

Benton Park West Neighborhood Association

Neighborhood Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 21st, 2020

Submitted by: Erin Godwin

Call to order Scott McIntosh -7:07 pm

Attendance - **21 adults** - Roll Call

- President - Scott McIntosh - **Present**
- Vice President- Tim Thomas - **Present**
- Secretary - Erin Godwin - **Present**
- Treasurer - Linda Hennigh - **Present**
- Member At-Large - Pam Welsh - **Present**
- Member At-Large - Gwynn Jackson - **Present**
- Beautification - Stephanie McKinney - **Present**
- Block Link - Chris Schmidt - **Present**
- Communications - Scott McIntosh
- Community Garden - Linda Hennigh
- Our Neighborhood Garden - Scott McIntosh
- Dog Park - Jeni Poole - Absent
- Facilities - Bill Byrd - **Present**
- Fundraising - **Vacant**
- Housing Committee - Scott McIntosh
- SLACO Committee - Linda Hennigh
- Membership – Bill Byrd /Rosie Jackson - **Present**
- Quality of Life and Safety - **Vacant**
- Youth Outreach - **Vacant**
- Cherokee Street Liaison - **Vacant**

Mary Pat Carl, St. Louis Democratic Primary Candidate for Circuit Attorney

She ran in 2016 for Circuit Attorney and came in 2nd in a 4-way race then went into private practice. Mary Pat Carl stated that restorative justice is a model that has been shown to help both offenders and victims. She also stated that non-violent offenders need better access to jobs; the diversion programs we have need more employers involved and more jobs for young people. She wants to get people coding and into trade jobs. We need outside victim services that help victims, families, witnesses, and others affected by crime; this can be done by partnering with outside organizations that already do this work.

Annual Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's report was reviewed for changes; there will be a vote to accept next month.

Committees

If people would like to be engaged in committees, we always can use help with outreach, the dog park, and other committees.

Security Cameras

If you have an exterior security camera and would be willing to share video with the police in the event a crime occurs nearby, send your name, address and phone number to Chris Schmidt at mcdeam@gmail.com. Stephanie McKinney reminded everyone to occasionally make sure their cameras are actually working

Dan Guenther, Ward 9 Alderman

A lot of places aren't open; wearing masks, washing hands, and avoiding crowding will continue to be important. The SLDC is working to establish a small business grant. The city website has updates about covid, grant opportunities and standards for reopening. The Board of Alderman has been in session for two weeks and are working on the budget expecting a \$70-120 million deficit in the city. It is possible community centers, pools, etc won't be open, and ward capital money may be cut. They are trying to avoid cutting employees or furloughing staff. Cherokee Street restaurants can now expand their seating onto the parking space on the street.

3323 Cherokee - at Louisiana- owner John Nash is going to do the corner unit as commercial and the three smaller units as residential. Zoning had opposed it for lack of parking, but the CID voted to support the conversion to mixed use.

Board Bill 8 was approved by the Youth and Education Committee of the Board of Alderman today and will be passed next week.

There is a 6 cents per \$100 value property tax increase for early childhood education (0-5 years old) on the ballot in November. The taxes will all go directly to the Missouri Mental Health Board, not the city; it can not be diverted for other uses. It would bring in \$2.3 million per year. This would put STL at the state maximum property tax rate of 25 cents per 100. To designate more to mental health and early childhood education, we would have to go to the state for approval.

Joe DeLiso - There were at least 5 car accidents since last summer at the intersection of Arsenal and Iowa. The Iowa sides have stop signs and the Arsenal side doesn't so people get confused. He would like to get a stop sign and stated there has been a wrecked car at the intersection since March.

One of the bills brought up at the Board of Aldermen in the last two weeks, brought by Alderwoman Tyus of the 1st Ward, would change how we do traffic calming studies. Currently Aldermen must pay over \$1,000 for a study, and then the streets department denies them all anyway. Instead we want a citywide comprehensive plan to address dangerous locations and

add speed bumps, ada ramps, curb bumpouts, etc. The city needs a real traffic calming study funded to address these issues. Currently improvements come out of ward money.

Alderman Guenther noted ADA requirements also make it so we can't do bump outs without making them all accessible. He did a speed study months ago, and after the study, the streets commissioner stated they could add speed humps only if they took out stop signs. It is really important to have cameras to help in hit and run crashes. If you see someone run stop signs, you should call the police to report it so it is on record for future traffic studies.

Officer Jazmon Garrett

April 16-May 13: No homicides or rapes, 2 robberies, 1 carjacking, 4 assaults, 3 burglaries (2 residential, 1 commercial), and 10 larcenies. Total crime year to date is up from last year. Make sure your garage and property are secured. If you have an alarm, set it. If you have video, do check if it is working. Call 911 or the non-emergency line if you hear gunshots. If there is anything you want more information about, email Officer Garrett, and she can get you information for the next meeting

Barb Potts, Neighborhood Improvement Specialist

A lot of reckless driving is done in stolen cars. Fobs for keyless cars shouldn't be left in the car; if someone tries the door and gets in, they can start the car. People sitting in their cars on their phones are also being carjacked; get out of the car immediately and lock it. Making sure cars aren't stolen will help reduce accidents. Reporting is busier than ever since people are noticing things they didn't when they were at work. Dumping incidents have been reported and are being investigated. Please let Barb know if you have issues; be patient and kind to each other. Lefty's Fried Rice is illegally parking and blocking the street.

Bill Byrd motioned to adjourn, and Stephanie Mckinney seconded.
Meeting adjourned at 8:08pm