

History is made Here: Immigrants strengthen our community — part II

By Ferrell Miller

Geary County Historical Society Researcher

The Junction City German-American Club was formed in 1980 by Fred Meyer and Arnold Becker, both German-born naturalized American citizens. One of the original goals of the club was “to provide a chance for camaraderie between German

Americans in the area and other residents who wish to share the German heritage. The original idea of providing a place for Germans “to speak in their native tongue” ultimately failed. People of German heritage in Junction City, and even soldiers who had been stationed for years in Germany and married German women, did not speak German

well enough to conduct meetings in the language. Antje Meyer, wife of founder Fred Meyer, had discovered that even though some German women who had grown up in Germany, they were no longer comfortable speaking their native language. By 1997, the officers were American men, and the meetings were in English, though the kuchen and conversa-

tions among the women over coffee were in German.

Despite its change in objectives and leadership, the German-American Club was still thriving in 1998. Its activities consisted of sponsoring large celebrations Oktoberfest, Weinachtsabend (Christmas Eve) and Fasching at the beginning of Lent. Attendance for the annual ball had

been as many as 600 people at one point, though by 1998 had dropped to 100. These events were used as fundraisers for United Way, Special Olympics, and the Buffalo Soldier Monument.

Most of the native German population in Junction City after

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City chickens out on whether to allow chickens

City, From Page 1

care, as the decision is up to the commission.

“Overland Park has a very nice and detailed ordinance structure,” he said in the agenda notes. “It limits the number of chickens per the size of the property. It requires licensing and a chicken permit fee. That helps city staff know who should have chickens and who do not. But more importantly it requires the chicken owners to put forth some responsibility and equity into their desire for chickens. In addition, there are clear pen and other structure requirements so there is no loose “reasonable” standard applications. Everyone is on the same page.”

In a slide show presentation during the meeting, Stites also included a few other options, including what Abilene and Herington require in their ordinances

that allow chickens. The presentation can be viewed as part of the full agenda packet available on the city’s website.

Mayor Pat Landes and Commissioner Ronna Larson both expressed opposition to allowing chickens. Landes said he considered the matter closed and didn’t want to create more problems when they already have problems with residents just taking care of their houses and their dogs. Larson cited the time it would take staff to enforce a new chicken ordinance if they allow it being the reason she thinks they shouldn’t allow it.

“My (concern) is just the lack of the enforcement of the ordinance and putting an addition burden on employees who are already not able to keep up with everything with what we’re already asking of them,” Larson said and referenced the problems they faced with unlicensed Pit Bulls after they lifted the

ban on pit bulls and required them to be licensed instead. “You’re not going to know if someone got that license.”

Commissioner Ricardo Gutierrez also indicated a concern with the cost and resources chickens would take, but indicated it could be covered with the permit fees they charge.

Commissioner Al Gordon said “the community wants it” and recommended they put the matter on the ballot so constituents can have a voice on the matter. Gutierrez said the commission is that voice and they should be the ones to make that decision if they are going to allow chickens because it is a complex issue.

Pinaire disagreed that chickens would be too much trouble.

“I just think it’s kind of amazing that everyone around us can do this and they don’t have a big struggle ... and we’re like this island,” he said.

In other city business

Through the consent agenda, the commission approved a special event permit requested by the First Thousand Members Club for Harmony Fest, to be held Aug. 22 and 23, and a change order for pavement improvements for Fire Stations 1 and 2, a deduction of \$17,103.20.

JCPD Officer Derrick Davis was presented the Law Enforcement Award by District 4 VFW Post 8773.

The council approved Main Street’s request to utilize a fire hydrant request during the Aqua Adventures at Main Street Market on Aug. 9.

The commission approved Fresh Start Emergency Shelter’s request to use Opioid Funds in the amount of \$30,000 to provide scholarships for substance-use rehabilitation services.

The commission heard an extensive presentation by Columbia

Capital on the fiscal sustainability plan. Chief among their recommendations was to continue a sales tax initiative that comes up for renewal in 2030, as that funding source will help the city meet upcoming infrastructure needs.

The commissioners approved Wellfield analysis and odor control study at the Grant Avenue East Plant by HDR.

The commission awarded a bid \$193,187.34 for replacement of insulation at the community center to H & H Spray Foam Insulation, agreed to purchase bunker gear from Delta Fire & Safety for \$29,924.02 and approved a change order for the 2025 Water System Improvements in the amount of \$107,763.

The commission approved publication of a notice of public hearing, to be held on Tuesday, Sept. 2, at 7 p.m. to consider renewal of the city’s Neighborhood Revitalization Plan.

Six advance to general election

Election, From Page 1

Joe D. Markley comes in fifth with 282 votes.

Kelly Niemczyk comes in sixth with 278 votes.

Al Gordon comes in seventh with 275 votes.

William Arnold Jr. comes in eighth with 129 votes.

Heath Gadberry comes in ninth with 119 votes.

John L. Tice comes in 10th with 68 votes.

The candidates placing in the top six for number of votes will advance to the general election in November for three positions that are open.

At least one candidate could be affected by the canvass of the primary election conducted by the Geary County Commission, as the candidate coming in seventh is separated by the candidates coming in sixth and fifth by a factor of three and seven votes.

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