

2020 Vision: A Historical View as We Look to an Exciting Future

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

For generations, the area around the intersection of Clayton and Mason Roads has been a major focal point of community activity in Town and Country. Over the past two decades, it has been enhanced with the construction of our firehouse in 1991 and by the establishment of Longview Farm Park in 2002. From the Safety Fairs of the 1990s to the newest location for Fire & Ice this summer (postponed due to weather, but rescheduled to take place during the Fall Festival), this location continues today as a central gathering place where we are able to celebrate community, commemorate historical events, and create family memories. With the added ambience and amenities provided by the quaint shops at Mason Woods Village, and the Clayton Road trail-head drawing in walkers and cyclists from all over, a true town square has been *re-emerging*. Now, with the Wirth property under contract to the City, yet-to-be defined opportunities have been made possible that could positively impact Town and Country for generations to come.



REAL ESTATE PURCHASE AND SALE AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT ("Agreement"), dated as of September 8, 2014 (the "Effective Date"), is made and entered into by and among Dorothy A. Wirth and Henry W. Wirth, as Trustees of the DOROTHY A. WIRTH TRUST dated March 18, 1986, as amended (as to Parcels 1 and 2 below), Henry W. Wirth and Dorothy A. Wirth, as Trustees of the HENRY W. WIRTH TRUST dated March 18, 1986, as amended (as to Parcel 3 below), Dorothy A. Wirth, as Trustee of the IRREVOCABLE TRUST OF HENRY W. WIRTH dated November 18, 1993, known as the WIRTH FAMILY TRUST (as to Parcel 4 below), HENRY W. WIRTH (as to Parcel 4 below), Dorothy A. Wirth, as Trustee of the IRREVOCABLE TRUST OF DOROTHY A. WIRTH dated November 18, 1993, known as THE WIRTH HOUSE TRUST (as to Parcel 5 below), and HENRY W. WIRTH and DOROTHY A. WIRTH, as husband and wife and as Trustees (hereinafter collectively called the "Sellers"), and the CITY OF TOWN AND COUNTRY, MISSOURI, a municipal corporation (hereinafter called the "Purchaser").

Wirth's Blacksmith Shop and Landscaping--1890

The desire of neighbors to gather together around Clayton and Mason dates back to a time when Town and Country was known as Altheim, Missouri. Altheim was a farming town



located along Clayton Road between what is now I-270 to the east and Woods Mill to the west. Just to the south along Mason Road was the one room schoolhouse that served Altheim. To the north on Conway Road was the first post office in the area, which was housed in the Oge log cabin that is being reconstructed at Drace Park. The center of Altheim was near Clayton and Mason Roads where you could find the Fette Tavern, and just to the east was the

Altheim Inn that served as a gathering place for farmers and popular venue for community dances and town meetings.

In the midst of all this Altheim activity, the Wirth's Blacksmith Shop opened in 1890 in the very location that would later be the site of the gas station many of us remember fondly today. In addition to blacksmithing and horseshoeing, farm wagons were also built at the original shop. The Wirth family later added



the sale of petroleum products to service the newly invented automobile. Significantly, however Wirth's was far more than a place to shoe your horse or gas up your vehicle. It was a place where you could connect with a friend or neighbor, catch up on the latest town news, or just revel in a place where time seemed to move just a little slower. For 112 years, people were drawn to the Wirth property for various goods and services and to share in those positive relationships that make up vibrant community life.



Perhaps recognizing the village charm of this area, noted architect Butler Sturtevant designed Mason Woods Village in 1966 with a colonial Williamsburg theme, ensuring that the Clayton and Mason Road intersection would continue to be the focal point of our then very new City, Town and Country. Truly, this geographical center of town has been the community gathering place for over a century and now forms the centerpiece for our collaborative planning purposes as we chart a path forward and establish something really special for our City, its residents, families, friends and visitors to celebrate long into the future.



The Wirth Property Acquisition

I have devoted considerable space in the past two issues of the Times regarding the need for a collective vision for Town and Country, especially relating to the positive attributes associated with placemaking—where people can gather, enjoy local amenities, and simply benefit by spending time together in areas we all appreciate and enjoy. Such thoughtful, forward-thinking planning could truly be transformative for our community. Fortunately, your elected representatives have seized a major opportunity to further this vision, as well as to take control of our city's destiny, by purchasing the Wirth property next to Mason Woods Village. This opportunity was made possible, in significant part, by the incredible generosity of Hank and Dorothy Wirth, who have agreed to a sizable contribution in favor of the City and its residents. The City currently has the property under contract with a tentative closing date in early December.



There has been a great deal of interest in this eight-plus acre parcel since 2002 when Mr. & Mrs. Wirth closed one of the last remaining full service gas stations in the area, bringing another chapter of this area's history to a close. While prospective buyers and developers often view land as a means to maximize their individual or commercial interests, Town and Country, through a collaborative 2020 Vision, has acted decisively to capture this community asset. Now, we can

“Placemaking is how we collectively shape our public realm to maximize shared value. Rooted in community-based participation, Placemaking involves the planning, design, management and programming of public spaces. More than just creating better urban design of public spaces, Placemaking facilitates creative patterns of activities and connections (cultural, economic, social, ecological) that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.

--Project for Public Spaces

maximize this opportunity and advance the community’s collective interest, thereby assuming a central role in helping to write the next chapter of this century old town square.

Since elected to the office of Mayor in 2005, I have witnessed a wide array of proposals from a myriad of developers, and the question that I always ask is, “What value does the proposal bring to Town and Country and its residents?” Now that we are in control of this valuable piece of property, the stakeholders of the City will now answer that question.

An effective Placemaking process capitalizes on a local community’s assets, inspiration, and potential, ultimately creating good public spaces that promote people’s health, happiness, and well being.

--Project for Public Spaces

Your Board of Aldermen clearly discharged the duties and responsibilities vested in it by the voters of Town and Country, and now it is your turn. As I stated in my prior message, *it is essential to the success of our 2020 Vision planning process that we work with the stakeholders of adjoining neighborhoods and properties, along with gaining input from city residents at large, to develop a blueprint that will foster planning and development that becomes an asset to our*

community and emerges consistent with our values...a blueprint that reflects who we are and preserves that identity for future generations.

In the driver’s seat: Seizing a strategic planning position

I have asked Alderman Skip Mange, who has served the City in many capacities for several decades, to act as the Co-Chair of a Town Square Task Force. It is my intention to seek a resident to sit alongside Alderman Mange as Co-Chair, to facilitate the planning and analysis process that will include meetings, forums, surveys and other outreach as we seek community input. Members of the Task Force will be selected from around the community to represent its diverse interests and commitment to securing and advancing the best interests of Town and Country as a whole. This is an exciting paradigm shift in city planning and development...community gatherings and dialogue *before* there is a proposal on the table! We will proactively, and collectively, formulate a vision with a resulting land use plan for the very heart and soul of Town and Country.

The timeline for our Task Force is to appoint the Co-Chairs, establish the membership, and hold the preliminary/organizational meetings this fall or early winter. Once the Task Force establishes its community-driven process, forums to gather public input and ideas will be scheduled and announced. This important process will build upon the foresight of the 1997 Strategic Planning Committee to develop a “vision” for undeveloped land, while pursuing the mission to enhance our “sense of community.” As always, please contact me directly if you have an interest in or observation regarding this fascinating opportunity.



A Grand Celebration on October 18th

Perhaps the sudden summer storm that brought a premature end to our annual Fire & Ice celebration on June 21st has a silver lining after all. On October 18th, we will combine all of the events associated with Fire & Ice with our popular Fall



Festival, hosting perhaps the largest community event in our 64-year history. This will be a grand way to celebrate the acquisition of the Wirth property as we prepare to write the next chapter of Town and Country's story. In addition to pony rides at Longview Farm Park, we will have pumpkins, bounce houses, food and music at the Wirth Property (for more details, see pages 10 & 11). The Plein Air Art Competition will be taking place throughout the day, capturing on canvas the pastoral settings of our City, followed by the Impressions of Town and Country Art Reception in the large bay of the Firehouse. The celebratory day will conclude with the fireworks spectacular that will take place at approximately 7:00 that evening.



Other news around town

As exciting as these developments are in the center of our town, we are seeing similar energy and enthusiasm throughout the City. For example, some value-added amenities and retail opportunities are looming on the horizon at Town and Country Crossing that will enhance the already popular dining, grocery, and retail destinations we enjoy on the western edge of town. The Estates at Town and Country Crossing are also proving to be very popular with over 30 homes under construction in that planned mixed use project that was the result of a creative, collaborative effort by your elected officials, residents, and the ownership group.



At the other end of town, you most likely have noticed the demolition of the abandoned gas station at the Ballas and Clayton intersection, making way for a future service opportunity for surrounding neighborhoods. A major step in improving the area began with a partnership with St. Louis County Department of Highways and Traffic, which maintains the intersection. Starting with the improvement of the south side of the intersection to connect the Clayton Road Trail, we will expand the improvement to the north side in the near future with the recently awarded grant by the East-West Gateway Council of Governments. The modernization of this intersection will literally pave the way for a new establishment that will



bring value to one of the oldest intersections in the City.

One of the most frequently asked questions at neighborhood meetings relates to the status of Manchester Meadows on our southern border. We have been working diligently with the ownership group to ensure the future vitality of that center, which provides a variety of valuable services to our residents as well as to the neighboring communities. We are making real progress, evidenced by new tenants who have moved in as well as existing tenants who have renewed their leases. I am hopeful that I will be able to report additional information in the next newsletter on our continued positive movement forward at Manchester Meadows.



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I hope you will enjoy perusing the many accomplishments and activities highlighted in this Fall edition of the Times—honoring our storied past, embracing the present with enthusiasm, and envisioning an exciting future. It is indeed a special time in which to live in Town and Country, and yet, we have just “skimmed the surface of possibilities,” as my friend Jamie Cannon once said. So, if you have never been involved in your community, now is the time to do so!

As aforementioned, community involvement will be an essential element in any contemplated changes for our City, so I welcome your observations and comments about these significant opportunities. I hope to see you at the Fall Festival on October 18th!

All the best,

Jonathan F. Dalton
Mayor