

PINCKNEY NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 125, Lawrence KS 66044

pinckneyneighborhood.org

Steve Braswell – President, 841-6902 Ruth Lichtwardt- Vice President

July 2009

General Meeting Saturday, August 15 10:00 am Lawrence Memorial Hospital, D South

Woody Park

Lawrence Memorial Hospital has expressed an interest in acquiring Woody Park at 2nd and Maine Street to use for parking. LMH has undergone a very large expansion over the last several years and LMH administration states that additional parking is required.

Woody Park was originally known as Lincoln Park when it was created in 1936. In March 1973, Lincoln Park was named Woody Park to honor Mr. Elgin Woody, who for years had helped maintain the area and organize athletic events when recreation facilities for African Americans were limited.

From the Lawrence Journal World article when he died in 1978, “Mr. Woody was cited in 1965 as Kiwanis Substantial Citizen of the Year, an honor that goes to living residents who have made numerous community contributions over a long period. He and his wife, who died in 1955, worked extensively with young people. They were credited ... with ‘keeping a lot of youngsters who might have strayed, traveling the straight-and-narrow’.”

Lawrence has a great park system and it would be a shame to lose any park. Parks and open space are important to any community. Horizon 2020, the City of Lawrence’s planning guide for future growth points out the need for parks and green space. It states, “Existing parklands and open space areas should be permanently dedicated for perpetuity and conversion of such areas to non-recreational uses is strongly discouraged.”

But the loss of Woody Park would be a loss of local history as well as a loss of a recreation facility and Green Space. There are many in our community who remember Mr. Woody and have expressed great concern with the idea of losing this park. They see this as losing something that was positive and good that was created during our segregated past.

On July 21, I and other residents of the Pinckney Neighborhood met with LMH Chief Executive Officer, Gene Meyer, to discuss the future of Woody Park. Mr. Meyer stated that the lack of adequate parking at the hospital is a problem and said he wanted to start the discussion if options for replacing Woody Park could be accepted by the neighborhood.

The importance of Woody Park as part of our history was brought up at length. Mr. Meyer said he understands that aspect of Woody Park and that it is important to so many people. This was a very general meeting and nothing was decided except more discussion is necessary.

I have gotten a number of phone calls and emails from people in our community, many not residents of the Pinckney neighborhood, and they all have expressed concern at losing this park. There was a Lawrence Journal World newspaper article July 18, a letter to the editor and a sports column about Woody Park.

So this is a big deal. Our community hospital, which is important to all of us, says it needs more room. Neighborhood and other community members have expressed great concern with not just losing a park, but this park with its history and meaning for many people.

We will have a PNA meeting Saturday August 15 at 10:00 am in meeting room D South on the lower level of Lawrence Memorial Hospital. Gene Meyer with the hospital as well as City Manager, Dave Corliss, will be at this meeting to discuss the future of Woody Park.

Please come and help shape the future of Woody Park.

Thanks to Katie Armitage, Dave Evans, Howard Walker and others who have provided background information about Woody Park.

Steve Braswell, President Pinckney Neighborhood Association
785-841-6902
steve@acornwebworks.com



P. O. Box 125
Lawrence, Ks. 66044