

WEST PLAZA

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION



3rd Time

Paul Minto, President WPNA

The latest development plan proposed for the block located between Ward Parkway and 48th Street, Roanoke to Belleview appears to be gaining support. The project's developer is apparently starting to take to heart the concerns raised by members of Kansas City's planning staff, historic preservation community and neighbors. His proposed plan has evolved to address some of these concerns. If this pattern continues, it may ease the resistance to this development and set a new standard for other developers to follow. This hasn't always been the case.

Back in the mid 90's businessman Cecil VanTuyt had purchased and/or secure options for all the properties on the block except for the Co-op building located at the southeast corner of the block. He had owned some of the properties for several years. The level of maintenance and state of repair varied from building to building.

He championed a plan that would have raised all the buildings on the site. This included the discussion of condemnation as an option if a successful purchase of the Coop could not be reached. In their place according to the submitted Urban Redevelopment District plan dated April 6, 1998, a 200,000 gsf (gross square foot) office building, 23,000 gsf retail/restaurant component and 1776,000 gsf of new condominium space totaling almost 400,000 gsf, producing a FAR (Floor Area Ratio) of 3.43 (the ratio of built floor plan area to the area of the site) would have been built. And it would have included 1,100 underground parking spaces.

The \$78,009,000 project would have been subsidized by the City with a Tax Increment Financing package. The package would have worth \$19,500,000, leaving the remainder of \$58,509,000 to be paid for by the developer.

But before he could move forward with the project, the City's long term master plan would have to be altered to allow this otherwise prohibited development scheme and

financing package. The state of Missouri expressly forbids giving such subsidies for developments when those developments did not conform to a region's Design and Development Master Plan.

The first step in changing the master plan is to seek support from the City planning Commission. In November 1996, after a long series of public hearings with the developer, the City's planning department concluded they "Had not been convinced of the need to deviate from established guidelines of the Plaza Urban Design and Development Plan or to rezone the property to a more intense zoning district to accommodate this project." The City's Planning Commission agreed with the planning department staff and on the 18th they voted to deny the request to change the master plan and to rezone the property.

What would have normally ended there didn't. In Kansas City the Mayor or a City Council person can introduce an ordinance to change the master plan and/or approve a rezoning request over the objections of the Planning staff and Commission. On January 9, 1997, then acting Mayor Emanuel Cleaver introduced just such an ordinance meant to amend the Plaza Plan and rezone the property anyway. (Continued on page 2)

**The next General Membership Meeting
will be:**

Tuesday, 28 January 2003

7:00 p.m.

**Swinney Elementary School Cafeteria
1106 West 47th**

Meeting Topics

By-laws revision vote

Election of Officers for 2003

Ray Braswell, Developer

West Plaza Neighborhood Association Newsletter
Edited by Boyd Williston (Director of Communications)
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Submit suggestions for newsletter articles or association activities to Boyd at his e-mail or postal address (e-mail is preferred). You must include your name and how to contact you for your suggestion to be considered. Articles may be edited for length, accuracy, and grammar. The submitter's name will be used only if permission is granted.

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Quarter page	\$35 per issue
Half page	\$50 per issue
Full page	\$100 per issue

(3rd time continued from page 1) If convinced to do so, the full City Council who votes on such ordinances, could disregard the recommendations of the Planning staff and the Planning Commission, and change the master plan to allow the development. Likewise, the City Council could also disregard with he recommendations of the Tax Increment Financing Commission too.

With renewed life, Mr. VanTuyl attempted to acquire support for his request for public financing by way of a Redevelopment Plan submitted to the Tax Increment Financing Commission. He was seeking approximately \$19.5 million in public financing via tax increment financing. During the late spring of 1997, the TIF Commission weighed the merits of the developer's request for a tax break from the City and his plea for the City Council to change the master plan so his project could move forward.

Another round of public hearings followed. Then on June 11, 1997, instead of gaining the support the developer sought and moving the project along, the Commission aligned itself with the findings of the Planning Commission and "Recommended that the City Council take no further action on the project." Only the Chairwoman Kay Waldo Barnes and Commissioner Pendleton objected to the Commission's resolution.

Again a typical project might not have gone any further after such a recommendation. But again, since an elected official intervened, the Planning, Zoning, & Economic Development Committee of the City Council disregarded the recommendations and took up the troubled ordinance request anyway.

The four member PZ&E City Council committee was chaired by Councilman Ken Bacchus. His committee normally reviewed the developer's request, the proceedings and recommendations of the Planning Commission, the proceedings and recommendations of the TIF Commission, and makes a recommendation to

the entire City Council. After considering the project's history and conducting another long series of public hearings and testimony, the Committee could not come to a consensus. In July 1998, the Committee moved the request to the full Council without its own recommendation.

Council support for the Mayor's ordinance faltered. At the request of the developer's attorney, Michael White of then Polsinelli, White, Vardeman & Shalton, substitute ordinances were submitted to the City Council in lieu of the January 1997 proposals. The substitute ordinances would still change the master plan and rezone the property, and provide the TIF subsidy, but a new provision was added.

To address the growing public outcry against the project and the process, the new ordinance included a mandate directing the City clerk to recognize this ordinance as an emergency measure and submit it to the voters of Kansas City in a special election scheduled for November 3, 1998. According to the substitute, the ordinance would become effective only if the voters of the City approve both the rezoning and amended master plan, and concurrently approve the developer's Tax Increment Financing Plan request.

In a split vote on August 6, 1998, the substitute ordinance was narrowly approved by the Council. A special election was to be held to review the ordinance and subsidy request in a City wide referendum.

The special election never happened. Directly after the Council's action, the School District of Kansas City Missouri filed a law suit against the City of Kansas City served to Emanuel Cleaver, Mayor and to Roanoke Manor, L.L.C., the developer. School funding is maintained in large measure through the collection of property taxes. Those taxes would be part of the earmarked money to finance the project.

At the same time, neighbors, preservationist and taxpayers were preparing to campaign in support of the existing master plan and against the subsidy. Dozens of neighborhood and home owner associations organized and sent letters of protest and phone calls to the City. Then, without offering an explanation, the developer withdrew his request. The issued never made it to the election.

Since the ordinances could only become effective by winning a majority in a City wide election, the proposed plan changes and public financing never were enacted. About a year later, on October 19, 1999, the City planning staff issued a report that reconfirmed the original intent of the long ranged design and development plan. For the time being, the effort to demolish the block, rezone, rebuild and publicly finance a project on the edge of the Country Club Plaza was ended.

(Continued on page 3)

(3rd time continued from page 2)

The breadth of neighborhood support against the project was unprecedented. Similar unified objects followed in the City when UMKC proposed the demolition of several residential blocks around their campus. What the citizens realized was the precedent set in other neighborhoods would eventually have a direct impact on them in their neighborhood some day too. By joining together in a coordinated effort, neighbors, preservationists and taxpayers found a more diligent and less political practice of development and subsidy could be maintained.

David Block of the Block Company returned to the site in 2000 with another grand development scheme. Again the concerns of the neighborhood and planning staff seemed to be ignored. Again another project ended in wasted effort. The plans never made it past the first round of City review.

Enter Ray Braswell in 2002. He went searching for a location to build a boutique hotel near the Country Club Plaza. He found Mr. VanTuyl only willing to allow a hotel on a portion of the same site, if Ray could convince the City and neighbors to allow a high-rise office building and retail structure as well.

His current scheme is the result of working with various neighborhood members, preservationists, and the City's planning staff. The historic nature of the site would be maintained along the Brush Creek street front. The Coop building located at the intersection of Ward Parkway and Roanoke would remain in this plan, as well as the two adjacent blonde brick buildings located along Ward Parkway. They would be renovated into luxury condominiums. The other buildings would be replaced with new structures.

In the center of the block he proposed placing a 220,000 gsf office building. Along the north end of the block he proposed a 110 room, 68,000 gsf hotel constructed over street level retail 25,000 gsf. A central plaza would divide the buildings and create a vehicle drop-off accessible from both Bellevue and 48th Street.

The new project would total approximately 313,000 gsf and have a F.A.R. of about 3.2. The non-residential and office portion of the project would be larger than the original VanTuyl proposal while the residential component would be less with three of the original structures remaining. There would be 300 fewer parking spaces.

The project would include an 800 space underground parking lot. The parking would primarily be accessed from Roanoke with internal circulation and a secondary access made to Bellevue. Primary service vehicle delivery and waste removal access would be accessible from Roanoke.

The massing of the structures would rise up from the south, peak in the middle and lower back down along the north edge. Like wise the tallest element would be

positioned along Roanoke and would step down as the buildings progressed towards the west.
(Continued on page 4)

WPNA Business Members

SHELTON TRAVEL
4800 Bellevue
816-753-4888

**PLAZA PANTRY
GROCERY**
4802 Bellevue
816-753-8225

LE NAIL'S SALON
4804 Bellevue
816- 931-0303

DR. STEVEN RICHTER
Oral Surgeon
4706 Holly

**LADNER ASSOCIATES
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4808 Bellevue
816- 561-7580

BERGAMOT & IVY, INC.
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816-561-5599

**CATHY'S
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4301 Wyoming
816-561-2331

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4312 Terrace
816-931-4122

**FINAL DRAFT
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4401 Genessee
816-931-2276

HAIR STYLE
4500 Bell
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PLAZA CHIROPRACTIC
1507 West 47th Street
816-931-4601

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4428 Jarboe
913-722-6280

ACT II
1417 W 47th
816-531-7572

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207 W 31ST
816-753-4188

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4505 State Line
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DEALERS**
4501 Genessee
816- 561-4501

**RICH YOUNG
ASSOCIATES INC**
4501 Fairmount
931-4724

(3rd Time continue from page 3)

A green space would be maintained between the new structures and the existing buildings on Ward Parkway.

Ray acknowledged the desire to pursue a Tax Increment Financing package with the City. The amount of the requested subsidy is not known. To date there has not been any discussion of the merits of this request or a comparison to the past request.

One of the major reasons past requests to place non-residential uses into residential areas have failed is because they have not successfully addressed the increase automobile traffic created by the project. Often times the intersections located immediately adjacent to the development are rebuilt to increase car speed and/or street capacity but they do not look beyond the shadow of the building itself.

Increasingly, neighborhoods located around the Plaza and Westport are experiencing a growing amount of non-neighborhood traffic cutting through the residential streets at higher rates of speed. Then even the appearance of a quicker or shorter route into and out of the ever denser area leads many folks to travel the once safe and quiet neighborhood side streets, avoiding the heavier traffic on the non-residential thoroughfares. Each new project incrementally contributes to this problem.

Again to date, no solution has been offered to address this problem. Mr. Braswell verbally expressed a willingness to work for a solution but acknowledged he didn't have the ability to rectify the situation on his own.

The massing and height of the proposed structures have been reconfigured in part to address some of the concerns and a portion of the original architecture would be saved. The footprint of the retail areas were arranged so that it would limit the ability to rent the space to a large scale operation and make the spaces more neighborhood scaled. The new scheme provides vehicle access in and through the site in a manner that puts less traffic on the immediate streets around the site.

So, will this scheme garner public support? Are the non-residential uses any more acceptable than the previous developers' proposals? Will the traffic this larger non-residential development produces be any more acceptable than that of the past?

Will the previous opposition to the Tax Increment Financing plan have waned? Or, has this part of the City declined to the point where a subsidy is warranted? According to the School District's previous lawsuit, the developer could not provide "sufficient evidence that properties within the Plaza Project and surrounding area have not been subject to growth and development through investment by private enterprise and would not reasonably be anticipated to be developed without the adoption of the Redevelopment Plan."

This is one of the rare times you can have a voice in the direction of the City. A large amount of time and effort was spent by countless neighborhood leaders to create this scenario. Pay attention to the events unfolding and participate in the process. The developer has already prepared a formal Urban Redevelopment Plan. He has talked informally with the City Planning department, the Planning Commission, and the TIF Commission. But, he says he will not proceed if there is not City or neighborhood support. What do you think?

Ray is bringing copies of the plan to the next West Plaza Neighborhood Association meeting. Everyone is invited to attend. If you have questions and/or want to voice support or concern, you are certainly welcome.

On page 5 is an architect's drawing of the layout of the most recent version of Mr. Braswell's proposal.

Thank You St. Garabed Church

We had a wonderful couple of years together and we thank you St. Garabed.

As most of you know, the WPNA held its general membership meeting at St. Garabed Church, located at the intersection of 44th Street and Wyoming, for the past several years. The church was a very generous host and couldn't have been more accommodating. But our attendance proved to be too large for the facility. So, the meeting location has returned to Swinney School.

Please tell the congregation thank you and let them know we'll be looking for them at the next neighborhood meeting. Thank you.

Swinney School Principal Gives WPNA Warm Welcome

Principal Dr. Donald Bell welcomed the neighbors back to the Swinney School last September during the WPNA general membership meeting. The meeting location was in the cafeteria that is on the ground level (no steps) at the southwest corner of the building. The accommodations were excellent.

Dr. Bell informed WPNA members of volunteer opportunities at the school. If anyone would like to share his or her skills as a volunteer with a new friend, please contact Dr. Bell at 816-418-6275. THANKS AGAIN!

!!!Recycle!!!

48th and Forrest

Wednesday through Friday 11 am – 5:30 pm

Saturday 8 am – 4 pm

Note the winter closing time



Above is an architect's drawing of the latest version of Ray Braswell's proposal. North is to the left. The drawing is of the ground level for the block. The proposed hotel would be above the retail space, facing 48th Street. The main entrance to the parking is from Roanoke. The three existing buildings would have access to the parking via the drive from Ward Parkway.

By-Laws revision

One major issue for the next meeting will be a final vote on the proposed revisions to the by-laws. We are including a copy of the proposal with the newsletter sent to WPNA members. If anyone else would like a copy of the proposal, please contact Boyd Williston. Also, contact Boyd if you want a copy of the current by-laws for comparison.

Election of Officers

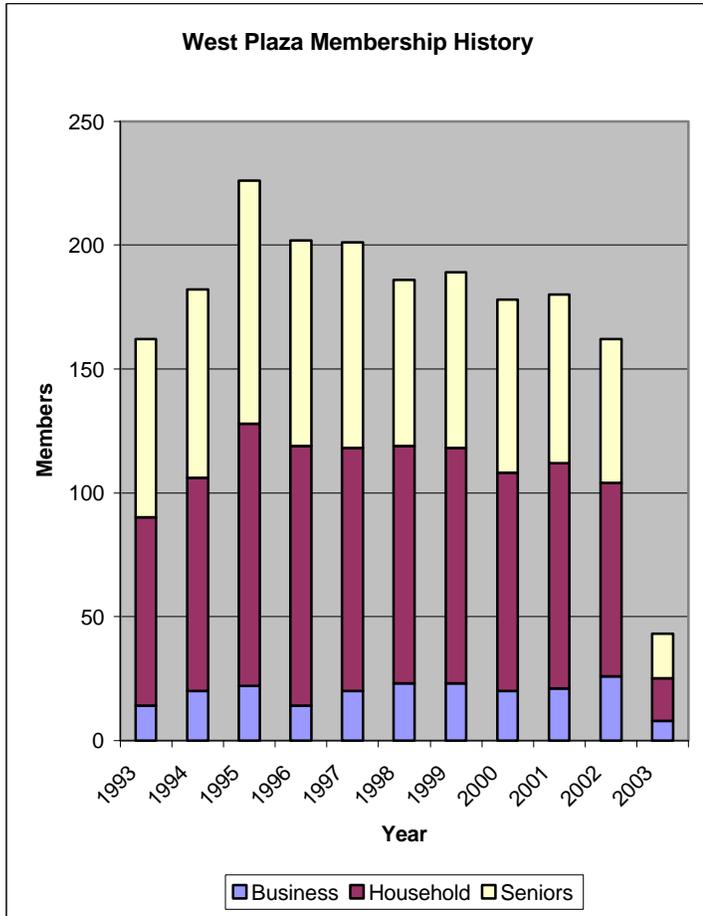
Every January, we vote on the officers for the upcoming year. This year, the election will be complicated by the issue of whether we adopt the by-laws that are being proposed. So the nominations are for the current offices, with the new offices that the individual would take listed in parentheses.

President (President)	Bob Crutsinger
Finance (Finance)	Marlene Toms
Communications (Secretary)	Elizabeth Jacobson
Membership (Membership)	Delois Moore
Marketing (at-large)	Paul Minto
Zoning and Development (at-large)	Shirley Williston
Senior Citizens' Affairs (at large)	open
Property Maintenance (at large)	Boyd Williston
Crime Prevention (at large)	John Toms

Membership status

It's that time of year again when we remind everyone to renew membership. Don't forget, we clarified our membership a few years ago, and **everyone's** membership expires on January 1st.

You might be interested in how our membership has been doing. Here is a chart of the history over the last ten year and the 2003 renewals as of January 1st.



Statement of cash balance, income, and expenses for the year 2002

WPNA Operating Account

<u>Beginning Balance</u>	\$5,020.80
Expenses	
General membership meetings	56.28
Newsletter	840.80
Neighborhood picnic	226.55
Office supplies	542.06
Board of directors meetings	23.32
PO Box rental	45.00
Westside Housing Organization Dues	50.00
Garage sale	89.99
Liability insurance premium	345.00
July 4th patrol	400.00
Nonprofit annual fee	15.00
 Total expenses	 \$2,634.00
Income	
Membership	1,832.00
Donations	497.00
Interest	29.45
Advertising	125.00
 Total income	 \$2,483.45

Ending Balance \$4,870.25

Neighborhood Self Help Fund 2000

<u>Beginning balance</u>	\$226.00
Expenses	
1600 Mutt Mitt Hangable Headers	121.76
 <u>Ending balance</u>	 \$104.24

Neighborhood Self Help Fund 2001

<u>Beginning Balance</u>	\$3,453.92
Expenses	
800 Mutt Mitt Hangable Headers	60.88
 <u>Ending Balance</u>	 \$3,393.04

Total of all money on hand \$8,367.53

Join Your Neighbors in the WPNA

Please fill out the information below and return along with your check to:

West Plaza Neighborhood Association ~ P.O. Box 32826 ~ Kansas City, MO 64171-7826

New Renewal Household (\$12) Senior (\$7) Business (\$25)

Name _____

Address _____

Zip _____ Phone _____

e-mail _____

I would like to help the neighborhood with:

Picnic Property Maintenance/Zoning

Yard Sale Neighborhood clean-up

Crime prevention Distribute newsletter

Refreshments for meetings

(January 2003 Newsletter)