

# East Lawrence Neighborhood Association

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July 20, 2023

Lawrence Historic Resources Commission  
Lawrence Historic Resources Administrator  
Lawrence City Commission  
Sent via e-mail: [lzollner@lawrenceks.org](mailto:lzollner@lawrenceks.org)

Re: Proposed Amendments to Lawrence Historic Resources Ordinance

The East Lawrence Neighborhood Association (ELNA) appreciates the opportunity to comment on proposed amendments to Lawrence's Historic Resources Ordinance. We offer sincere gratitude for the months of hard work that is evident within the detail of this document. The Historic Resources Commission is the one public body that we can always count on to reflect the values of our Unmistakable Lawrence identity.

There is a lot to like in the proposed revisions. Among the changes we support are: the makeup of the Commission itself, the simplicity and clarity of the graphic representations of design guidelines that help the public to really understand these nationally accepted best practices, and repeated mentions of the recognition that cultural assets are an important element of historicity.

ELNA also has several specific suggestions that could strengthen the ordinance even more.

Section 22-102, (e) should also include historic infrastructure (defined as: including brick streets and sidewalks, stone curbs and sidewalks, and similar elements). Historic Infrastructure could be specified in the definition section of the document as a stand alone, or included in Objects.

Section 22-210, (B)(1) should also include historic infrastructure (defined above) streetscapes and viewsapes. (Note that the importance of viewsapes is referenced in KU's development guidelines document). There are several places throughout the document with references to "sites, structures, objects and areas." ELNA strongly suggests that "infrastructure, streetscapes and viewsapes be added in all of these places throughout the document.

Section 22-210, (B)(8) refers to methods of informing the public. ELNA believes these methods should include "digital resources." Please also Include elsewhere in the document where applicable.

Section 22-210, (B)(10). ELNA believes Lawrence should develop specific design criteria "with genuine community involvement and historic preservation best practices."

Section 22-210, (B)(11). Required notifications in the ordinance should also include "neighbors, neighborhood associations where applicable, and civic organizations interested in historic preservation activities."

Section 22-210, (B)(16). ELNA suggests changing the term "governing body" to "governing bodies" in order to include the County Commission or other governing bodies when communication with these entities is appropriate.

Section 22-210, (B)(19). ELNA agrees that applicable individuals should strive to attend seminars. To operationalize this, we suggest adding the language “and seek funding to do so as necessary.”

Section 22-301, (c)(2). ELNA suggests language referencing groupings of landmarks because of their type, such as barns, Craftsmen houses, religious sites, etc. Specifically, areas in and adjacent to East Lawrence contain historic resources relating to: early Lawrence pre-Quantrill, the Railroad, early industry, World War 2, working class vernacular housing types, various ethnicities, etc.

Section 22-301, (c)(3). ELNA strongly believes “economic hardship” should include “low-income individuals and families.” Appropriate language should be inserted into Article 6.

Sections 22-505, (b) and 22-604. ELNA believes that there is an appeal process beyond the City Commission, to the Kansas SHPO. If so, this should be spelled out.

Sections 22-1004, 22-1201 and 22-1301. ELNA agrees that required maintenance can be an important tool for preserving historic resources. Unfortunately, for low-income individuals and families who are struggling to survive, there is an irony that penalties for failing to maintain properties can reallocate limited family resources that might have otherwise been used for maintenance into paying penalties instead. There have been many instances in recent decades of East Lawrence property owners experiencing economic hardships (poverty) losing ancestral homes that had been in their families for generations. Many of these structures were ultimately purchased by speculators and ended up being bulldozed, including several that were still in reasonably decent condition. Gentrification has resulted, depriving the neighborhood of its historic cultural heritage and diversity. The families who have populated the neighborhood for generations are as much a part of its unmistakable identity as the historic buildings and streetscape. The ordinance should include options for how low-income folks can be successful with required maintenance. Perhaps the preservation fund should include specific provisions that it could provide grants and loans to low-income preservationists who want to remain in their homes. The municipality certainly has no problem granting incentives and tax breaks for the developer community; we believe low-income owners of historic properties should be prioritized. ELNA has no specific suggestions for language, but we strongly believe that this is a community policy conversation which is long overdue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Barry M. Shalinsky". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Barry" being more legible than the last name "Shalinsky".

Barry M. Shalinsky  
President, on behalf of the ELNA Board

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