JOHNSON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Johnson County Administration Building
Board of County Commissioners Hearing Room, Third Floor
111 South Cherry Street
Olathe, Kansas

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
July 23, 2019
5:45 p.m.

A. CALL TO ORDER
A meeting of the Planning Commission of Johnson County, Kansas, was convened at 5:45 p.m. on Tuesday, July 23, 2019, and was called to order by Chris Iliff, Chairman, with the following members present and participating; to-wit: Roxanne Morse, George Lund, Jim Neese, Mark Huggins, Dennis Bollin, Jason Meier and Roger Mason. Absent were Hank Deters, Pete Oppermann, Teri Atwell and Randy Hutchins. Also present was Jay Leipzig Johnson County Planning Department. Visitors included Cliff Middleton, Planning & Development Manager, Johnson County Parks and Recreation, Stuart Lord, Senior Planning Engineer, Johnson County Wastewater, and Brian Pielig, Director, Johnson County Public Works. Leslie Davis served as secretary to the Planning Commission.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Approved as printed.

C. CONSIDER MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Chairman Iliff: Are there any recommendations for changes or amendments to the minutes of the May 28, 2019, meeting?

Motion by Comm. Neese, second by Comm. Lund, to approve the minutes from the May 28, 2019, Planning Commission meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS [None]

E. JOHNSON COUNTY UPDATE
Chairman Iliff: We’ve called upon the leaders of different departments to come and give us updates on things like parks, wastewater, and public works. We appreciate you coming. We will start with Parks and Recreation.

Cliff Middleton, Planning & Development Manager, Johnson County Parks and Recreation, appeared before the Planning Commission and made the following comments:

Mr. Middleton: Thank you. I am pleased to be here. I will go through my presentation fairly quickly, so please ask questions if I’m going over something that you would like to know more about. First of all, we have 12 existing parks throughout the county. As you can see on the screen there, they’re fairly well distributed. Not quite as many in the southwest corner of the county, but we do have our largest park, which is Bull Creek Park at a little over 2,000 acres, down between Gardner and Edgerton. We recently opened some new parks, and as part of this presentation, I will go through that quickly.

We have opened three parks in the last two years – Lexington Lake Park, Big Bull Creek Park, and our most recent is Meadowbrook Park. We also have two park properties that are in various
stages of planning. The Cedar Niles Park, we actually did the master plan for that clear back in 2008. We are finally getting that park off the ground, or we will this fall. We are hoping to bid the first phase of that construction. It will primarily be a trail project with access points at 135th Street. We will have additional park amenities, playground, restroom, picnic shelter, that type of thing. So, Cedar Niles Park will have about four miles of trail. I’ll get into that a little more in the presentation. The other is Camp Branch Park, which is in the southeast part of the park. We just recently finished master planning that park. Again, I will talk about that further down in the presentation.

The other thing that Johnson County Parks does – Actually, there are three main types of properties we own. We own our regional parks, which is the first slide, and we also do streamway trails, greenways along nine of the major, the plan is eventually nine of the major streams in the county. This slide, the trails in red would be the Johnson County trails. You can see, for context, there are a lot of purple lines on there; those would be trails by different municipalities in the county. Johnson County Parks and Rec has about 52 miles of paved trail, with all type of trail, including equestrian, mountain bike, hiking trails, at the various parks. We have about 112 miles of trails.

So, I talked about some of the parks we opened, and these are the ones that I’m going to go through quickly. In 2017, we opened Lexington Lake Park. It’s in the northwest part of the county, west of De Soto. It’s about 465 acres. This slide shows some of its nature features. It had a 28-acre lake when we bought it, which was a nice asset. We did improve that lake, did some work on it. Nice little park. Coffee Creek trail was one of our streamway trails, our most recent one. We opened it in October of 2017, and it’s 3 ½ miles. This is actually in Overland Park, not in the unincorporated area, but fairly close to quite a few of the unincorporated residences. So, it wouldn’t surprise me to see that type of use on that trail. Finally, Big Bull Creek Park was opened in 2018. Again, that’s our largest park, a little over 2,000 acres. It’s got a nature-themed playground, several picnic shelters. There’s an organized group camp for scout groups, that type of thing, in the park. As part of that, we also built a maintenance building and a park police substation. Our main park police station is in Shawnee Mission Park, but now we have a substation that we staff down in the southwest part of the county.

Stilwell inclusive playground was a fairly major project in the unincorporated area, and we also opened that in 2018. About $1 million playground. Very well received by the community. We got lots of great input from the Stilwell Community organization, and others. Lots of great input from people that work with individuals with disabilities, physical therapists, 4-H people, etc. It was a great process, and really enjoyed all the input we had on that.

Quickly, I’m going to mention Meadowbrook park is not in the unincorporated area, but it was a big project for us. It’s really hard to get decent, big, park-sized property within the 435 loop. So, working with the developer that bought the old Meadowbrook Country Club, we managed to get 82 acres out of that. The City was a big part of facilitating that. There was TIF bonds sold to both purchase the park property, purchase the 82 acres, and also do about $5.5 million worth of the first phase of development. A lot of times, those type of investments go back to the developer. In this case, a fairly unique project, I think, where they really all went to... Well, maybe not all of it. By far, the majority went to public improvements. So, it was a great project.

Chairman Iliff: Let me stop you for a second. I was there at the park today, and the place was packed with kids and parents, on a Tuesday. You know, one month into being opened. And even before you opened, with the snow we had this winter, the snow mound, the mound that you built there was being actively used by sledders. It was just unbelievable to see the transition from a
private golf course into a public space that is really being actively used by ultimately tens of thousands of people, but today there were hundreds out there. It was wonderful.

Mr. Middleton: And the playground especially there is that every day that I've been there. It's summer, kids are out of school, yeah, it's been a great attraction and a wonderful thing. To move on to another project in the unincorporated area, the Kill Creek observation tower. This is a 45-foot-tall observation tall that we're constructing in Kill Creek Park. The project is under construction. In fact, it started going vertical yesterday. There are four big steel columns now standing out there. You can see from the pictures, it's a unique structure. It will have an elevator, so it's completely accessible. You can get off at any of the levels. We think it's going to be a nice attraction for that park. This project was about 50 percent funded from the estate of the gentleman we bought about half of the property from out there, when we first started acquiring property for that park. He left us about a million dollars. The project, we're looking at it finishing out at about $1.9 million. So, that legacy went to create something special out there.

The other thing we do is trails, like I said, and I want to show future trail projects that are our priority list. I mentioned Cedar Creek streamway trail, and I'll get into a little more detail on that. We can see that in the purple star, kind of in the middle of the screen. We're hoping to bid that later this fall and start construction before the end of the year. The Kill Creek streamway trail, the south portion of that, that trail will begin construction, probably in the next two weeks. We had to acquire an easement there; that's been done. We've actually started a little bit of work on it. We've done some fencing out there. We've ordered a pedestrian bridge that we need to cross a creek. You'll start seeing the trail cut sometime in the next several days.

And then, the other ones we had highlighted are probably further out. I'm going to talk a little bit about our CIP and our plans. The Park's CIP is in a bit of flux right now, with the board trying to make some priorities with some projects. I'll come back to that in a minute.

Cedar Niles Trail. Cedar Niles is 900-and-some acres west of Olathe. It is in the unincorporated area. The property comes very close to touching the Lake Olathe property. You all have probably heard that that lake is undergoing a fairly big redevelopment, and parts of it are open, and the rest of it finishing up. They have quite a few trails involved in that project. Our trail and another trail that the City is doing south of Lake Olathe will eventually create about 10 miles of trail in that part of the county. You can see on this graphic, the darker green on the left side is the Cedar Niles property, and the purple trail is what we will be constructing as our first phase, with the exception of a little piece that extends north of 119th Street that would be a future phase. The Lake Olathe trails are in place, and then, the City has a project, a trail down on the south end that connects Lake Olathe to Cedar Lake. There is going to be, at least initially, a bit of a gap between our trail and the City's Lake Olathe trail. The City's working on how they can make that connection. If you've driven down that part of 135th Street going west, you know it's a pretty steep downhill. The properties don't quite touch, so they're trying to figure out how they can do that within the right-of-way.

On the right side of that graphic in the black is the concept for the Cedar Niles trail. The alignment has changed a little bit since the plans have been done. It's a little bit curvier in sections, but generally follows this same corridor you see. There is a piece of property. You'll notice the black actually gets off of the green line there, and we do have an easement with Olathe for that trail connection. Like I said, we're in design. We're probably halfway through our construction plans now, and we'll plan to bid that this fall and start construction by the end of the year.

And then, this is just a graphic of the access point to the trail at 135th Street. This will be the area where we'll have our first, kind of park elements—shelter, playground, restroom, that kind of thing.
The other access areas will be parking lots. Pretty simple there. Actually, down by the creek within the flood plains, we’re kind of limited on what we can do there, but we are going to provide places for people to get on the trail at 119th Street, and also at 127th and Clare.

I want to talk about the Camp Branch Master Plan. Several of the Planning Commission members participated in that plan. I appreciate your input on the steering committee. I thought we had great input from the steering committee. We also had some members from the Stilwell community organization. They were very excited about having another park in their area. That plan just wrapped up, and the board accepted the Master Plan. We did have several opportunities for public input. We had an online survey; we had a popup event, the Park-palooza event; and we had two open house meetings. One was attended by about 50 people. And then, after that meeting, we actually were contacted by some neighbors that weren’t able to attend that meeting and some concerns about the park, so we actually held a second meeting. I think we had even more at the second meeting. I’m thinking we had at least 60 people. So, good turnout and participation. We got lots of good comments, and of course, the public had, they had some questions about things, but I didn’t hear very many negatives. We were very pleased with what our consultant did on that.

Here is the draft Master Plan, which those of you who were on the steering committee saw this, and the final Master Plan. You can see the elements all really stayed the same after our two public meetings. We did make a few modifications. We pulled the day camp area further away from the surrounding properties and refined some of the design a little more. Really, all of the pieces that we had in the plan are still there, and still in the same general areas. It’s a pretty passive plan. The north part of the property is probably the most resource-rich part of the property, also with the most topography. That part of the property is really only going to be accessible by trail, both paved trail and a hiking trail. All vehicular access is in the southeast part of the park, with connections off of Mission Road and 183rd Street. One of the things we heard from the neighbors on 183rd Street was they wanted the road to come in from Mission; the neighbors on Mission wanted it to come in from 183rd. Public Works said they felt it was appropriate for this property to have both of those connections, so we did leave those connections in the plan. We had some passive open space, kind of a green blob in the middle of the plan you’ll see. That’s kind of a big lawn area. People can fly a kite there or do whatever they want. It’s not a game field, per se. It’s just going to be an open lawn that people can use how they want.

And then, around the central parking lot, we have our park amenity area. We’ll have picnic shelters, a large playground. In the southeast corner, there’s an old farm pond that we’re going to work on and make it more of a wetland area. It’s kind of become that anyway, but to make it a little more attractive, do wildflower plantings, and again, a little footpath in that area. There is a day camp envisioned for the area on the west-central part of the park, and that would be really just some areas where you can have one of our camps in the summer. It’s not an intensely developed area. We figured it would handle up to maybe 60 kids at a time. There would not be overnight camping or anything like that. Strictly day use.

Chairman Iliiff: What is your time frame for development of Camp Branch?

Mr. Middleton: Okay, that was going to be my next piece. Our capital improvement plan, five-year plan that was approved in November of last year, shows the first phase of development starting in 2021. I will say that our board has been involved in some really challenging discussions on reprioritizing some of our needs, especially with some fairly expensive renovations of some of our sports complexes. The indications are really good that our next adopted CIP will be nothing like this CIP. I don’t have a lot of confidence to say that the first phase of that development is going to happen in 2021. We’ve been through two different scenarios with our board already. We have a presentation again next month. Lots of our capital projects, especially new developments, are
being pushed outside of the five-year plan in order to be able to start work on renovating some of our sports complexes. The board may choose to do that; they may not. Like I said, we have a presentation in August. I don’t know that they will make a decision in August, but certainly by October or November they will adopt a revised CIP or choose to continue with what we have.

Comm. Neese: I don’t see allocations for Cedar Creek.

Mr. Middleton: Cedar Creek has already been funded. This is starting with 2020 here. Cedar Creek was actually funded in 2018. We issued the debt for that earlier this year. Design is underway, like I said.

Comm. Neese: Is that for the entire project or just the trail ways?

Mr. Middleton: It’s for that trail with the park amenities that I talked about. That’s our first phase for that park. That project will move forward.

Comm. Meier: I was on that board for the Camp Branch project, and I remember there was supposedly funds that the trails could begin. They were saying it was going to happen the end of this year.

Mr. Middleton: We have funded a piece of trail that actually starts just north of that property, starts at 175th and goes to about 167th. With our board’s discussion of the priorities for the CIP, I can’t say with confidence that that is going forward. We actually are requesting our board to give us permission to put that out to bid. We’re very close on having the plans done, so we could be moving forward on that before the end of the year, or the board could choose to hold off on it.

Chairman Iliff: I see the Camp Branch trail/Blue River Bridge trail; it looks like it’s 2023. Do you have anything on that?

Mr. Middleton: That would be the next piece north of the trail section I just talked about. It would get us across the Blue River. It’s going to take a fairly sizeable structure there to get across the Blue River.

Chairman Iliff: Is there a map somewhere to show where that trail actually goes?

Mr. Middleton: We have a conceptual alignment. I’m sorry I didn’t put one here in the presentation. I had the actual alignment up to the point, and from there to the point of the project we’re hoping to bid, we had that all completed. From that piece forward to the Blue River, there’s not a lot of options of where you’re going to go. You’re going to be next to the roadway.

Chairman Iliff: Are you taking about putting a walkway/bikeway bridge over the Blue River?

Mr. Middleton: Yes.

Comm. Meier: This is a little off the subject, but I know what we’re talking about with major renovations to potential sports fields that we have because I’ve been reading about it. I’m sure that there have been many studies done, or maybe you’ve done research. Are the Olathe soccer fields, are the Wyandotte soccer fields that have so much infrastructure and cost put into those fields, are those profitable?

Mr. Middleton: I guess it depends on how you define “profitable.” We completed a study earlier this year on the renovation of fields and going with going to synthetic turf fields, and that kind of thing. It’s not going to happen without public input, public monies on that. So, I don’t know the development of Olathe, I don’t know how much of that piggybacks off the development around there that helps pay those bills. What we saw, what our consultants put together and said, you know, they can pay for the operation, hopefully they can pay for capital replacement of fields down the road, but they’re really not going to fund the initial development. As a park and rec district, we
don’t have the ability to have, like a tax like some communities have. We know that our development will benefit hotels, restaurants, those kinds of things. We don’t have the mechanism for that kind of direct money back to us. There have been some discussions with Shawnee in particular about maybe some help with the ball complexes at Mid-America and Mid-America West. Overland Park, I think they’ve been taxed. They feel like they have that at the ceiling of what they can do now. So, they’ve got their own issues.

My last little piece, in 2015, we did commission a study to examine what economic benefits JCPRD brings. We partnered with the Trust for Public Land, and they have some economists that had done dozens and dozens of these types of studies around the country. What they showed was that in 2015, JCPRD contributed more than $100 million in economic benefits to the County. These are the major categories in which those were derived. Enhanced property values. Properties adjacent to or within a quarter mile of a more passive type park. It had pretty substantial premiums to the properties. They used as an average 5 percent, which is pretty conservative, because we’ve seen numbers much higher than that. We know for a fact that the properties in Meadowbrook Park, with developers coming in, are selling for, in some cases, nearly double what they originally put on their cost. At least 50 percent more than what they originally figured they would get for properties. So, there can be some pretty dramatic increases. That’s not so much the case for things that generate lots and lots of traffic. And much like any other high-traffic generator, that’s probably not going to benefit your residential properties that much. But a majority of our properties are green open spaces, so that’s where those dollars came from.

And then, we also provide air and water quality benefits, and there’s tourism dollars that come in. We have sports complexes, we have the public that come in for those events. Direct use benefits would be what people spend for their particular activities that they would do on parks and trails. And then, health care savings; getting out and exercising and what that does for the community. With that, I want to thank you for having me.

Comm. Neese: I have a couple questions. I live on 127th street and am on the zoning board there. I’ve had a number of people ask me to ask you some questions. Some of the property that they’ve taken over in the last few years have had different kinds of land management. Some of it’s hay, some of it’s natural. Some of it’s, for example, off of 127th Street, some of it has been hay, and some of it’s turning into cedars. Some along 135th Street, there’s a swath down where your trail is going to go. Do you have a land management person that does that? And then, what is your philosophy about raw ground that’s become fallow and turning back to sometimes undesirable type woods?

Mr. Middleton: We do have a biologist, and we just completed earlier this year our Natural Resource Management Plan. We have some more dollars in 2020 to start implementing that. The Cedar Creek property in particular has a couple areas that have some really nice stands of grasses, and we will be managing those to encourage those native grasses. The cedars are something we need to deal with, and this is a challenge in that area, not only on our property, but there are several surrounding properties out there that have lots of cedars taking over. So, we will be managing those cedars, trying to reduce those.

Comm. Neese: Part of the property, where the creek winds around there, there’s no access to go across the creek to take care of a lot of the farm trees and stuff that are coming on. Is it possible to get more of a detailed plan that I could talk about at the zoning board? We make a presentation about what goes on here to our zoning boards. Would it be possible? I don’t know if you have any printed literature of what that park is going to look like, and the trails. One of the questions is going to be where the parking is going to be on 127th Street.
Mr. Middleton: Right now, the parking on 127th will be at the intersection of Clare and 127th Street.

Comm. Neese: I'm trying to think because it's very narrow. Would it be further north of 127th Street?

Mr. Middleton: You can see right here is Clare and 127th Street. There will be a parking lot there. The trail goes down, a little narrow piece goes down to 119th. We'll have another parking lot at 119th Street. And then, we don't have another access point to 135th Street. The Park Plan, in the long run, the Park Master Plan is on our website, or I would be glad to forward that to you. But the major park development is going to happen in here, and there will be an access road and parking. That's where most of the...

Comm. Neese: One of the questions that comes up a lot is on top of the hill. I know you just bought the Mauer property. What's your plan for that? I get a lot of phone calls on that. What are you going to have in that hilltop area north of 127th Street? There's an old racetrack there. What are you going to put in there? One of the questions is, are they going to put in ball fields, are there going to be lights? That type of thing. Do you have a plan for what you're going to do for that?

Mr. Middleton: The 2008 Master Plan did show some practice fields in there, not developed sports fields, not games fields, but some areas where teams could practice, where kids could play in that area. An off-leash area proposed in there. There are picnic shelters, playgrounds, that kind of thing.

Comm. Neese: And that's down the road. That's not immediate.

Mr. Middleton: That is down the road.

Comm. Neese: The next question is, the Mauer property, what's your plans for the house and that property?

Mr. Middleton: We did present a couple months ago to the Park Board the concept of maybe converting that to a venue that could be rented. It could be used for weddings and that kind of thing. The Park Board wasn't terribly interested in that idea. They basically said we don't know what to do with that. Don't tear the house down. We probably need to go through a planning process to figure that out. We acquired that property in December of last year, so we haven't had all that long. We've been busy on lots of other things. The 2008 Master Plan, that's kind of a hole in that plan because we didn't have that property. We do need to update that Master Plan and figure out what we're going to do with that property.

Comm. Neese: So, whatever happens, the plan is for it to be developed.

Mr. Middleton: That is correct.

Comm. Neese: Something came up from the zoning board that caught everybody's eye. The small sliver of property at Clare and 127th Street. We had a gentleman come in and ask for zoning on 60 acres to the west of that small sliver. So, that was granted. Right after that, we had a meeting, and the lawyer from the City - I believe he was a lawyer - made it clear that Parks had given a 20-foot easement across the front of that place, and therefore, they had the right to annex that 60 acres. My question is, what kind of discussion do you have? Somebody, it might have been the County Commission, I don't know, but somebody granted an easement across the front of that property, which in effect allowed the City to claim that it was contiguous to their property, and therefore, they could annex that. And if they annex that property, I think they argue that they can annex across the street, and in effect, have the right to annex that whole area out there. My question is, how did that happen? Did the City request it?
Mr. Middleton: I'm going to have to plead ignorance on that. I don't know what that easement was, or what was granted. Bill Maasen, our Superintendent of Parks, he may have some background.

Comm. Neese: And I respect that. So, what I would like to request is that whoever it is come to our next board meeting and explain that. Some people think it's not the most kosher thing in the world to do that. I'm not saying it's legal or not legal, but it was done after the fact, and the guy who bought the property was kind of dropped on, from what I understand from our zoning board meeting. So, I would just like to get a feel for how that happened. If Bill Maasen decided to give that easement, or somebody in Parks and Rec, without any kind of input, it flies in the face of discussion to the neighbors, or whatever.

Mr. Middleton: Like I said, I'm going to plead ignorance. I don't know anything about this issue, but I would say that Bill Maasen, if there is some background there, he may be able to provide it to you. But he cannot grant an easement. That would be an action...

Comm. Neese: I would just like some background because it happens to be in our area and there's been some questions about that. So, we would just like an answer of how that came about.

Mr. Leipzig: I'd be happy to look into that for you.

Comm. Neese: Now is not the time to go into it, I don't think.

Comm. Huggins: I was involved in that project, both 127th and Clare. I'm sorry, but I have another meeting I have to attend, so I'll have to leave.

[Comm. Huggins left the meeting.]

Mr. Middleton: Well, I've taken enough of your time, I think. Thank you for having me.

Chairman Iliiff: Thank you.

Mr. Leipzig: We have Stuart Lord here from Wastewater, he will come up and present a little bit. I think the previous request from the Planning Commission was for Parks and Recreation and Public Works, and I thought while we were doing that, I know Wastewater has a lot of exciting projects going on, so I thought I'd have them come up and give a review of what's happening.

Chairman Iliiff: I think it's great. I think it's exciting that you can refer to Wastewater projects as "exciting."

Stuart Lord, Wastewater, appeared before the Planning Commission and made the following comments:

Mr. Lord: I'm the senior planning engineer for Johnson County Wastewater. Tonight, I'll go over some of the recently completed projects we've had, and I'll talk about what's ongoing right now, as well as the trend that we see with development.

Just a refresher of what our service area looks like. We have six major treatment plants, and each of the watersheds go into treatment plants, represented by different colors. We have over 2,200 miles of sewer lines, 15,000 manholes, 42 miles of force main. So, there's a lot of assets out there that we have to take care of. This is a map that needs to be updated. It gives a rough idea of where we see development occurring, where we see different projects that are either underway or potential sewer projects that folks have shown some interest in maybe developing in those areas. This is the Gardner Lake area here, a project we just recently completed. The main reason I wanted to show this map is you can see where, the yellow area here, this is our consolidated main sewer district boundary, the area that we serve. On the fringes here, this orange area, for example, is an area where the property owners were interested in getting sewers, and once we have enough folks in a sub watershed that have an interest, we will bring them and have an
information meeting to talk about what it would take, the cost involved, the timing, that type of thing. If they are still interested, we will help them draft a petition that basically states that they want to be included in the sewer district. In this situation here, there were enough people interested, but once it came time to sign a petition, there weren’t anymore. So, in order for it to be a valid petition, it needs to be 51 percent of the land area, has to sign that, saying that they want to create a district. As soon as the district gets created, once we have a valid petition, we take it to the Board of County Commissioners for them to act upon. Once the district is created, the properties within that area will start having a sewer availability charge, which is currently $375 per acre, per year. So, as you can imagine, these petitions don’t come in, these areas don’t really develop until the developers in that area are ready to move forward with us.

Here is one of the projects that’s been completed recently in the Gardner Lake area. Kill Creek 2 sewer project. This district was completed a little over a year ago, but we continued to get properties that are still tying into this new sewer line out there. This is a little different than a normal district we have because we’re using low-pressure sewers instead of preferred gravity method. Low-pressure sewers involve having a pump at every house, and it pumps to a smaller line that then is collected, and it comes down to the larger pump station here, that then takes it to the treatment plant. So, low-pressure sewers are really designed for areas like around lakes where all the properties are sloping down towards the lake. It’s very hard to get a gravity line in there without having a pump station. By doing this and creating this district, we’ve managed to take about 250 homes off of septic and onto sewers.

Another project that wrapped up last year is Blue River 4, Contract 1 project. This was of particular interest because it takes a couple lagoons out of serve. We don’t want to have lagoons as our treatment process, and neither does the state. So, they’ve been looking forward to us removing lagoons for quite some time. As soon as the gravity lines got close enough to this project to the north, we were able to go ahead with another project to bring the sewer lines and take those lagoons out of service, clean them up, and now, that neighborhood, Timbercreek Estates, is now on traditional sewers.

Ongoing projects. One of them you’ve probably heard about. If you go down 435, when you get to Leawood, look on the south side of 435 and you might see a lot of tower cranes there. That’s the Tomahawk wastewater treatment plant facility expansion. The plant that was there before was treating about 40 percent of the flow for that watershed, and the other 60 percent was being sent on to KCMO for them to treat. With the rate increasing at KCMO, we did a study, and it was determined that it made sense for us to go ahead and upsize our plant and treat 100 percent of it ourselves, rather than passing it on down. If you want more detailed information on this project, it has its own website, JCWTomahawk.com. There is a live webcam there that shows progress on what’s going on, there on the site, and it also has more detailed information. They started construction last year. Completion is intended for October 2021, so we still have a ways to go. And by "substantial completion," that’s the point at which the plant can start to take flow. Final completion would be in 2022.

Comm. Neese: I have a quick question. When it went to Kansas City, where did it go? What plant was there?

Mr. Lord: There’s a lot of people who know that better than I do. I’m not sure what the name of the treatment plant is that KCMO, that it went to. I’d have to look into that. I just know it was a KCMO sewer system. A couple current projects. This one is in Lenexa, Mill Creek 1, Contract 2. This one goes before the Board of County Commissioners for bid award this Thursday, so hopefully that will go through and we’ll be able to get this project started in August. This one is of
particular interest because it’s above the caves, commercially occupied caves in Lenexa. So, we made full use of the service as well.

Another project that starts construction this week is the Executive Airport, 16, Contract 4. This project is of particular note because it contains a few different types of sewers. The yellow area here will be low-pressure sewers, much like what we have a Gardner Lake. Then it goes into sewer lines here that were existing sewer lines that the airport was using. Those old sewer lines will get rehabbed. And then, the red line is the new gravity sewers that we will put in to bring it down to the existing JCW system to the south. The airport was treating their own flow, kind of a package plant, so we will be able to get rid of that and clean up these as well. Much like the case with Blue River 4, the state was anxious to have us do this project and help them out as well.

A little bit about permits. We are a little off pace compared to the last couple of years on the permits we’ve issued. We’re at about 469 through June, which is more on par with what we saw in 2012-2013. Even with that being the case, we’re still seeing through the online software database that we use, we’re getting about 20 plan submittals a week, either commercial plan review or sewer main extension plans. We’re getting in about 20 of those. Also, about four residential permits requested every day. So, we’re moving along at a fairly good clip right now.

Here’s another map that we’ll be updating this year. It’s a system expansion potential map. So, this generally shows where we were projecting sewers would expand into in the next 25 years. So, the different colors represent different five-year increments. As you can tell, for example, the maroon area here, we anticipate sewers will probably go into that area by 2030.

A couple things of note on this map are the cross-hatched area in the yellow, those are areas in the consolidated sewer district where sewers are basically available because it’s vacant ground. These areas haven’t developed yet, but the sewers are there. We estimated that to be about 15,000 acres. The orange areas are areas that may or may not be in the CMSD itself, but there’s a sewer line within a quarter mile from that edge. So, when we create a sewer sub district with public funds, we’ll put in the lines. So, we put in the lines up to a quarter mile from the top of the watershed. Any branches off of that trunk are paid by either the property owners or developers, or what-have-you. In the orange areas, there are sewers generally there for folks to extend off of. That is estimated to be about 15,000 acres itself. Really what we’ve seen is, rather than the sewer main expansion into the urban fringe that we used to see a lot more of, we’re seeing more now permits for infill and for redevelopment type areas. We’re seeing a lot more of a trend for that.

That’s basically it. I kept it pretty quick. I can go into more details if you want. If you want more information about the treatment plant process, we give tours, so you’re more than welcome to come out. If you want more details on the district creation process or anything along those lines, just give me a call.

Chairman Iliff: Thank you, Mr. Lord.

Comm. Meier: Is there any way to get that last slide shown, where the future sewers are planned? Just a pdf of that, mailed to us?

Mr. Lord: You bet. I will warn you, it is dated. I don’t see the date on here, but it’s a couple years old, and it’s one of the things, we plan to have a new version of that this fall. I can give you a copy now, but we’ll get you a revised version on what’s available. We base those on where we receive phone calls, interest, and also the proximity of the existing sewer.

Comm. Meier: Thank you.

Chairman Iliff: I’m going to declare a five-minute break.
[The Commission took a short break.]

Chairman Iliff: All right, we're ready to resume. Mr. Pietig.

Brian Pietig, Public Works Department, appeared before the Planning Commission and made the following comments:

Mr. Pietig: Good evening. I'm going to start by talking about dust control. About a month ago, we had a Committee of the Whole meeting with the Board of County Commissioners. They approved a subsidized dust control program. The number one complaint we get on gravel roads is the dust that you see in the, especially in those hot, dry summer months, like we've had this last week. The thought would be that we would subsidize 50 percent of it. We had a sign-up through the winter, and the application would be most likely applied in May or June. That will typically last one season. This is a mag chloride. It puts a cementous type of surface to a gravel road. It doesn't 100 percent eliminate it, but it probably reduces it by 70-80 percent. It would need an annual reappplication. The cost for about a 400-foot stretch in front of a home is about $600, so that would be split $300/$300 between the County and the resident. I'm glad that we're going to be putting that out there next year, and I'm anxious to see how that's received by the public.

Chairman Iliff: Is that both sides of the road?

Mr. Pietig: Yes.

Comm. Neese: Is that the same product that they put out in Franklin County?

Mr. Pietig: I believe they do mag chloride as well.

Comm. Neese: Because it's $220 for the same amount.

Mr. Pietig: We will completely bid it. So, whatever the price is, the price is. If they can do it for $220, they must have a better vendor.

Comm. Meier: I've seen other counties in Kansas use millings instead of gravel. Have you guys ever...?

Mr. Pietig: So, the issue with gravel roads and why there's so much dust is because they have to have fines in them that holds the aggregate together. If you just put clean rock out there -- We get calls, "Why don't you just put clean rock?" The clean rock would just shove around like loose sand. You run four or five vehicles down there, we'd have to chase a blade after it to get it back in shape. It's just absolutely un-maintainable, clean rocks. So, you have to have fines that hold the aggregate together. That's also what produces the dust. If you just put millings down, there's no fines, and you have the same issue again. That's why. We have tried it. Every once in a while, we'll get a resident who finds a buddy who has millings, and they dump them out there. Then we just have a mess. So, I hear you. Some counties still do it, and it doesn't work very well.

Road projects, what we have going on. So, the issue we have in the county, as you can see in that top-left picture, that's an unimproved asphalt road. And I know some folks have seen this, so this is a rerun for some of you. We have the original right-of-way that the settlers dedicated when they opened up these roads. So, to become a county, we did a survey, and the survey was done on one-mile increments so that they could deed land to the homesteaders. When the homesteaders started pondering how to get their crops to market, they said, "Let's build a road to the section line." This was back in the 1850's and 60's; 1855 is when the county became a county. Before that, it was actually Kansas state. Which makes sense. You put it on the property line. They dedicated 20 feet on either side, they made a little dirt road, they cut some ditches, and that's what we still have today. It was gravel back in the 50's, then we put asphalt on it back in
the 70's and 80's. We have no shoulders, no ditches. We can't take care of the water very well. And if you look at the top-left picture, you can see that big drop-off. You get a tire off that, it's extremely difficult to recover. There's no shoulder there to make an evasive move or to pull over. There are utilities, trees, right next to the road. It's very difficult to maintain. So, you compare that with the bottom-right picture, where we've done some modest improvements. We kept the road, we didn't tear it out, rebuilt it, and we put shoulders next to it. You can see we've moved the trees away from the edge of the road, meaning we got rid of them. Utilities were moved away from the road, creating a clear zone. And the traffic crash rates on those roads and the severity of those crashes are much lower compared to the roads that are unimproved. So, our focus over the next 20 to 30 years is taking these asphalt roads and adding shoulders, adding a ditch section, adding a cleared zone to it. Not totally reconstructing. Do what we call a contextual type of improvement. Meaning the context of the rural county. It doesn't need to be totally rebuilt to an urban standard with streetlights. It's a type of improvement that fits that area.

Here's a cross-section of what it looks like. We'll have 11- to 12-foot lanes. We're generally looking at six-foot asphalt shoulders. That picture you looked at before is gravel. A lot of the comments we receive are bicycles. If we can get them an asphalt shoulder, most of them — not all of them — will move into that shoulder area to face the traffic, and the bicycle conflict is much less. It really helps out with that, especially on a road where, we're going to talk about Mission Road, we're doing improvements. And there are a lot of bicyclists who love to bike that road. I don't know why. There are vertical and horizontal geometric issues. But that's fun for them, I guess, and it creates a lot of conflicts. I think if we can get an asphalt shoulder out there, it will improve the conditions quite a bit.

Comm. Neese: Johnson County should put one of its mental health offices out there along Mission Road. I drive that every day. The bicyclists are, there's clearly something wrong with them. [Laughter.] Will that project supersede...? I remember one time you said we had, like, 243 miles of gravel road. Is that close?

Mr. Pietig: It's 135.

Comm. Neese: Okay. Will that program supersede the funds to take some of the gravel roads and make them a hard surface, or a finished surface?

Mr. Pietig: They all compete for the funds. We have a limited pot of funds to do improvements. Gravel roads, in general, the thought is that when you get past 400 vehicles a day type of traffic count, that's when they will start to compete for funds. It doesn't exclude gravel roads. Most of our gravel roads, we did a study... And we're doing traffic counts this year. About 96 percent of our gravel roads are below 200 vehicles per day, so we're in pretty good shape with gravel roads needing to be improved. The only stretch that needs to be improved is on Waverly south of 56 Highway and the railroad tracks, there by the Burlington Northern, if you're familiar with that area. That gets 500-600 vehicles per day.

Comm. Neese: So, 400 is kind of the magic number, when it starts to...? Okay, good.

Mr. Pietig: Yeah, we'll be watching once it hits 300, and when you hit 400, we need to do something.

Chairman Iliff: So, Waverly is a target for paving at this point?

Mr. Pietig: It is, but we can't get our friends in Gardner and Edgerton to agree on what's needed out there, if anything. That one is a long story. We could have a whole study session on that.

Chairman Iliff: I happened to drive it recently and there are a lot of heavy truck that use Waverly.
Mr. Pietig: That's exactly right.

Chairman Lifft: And there were times when I couldn't see where I was going. It needs it, but I understand the political problems.

Mr. Pietig: Well we'll get there. Some day. Here's what we're looking at, which is probably what you've been waiting to see, is where we're at, and what's going on. The green are current projects on our CIP. As you can guess, we're in the Burlington Northern area, improving 199th. And the blue there, that's future projects that we anticipate. We want to do a connection from 169, and we've already improved a piece there, east of 56 Highway to Homestead. We're just marching across to the east, and we'll be doing improvements there. Ten, 15 years ago, I would have never dreamed we'd be in the southwest area of the county. There was very little development, very little traffic. And then, the Burlington Northern and the logistics park plops down on it, and the whole world changes. We were working on this stretch of 199th when that happened. So, we see that in the future, we will come back to that. That's the stretch between Ridgeview and Antioch, six miles. That's probably 10-15 years before we get that.

The other piece that we currently have on our CIP is Mission Road, 199th to the Overland Park city limits. That one popped up on our radar after Overland Park did the, what we call the island annexation area. They are currently in development. There are houses going in right now. They are selling them. The traffic is starting to come out on 175th Street. We have a project to improvement a little of 175th Street east of Mission that will hook up into the Overland Park city limits. The projections are, when that fully develops – and it's hard to say how quickly that will happen – up to 2,000 units. And when you take that times nine or 10 trips a day for each unit, that's up to 20,000 vehicles in that area of Johnson County, trying to get north and south, east and west. Which is also why we improved 183rd Street, put the bridge in there between Mission and Nall a few years ago. So, the big projects we'll be working on is marching across 199th Street, and then, Mission Road. We also anticipate projects... Up on Renner Road, we have a lot of traffic on that.

A couple other projects that are interesting is we have boundaries with the cities. Let me step back. These projects that we're talking about will be rural in nature and contextual types of designs that we are discussing. We also have projects in purple. You see in the two-mile stretches there on either side of Heritage Park. We have entered into agreements with the cities to look at the design and what those should be. Yes, those are going to need to be constructed to a more urban type of standard with curb, gutters, streetlights, traffic signals. The cost of those is going to be quite a bit, but there's a responsibility there from the County side. Heritage Park was developed by the County, will stay in the county, will always be in the county, so our board has tended to look at that as we need to partner with those types of folks.

Comm. Neese: What about that stretch on 159th that narrows down to two lanes, from the corner down to Black Bob? Eastbound of Heritage Park.

Mr. Pietig: I didn't quite catch the area you're talking...?  

Comm. Neese: One Hundred fifty-ninth and, I guess it's...  

Mr. Pietig: There's still quite a bit of 159th that's two lanes. North of the park is where we put shoulders and a ditch section on them. And I anticipate it's going to stay at that for quite some time. The cities are slowly annexing those areas and improving those. There are still areas of Olathe that are two lanes, but they are improving those even to a wide two-lane, even four lanes as you go into different areas in Overland Park. I would guess all of Johnson County, when people ask me if they'll ever improve the road out in front of them in the unincorporated area, the answer
is yes. It's just a matter of when. You folks have seen, the county grows 8,000 to 10,000 people a year, and it's done it for decades. That's a national trend. Folks are moving away from the rural areas. I grew up in rural Iowa and I have very few relatives left in those areas. The farms have gotten much more corporate-like, they farm in much bigger areas, and they need less people. So, I don't see that trend ending. That's what the Mid America Regional Council projects. Those improvements will just continue.

One other area of note is the circled blue area. We call it the Kill Creek Corridor. We need an improved north-south corridor, and that in blue is future. We don't have anything on the CIP, but I would guess in the next 15-20 years, some type of improvement will be needed there to connect 135th Street with K-10 through the Kill Creek/Waverly/Gardner corridor. Also, it's kind of small, but the little green star here is the De Soto bridge. It's starting to get into the window that we need to consider replacing that, probably in the next 10 to 20 years. That's going to be a major ticket as well. When it comes through, maybe a $15-20 million bridge structure. Both have seen issues with infrastructure and finding funds for it. We compete with all the other county departments, the courthouse, wastewater, libraries, parks, and it's a tough sell sometimes for these projects that only have a few thousand vehicles a day on it. But our board has been really good. We're still cranking the wheel, and we'll keep doing it. It's interesting, you hear the national issues of rural areas and bridges and the dilapidated issue of, whoever did it 30, 40 years ago, Don Hovey, who was our bridge engineer, retired a couple years ago, he was the first bridge engineer we had in the county, and we worked on virtually every bridge here in the county. We have two bridges left to replace. Our bridges are in great shape, and our commissioners funded a program to start replacing bridges about 35 years ago. It was a daunting task back then. So, you crank the wheel, and later, you find that you've actually made some significant progress. And that's what you're going to see in your rural roads. We'll crank through these, my predecessor will crank through these, and in 20-30 years, we'll have a good network system of major roads – 175th, 199th, Ridgeview, Pfumm – that we've done improvements to. And we'll save lives with these improvements. So, I'm really proud of the work we're doing, and our commissioners for funding us.

So, that's what we see. This is probably a 25-year look of what's going on. We take traffic counts as new developments happen. The Burlington Northern would be a great example. The Overland Park annexation area. We're always talking with our partners at Parks, the cities, the state, to see what's going on, making sure we're coordinating. With that, I will answer any questions you might have.

Comm. Mason: On Moonlight Road, beside your magic blue circle, that green? What is that?

Mr. Pietig: That would be the chip seal road that we did, and it's not holding up. There's a lot of traffic, and we're going to be paving that. One of the issues we have, this is one of those, sometimes you have to live with the decisions of your predecessors. Chip sealing gravel roads is very difficult to maintain. It's just an oil film you put on gravel, and it does not hold up to any type of traffic or weather. When you plow in the winter, put salt on it, it breaks and pops up. And especially this winter, our chip seal roads really suffered, as they did all over this area. That's one where it gets so much traffic, we just need to pave it and get an asphalt surface on it.

Comm. Neese: What is your cost now for doing a mile chip and seal and a mile of asphalt?

Mr. Pietig: To build a chip and seal road from day one costs about $150,000 to $200,000. And that's just putting the chip seal down. That's not doing any improvements, bought any right-of-way, it hasn't put in a drainage system to get the water off the road. That's just bare bones, just put chip seal down. To improve a mile of gravel road with asphalt is about $1.5 million. It's
expensive. You have to buy right-of-way; you have to move utilities. You need to do drainage work. You need to put down asphalt.

Comm. Neese: On the roads like Moonlight, which you asphalted pretty much an all chip and seal road… I don’t think you did rights-of-way and moved utilities and all that stuff. Same for 135th and 127th. What would that be? Last I heard it was, like, $750,000 a mile to do that.

Mr. Pietig: I’m sorry, I’m not hearing very well.

Comm. Neese: On Moonlight from 135th to 127th, when you did that, you didn’t buy a bunch of right-of-way and move a bunch of utilities, so, what was the cost on something like that?

Mr. Pietig: It would be about $200,000 [inaudible]. And that’s not something I want to repeat in the future. If we want to pave a road, we don’t want to recreate this issue, which is the path we’re headed on if we do something like that. If we want to improve a gravel road, we need to do it correctly.

Chairman Iliff: What is your timeframe for starting on Mission Road?

Mr. Pietig: We’re doing it right now. You may have seen, we’ve done some projects. We’ve straightened out that hairpin curve. I’m guessing we’re going to start on 159th and 175th in the next couple of years as far as construction. We have design going forward, providing right-of-way and utilities right now. It will take five to seven years to do the whole stretch to 199th.

Chairman Iliff: Okay. Any other questions for Mr. Pietig?

Mr. Pietig: Thank you. I miss seeing this group after my year of being interim planning director. Good to see everyone again.

H. DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Chairman Iliff: Next item is Director’s Report.

Mr. Leipzig: I’ll be very brief. I just want to point out, on your dais is the updated report. If you have any questions about that, please let me know. I’d be happy to answer any questions you might have. I also wanted to report that the illegal lot and mortgage parcel issue we talked about previously, I have a report that we will present to you at the August 27th meeting. We’ve got that fairly well finalized, at least a good draft.

The other item that we have is we’re in the process of recruiting for a new deputy director. As you know, many of you attended the reception that we had for Paul Greeley, who retired on June 28th. We had a great send-off for Paul. Right now, we’re in the process of recruitment. We had one round of interviews a couple weeks ago. We have another round this week. Hopefully we will bring someone board the first week in September. So, that’s moving along very well.

The other thing to note is Stuart Lord mentioned the MPN (My Permits Now) software that Wastewater is using. That’s the same software the Planning Department is using. So, Planning and Wastewater will be in line with each other in terms of permits. I think that’s a huge step forward. Also, I had discussions with Public Works about moving into that same software. They are small steps, but I think getting us all together and on the same technology platform will help tremendously as far as communication, being able to look up a parcel where you can see all the permit records for that particular parcel. So, that’s a huge step forward for us. The Planning Department is live. Right now, we’re internally live, or we’re using the product. We’ll be live for the public on September 9th. And then, we’ll be going complete electronic January 1st of 2020. And that is consistent with what the City of Olathe is doing, as well as the City of Overland Park. With that, that concludes my report.
Chairman Iliff: Okay. Any questions?

Comm. Mason: Is that the same software that Overland Park and Olathe are putting in?

Mr. Leipzig: It's a different software program. I know that the program that Overland Park has just didn't work for the needs that we have. I know they've struggled with it a little bit; I believe the City of Olathe is struggling with their product as well. So, I think it's just a matter of getting used to it. We've had a few issues with ours, but we're working through them. It's just a matter of programing. But it's still the same general process. You upload your plans — there's an electronic portal — if you're a land planner, or the applicant can download all the materials directly onto the website.

I. UPDATES/OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Iliff: Very good. Our next meeting is August 27th.

ADJOURNMENT

The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting will be Tuesday, August 27, 2019, at 5:45 p.m. This meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Chris Iliff, Chairman

ATTEST:

Secretary to the Board