

Benton Park West Neighborhood Association

Neighborhood Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 17, 2020

Submitted by Erin Godwin

Call to order by Scott McIntosh - 7:01 pm

Attendance - **26 adults- 18 members, 8 guests**

- President - Scott McIntosh - **Present**
- Vice President- Tim Thomas - **Absent**
- Secretary - Erin Godwin - **Present**
- Treasurer - Linda Hennigh - **Present**
- Member At-Large - Pam Welsh - **Absent**
- 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/Pam Welsh - Absent
- Facilities - Bill Byrd - **Present**
- Fundraising - **Vacant**
- Housing Committee - Scott McIntosh
- SLACO Committee - Linda Hennigh
- Membership – Bill Byrd /Rosie Jackson - Absent
- Quality of Life and Safety - **Vacant**
- Youth Outreach - Darren Young- **Absent**
- Cherokee Street Liaison - **Vacant**

Nonpartisan Court Plan, Judge Fowler and Judge Lynn Perkins

The nonpartisan court plan appoints Judges by a commission with checks and balances to keep politics out. Judges stand for retention elections every six years for circuit and four years for associate circuit. They need a majority vote to stay. The Missouri Bar evaluates all judges on the ballot, looks at their legal opinions, surveys lawyers and recommends whether they should be retained. To be an informed voter, you can visit the courts website; they link to each judge's overall score, recommendation, and some of their opinions. Talk to friends who have participated in the court process. Finally, observe hearings via the Zoom virtual courtrooms. Virtual courtrooms opened fully on June 1st with full dockets Monday through Friday. Go to the St. Louis 22nd Circuit Court website and look at the alphabetical listing of judges; each judge's homepage has a link into their virtual courtroom, so you can observe any hearing. The Grand Jury has resumed in person, and they're trying to schedule jury trials.

Board and General Meeting Minutes

The board and neighborhood meeting minutes through September are now on the website. In November, we will vote on the meeting minutes from January through this month October, since we haven't been able to do that yet. Look at the neighborhood meeting minutes posted on the website to see if there are any edits or corrections before we vote to approve them in November.

September Treasurer's Report

The name spelling correction for Stephanie was again noted and will be made in the report. Motion to approve the report with the correction was made by Pam Welsh and seconded by Chris Schmidt. Motion passed.

Budget

Income and expenses from anticipated events continue to be much lower due to COVID. we're still fairly healthy this year, but it still is helpful for everyone to renew their memberships, so we can do programming and things in 2021.

BPWNA Board Elections

The candidates were presented and given an opportunity to speak. The link to the online ballot was available via the Zoom chat throughout the meeting with the option to submit write-in candidates. Board election results will probably be shared by email.

Becky Martinez Memorial

Becky Martinez, who has been very active in our community, has sadly passed away. October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Becky had been in remission for cancer and, unfortunately, it came back. We're very sad to have lost Becky. She's been a great friend, a great neighbor, a great member of this community. Becky has served in various roles on the board in the past. Options for how to honor Becky will be discussed at the November board meeting.

Block Link

We are not able to do our trunk or treat this year and are holding a **house decorating contest**. Let the secretary know what block you're on so we visit that block for judging on October 30. There will be three prizes for second and third: \$100, \$75, and \$50 Visa cards. You can give out candy if you want but it isn't part of the contest.

If you want to be on the list of **houses with outside cameras** in the neighborhood, email Chris. It's valuable if a car or house is broken into or somebody takes a package from a porch, as we are able to give that information to the police.

Dan Guenther, Ward 9 Alderman

COVID cases in Missouri are climbing but steady in the city. Two weeks ago, the health department said playgrounds can reopen, but they encourage parents to bring sanitizer to wipe

things down. Within the next few weeks, the Cherokee Rec Center pool will also be open again, but with limited capacity; there will be a signup sheet.

Halloween safety rules are on the city's health department site. you can give out treats.

The **DeSales project at Jefferson and Arsenal** is reapplying for LIHTC credits in the next two weeks. It would be a \$12 million development at Jefferson and Arsenal.

Persistent aerial surveillance over the City of St. Louis is proposed by a private surveillance company from Baltimore which could collect our data and sell it. He opposes the proposal, and the Board of Alderman has a bill that regulates surveillance throughout the city.

Early voting is open. Besides going downtown to the Board of Elections at 300 North Tucker, four libraries offer early voting: Buder, Central, Julia Davis and Schlafly.

Concerts in Benton Park will be from six to eight on Monday October 19, Friday October 23, Monday October 26, and Wednesday October 28.

Louisiana's calm street project final plan was approved by the Board of Public Service after three and a half years of work. It will span more than 20 blocks to connect Carondelet Park to Tower Grove Park; phase one is through Benton Park West. It uses new speed calming technologies and is a pilot program. It is a federally funded multi-million dollar, East-West Gateway approved plan. Construction will start in spring. The Alderman can send the plans to anyone interested.

Traffic calming continues to be extremely difficult to get approved. Alderpeople are confronting the mayor about the need to change the process, make a city wide traffic plan, and have police enforce traffic laws. He's also trying to get the streets department to allow small 'stop for pedestrians' signs in the middle of the road, like in Lafayette Square, at more residential crosswalks.

Ninth Ward Democrats is asking for input on their endorsements or amendments of propositions coming up in November. That is on Facebook.

Officer Jazmin Garrett, District 3 Community Outreach and Liaison

The new captain is Joseph Murray; an introduction and a photo of him will be shared on NextDoor next week. From September 10 to October 7 there were a total of 22 crimes. The main one was the homicide that happened in the 3000 block of Utah. It is still an ongoing investigation and no additional leads or information is available yet. Nate Fowle noted that the woman killed was a nextdoor neighbor and a wonderful human being. She was trying to protect her child when it happened. She was an anchor for the whole neighborhood, looked out for all the kids, was friends with all people on the block and will really be missed.

Emily Thenhaus, Cherokee Street CID

The **Cherokee CID board** has six seats open at the end of the year; if interested in serving on the board, you can find more information on CherokeeStreet.com/board. You have to be a resident, property owner, or business owner on Cherokee Street between Gravois and Indiana. The Cherokee CID board and the city launched a **camera grant program** for the district to help install exterior cameras on Cherokee Street. if you are a property owner on Cherokee Street. The grants are for up to \$2,000 per camera system and may be used for new systems or some upgrades. They'll be collecting applications till the end of November. Keep an eye out for more

info next Monday. Subsidies may also be available in future for home or business owners to add ring cameras to the front of their building.

Cherokee won't have a Love Bank Park party but will do **trick-or-treating at Cherokee Street** businesses and need volunteers to fill gaps between businesses. The CID will be providing the candy, masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer. They will spray chalk stencils of skulls made by a local artist every six feet along the sidewalks to encourage social distancing.

This **Cherokee Street Thanksgiving** they're focused on the goodwill aspect of the event and are turning it into a Cherokee Street Thanksgiving drive-thru food distribution. They will provide turkeys, potatoes, pie and fixings the Tuesday before Thanksgiving at the Bird and Barrel space on Jefferson. They are looking for food donations and organizations able to help or collaborate. Stay tuned for more updates and plans about **Print Bazaar**; a lot of the artists still want to make something happen.

Christ Schmidt moved to adjourn the meeting. Bill Byrd seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20pm