Have We Turned a Corner on Capitol Avenue?

Recent Blight Study offers solutions to decay

For many years preservationists have watched with dismay as historic properties in the Capitol Avenue Historic District have deteriorated at an alarming rate. Currently there are 20 abandoned buildings in a four-block area roughly bounded by Adams, Marshall, State, and Commercial Way. Ranging in age from 80 to 184 years, they represent not only some of the finest examples of period architectural styles in the city, but also some of the oldest. But much more than the loss of historic buildings is the high cost of this decay, economically and socially, that ripple throughout the city.

The decays is beyond remedy using the city’s existing regulatory tools, largely due to the fact that over thirty properties in this area are owned by one person who is resistant to selling, renting, or maintaining her properties. The deterioration has continued despite fines, fees, liens, and even lawsuits. The question then is “At what point do the rights of the community trump the rights of one land owner?”

The Blight Study

The State of Missouri does provide a recourse for local communities faced with declining areas. The Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority (LCRA) Act provides various powers of authority to cities to carry out urban renewal plans in blighted areas. But first the area must be officially declared “blighted” as defined under the LCRA law. LCRA is under the auspices of the Housing Authority.

In seeking LCRA authority the city commissioned PGAV Planners in May to conduct a Qualifications for Chapter 99 Designation (blighted) of the East Capitol Avenue area. Results of this study were presented in August showing that the area does meet the LCRA blight criteria. The full report can be found on the city’s Planning and Protective Services section of the city’s web site: www.jeffersoncitymo.gov.

The study covered 38 acres and 116 properties in the Capitol Avenue area. (See map, page 3) A blighted area is defined as “an area which, by reason of insanitary, unsafe or deteriorated conditions, retards occupancy or constitutes an economic or social liability or is a menace to public health, safety, morals or welfare in its present conditions.”

After the blight study was released, the city council formally declared by ordinance the entire area blighted under the LCRA Law in a unanimous vote in September.

Economic and Social Liability  The study reported that “the area, in its present condition and use, is severely underutilized.” All but 14 of the 116 properties in the study either declined in value or had no increase in value over a 8-year period (2007 to 2015); 35 properties decreased in value and 67 were unchanged. This amounted to a decrease in assessed value of 11% over 8 years that translates into a loss of $778,000 in tax revenues. In contrast, over this same period, the city as a whole saw an increase in assessed values of nearly 8%.

Since 2007 there has been a loss of $778,000 in assessed valuation of properties in the area studied.
Historic City of Jefferson
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Revolving Fund Committee Formed

Long-Time HCJ Goal Gets Footing

In 2013, the Historic City of Jefferson (HCJ) completed a Strategic Plan that included the creation of a revolving fund as a financial tool that could be used to protect historic resources in our city. In order to accomplish this goal, HCJ’s Board recently established a Revolving Fund committee.

The committee is looking at a point system to help determine which projects – and in what order – to consider assisting. The point system addresses neighborhood impact, the number of potential funding partners, curb appeal, and resale potential. If you have questions or concerns regarding the revolving fund, please contact Jane Beetem, jbeetem@embarqmail.com or 573-680-0005.

Welcome New Members

Coring & Cutting Group, Ashland, MO
Daniel Basel

Any Bookcases to Spare?

HCJ has been busy archiving and organizing many historical documents but needs more shelf space. Do you have a bookcase you could donate? Contact Tammy Boeschen at hcjprez@gmail.com or 573-893-4121. Ultimately, the goal is to become a resource for local history buffs.

Christmas Program

Tuesday, December 6th, 6:30pm
Hawthorn Bank Meeting Center
3600 Amazonas Drive

A holiday reception for HCJ members and guests will be followed by the program “Jefferson City in the 1960s” by Henry Gensky

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Welcome New Members

Coring & Cutting Group, Ashland, MO
Daniel Basel

Vicki and Greg Schildmeyer man the HCJ booth at Old Munichburg’s 2016 Oktoberfest. Sales of books, tickets, and card decks were brisk as the displays of the Capitol Avenue abandoned properties drew welcomed attention.
Blight Study, continued from page 1

No rent nor commerce is generated from these derelict abandoned properties. They do not use services from local energy providers or insurance companies, nor is money being spent locally on labor, services, or materials to maintain the properties. At the same time, public costs are expended in boarding up and securing unsafe properties. Vacant buildings also draw more criminal activities requiring police attention. So while adding nothing to the economy, they excessively drain local resources. In addition, lost tax revenues negatively impact the city’s schools and public services.

The nearby properties of responsible owners suffer depressed values due to their proximity to the blight. Yet, while the derelict owners are draining local public resources, they are “rewarded” with lower tax rates as their properties decay!

“Underutilization” is an understatement considering the economic potential of this particular area that could be supporting and profiting from the brisk tourist industry that has developed around the old state penitentiary.

PGAV Recommendations  PGAV Planners recommended for the city to

- Analyze each property’s degree of deterioration and fair market value and to develop a land acquisition strategy.
- Tackle those properties in the worst condition first.
- Consider providing public financial incentives to potential new owners/developers.
- Accept that resurrecting this area may require invoking eminent domain.

Eminent Domain would allow for the condemnation and sale of derelict properties where the owner is resistant. The owner would get paid for the property at a fair market value.

Housing Authority approves a new Urban Renewal Plan  Following the City Council vote to approve the PGAV Urban Renewal report in September, the Housing Authority voted at its October meeting to adopt a new plan that now covers all the area in the Blight Study. In doing so, specified properties could be designated for redevelopment and that process could proceed through condemnation and invoking eminent domain if necessary. The new plan will next go to the Planning and Zoning commission for review and finally, the City Council. Ultimately, it could be one to two years before properties can be sold; less time if the owners decide to sell the properties voluntarily. “The Housing Authority is anxious to move forward in the speediest and most economical way,” Housing Authority Director Cynthia Quetsch said.

Conservation Overlay District  A plan for an Overlay District in the Capitol Avenue area was presented to the public in April by City Planner Eric Barron. It would cover the area designated in the Blight Study and would provide guidelines for future redevelopment and renewal of the area. “Getting this Overlay District in place is almost as important as the new authority granted by the LCRA law,” says Jayme Abbott with the city’s Planning and Protective Services Division. “Without an overlay district and guidelines, developers would be able to demolish and infill with buildings that are not sensitive to the historic fabric of the neighborhood. At any time, the owners of the derelict properties could decide to sell even before LCRA authority is invoked and there would be no guiding ordinance that would keep the historic integrity of the buildings and neighborhood.” Abbott stresses that the Capitol Avenue Overlay District plan needs to have more input from the public and very soon. A rezoning plan is also proposed; however, it is independent of the overlay district plan. Please visit the city’s web site to view the current plan: www.jeffersoncitymo.gov/government/planning/index.php Barron says this plan is being revised but he is still accepting comments. You can direct your comments to him directly at EBarron@jeffcitymo.org.

In the PGAV Planner’s report to the city council, John Brancaglione commented that in 22 states and over 400 studies in 40 years “we cannot recall a single situation in which a single property owner accounts for such a significant percentage of qualifying properties. . . . When it gets to this state of affairs, everybody has to get proactive.”
Among Our Most Successful Homes Tour to Date!

Charm, History and Challenges of Capitol Avenue Spotlighted

A beautiful street, seven beautiful homes to tour, a beautiful day (despite dire forecasts), and lots of coordinated efforts made for a very successful Homes Tour. Over 500 visitors came to HCJ’s Annual Tour on September 25th, walking through some of the renovated historic mansions that line the 500 and 600 block. An additional walking tour included the recently designated blighted area that HCJ has hopes for remedies in the near future.

Many thanks to home owners who opened their buildings to us and tour sponsors (see page 5), our tour Co-Chairs Mary Ann Hall and Jenny Smith, and the many volunteers who made this event possible.
As part of the 2016 Capitol Avenue Historic Homes Tour, a booklet was published, loaded with history of the street, the homes, the people who built and lived in them, the industries, and the prison. Many thanks to our sponsors (see below), the writers and researchers: Carolyn Bening, Jenny Smith, Jane Beetem, Katherine Owens, Cathy Bordner, and Deborah Goldammer. Special thanks to Mary Ann Hall for her artist’s eye that created a book that is more than a pleasure to read but also to view.

The book is available for $6 from HCJ. Contact Tammy Boeschen at 573-893-4121.

**Capitol Avenue History Booklet**

**Thank You Sponsors:**

**Burton & Leise**  
Government Relations

**Graphics Arts by Mary Ann Hall**

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**Thank You Property Owners:**

COMMUNIQUE, LLC

**Missouri Association of Counties**

Frank and Carol Burkhead  
Flotron-McIntosh, LLC

Bella Vista Apartments

Jeff and Jane Schaeperkoetter

Marilyn W. Rooney/Thomas Whitecotten III

Core & Cutting  Avenue HQ  Jim Weber

**Graphics Arts by Mary Ann Hall**
HERITAGE DAY AWARD WINNERS—May 17, 2016

Multi-Media Contest Winners

1st Place  Madalynn Berkey
“National and Woodland Cemeteries”

2nd Place  Savanah Feltrop
“Missouri State Penitentiary”

3rd Place  Audrey Ickes
“The Landing”

Art Contest Winners 9-12 Grade

1st Place  Malena Gansmann
“Memorial of the Louisiana Purchase”

2nd Place  Addison Luetkemeyer
“Carnahan Memorial Gardens”

3rd Place  Jacob Ceglenski
“The Centaur”

3rd Place  Lainey Winge
“Lohman Opera House”

Honorable Mention  Emily McMichael
“Female Department of the Missouri State Penitentiary”

Honorable Mention  Landon Williams
“Missouri Pacific Depot”

Local Landmark Award Winners

Farmer’s Home  701-703 Jefferson Street
Hope Mercantile Building  201 East High Street
Deputy Warden’s House  722 East Capitol Avenue

G. Stockard Distinguished Service Award
Jenny Smith

Reception for Civic Leaders at
Cork and Provisions held Sept 29
Why did you join HCJ?
I clearly saw the need for involvement and advocacy when Cole County proposed tearing down the Old Jail and Sheriff’s Residence. Historic buildings such as this represent the character of this historic city. I just could not stand by and let it happen. I must get involved.

What do you like best about being a member of HCJ?
The best thing about HCJ is its mission. To protect and preserve the cultural heritage of Missouri’s Capitol City is a cause worth giving of one’s time, money and sweat. HCJ is the only organization where you feel like you are making a difference.

Do you have a favorite HCJ program or activity?
I am pretty new to the organization and board but I truly loved the Capitol Avenue Homes Tour this year. It truly showcased the most important street to the City of Jefferson, past and future.

If someone asked you the benefits of HCJ membership, what would you say?
There are many benefits. It is a great resource for the history of its people, historic buildings, and residences. The organization is truly a place to “make a difference” in protecting and preserving this historic city. As a member you can be part of saving for future generations what could be argued as the most historic city in Missouri, the historic seat of state government. It allows one to be involved in a personal way with one of the finest capital buildings in America to the oldest prison west of the Mississippi and everything in between.

What do you think is the most effective way for HCJ to achieve its historic preservation mission?
I served in the Missouri Legislature for 10 years, two of those as Speaker of the House of Representatives. I learned that THE WORLD IS RUN BY THOSE WHO SHOW UP. I learned there is “STRENGTH IN NUMBERS.” The most effective way to achieve this important preservation mission is to join Historic City of Jefferson. With sufficient numbers (votes), we can successfully advocate to government (show up), especially City Government, for a strong voice and the tools needed to preserve the historic character and structures of the City of Jefferson. Greater membership will also allow us to make the case for the economic importance of historic preservation for the future growth of business and jobs while increasing property values.

What one thing might HCJ members be surprised to learn about you?
I was born in Germany and had a full-blooded German mother. I can totally pronounce all the German names around The City of Jefferson. I do a pretty good impersonation of Theodore Roosevelt. BULLY!!!!!!
GOLDEN HAMMER

AUGUST

304 Marshall Street

This was HCJ’s 50th Golden Hammer Award but its first award given to the City of Jefferson. The city acquired this distressed 1900 Marshall Street property by foreclosure in 2010. It was purchased through the Neighborhood Stabilization Program, one of six lots bought at that time with the federal stimulus money. This house was on the Hidden Spaces, Secret Places tour on May 1 this year allowing visitors to see the “before” condition of the house. After a new roof, electrical, plumbing, and general repairs by LG Berry Construction, it has been transformed with much of its original woodwork preserved. The home will be sold to a qualified median-income buyer.

SEPTEMBER

615 East Capitol Avenue

John and Shelley Pervinich have helped in the revival of this historic neighborhood with an impressive renovation of this circa 1882 home. The home had been in the Rudolph Dallmeyer family for most of its 134 years. The Pervinich’s have taken pains to preserve original features, such as the arched pocket doors and oak fireplace mantles. (See photo) John, with Coring and Cutting Group, did much of labor himself. The second floor is currently an apartment rental while the main floor is being marketed for office space. Many thanks to John and Shelley for their part in revitalizing this historic neighborhood!
It is still standing but only barely. A classic example of “demolition by neglect,” this log house built circa 1865 is among the oldest structures in Old Munichburg. It was allowed to decline by its former owner who reportedly had speculative intents of turning it into parking for projects that never materialized, i.e., a post office or convention center. Phoenix Healthcare Realty Holdings is listed as current owners, but most of the property’s decay occurred under the previous owner. It has been vacant for almost 20 years.

Old Munichburg historian Walter Schroeder says the house was likely built in the 1860s and first served as the German Methodist Parsonage until the church disbanded in 1916. It served also as a place of worship until the congregation built its church a half-block away on Broadway in 1874. A fascinating history of these German Methodists in Jefferson City can be found in Schroeder’s recent book, Southside Sketches. After 1916 the house went through a series of owners and may have served most of its life in rental.

In 2005 Schroeder toured 310 W. Elm with log-home expert Larry Hall. Hall described it as a simply built timber-framed pioneer house on a rock foundation (not hewn limestone). The clapboard siding was likely added at the time it was built. Hall, who has disassembled and rebuilt many log cabins, found that much of it was not salvageable for removal and reconstruction due to extensive termite damage. Since Hall’s evaluation, the east wall of the home has collapsed.

HCJ Mourns Loss of Long-Time Member Betty Weber

It was with great shock and sadness that Historic City of Jefferson members bid farewell to a friend and long-time member Betty Weber. Betty and her husband Jim were involved with many HCJ activities, such as board members, home-tour volunteers, and as hosts in their home in 2015 for the Hurst John Homes tour.

Friend and neighbor Jeanette Dulle reflects, “I found Betty sweet, smart and articulate. She was willing to give her time to all aspects of the Jefferson City community....whether it was Faith Lutheran, HCJ, the Governor’s Mansion, or the Cole County Historical Society. Her abundant energy will be missed by all who knew her.” Another Mansion docent Connie Hubble adds, “She was a valuable addition to our program and looked so lovely in her dress. She was good with the tourists and always so gracious.”

Betty was a beautiful person both inside and out. Her involvement with so many area causes will leave a void in our community and in our hearts.

Betty poses in her living room next to the beautiful stone fireplace that was reportedly salvaged from the Old U.S. Post Office razed in 1972. The violin belonged to Betty’s grandfather. The Weber’s home was on HCJ’s 2015 Hurst John Homes tour.
SAVE THE DATE!

Tuesday December 6, 2016 - 6:30 PM

HCJ Christmas Reception and Program:
“Jefferson City in the 1960s” by Henry Gensky
Hawthorn Bank conference room, 3600 Amazonas Dr.

Looking back . . . . . . Moving forward

Golden Hammer Chair - Laura Ward
Newsletter Editor - Jenny Smith
Education and Programs - Donna Deetz
Oral History Chair - Janet Maurer
Publicity - Vicki Schildmeyer

Membership and Social Media - Terri Rademan
HCJ Foundation - Nicholas M. Monaco
History and Documentation - Katherine Owens
Finance - Tim Morrow

OUR MISSION STATEMENT
To proactively preserve our historic resources and create an environment that makes preservation a central focus for the future development in the City of Jefferson.

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Visit our Web site at www.historiccityofjefferson.org