

STATEMENT OF BERNARD BROWN TO THE WESTWOOD CITY COUNCIL, FOR THE CITY
COUNCIL MEETING APRIL 10, 2025

To the Mayor, all members of the Council, and to the citizens of Westwood and in neighboring communities:

Those of us with the Friends of Westwood Parkland are glad that the City gave citizens a vote on the sale of the Park, and are very grateful for the efforts of so many citizens in support of the Park.

But we believe that pretty much *everyone* wants a larger, better park. That agreement and common cause gives us a great opportunity to work together to make it happen. The primary challenge has been to find a way to manage it financially. We aim to take on that challenge. We have a number of ideas, and a lot of very willing people.

We want to enlist our neighbors who voted in favor of the sale to help with this effort. We want to work *together* with all of our neighbors in this effort. We want also to enlist our neighbors in our close-by cities to pitch in on this effort, and we want to enlist support from close-by cities' governments, and from the County Commission. Where there is a will, we believe there is a way.

And if we work together in this major effort, this can help us build our community fabric, our good relations. A bigger, better park, *and* better, pleasing relationships with all of our neighbors, can both be lasting results if we do this well.

We want to put our shoulders to this wheel right away. But we have not yet heard anything from the City about where things stand with respect to the Karbank project. The vote did make clear, in our view, that the citizens of Westwood want a *park*, and not a commercial development, in this location. We hope that the City and Karbank are treating the project as canceled, so that we can have a fresh start to make this happen.

We ask that the City inform everyone as soon as possible as to exactly where things stand with respect to the Karbank project and the properties at issue. The sooner we get word that the Karbank project is indeed entirely off the table, the sooner we can get to work.

Hi there and thanks for the chance to speak,

First off, we really appreciate that the city gave the community a chance to vote on Joe D. Dennis Park. We're glad to see that the people voted to keep it and hopefully improve and even expand it down the line.

Since the park can't be used for any kind of development, we're asking the Westwood Planning Commission to bring back the R-1 zoning for the park and remove the Planned Development (PD) zoning. We also hope the City Council will support that decision once the Planning Commission changes it. This is really just about making sure the zoning reflects what the voters asked for and keeping the park protected going forward. Thanks again for listening and all that you do. This is a perfect time for all of us to come together and put our differences aside.

Tammy Carter
2323 W 51st Street
Westwood KS. 66205

Good Evening and thank you for the opportunity to speak.

I'd like to speak briefly about the Church Property, also known as 5050 Rainbow. This church was formerly owned by The Christian Church of Greater Kansas City, Inc., also referred to as the Westwood Christian Church.

The Westwood Christian Church sold the Church's property in April 2014 to the city of Westwood. I'd like to put into the record a Johnson County Post article from Dec 19, 2023 which related a statement made by Rev Walker on behalf of the congregation stating, "While the Church could have received more money from a private sale, this is a move to return it to the community."

It is my understanding that Westwood City Church received an offer from a developer in late 2013 to purchase the Church for \$525,000. The Property was appraised @ \$500,000. The Westwood City Church did not want it to be sold to a developer. Instead the Church wanted the property to be owned by the Community. Accordingly, it sold to the city of Westwood for a bargain price of \$425,000. The City Vote to rezone 5050 Rainbow will ensure continued community use as originally intended.

I and other Westwood residents believe, the 5050 Rainbow property, should be a part of an expansion of Joe D Dennis park. You can help make this happen by re-instating the properties R-1 Zoning.

Dan Blom


December 19, 2013 • Development

Westwood Christian Church closing its doors, being sold to City of Westwood

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December 19, 2013 Development



Westwood Christian Church on Rainbow Blvd. sits just to the south of the city park and east of Westwood View Elementary.

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intent to sell the building and property to the City of Westwood, according to the city and the church.

The congregation dissolved at the end of October after 67 years at the church on Rainbow Boulevard in Westwood. Joe Walker, who had served as interim pastor for the last two years, said a Spanish-language congregation that has been holding services in the church for the last three years will continue to meet until the sale is complete.

The church and its grounds are especially strategic to Westwood because they sit just south of the city's Joe D. Dennis Park on Rainbow and just to the east of Westwood View Elementary School. The city has used open ground between the park and church for some city events.

Mayor John Yé, in the latest city newsletter, indicated the city was discussing the purchase of the property in conjunction with planning to upgrade the park. In the same newsletter, the mayor said the city is talking with the school district about joint planning as it relates to Westwood View, the park and the church property.

Rev. Walker said the size of the congregation attending services at Westwood had dropped into the 20s by the end. Most of those have now joined one of two nearby Christian churches. "It was supposed to be a neighborhood church," Walker said, therefore "it was always small." At its peak the congregation was well more than 100.

Walker said the "rule of thumb" now is that it takes a congregation of at least 150 to support a full-time pastor. Most of the groups that used the church for meetings have left, Walker said. A woman who offered piano lessons in the building was moving out this week.

While the church could have received more money from a private sale, he said, this is a move to return it to the community. Walker has now moved on to his next interim church assignment.

Westwood City Clerk Fred Sherman said the city is working through financing options and may have a proposal ready for the city council in January. All the options for how to use the building are still on the table, including leasing it out, shorter-term rentals, or closing it up, he said.



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The property is critical to the park master planning, he indicated, because of the limited space at the park. The church “has been very gracious to let the city use the space on the north end” over the years, Sherman said. He noted that the school district also is going through a master facilities planning process. The city has been a strong advocate for Westwood View as the school survived school closings in recent years.

For decades, the Westwood Lutheran Church sat just across the street in Mission Woods from Westwood Christian. Both churches opened in the same era and both saw their congregations dwindle before closing. The former Lutheran church was purchased in 2011 and is now home to a Latin Mass Catholic congregation.

Good evening, neighbors

In order to heal a divided community, the Friends of Westwood Parkland believe that many citizens in the northeast Johnson County region, some former residents and neighbors in our bordering communities would be willing to contribute toward the goal of a northeast Johnson County park. We believe the most efficient way to support this effort would be for the City to establish a designated fund to receive charitable donations specifically designated for and limited to the following purposes, in the following order:

(1) to pay off amounts due on the Purchase Agreement between Security Bank of Kansas City and the City of Westwood, Kansas dated January 1, 2023, with the first \$284,625 to be used to satisfy the lease on either August 1, 2025 or February 1, 2026.

(2) to provide a renovation fund to repair the fountain and any other improvements or repairs at Joe D. Dennis Park in the amount of \$115,375 for this purpose

(And that)

(3) any amounts donated above \$400,000 would be specifically earmarked toward the purchase of the former Westwood View Elementary school property. If the purchase can not be undertaken by the City of Westwood prior to January 1, 2026 or such other date as agreed upon by SMSD and the City of Westwood then all such amounts shall be applied to fund park improvements to the 5050 Rainbow property and Joe D. Dennis park collectively.

Jennifer Westlake
2309 W. 51st Street
Westwood, KS 66205
4/10/2025 Council Meeting

Statement from the Friends of Westwood Parkland:

We sincerely hope that all interested parties would recognize that a majority of Westwood citizens do NOT support the development of a large office complex or other dense non-R1 uses on these properties: Joe D. Dennis Park, the 5050 Rainbow (former church) property, and the old Westwood View elementary school property.

This green space is a gem that should be supported by all Northeast Johnson County communities, particularly Westwood, Westwood Hills and Mission Woods. We also suggest that many in Fairway and Mission Hills would be supportive of maintaining this green space sanctuary in our community.

If the City of Westwood shares this vision with the Friends of Westwood Parkland, we would undertake to solicit financial support from everyone within those communities and beyond to achieve a win for all. We ask that you approach these suggestions with an open mind and recognize possibilities not just for the immediate financial concerns, but as a means to make this vision sustainable over our lifetimes and beyond. We believe that other financial alternatives such as supporting endowments should also be pursued.

Our greatest desire is to move past the recent divisiveness to pursue that common cause we can all rally around: a bigger, better park to enjoy today and to leave as a legacy for future generations.

EXHIBIT TO 4/10/25 CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

My name is Stephen Platt. I live at 4910 Glendale in Westwood Hills. I would like to offer a suggestion to adjust the city council meeting to promote involvement and transparency.

On a side note I would like to mention other council meetings I have attended start with the Pledge of allegiance. It is a nice touch.

A comment section at the end of the meeting rather than the current format would be helpful to ask questions and get answers about the old and new business that is presented. It needs to be interactive.

Resolutions should have a question and comment section prior to voting. A recent example is the resolution on strategic direction and goals. It lacked public discussion prior to declaring the City's goal is to reach a higher ratio of commercial to residential tax revenue, more rezoning, and more diverse housing. This resolution appears to be based on another city survey with vague questions not discussions.

Neighbors in adjacent city neighborhoods should be welcomed. Did the residents of Roland Park who are losing their parking in front of their homes for a bike lane on Mission Road get adequate consideration?

A question I have from the residents of Westwood Hills Involves the community room we share. It was given a low mark on your recent survey. No wonder. It is something taken for granted without realizing the city hall was going to be sold.

So after reading the 14-page RFP that has had little discussion or public education I would like to ask-

What do you envision for a City hall?

And here are some other questions the residents of Westwood could be asking.

Have the four Adams Residents affected been consulted?

Can you disclose the finalists? There is speculation as to who it is already.

Can you update us on Woodside Rosedale expansion?

What TIFs or existing TIFs are speculated? What limits are you setting? The RFP has preferences, how are the proposals marrying up?

How is the ratio of exempt to non-exempt property tax revenue shaping up? Same question about ratio of residential to commercial.

What are KU's plan for the dialysis center? Will they stay in Westwood? What accommodation are you anticipating for the future?

It is a question of being informed and engaged. Why isn't the city conducting open meetings on progress rather than waiting until the after selection of a developer and relying on the developer to inform the city residents of their approved plans. I only comment in hopes that recent events are not repeated.