

Benton Park West Neighborhood Association
March 19, 2015 meeting minutes

Meeting was convened at 7:04 p.m.

President Linda Hennigh reminded everyone to include their email addresses on the sign-in sheet in order to receive email updates between meetings whenever there is news of interest to the neighborhood. She next urged everyone to purchase their Cardinal tickets for the 4 Cherokee Neighborhoods Night at the Cardinals game on May 4. Tickets are limited but still available at \$26 for members and \$30 nonmembers. There will be a shuttle available.

The minutes of the February meeting minutes were reviewed. A motion to accept the minutes as written was made by Connie and seconded by Shelly. Motion carries.

President Hennigh pointed out the minutes for the board meeting for our review. She reminded us that everyone is invited to attend the board meetings which are held on the second Monday of the month, and acknowledged that is where the real business of the association is conducted.

A motion to accept the treasurer's report was made by Mandy and seconded by Shelley. The motion passed.

Lastly, Paula made a motion to accept the budget as proposed. This motion was seconded by Stephanie, and the motion was accepted.

Stephanie McKinney, representing the SouthSide Early Childhood Center, spoke briefly about the Center which was started in 1886 in Soulard. In the 1950's, the Center moved into our neighborhood, and last year moved into their new building in the Fox Park neighborhood at Jefferson and Russell. The Center is fully accredited and has hours from 7:15 to 5:45 or 8:30 to 3:10 depending on the program chosen.

David Jackson from the St. Louis Public Schools Board noted that there are two seats up for election in April and that there are 6 candidates running for those two spots. The purpose of the board is to monitor and audit the school system. Since 2007, the board has operated with seven elected members, and three appointed by the State. Mr. Jackson would like the leadership to be returned to a fully elected board in order to better represent the whole community. Their goal is to direct dollars to the classroom to cover over 1500 educational programs. The board meets the second Tuesday of the month in different schools throughout the city. Check out their web site at slps.org for the schedule of places and times.

Deanna Venker from MoDOT informed us that there is a plan in the works to improve Gravois. They are looking at closing some of the lower access points to Gravois from Grand to I-55 in order to eliminate the six way intersections and provide better traffic flow. Test barricades will be put in place in the spring to close some of these streets, and if the plan works, then permanent improvements including sidewalks will be added. In 2016, there will also be resurfacing of the street from the city limits to 55.

Announcements - Probation and Parole will start alley cleanups once again in April. Please let Linda know if there is an alley in particular need of help.

May 16 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Cherokee Row Antique History Fare. Featuring music, and a car show. KDHX will be sponsoring a tie-dye fundraiser at the Venice Café from 2 to 7.

Free movie night and hot dogs at Kirby Church on March 20 at 7 p.m. Featured movie - Race Car

Mandy reported that the dog park will have an open house on April 11 from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. There will be donuts and coffee for the humans and open play time for the dogs. She further announced that she is trying to come up with a new name for the dog park and then install a sign to better promote the existence of the park in our neighborhood.

The district 3 community outreach officers announced that overall crime is down but violent crimes have gone up recently. They attribute this trend to recent gang activity. They further reported that two of the three suspects in a local burglary ring have been arrested. They urged us to call 911 whenever we see suspicious activity. They further stated that the more information you can provide, the better, and asked us to please leave a call back number to help answer any questions that may arise.

May 2 is the Cinco de Mayo celebration on Cherokee. Several new businesses have opened recently as well including Elaine's and Little Dipper sandwich shops; Mesa Homes; St. Louis Hop shop featuring craft beers; and Bridge Bread, a retail operation featuring bread baked by the homeless.

The community gardens group for the corner of Jefferson and Arsenal is meeting Saturday at 10:30 to discuss what they will do this summer.

April 4 in Gravois Park - the Easter Eggstravaganza begins at 10 a.m. In its tenth year, it is still free to attend. The only cost is if you want your picture taken with the Easter Bunny. The mounted police horse Jake will also be in attendance.

Attendance prizes - surprise package went to women from salvation army as did the glass beverage set. Gardening set was won by Quinn. The 50/50 of \$13 was won by Johnnie Walkers owner.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Paula and seconded by Mike. The meeting was adjourned at 8:19 p.m.