWOOD SHOOTINGS: ONE YEAR LATER

# BEING A SURVIVOR



Kirkwood City Attorney John Hessel threw chairs at Charles Lee "Cookie" Thornton during the Kirkwood City Hall attack. Later, Hessel was given a chair from the council chambers. On the chair is a plaque. It reads: "Fathers always protect their children forever."  
Christian Gooden | Post-Dispatch

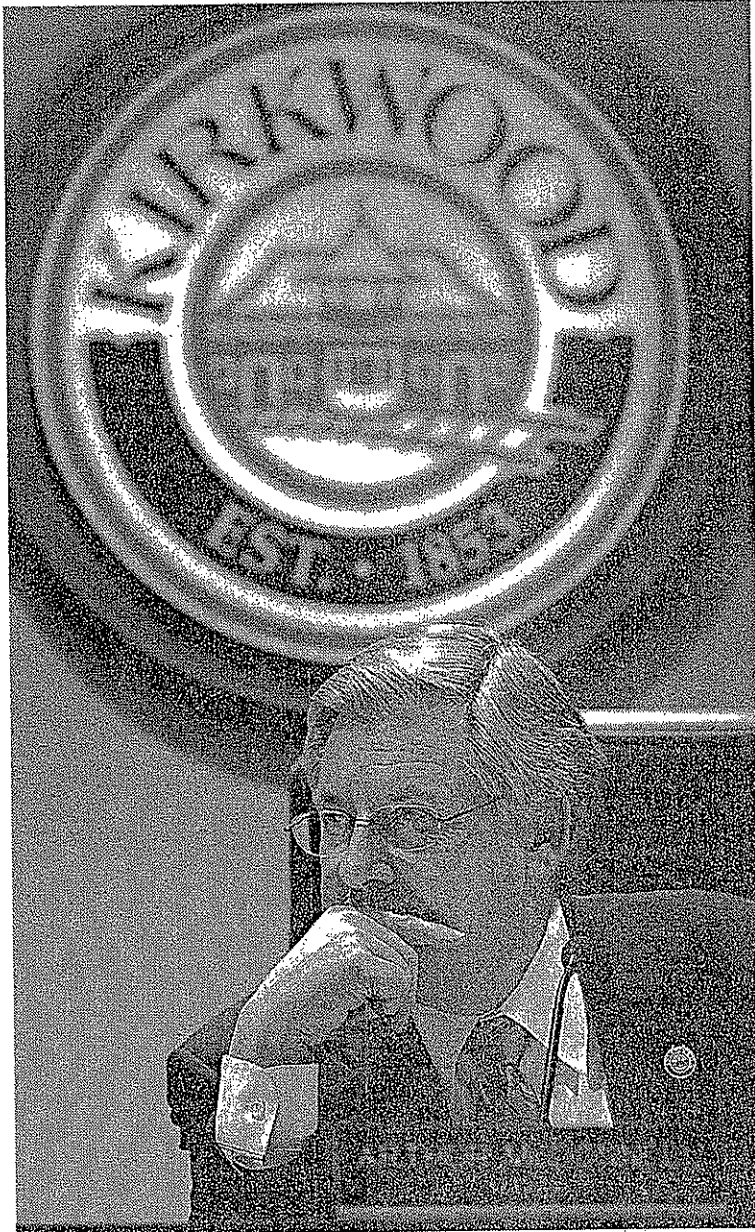
**CLAIRE BUDD** Former Kirkwood public information officer



Claire Budd said she is doing better, but she still tries to avoid Kirkwood City Hall. Of the advice she has been given, Budd most to the words of a Kirkwood police detective. "He told me, 'Don't waste your life trying to figure out why, because I don't know the answer out why.'"

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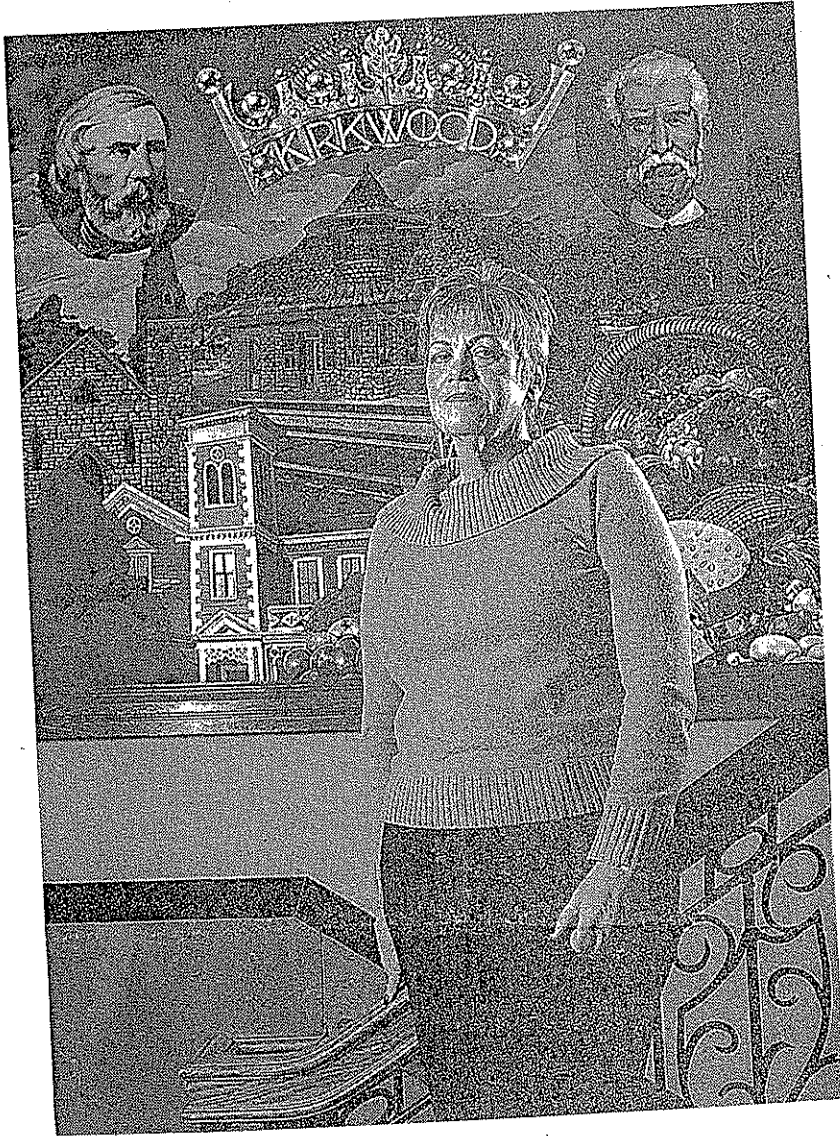


**ARTHUR McDONNELL**  
Kirkwood mayor,  
former city councilman

“It’s something I’ll never forget in my life. It always pops up. I can never suspect when. But I gently put it away.”

Arthur McDonnell, shown presiding over a recent City Council meeting, has a copy of the police report about the shootings, but he hasn’t read it.





## BETTY MONTANO Kirkwood city clerk

“In the very beginning, there were days I would wake up and say, ‘I don’t know if I can do it anymore.’ But now I just take it a day at a time, and one way for me to honor the legacy of the officials who lost their lives the night is to continue my career in public service, which I enjoy. I’ve been doing it for 20 years and think this is my niche in life. It almost like I feel like my position as a city clerk is a calling for me.”

Betty Montano returned to work shortly after the shootings, but she felt overwhelmed.  
Photos by Christian Gooden | Post-Dispatch

As

# Kirkwood shootin

KIRKWOOD | FROM A1

## Memories linger for survivors

Another volley of gunfire followed. A police officer began asking who was injured and motioning people out of the room.

The gunman, Charles Lee "Cookie" Thornton, lay motionless near the dais.

Forty-two other people attended the meeting or were about to enter the chambers on Feb. 7, 2008. Thirty-eight would survive that night.



Thornton

For many, normal had been shattered. Their worlds split in two — life before the attack and life after.

And with survival came endless questions.

*What if...?*

"I had tremendous guilt about not getting up and saying, 'Cookie don't do this,'" Burquin said.

*What should I have...?*

"Some people after it happened said, 'Well, if I was there, I would have done this, or I would have done that,'" Deputy Mayor Tim Griffin said. "What I say is, 'You have no idea. You have no idea.'"

One year later, some survivors say they are moving forward; the memories linger, but don't overwhelm. For others, life has become a search for a new normal.

"I don't know if you can ever really heal," said Claire Budd, the city's former public information officer. "It's just getting used to a new world. It's like saying, 'You can't go home.'"

### HAUNTED

City Attorney John Hessel was at his daughter's wedding reception, preparing to give the toast.

Just before he began to speak, he saw someone enter the room.

Charles Thornton was walking among the guests, wearing the same black jeans and leather jacket he did the night of the attack. Hessel watched in horror as Thornton pulled out a gun and started shooting.

The dream about his daughter's wedding last summer was just one way his mind struggled with what he had seen. For months after the shooting, Hessel had explosions of energy, his three-mile afternoon runs turning into six miles.

"I'd run for miles without even trying," he said. "I'd run twice as far and it felt like it was nothing."

Alan Hopefl was a fixture at city meetings, chronicling city issues for a mass e-mail sent to residents and others. Of all the people in the room that night, Hopefl thought he would be immune to the effects of trauma. He had taught medical therapeutics to staff in an intensive-care unit at St. Louis University Hospital. He had seen people die.

But three months after Thornton's rampage, Hopefl found that when he tried to leave Kirkwood's city limits, he was gripped by anxiety. His appetite would vanish; he was beset by waves of sadness.

"I was used to people dying, but those were people that I didn't really know that well, and there wasn't any violence involved," he said.

Todd Smith, a reporter for the Suburban Journals, was covering the meeting when Thornton attacked. A bullet that passed through Yost struck Smith in the hand, requiring two surgeries. He still catches himself rubbing the plastic joint doctors put in his thumb.

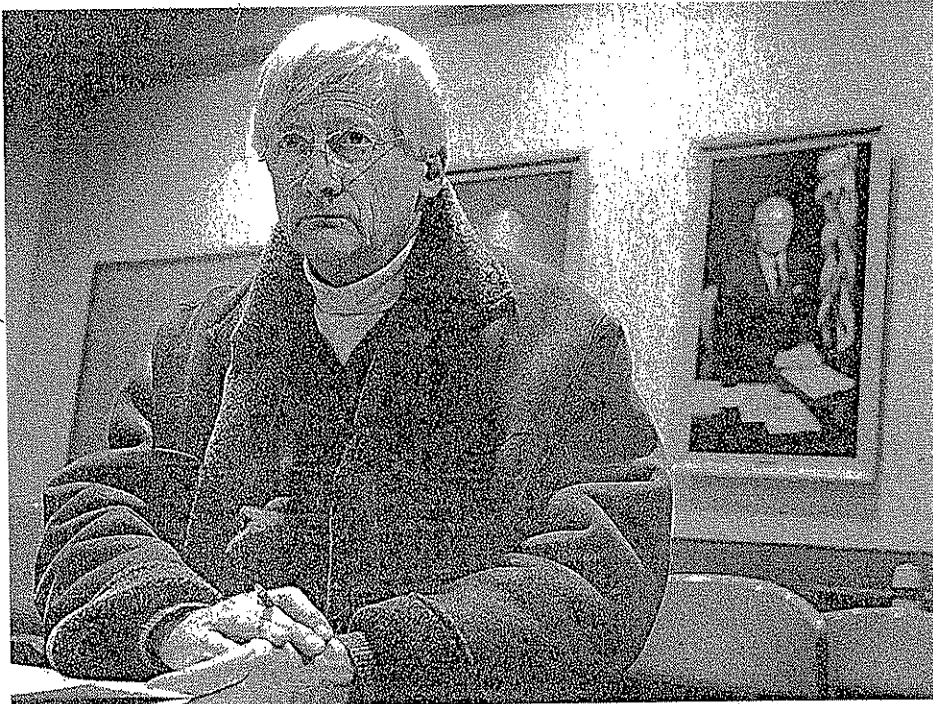
And he can't shake the memory of Thornton's face.

"I just saw complete hate."

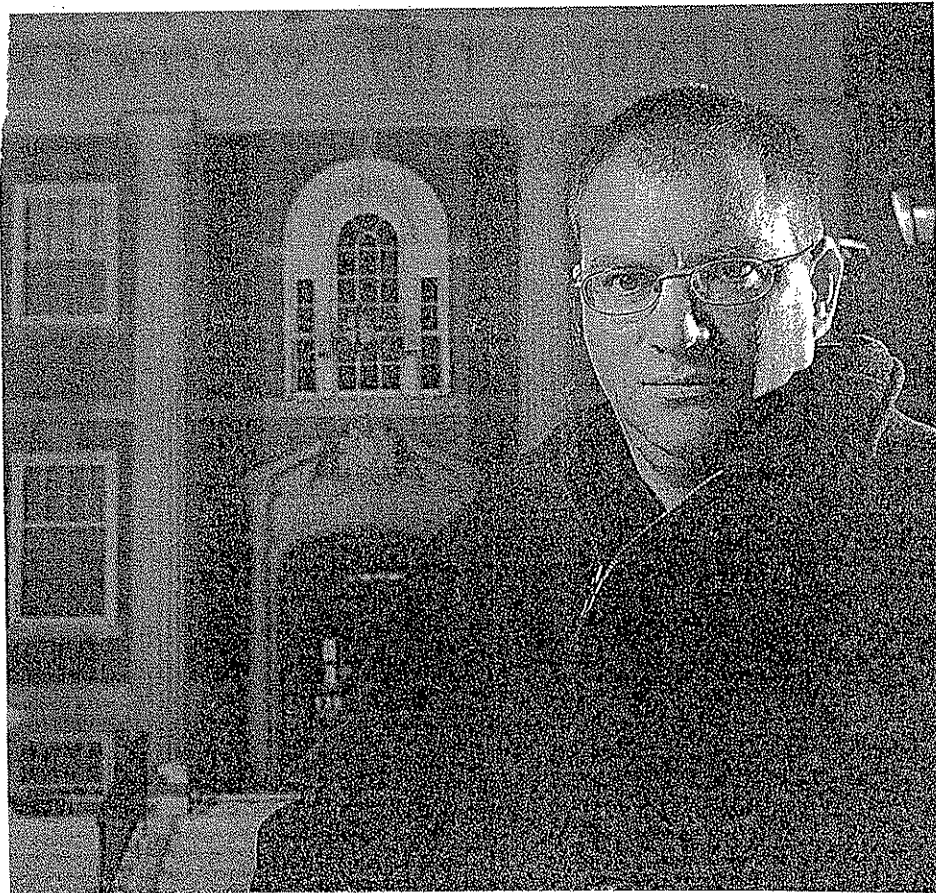


“For some reason, I just didn’t want to go very far out of Kirkwood. Maybe I just felt more safe in the community. ... A lot of people I didn’t even know would come up to me in stores and ask me how was. It was kind of unexpected.”

## ALAN HOPEFL Kirkwood resident



Alan Hopefl was at the meeting a year ago, preparing to chronicle discussions for a mass e-mail he was sending out. He has resumed attending meetings. “I thought some of the people who were killed would have wanted me to do that,” he said. Photos by Christian Gooden | Post-Dispatch



## TODD SMITH Suburban Journals

“In a way, I’m the only person who never actually gets to get over it. I never get over it because my hand is not the same ... I will never get over it physically.”

Todd Smith’s right hand was hit by a bullet the night of the attack. He has undergone two surgeries since then and now works as an editor for the Suburban Journals.

KIRKWOOD | FROM A8

# Survivors try to cope with memories

Thornton then burst into the chambers. "Everybody stop what you are doing!" he yelled, followed by a few inaudible words. After that, "Hands in the air! Hands in the air!"

Thornton can't be heard saying anything else on the tape, leaving some survivors to second-guess their own memories.

McDonnell, who is now the city's mayor, was among those who chose not to listen to the recording. But he kept a copy of the police report. "I put it in a box upstairs if my kids ever want to read it," he said. "But I haven't read the report. He had seen enough already."

## THE NEW NORMAL

Claire Budd can't visit her father's ashes.

They are buried in a memorial garden at Kirkwood's First Presbyterian Church. There, his name — D. Jack Patton — is engraved on a pinkish-gray granite marker.

On the same stone is the name of Budd's former co-worker and friend, Ken Yost. A friend she watched die. Seeing his name brings back memories she can't put aside.

"Ken was a wonderful man and I considered him a good friend," Budd said. "But when I see that name, at least for now, those aren't the first memories that come to mind — it's what happened that night to him."

Budd quit her job at City Hall. If she was going to find a new sense of normal, she needed to do it somewhere else. She feels as if she's come a long way since that night, but not far enough to attend a remembrance ceremony, scheduled for Feb. 7. She has a hard time even driving down Kirkwood Road, past the building where she watched friends die.

Many survivors sought counseling from professionals, clergy and from the only people who could possibly know what it was like to live through such horror — the other survivors. Mullen and his neighbors formed their own self-help group that still meets on occasion to keep tabs on one another.

A few found the strength to return to the very place that produced such painful memories.

Montano, the city clerk, went back to work at City Hall almost immediately. But she found herself overwhelmed by the memories. She turned to counseling.

"I don't think that I'd be where I am today without that," she said.

Mullen also returned to the council chambers to finish the work he had started. The proposal for the medical building he and his neighbors were fighting eventually was resolved. They prevailed. Hopeff resumed his note-taking

at city meetings. "I thought some of the people who were killed would have wanted me to do that," he said.

McDonnell said the tragedy had made him appreciate so much more in life. Any time he gets a phone call from one of his sons, he takes it.

"Before, I might have said, 'Peter, can I call you right back?'" McDonnell said.

"Now I think, 'Well, this is the moment I have.'"

At times, Hessel has no words for his emotions — a strange mix of gratitude and bereavement. What do you call that?

"It's not guilt," said Hessel. "I don't know how to find the term for the feeling you have."

For some of the people who returned to council chambers, there are uneasy moments. When the doors at the back of the chambers open, they turn and look. Their minds wander.

## MOVING FORWARD

On the afternoon before the shootings, Hessel was sitting in his office, apologizing to his father who had died 10 years ago that day.

*"I know I should get out to your grave site today and see you. But I don't have time. I have to go to this stupid council meeting."*

That urge Hessel felt while he was under the desk during the attack? He thinks it was his father telling him to get up and run.

"I was absolutely certain that my father was my guardian angel," he said.

He knows people credit him with saving lives by distracting Thornton, but he doesn't feel like much of a hero. "I was just trying to stay alive," he said.

He has replayed the night hundreds of times, envisioned ways he could have acted differently. But each time he changes something, each time he veers from reality, the result is always the same.

"I get killed," he said.

For days after the attack, Burquin questioned whether she should have stood up and spoken to Thornton. Graduates of Kirkwood High's class of 1974, they had known each other for years.

Whenever she catches herself wondering what if she remembers what a counselor said just after the shootings. During a community program on trauma, one man asked why no one had tried to stop Thornton. It was not the right question, the counselor said, because it implied that everybody in the room did something wrong.

Only one person, the counselor insisted, was in the wrong. "I was so glad she said that," Burquin said.

And with that moment, the survivor took a step forward.

deere@post-dispatch.com | 314-340-8116

dmoore@post-dispatch.com | 314-340-8125

eholtano@post-dispatch.com | 314-340-8255



## ABOUT THE SIX WHO DIED

**WILLIAM BIGGS:** Biggs, 50, had been a Kirkwood police officer for 20 years. Thornton shot Biggs near City Hall, stole his gun and entered the building. Biggs sounded a distress call that alerted other officers to the shooting.

**TOM BALLMAN:** Ballman, 37, joined the Kirkwood Police Department in 1999. He was the first person Thornton shot when he entered the City Council chambers.

**KEN YOST:** Yost, 61, the Kirkwood public works director, had worked for the city for more than 35 years and was known as a quiet and selfless worker.

**CONNIE KARR:** Karr, 51, was serving her second term on the council and planned to run for mayor. She challenged City Hall to be more open and had reached out to residents in Meacham Park, the neighborhood where Thornton lived.

**MICHAEL LYNCH:** Lynch, 63, a retired Army reserve major, had served on the City Council since 2000. He co-founded his own consulting firm, had a pilot's license and loved to fly.

**MIKE SWOBODA:** Swoboda, 69, died on Sept. 6, seven months after the attacks. Thornton shot Swoboda twice in the head, and in the months afterward, Swoboda's seemingly miraculous recovery inspired many. He made a return to City Hall for his last council meeting as mayor on April 17. His death was related to complications from the gunshot wounds. The St. Louis County prosecutor's office ruled his death a homicide.

## CEREMONY AT CITY HALL

Kirkwood will mark the first anniversary of the City Hall shooting rampage with a ceremony of songs, candles and prayers on the front steps of the building at 6:50 p.m. Feb. 7.

It was a year ago, on Feb. 7, 2008, that Charles Lee "Cookie" Thornton opened fire at a council meeting.

For the commemoration, the city will close Kirkwood Road in front of City Hall and Madison Avenue alongside it.

The short ceremony is to include an opening prayer by the Rev. Renee Johnson of St. Matthew CME Church and songs by a gospel choir. Members of the Kirkwood City Council will light a candle for each victim as Mayor Arthur J. McDonnell announces their names. The Rev. David Holyan of First Presbyterian Church of Kirkwood will close the ceremony with prayer. If the weather is bad, the ceremony will be moved to nearby First Presbyterian Church, 100 East Adams Avenue.



*Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement  
Association*

*229 New York St.  
Kirkwood, Mo. 63122  
Harriet Patton (President)*



November 6, 2009

Dear Friends of Meacham Park Neighborhood, City of Kirkwood, Missouri:

Please read the article from the Saint Louis Beacon, an on line only newspaper at <http://www.stlbeacon.org>. Please notice the comments of Kirkwood Mayor Art McDonnell.

This is an opportunity for you to read and respond to how you feel about the article. Your voice is important and Kirkwood needs to know how you feel about it.

As members of the Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association, it is very important that we continue to promote positive participation that yields end results of better living status for all.

Please send your response to Mr. Bill Freivogel.  
U.S. Mail – St. Louis Beacon, 3655 Olive, St. Louis, MO 63108  
Phone – 314 535 6397  
Or to Margaret Freivogel, Editor, St. Louis Beacon, [mfreivogel@stlbeacon.org](mailto:mfreivogel@stlbeacon.org)

  
Harriet Patton

President  
Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association

## **Meacham Park resident quits mediation team appointed after Kirkwood shootings**

By William H. Freivogel and Jaclyn Brenning, Special to the Beacon

**Posted 5:25 p.m. Sat., Oct. 17** - The president of the Meacham Park Neighborhood Association has resigned from the Justice Department Mediation Team that was appointed in the wake of the Feb. 7, 2008 Kirkwood City Hall murders that left five city officials dead. The team is preparing to deliver its report next month.

Harriet Patton, a long-time activist in Meacham Park, said she resigned last month because city officials on the team kept saying, in her words, "Kirkwood does not have a racial problem. There is nothing broken, nothing needs to be fixed." Meacham Park is a mostly African-American neighborhood in Kirkwood.

In her Sept. 14 letter of resignation, Patton wrote, "After many meetings and much discussion and careful consideration, I have concluded that this process has little or no possibility of forging a consensus on reasonable and necessary actions for the future."

A spokesman for the Justice Department team said he was unable to comment on Patton's resignation or the team's progress because its discussions are confidential.

The team released a statement by the Rev. David Bennett, minister at Kirkwood United Methodist Church and a community member of the team. He said, "everyone on the team appreciates the important contribution Harriet Patton made while serving on the team. Her passion for justice and persistence for change has helped to bring awareness to the needs of the community."

Bennett continued, "I believe much progress is being made and that there will be substantive changes. The ... teams are finding common ground on important issues."

Mayor Art McDonnell, one of the city officials on the team, said in an interview this month that he wishes the Justice Department had decided early on that there was no need for the mediation process.

McDonnell said "we really don't have a race problem." City Hall murderer, Charles "Cookie" Thornton, was motivated by personal financial problems rather than race, he said.

Since his election as mayor a few months after the killings, McDonnell has been credited with opening lines of communication to the entire community. He regularly talks with citizens before city council meetings and has removed the three-minute rule that had limited the time that citizens could speak before council sessions.

McDonnell said he couldn't go into detail about Patton's complaints because of the confidentiality agreement. But he said she was unhappy that the mediation team did not reinvestigate old complaints from about a dozen residents of Meacham Park concerning the way their homes had been rehabilitated during the redevelopment of the neighborhood that began about a decade ago.

McDonnell said that the city had previously looked into the complaints of the residents and they had signed

statements saying they were satisfied.

Patton, who also said she felt constrained by the confidentiality agreement, said she had presented the list of unhappy residents to the city several years ago but officials had not adequately investigated them. She said she had not gone back to the residents to see if they were still unhappy, but she thought the city should have made a formal audit of the way the complaints were handled.

Patton said that the residents' complaints were not the main reason that she resigned from the team. The main reason, she said, was "Kirkwood's unwillingness to acknowledge that there is a problem, that is a difficult problem. The lack of awareness of white privilege is a dream come true in Kirkwood. Our public officials seem not to have a reality check when it comes to racism in Kirkwood. We could hardly even mention his (Thornton's) name."

In the months after the Feb. 7 murders, the Justice Department offered to come to Kirkwood to facilitate discussions between the city and members of the community. The Justice Department's Community Relations Service offers to mediate community disputes, particularly ones involving race.

The city accepted the offer to address "issues and tensions present in the community and to produce a written document setting forth constructive remedies or solutions."

Under the process, a city team and a community team met to discuss problems and solutions. William Whitcomb, in the Justice Department's Kansas City office, has overseen the process. C. J. Larkin, a lecturer at Washington University Law School in alternative dispute resolution, also has been working with the team.

The community team, consisted of Rev. Bennett, Lois Bliss, Rev. Vernon Gundermann, Ron Hodges, Charles Howard, Cynthia Isaac and Patton. After several meetings in the late 2008 and early 2009, the community team began meeting with the city team in April 2009. The city team is McDonnell, Chief Administrative Officer Mike Brown, Police Chief Jack Plummer, Assistant Chief Operating Officer Georgia Ragland, and Councilmember Iggy Yuan.

Several of the remaining members of the community team were heavily involved in last year's meetings held by the Community for Understanding and Healing, now called the Community for Understanding and Hope (CFUH). Hodges, Bliss and Bennett have been active in the group.

The meetings of CFUH focused on communications problems between the city and citizens and on racial issues involving the Meacham Park neighborhood.

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# Meacham Park resident quits mediation team appointed after Kirkwood shootings

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Here is the full statement of Rev. David Bennett on behalf of the Justice Department Team

Thank you for your interest regarding the status of the U.S. DOJ Mediation Team work in Kirkwood. I would like to comment on the progress made and your interest in the resignation of Harriet Patton from the Community Team. Unfortunately I cannot at this time as both Community and City Teams have made a commitment to confidentiality.

I would say that everyone on the team appreciates the important contribution Harriet Patton made while serving on the team. Her passion for justice and persistence for change has helped to bring awareness to the needs of the community. She will be missed as an important contributor. I am confident she will continue to work for this important cause.

I would like to talk with you about the progress being made between the Community and City Teams in the near future. I believe much progress is being made and that there will be substantive changes. The two teams are finding common ground on important issues. I believe a report will be available in November.

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**Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association**  
229 New York St.

**Kirkwood, Mo. 63122**

**C/O Harriet Patton (President)**

September 14, 2009

**E-mail [ronpa11@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ronpa11@sbcglobal.net)**

**314-822-8814**

**Resignation**

Ondray T. Harris

Director of Community Relations Service

U.S. Department of Justice

600 E. Street, N.W., Suite 6000

Washington, DC 20530

Dear Mr. Harris,

I am the President of the Meacham Park Neighborhood Association and a member of the "Community Team" which has been engaged in the Mediation Process with "Kirkwood City Government Team", Kirkwood, Missouri. This process was established under the guidelines, ground rules and procedures employed by CRS. It was established following the tragic incident at the Kirkwood City Hall when Charles "Cookie" Thornton, a resident of Meacham Park, killed five persons on February 7, 2008. Mr. William Whitcomb of the Region VII Office in Kansas City has served as the facilitator for the process.

After many meetings and much discussion and careful consideration, I have concluded that this process has little or no possibility of "forging a consensus on reasonable and necessary actions for the future". Therefore, I choose to remove myself from this process and its outcome, and I submit my resignation and request that my name be removed from all proceedings effective immediately.

The efforts of the Department of Justice in seeking consensus among the teams have been invaluable. Please accept my best wishes for those members who remain in this process.

Sincerely,

  
Harriet Patton

✓Cc: William Whitcom



**Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association**

**229 New York St.**

**Kirkwood, Mo. 63122**

**C/O Harriet Patton (President)**

**E-mail [ronpa11@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ronpa11@sbcglobal.net)**

**314-822-8814**

July 22, 2008

U. S. Justice Department of  
Community Relations Service  
C/o Mr. William Whitcomb  
1100 Main St. Suite 1320  
Kansas City, Mo. 64105

Dear Mr. Whitcomb:

I am writing to you to obtain clarification regarding the aftermath of the Meacham Park town hall meeting (April 28, 2008) and the follow up meeting (June 12, 2008). Several members of the Meacham Park community asked me about what progress has been made regarding their grievances and complaints they voiced at the (April 28, 2008) town hall meeting. Many residents are also concerned by the apparent stalling of the mediation process, because there is no visible progress.

In order to better serve my neighborhood of Meacham Park I need clarification on the following issues:

- *When can we expect an item by item response from the City of Kirkwood city officials or from the Department of Justice to the residents' grievances?*
- *What is the outline process plan for mediation itself? What is the timeline of expected results from the mediation? Are there markers of progress of successful mediation?*
- *What is the precise role and capacity of Ms. C. J. Larkin in the mediation process? Does she speak for the Department of Justice when it comes to participants of the mediation process?*

I would greatly appreciate if you could provide a detailed reply to the listed concerns. I will pass on your response to residents of Meacham Park who are anxiously awaiting any news on these matters.

Sincerely,

  
Harriet Patton

(President)

CC: Michael Mukasey Attorney General