



The Neighborly Notice – Vol. 15, No. 26 – Tuesday, July 19, 2022

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Newsletter (PDF version): <https://bit.ly/NeighborlyNotice-2022-07-19>

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Published by the City of Knoxville's Office of Neighborhood Empowerment, we report news important to Knoxville's residential neighborhoods. Include your neighborhood-related event or meeting in this space. Call 215-3232. News deadline: 12 noon on Fridays.

[Like us on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/KnoxvilleNeighborhoods](https://www.facebook.com/KnoxvilleNeighborhoods)

1. Who Is Participating in National Night Out?

We have four neighborhoods registered to celebrate National Night Out on Tuesday, Aug. 2!

Mechanicville Community Association, Old North Knoxville, Inc., Timbercrest Neighborhood Association, and West Hills Community Association are participating in National Night Out. Activities will include games in the park, an ice cream social, and a pool party.

Is your neighborhood planning to participate? If so, please notify Officer John Morgan at jmorgan@knoxvilletn.gov and Debbie Sharp at dsharp@knoxvilletn.gov as soon as possible with the following information:

Name of the Neighborhood

Event time

Location

Address

Contact person's name

Contact person's email

Contact person's phone number

Type of activity

We will inform local First Responders about your activities so that they may attend.

For questions, please contact Officer John Morgan or Debbie Sharp via their emails listed above.

2. Private vs. Public Tree: Do You Know the Difference?

The City of Knoxville has definitions in place within the City's Tree Protection Ordinance that define what trees are considered public or private.

Many people assume that if a tree or tree part is not located directly on or over their property, then the tree must be a public tree. However, there are many other considerations, including: location of the tree or tree part, existing easements (City, utility, railroad, State, highway, drainage, etc.), and how the tree came about (planted or grew from seed) and is it being maintained.

Let's look at three scenarios:

Location of the tree or tree part: In Tennessee, the owner of a tree is typically determined by whose property the trunk of the tree stands on. It is possible for a tree to have more than one owner depending on the number of properties that the trunk stands on. For example, if a trunk of a tree stands 3 inches on your property and 15 inches on your neighbor's property, both of you would typically have equal ownership of the tree. In some rare occasions, a tree may actually start with one owner and over time, as the trunk gets bigger; grow onto another property, giving that property equal ownership of the tree.

What about the leaves that fall on your property? Often times, people assume that leaves and limbs that fall from a tree that stands on neighboring property is the responsibility of that tree owner to clean up. That is not typically the case, as Tennessee tends not to require a property owner to cross over onto someone else's property to do

maintenance. Lucky for you, the City has leaf pick-up each fall and will be happy to pick those leaves up for you if you get them to the road.

What about the limb from your neighbor's tree that is creating problems for you? Again, Tennessee does not require that neighbor to prune that branch, but you typically can provide help yourself without issue, as long as you do not harm or damage the tree. Some trees, such as those owned by the City, have special status and do require certain permits and permission prior to doing the work. Good news: call 311, and the City will have a crew out to inspect and do any typical maintenance needed for public trees.

Existing Easements: Trees within easements or within the right-of-way (ROW) tend to confuse many property owners. In general, the terms easement or ROW are interchangeable; both tend to give permission to use or go onto someone else's property. Different types of easements exist, and not all of them belong to the City. For example, there may be a utility or trail easement that allows others to cross over onto your property. Many times there are trees that fall within the boundaries of these easements, yet that does not necessarily mean that the entity with the easement is the owner or responsible for the care of the tree. This is true for most trees in easements within the City of Knoxville (see below). Keep in mind, easements are not ownership, and that owners still have some responsibility for (and some rights to) the vegetation growing on their property, even if the vegetation falls within an easement.

Origin and Maintenance of the Tree: A tree within an easement that the City did not plant nor is maintaining is not a public tree. Most properties within city limits are adjacent to some sort of street ROW or easement. The City has the right to make improvements in the street right-of-way (such as build sidewalks, place signage, place streetlights, mow for safety reasons, or even plant a tree), but that does not make the City the owner of the easement and responsible for vegetation on the easement. Trees may grow from seed, or even be planted by another party and therefore would not be public trees. One typical exception would be if the City has put in some sort of improvements such as sidewalks. In Knoxville, trees that stand between the sidewalk and the street (regardless of their origin) typically are considered public trees. The benefit for all of Knoxville is that the City has an Urban Forestry Division dedicated to making sure the public is safe with regard to trees, and if you think you have a situation that is a public safety issue, call 311 and the City will work you through the situation.

Keep in mind that every city is different. You may be moving to Knoxville from some part of the country where everything in a city easement is considered a public tree (common in many communities in the Northeastern US) or regardless of who planted the tree in the easement (city or resident) the adjacent property is the owner for the tree and not the City (common in the Western US).

If you have any questions about any tree, call 311 to get started.

You can view the Tree Protection Ordinance and find other tree resources by visiting the Urban Forestry Website at www.knoxvilletn.gov/trees.

3. How to Restore Your Voting Rights

Tennessee has complex laws with regards to the restoration of voting rights. Therefore, if you have been convicted of a felony, you should contact the [Tennessee Secretary of State Division of Elections](#) at 1-877-850-4959 to explore your restoration of voting rights options.

If you are eligible to restore your right to vote, you should work with a pardoning authority to fill out the [Certificate of Restoration of Voting Rights](#) and send it in to your [local election commission](#). If you are currently incarcerated, on probation, or on parole, you do not qualify and cannot vote.

The restoration of voting rights only applies to people convicted of particular felonies. If you have been convicted of a misdemeanor, you can vote, even if you are currently incarcerated.

For more detailed information about whether you are qualified to vote after felony conviction, visit the [U.S. Justice Department's](#) website that outlines the particulars of eligibility.

4. Historic Zoning Commission Meets Thursday

The Historic Zoning Commission meets this Thursday, July 21, at 8:30 a.m. in the Main Assembly Room, 400 Main St.

Properties on the agenda are 128 W. Glenwood Ave., 1711 Dandridge Ave., 140 E. Glenwood Ave., 1203 Luttrell St., 243 Deaderick Ave., and 214 E. Scott Ave.

If any of these properties are in your neighborhood and you wish to speak to the commission, you may do so by contacting Lindsay Crockett at Lindsay.crockett@knoxplanning.org.

5. Reminder: Application Deadline for the DA Citizens Academy is July 22

The deadline to apply for the District Attorney General Citizens Academy is this Friday, July 22.

Knox County District Attorney General (DAG) Charme Allen is offering an academy for people who live or work in Knox County. This program will include an overview of the justice system, a mock trial, and several behind-the-scenes experiences of the Knox County Justice Department.

The academy will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. on Thursdays, Sept. 1, 8, 15 and 29, Oct. 6, 13 and 20. You must apply by July 22 to attend.

To be eligible, you must be at least 18 years old, live or work in Knox County, and you must agree to a background check to be completed by the DAG's Office.

For additional information, including the application, visit the [District Attorney's website](#). If you have questions, you can also contact Emily Scheuneman at (865) 215-2515 or emily.scheuneman@knoxcounty.org.

6. Learn Shocking Electrical Safety Facts

Each year the Knoxville Fire Department responds to a significant number of fires and medical emergencies caused by electrical malfunction. Every year in the United States, more than 1,000 people are killed and thousands more injured in electrical fire or shock incidents. It is important to know how to use electrical appliances safely and how to recognize electrical hazards.

The potential for electrical shock or fire from an electrical appliance is very real, especially when safety recommendations are not followed.

Before buying an appliance, look for the label for the logo of a recognized testing laboratory such as Underwriters Laboratory or Factory Mutual.

Keep space heaters, stoves, irons and other heat-producing appliances away from furniture, curtains, bedding or towels. Also, give televisions, stereos and computers plenty of air-space so they won't overheat.

Never use an appliance with a damaged cord, and be sure to use three-pronged electrical devices in three-pronged outlets. These outlets may not be available in older homes, so use a three-pronged adapter, and screw the tab onto the grounded outlet box cover. Never cut off or bend the grounding pin of the plug. If you have a polarized plug (with one side wider than the other), never file it down or try to make it reversible.

Keep electrical cords out of the path of traffic. Cords placed under carpets or rugs can get damaged and result in fire.

An electrical cord should never be wrapped around an appliance until the appliance has cooled. Because hair care equipment is often used in bathrooms near sinks and bathtubs, it is extremely important to be especially careful that the appliances do not come in contact with water. If one drops into water, do not touch it until you have unplugged it. Never reach into the water to retrieve it.

Protect young children by putting plastic inserts in receptacle outlets not in use to keep them from putting anything into the outlets.

Never put a kitchen knife or other metal object in a toaster to remove stuck bread or bagels unless it is unplugged and cooled. Install television and radio antennas where they cannot fall across power lines. Use caution when operating a tree-pruning device or using a metal ladder around power lines.

Inspect appliances regularly to make sure they operate properly. If an appliance smells funny when in use, makes unusual sounds, or the cord feels warm to touch, then it is important to repair or replace the unit. Don't repair it yourself unless you are qualified. Keep appliances in a cool, dry place to prevent rusting.

We hope everyone will stay safe!

[7. Knoxville Neighborhoods Calendar](#) (click link for online calendar)

Call 865-215-3232 to include your neighborhood event or meeting in [this Google calendar](#).

The City of Knoxville ensures meaningful access to City programs, services, and activities to comply with Civil Rights Title VI and ADA Title II laws and reasonably provides translation, interpretation, modifications, accommodations, alternative formats, auxiliary aids and services.

To request language translation services, contact Community Empowerment Director Charles F. Lomax Jr at clomax@knoxvilletn.gov or 865-215-2536. For disability accommodations, contact City ADA Coordinator Stephanie Brewer Cook at scook@knoxvilletn.gov or 865-215-2034 at least 72 hours before the meeting.

Other Calendars

Additional online calendars that cover events outside the neighborhood realm include:

- [Arts & Culture Alliance](#) (There's More to Knoxville)
- [Arts & Fine Crafts Center Classes](#) (City of Knoxville)
- [City of Knoxville General Calendar](#)
- [Parks and Rec Community Programming](#)

About This Newsletter

*** This Advisory is produced on most Tuesdays of the year.*

*** Ideas and contributions are welcome. We reserve the right to edit submissions.*

*** Deadline for news & calendar items: 12 p.m. Fridays.*

*** May be copied and forwarded via neighborhood email lists and newsletters.*

*** See past issues at our website: <http://www.knoxvilletn.gov/neighborhoods>*

*** Don't have internet access? Call 865-215-4382 if you need a copy of a particular document.*

