

## **Bobbie Walthall**

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**To:** David L. Corliss  
**Subject:** RE: Comments on Budget

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**From:** lauri di routh [mailto:lauridi@hotmail.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 07, 2012 7:46 AM  
**To:** David L. Corliss; mike dever; mikeamx515@hotmail.com; aron cromwell; hugh carter; Barry Walthall  
**Subject:** Comments on Budget

Dear Commissioners,

As I cannot attend tonight's meeting/public hearing, I am writing to provide comment on the budget. I request that my comments be included in the public record.

### **Police Department Budget**

I am grateful that the Commission has taken the proposed police facility off the budget list, for this year. I think that a project of such magnitude deserves broader public input and further consideration regarding potential funding mechanisms. I believe strongly that there needs to be strategic planning before any such proposal is allowed to proceed.

In regard to the \$300K annual increase and the addition of three more officers to the force, as outlined in the 2013 budget. I do not support these increases. The police department has failed, time and again, to demonstrate any improved efficiency or accountability. Property crimes in the city are rampant, and are largely unaddressed. But the police always get more money when budget time comes around. Where does it end?

Further, the department remains plagued by questions relating to the ticket scandal revealed earlier this year. I, and many others, have serious concerns about the department's administrative transparency. I believe that the City Commission has an obligation to hold the LPD to the same standard as other departments are held. The LPD should be required to quantify their performance and set and address, annually, objective measurable goals before any additional budget increases are granted.

**Two questions:** Where is the review of practices and policies related to ticket dismissal that Manager Corliss promised the public after the scandal broke earlier this year? Also, why has the commission refused to subject the LPD to an administrative audit? If the Department has nothing to hide, an audit should be no problem. If they do have something to hide, an audit is clearly the first step to reform. The commission's refusal to prompt an audit raises troubling questions about commission complicity in departmental corruption.

### **Infrastructure**

The city has significant outstanding infrastructure needs that are not adequately addressed in this budget. Water mains continue to break, causing damage and waste. Sidewalk infill and repair has been stalled for several years. The City's failed drinking water intake needs to be a top priority, in my opinion. Given the drought and the potential peril that our drinking water sources face, this crucial part of our infrastructure should rise to the top of the list. This repair or replacement should come before any public dollars are spent on new infrastructure for new development (i.e. roads and water to the sports village site). If water/waste water rates need to go up, so be it, but let's make sure those rate increases benefit immediate needs like drinking water, and not speculative development like the Sports Village infrastructure. Development should not come before maintenance of what we already have.

**A few questions:** The 2013 budget has a \$25K line item for sidewalks. Woefully inadequate as this is, I was told that this line item has not been spent for the last three years. **Why?** Since these moneys have not been spent heretofore, will \$75k be available to spend on sidewalks in 2013? Will the City Commission ever make sidewalks a budget priority?

I believe that the City needs to make contiguous, safe, maintained sidewalks throughout the City a priority. This will require policy and operational changes that only the Commission can prompt.

I am tired of seeing multi-million dollar road building budgets every year, when there is only nominal inclusion of pedestrian access funding.

### **Economic development**

The Commission continues to subsidize unwanted and unneeded development by giving away future tax revenues via TIF and TDD, and also through subsidy of the Chamber of Commerce. These subsidies are made in spite of the lack of evidence that any real value is derived. I believe that the taxpayers are growing weary of TIF and TDD schemes that seem to reward well connected developers over regular citizens. I would like to see the City Auditor conduct an audit on the efficacy of the economic development and incentive monies spent by the City and provide a more comprehensive review of the incentives previously granted. As I have indicated to the Commission previously, I do not support the appointment and subsidy of an unelected, unaccountable economic development board board that is populated largely by Chamber members.

### **Bond debt for the Sports Village Project**

I do NOT support the City spending \$3+ million dollars in 2013 to move forward on the Sports Village Project. The CS&L report is poorly conceived and provides little more than rosy speculation about the benefits of this project. As I see it, the City is taking an incredible risk, and placing it squarely on the backs of taxpayers. We cannot afford this project. Further, it does not meet the needs of the majority of community members. The commission needs to listen to the public, and stop pressing forward on this project. There are serious questions and concerns that need to be aired before you start borrow money and committing future tax dollars.

I appreciate your consideration. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Laura Routh

# East Lawrence Neighborhood Association

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August 7, 2012

City & County Commission  
City Hall  
6 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lawrence, KS 66044

Dear Commission Members,

The East Lawrence Neighborhood Association would like to express our support for continued funding of the Sustainability Coordinator position in the 2013 budget.

We feel that this position not only has saved our city money in terms of energy efficiency, but has also served to raise the bar for green initiatives for our local government. These are gains that can be quantitatively proven and also have a direct positive impact on the quality of life for our citizens.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Leslie Soden, President  
East Lawrence Neighborhood Association