

ELNA Board 2015-16 Candidate Questionnaire:

YOUR NAME: Phil Collison

1. From the website: The purpose of the East Lawrence Neighborhood Association is to facilitate understanding with the City of Lawrence and Douglas County; to maintain and enhance living conditions; to foster communication in East Lawrence and to maintain good relations amongst neighbors, businesses, organizations and other neighborhoods in Lawrence.

As a board member, how would you contribute to ELNA's mission?

A: I have been on the board for the last 10 years or so. I actively participate in many things that ELNA is involved with. From the Yart Sale to the Block Party to Newsletter execution to being an ELNA rep to the E. 9th project, I have been in it for the long haul. I hesitate to say we should be doing this or that new things, not to say we couldn't be doing more, but to recognize that doing anything requires committed volunteers to own a process. I welcome new initiatives driven by new (and old) participants and following them through to fruition.

2. How many full ELNA meetings have you been to in the past 12 months?

A: I have missed 3 or so meetings in the past year due to travel. I do try and keep up with what I may have missed.

3. Have you volunteered, donated, or attended ELNA events? If so, which?

I run the beer tent at the block party, and I helped to organize the Music at the Yart Sale. I print the mailing labels for the newsletter. I have attended and commented at numerous City Meetings, including Planning Commission, CC and Historic Resources. I believe I am an active ELNA board member.

4. What kind of project(s) would you like to pursue for the neighborhood?

A: As stated above, I like the role I am playing with the core things the neighborhood is doing, and my role on the CAC for the 9th St. project. I would welcome new initiatives owned by new (and old) blood, and would be a supporter of those initiatives.

5. How long have you lived in East Lawrence? Why did you move here?

A: I have been at my current address since 2005. I moved to Lawrence in 1976, and East Lawrence has been my stomping grounds for much of that time. I lived within ELNA boundaries for about a third of my time here in Lawrence.

6. What are the major issues facing East Lawrence today?

A: As I get older I am recognizing that the times they are a-changing. Our collective sense of the past, the battles that have occurred and the marginal nature of EL are moving farther into the past. East Lawrence is heading towards the mainstream, and I believe that we need to balance the lessons we have learned in the neighborhood with the potential that we have created. I want to keep our funkiness. I don't want us to sell out to the latest trend (which is generally so last year's by the time developers catch on). I don't need my environment to be perfectly ordered to make me feel special. I want us to continue to be trend-setting. I don't need my neighborhood moments defined for me by outsiders. The more mainstream we become the more trendy we become, and in my humble opinion, the less creative we become. Our ability to stand out lessens. Let's work for infrastructure improvements throughout the neighborhood rather than one trendy makeover along one street.

7. How would you characterize the essence of the neighborhood?

A: EL has always been a live and let live type of place. Folks have been able to operate under the radar for many things. Those days are probably over. General liability plus additional economic pressures are pushing folks to notice us and impact us in directions that can cause widespread turnover within our neighborhood. I want to work to lessen that impact.

8. What other community / city boards/ groups do you belong to or attended regularly this past year?

A: I am on the board of the Lawrence Preservation Alliance. As stated I am an ELNA rep to the E 9th project.