



## RESIDENTS ALLOCATE FUNDS

by Louise Page

What's happening in East Lawrence? December's meeting of the East Lawrence Improvement Association proved there is much to be done and much being done.

The main focus of the meeting was deciding how to spend over \$6,000 of Community Development money that has been allocated to the ELIA.

The members voted to spend part of the money for the purchase of playground equipment at the New York Elementary School, which will soon be implementing a day-care program.

Some money will be donated to a Building fund for the renovation of Rev. Sims' house. Rev. Sims, who has served the group for many years, has received a housing grant from the City, but the amount fell short of what was needed for repair.

A neighborhood door-to-door survey also will be funded to obtain general information on housing conditions and needed areas of improvement. This survey will provide some part-time survey-taking jobs for a few East Lawrence residents. A supply of

smoke alarms will be purchased, although how they will be distributed has not yet been discussed.

There is still some money left to allocate. Other ideas not yet voted on are: planting some two-year old trees in the more barren areas; historical markers; trash

cans and lumber for trash racks to clean up the alleys; equipment such as a roto-tiller, lawn mower and chain saw that residents could borrow; and winterization equipment for houses such as caulking guns, plastic and staple guns. Any resident or ELIA member with project ideas is urged to voice

them.

Another big project underway is the development of a park. About \$80,000 was left by the late Maramee Hobbs in her will to purchase land for an East Lawrence park in memory of her husband, Earl Hobbs. The ELIA members present voted to recommend to the Parks and Recreation Board that the existing park at 19th and Delaware be improved with the money.

Richard Kerstenbaum, ELIA president said, "This is the only logical place to spend the money." Otherwise, the area is sure to become industrial. The 10th and Delaware park is the only East Lawrence park.

The Parks Board will meet December 20th from noon to 1:00 to discuss the Hobb's Park money, and make a recommendation to the City Commission.

So, a lot is happening in East Lawrence. It's refreshing to see concerned and friendly neighbors getting together to discuss these issues. The January meeting will be held on January 9, 7:30pm, at the New York Grade School.

THE EAST LAWRENCE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION MEETS THE SECOND MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT 7:30 PM AT THE NEW YORK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, ON THE 900 BLOCK OF NEW YORK STREET. MEMBERSHIP IS OPEN TO RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF THE EAST LAWRENCE NEIGHBORHOOD. IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN HELPING TO MAKE THE AREA A BETTER PLACE IN WHICH TO LIVE, JOIN THE ASSOCIATION (\$1 PER YEAR), AND ATTEND OUR MEETINGS.



## DAYCARE PROPOSED FOR NEW YORK SCHOOL

by Betti Harris

After years of dropping enrollment that has prompted rumors of the closing of the only school in East Lawrence, plans are now underway to boost enrollment by offering a before-and-after-school daycare center at New York Grade School.

Barbara Willits, chairman of the advisory board from the Lawrence Schools Area Council, said the daycare center program would make New York Grade School a magnet school by attracting students from other schools in the district.

The proposed daycare center would allow children to be delivered by their parents to the school at 7 a.m. and then picked up at 6 p.m. each school day. The children would be in the daycare center only before and after the regular school session. They would then be enrolled in school classes the rest of the day. Enrollment would not, as it is presently, be restricted to children who reside in East Lawrence, but would be open to any one in Lawrence who wants the daycare services.

The estimated fee to participate

in the program is \$10 a week for each child and \$5 for kindergarteners.

For an additional \$3.50 a day, the center would also be open whenever school is closed, except for national holidays.

Jacki Kirk, a member of the advisory board, said that qualified persons would supervise the children.

"Transportation will be left to the parents," Kirk said, "except for children in special education. We hope to offer transportation for these children." Willits said, "People are desperate for daycare centers. Many working people are looking for or need dependable, responsible and attractive babysitting sources. This program would offer these things."

The center proposal was prompted in February when the School Board discussed strategies to prevent the closing of the school by increasing enrollment at New York.

New York's enrollment has dropped from 314 to 100 in the past eight

years. Five of the 14 classrooms are being used as classrooms. The other classrooms are used by the schools district as libraries, audio-video rooms and offices for counselors. Many of the classes are combination ones, such as third and fourth grades.

Willits said many of the residents of East Lawrence were upset last February because "any time a neighborhood school closes, something is lost in the neighborhood."

"Many of these people are long-time residents of Lawrence who have attended New York School themselves," she said.

At the Oct. 24 School Board meeting, the advisory council was authorized to make plans for a proposed daycare center. The advisory board expects to present the daycare proposal to the school board early in 1978. Willits said their goal was to have the service by fall 1978.

A survey conducted in September by the school district indicates that 78 parents have an immediate need for the center. This would mean 98 children of these parents are interested in enrolling.

The people requesting day care weren't concentrated in any one area of town.

Kirk said the council was encouraged by the results of the survey, even though only 78 or about 5 per cent of those who returned surveys indicated they needed the service.

"We are not working on the idea that our program would be successful if we filled the school," she said, "just mostly fill it."

Each student in U.S.D. 497 was given a survey to take home to their parents. Of 3,288 surveys distributed, 382 were returned.

Fifteen of the 78 families who say they need the daycare center indicated that \$10 a week was too expensive.

Kirk said the more students who participate in the program, the more flexible costs could be for special cases.

The cost may be reduced for those using the service only before or only after school.

Eighty persons who returned the surveys included comments and questions about the service. Some were against the service such as the person who wrote: "This is a parent's total responsibility. If these practices continue, the schools will soon be bedding down the students. If parents continue to have children, they should be responsible for them."

Others were more concerned about the cost to tax payers. Most of them said they were "definitely opposed to tax-supported daycare indiscriminately provided for all students in their district."

Kirk said a minimum of 48 students would keep the program completely self-supporting.

The proposed daycare program was commented on favorably by some. One person wrote, "Each of the last four years we have had to locate a new sitter for after school care in the Broken Arrow district and have had an awful time finding one. There is a need for the type of program you suggest and we would be interested in discussing it with you."

The advisory board is now planning the fine points of the program which includes what equipment will be needed, what rooms will be used for the program and its budget.

Kirk said that the East Lawrence Association for Improvement of New York School and the PTA area council may provide the initial money for the program.

"We want to get the school going," Kirk said. "New York is a bit ignored because it doesn't have enough children to be a viable school. We hope to change that."



EAST LAWRENCE'S NEW YORK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

photo by Ed Boles