
Manhattan/Riley County, Kansas PRESERVATION ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

JULY -AUGUST 2005

FROM THE PRESIDENT—DIXIE WEST

I've just received my copy of *Choosing Our Community's Future: A Citizen's Guide to Getting the Most out of New Development*. This 90 page guide, written by David Goldberg, is sponsored by **Smart Growth America**. SGA is a non-profit organization working to "sustain quality of life, provide plentiful options in housing and transportation, preserve our built and natural heritage and promote a healthy economy" (Goldberg 2004: book jacket).

The ten principles of Smart Growth include (Goldberg 2004: 4):

1. Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost-effective.
2. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
3. Provide a variety of transportation options.
4. Strengthen existing communities and direct development towards them.
5. Preserve natural beauty, parks, farmland and environmentally critical areas.
6. Create complete neighborhoods where daily needs are close at hand.
7. Create a safe, inviting environment for walking.
8. Foster distinctive communities with a strong sense of place.
9. Make efficient use of public investments in infrastructure, schools and services.
10. Put jobs and good schools within reach of all who need them.

There are five tests to see if Manhattan or any community is undergoing Smart Growth (Goldberg 2004: 6):

1. Popsicle Test: Can you walk home from the store before your popsicle melts? Can most daily needs be met by walking or biking?
2. Smooch Test: Is the place comfortable, safe, attractive, and intimate, suitable for a date-

night stroll? Are people—and their ears—shielded from high speed car traffic? Would you feel good about taking a visitor there?

3. Kid Test: Can children safely explore a world beyond their own backyards? Can older kids get around on their own, safely developing a sense of self-reliance and autonomy?
4. Seniors Test: Are elder citizens a welcome part of the mix of residents? Are they engaged and active? Can they get out and about and get their needs met when driving is no longer an option?
5. Commons Test: Does the development contribute to the overall community something greater than what it takes in terms of natural and community resources? Will it age gracefully and adapt to future uses, or is it designed to be disposable? What does it leave for future generations?

Choosing Our Community's Future is an excellent source book for anyone who is concerned about what the city of Manhattan is like today, and how we can participate in how future growth occurs. It provides information on planning, zoning and development (Chap 2); evaluating the potential impacts of development (Chap. 3); gauging the environmental impact of development (Chap. 4); and examples of how other communities have used **Smart Growth** ideas to improve their neighborhoods or cities. I would urge you to become better informed by reading this book so that you are prepared to respond constructively when development issues come up, not only in your neighborhood, but the city at large. It's an easy read, and at a cost of \$10 it is well worth your money and your time. To learn more about **Smart Growth** and to order the book log onto the website:

www.smartgrowthamerica.org.

REPORT FROM THE EUGENE FIELD NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

The Eugene Field Neighborhood Association petitioned the city questioning the conversion of a single-family residence, 1738 Laramie Street, and a Manhattan Judge ruled in favor of the city, requiring the current owners to restore it to its original use as a single-family home.

Manhattan district Judge David Stutzman on Aug. 10, ruled in favor of the City of Manhattan in its case against Manhattan landlords Abe and Fay Fattaey, owners of a rental property at 1738 Laramie Street. The judge entered a permanent injunction against the Fattaey's for using the property as a two-family dwelling. He also ordered them to "take all steps necessary to restore the property's physical configuration to a status in conformity with all currently applicable zoning regulations ..."

This former single-family home once belonged to Dr. Lee and Helen Railsback. It was sold on Oct. 3, 2002, to settle the estate of the deceased couple. Shortly after the sale of this home, K-State mathematics professor George Strecker observed much construction was occurring at the former Railsback residence. Neighbors began to question why trailer loads of demolished walls were coming out while more trailer loads of new wood and sheetrock were going into the residence. The area had been downzoned from R-2 to R-1 single family dwellings.

During 2003, Strecker filed a Kansas Open Records Law request for the correspondence between the Fattaey's and the City of Manhattan. Paying less than \$5 for the records search, Strecker obtained and shared these documents with approximately 20 people from the Eugene Field Neighborhood Association at a meeting in the home of Darwin and Nancy Abbott in late December 2003.

The documents were read aloud one-by-one and discussed by Association members. Based on what neighbors saw and knew about the property during the Railsback ownership, several seemingly contradictory statements were noted in the documents. The Railsbacks had lived in the home for 40 years, and while they lived there it was a single-family home.

The decision was made to circulate a petition among the neighbors to ask the city to reexamine these documents and to consider the

association's questions about them. To further validate the petition, the association contacted a Railsback daughter, Virginia Railsback Gunn, who sent a notarized letter supporting the neighborhood association questions.

Five neighbors volunteered to canvas the Eugene Field Neighborhood Association area that is bounded by Laramie Street, Sunset Avenue, Leavenworth Street and 17th Street — the area generally southwest of the K-State campus. Going door to door, the canvassers obtained approximately 80 signatures. This neighborhood petition was submitted to the City of Manhattan in 2004 and referred to the City Attorney, who further investigated and brought the action against the Fattaey's.

During the court case on June 14-16, 2005, it was shown that the home while in Railsback ownership contained three bedrooms and one kitchen. After purchasing the house, the Fattaey's changed the house to contain six bedrooms and two kitchens.

MANHATTAN/RILEY CONTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

**See page 4 for details of the September 8,
2005 Annual Meeting.**

Regular Meetings: Second Thursday of each month, 7:30 p.m.

Location: First Congregational Church, Juliette and Poyntz unless noted

President: Dixie West

Vice-President: Michael Mecseri

Secretary: Linda Glasgow

Treasurer: Barbara Poresky

Newsletter Editor: Marolyn Caldwell

The businesses periodically featured in the Preservation Alliance newsletter have helped us defray our mailing and printing costs by becoming sponsors.

**YET ANOTHER HENRY B. WINTER HOUSE:
1027 HOUSTON STREET**

The house at 1027 Houston Street was designed for the W.H. Donaldson family by local architect Henry B. Winter, a 1908 graduate of Kansas State Agricultural College's architectural engineering department. According to the Nationalist newspaper's 1910 Semi-Centennial edition, Henry Winter "was making designs for residences before he got out of college, so accurate and painstaking was his work. But since that time Mr. Winter has been furnishing the plans and drawings for a large number of the best buildings in Manhattan, as well as in other cities."

Henry's father John Winter was a building contractor who had been in business since 1884. "John Winter is a man of high personal standing, having been elected to the city council as the choice of the people of his ward, and in this community his name is synonymous with public spirit and progress. He is considered a very

useful man on the council, and is conscientious and honorable in everything he does."

The Riley County Historical Society has in its collection a post card dated October 7, 1908, which shows the house under construction. The message "from Henry" says "this photo gives you an idea of where and what I've been doing this summer...built on Houston St."



1027 Houston Street

The Riley County Historical Society

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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Dues date from the Annual Meeting in September, but paid mid-year, confer membership status until the next Annual Meeting: \$15/ individual; \$20/family; and \$60/sponsor. Checks should be made out to the Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance, Inc. c/o P.O. Box 1893, Manhattan, Kansas 66505-1893. Questions? Call Linda Glasgow at 785-565-6490.

If anyone has contributions for future M/RCPA newsletters, please contact the Editor, Marolyn Caldwell (776-4862 or marolync@flinthills.com). We welcome any and all new sponsors. They can be business or individuals.

NOTICE OF 2005 ANNUAL MEETING

The Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance, Inc. will hold its annual meeting at the Manhattan Public Library Auditorium at 7:00 p.m. on September 8, 2005. New members will be welcomed. Dues are \$15 for an individual and \$20 for a couple. Dues must be paid in order to be a member in good standing. Members will elect directors to fill vacant positions on the board. The board will elect the officers.

Directors whose terms end in 2005 are Fran Ellis, Judine Mecseri, Jim Sherow, and Dixie West. Directors whose terms end in 2006: Gary Ellis, Linda Glasgow, Michael Mecseri, & Barbara Poresky. Directors whose terms end in 2007: Marolyn Caldwell, Elizabeth Harmon, Pat O'Brien.

Members will then engage in a discussion about the direction we intend to take the organization in the coming year. Light refreshments will be served. The meeting will adjourn at 8:45 p.m.

M/RCPA
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