

Benton Park West Neighborhood Association  
7pm  
January 20, 2020

**Board Members Present:**

Erin Godwin, President  
ChrisSchmidt, Secretary  
Marit Lau, Member At Large  
Gwynne Jackson, Membership Chair  
Sarah Pearl, Dog Park Chair  
Michael Sullivan, Historic Area

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 with introductions. Tom Pini, introduced himself as a new resident. Will Andrews is also new to the neighborhood, Emily Thenhaus from the Cherokee CID, Elaine Brune from MTUG who introduced Mira Belgrave as the new MTUG representative, 9th Ward Alderman Dan Guenther, Marit Ivory, Officer Jazmon Garret and Barb Potts, Neighborhood Improvement Specialist

**The Dog Park** needs maintenance, especially for the trees.

**LRA Garden** on Minnesota has passed to the nextdoor neighbor.

**The street signs** for Jefferson has been decided (by the board) that this cost would not be a priority at this time.

Marit motioned to approve the **November meeting minutes**. Gwynne seconded. Passed.

December and January Board Meeting minutes were reviewed for interest.

**January 2022 Treasurer's Report** is abridged and Erin described the expenditures of the T Shirts. **The 2022 Budget** was discussed but not approved because it is not totally complete. Gwynne motioned that we approve the January Treasurer's report, Marit seconded. Passed.

**Emily Tenhaus from the Cherokee Street Community Improvement District** thanked us for our support of the local businesses in general. They are working on new planters at Jefferson, California, Compton and Gravois. The old ones will be removed. Love Bank Park will be renovated this summer to include new activities as well as keeping the same uses. New businesses were discussed including Levelz, a new arcade at the corner of Oregon and Cherokee. There will be a Brass Band Blowout to kick off Mardi Gras the Saturday before at 2720 Cherokee. This will be a Vax card only event (or Covid test). Cinco de Mayo will still look a little different this year, but will happen. Sarah asked about vacancies on Cherokee. Emily said it is about the same, but businesses are at their stretching point because of Covid and they really need our business. Burger 809 will be moving down to serve inside of the brewery at the corner of Lemp and Cherokee.

**Officer Garrett** gave a report about police activities. There were a total of 19 crimes, most of them were larcenies from a motor vehicle or shoplifting (15 of them). In the 2600 block of Arsenal there was a garage burglary. 2 vehicles were stolen and not located. 3100 block of California saw one car robbery and in a different event there was an argument that resulted in a stabbing. Overall neighborhood crimes are down 27.3% in our neighborhood. Because of Covid the police are mostly *responding* to calls rather than self initiated, like traffic stops. Tom asked about porch pirates, specifically one that one of his contractors observed. Officer Garrett recommended trying to be sure you're at home when you're expecting a package or have security cameras.

**Barb Potts** talked about larcenies from cars and wanted to be sure that people know that Spirit One Automotive on Arsenal will install a cage on your catalytic converter to keep it safe. In general these are being taken from cars that are higher off the ground, making them easier to remove. She did a street light survey a few weeks ago and they have been repaired if necessary. Amren UE will repair the alley lights. If you know of a vacant building that needs to be boarded up please tell Barb so that they can be taken care of to keep folks out of the house in the cold where they set fires to keep warm. Just this past week a firefighter lost his life fighting one of these fires. Barb is frustrated with the issues regarding the refuse department because of shortages in staffing. There are several thousands in incentives for people who are willing to start become a collector. Derelict cars are being stickered, but it's taking a while to get them towed. Let Barb or Dan know if there are cars nearby that need to be towed.

Gwynne talked about **membership**. We do have one new renewal. On the sign in link in the chat there was a link to become a member, join the dog park or get a garden site.

Erin discussed **open committees**; specifically Youth, Beautification and Fundraising, and asked that participants check out the website to see what you might like to lead.

Suny Hutton from **SLACO** was not feeling well and did not attend this evening, although she was on the agenda.

In the **packet** is information about a request for expanded parking at an automotive shop at the corner of Utah and Virginia. The board intends to offer a letter of support for the Board of Adjustments with some specific conditions. We prefer that she only be allowed to add 5 more cars. There were no questions about it at the meeting.

Aaron Dohegene will be doing a fundraiser on facebook to raise money for additional trees and support for our neighborhood These trees will be planted in yards with educational information for the homeowners to help them thrive. Erin also got a mini grant to do an urban forestry program to help take care of our current trees. Look for information about this on the website. T Shirts will be available for \$25 at in person meetings. Iowa Avenue Adventure Playground project will be created on Iowa at the old site of the Southside Child Development Center. Community Mobility Committee is an organization that exists to advise the city on different transportation decisions to be sure all populations will be considered. If you know anyone who would be interested in that just reach out through their website. There was also information

about Prop R to make the government more transparent which will be on the ballot on April 5. The first Neighborhood Cleanup is tentatively scheduled for February 19. Tom asked about this for this coming week-end and is interested in possibly leading the effort! The Easter Eggstravaganza needs volunteers and will take place the Saturday before Easter. We will hire a Spanish language translator to help at the event this year. Neighborhood Cameras are kept on a list by ChrisSchmidt. Please put your name, address and phone number in the chat if you have one.

**Dan Guenther** talked about the new Ward Reductions and Redistricting resulting in a new Ward Map for the city. This year they reduced wards from 28 to 14 wards with an emphasis in making them racially equal in number. (7 with white majority population and 7 with a black majority population) Basically our current Ward will change into 3 different sections. At this time there is no sitting aldermen in our new ward, which will go west from Jefferson between Winnebago to the south Choteau to the north, and west to Vandevafor. If anyone is interested it will be an open seat so talk to Dan! March 2023 will be a primary for the new wards and April 2023 will be the general election. Dan encourages people to use lockers at the Save A Lot at Jefferson and Cherokee for deliveries to avoid porch pirates. Teh automotive repair shop at 3200 Utah is an issue that Dan has been following and he encourages neighbors to talk to him or Erin if you have comments. Just this past month they stopped yard waste collection for the winter. New drivers have been hired but they are now working on maintenance issues with the trucks. Recycling is not being picked up but there are sites for recycling near the firehouses, specifically at Pestalozzi and Jefferson. All of the alley dumpsters are being put into the landfill right now. Daytime warming shelters for the unhoused have been identified and need volunteers. There is an emergency pop up shelter at Cherokee Rec Center. Winter Outreach leaves from Mokabees at Arsenal and Grand at 6:30 on Thursday nights to try to fill the needs of the unhoused. There are also tons of services in our neighborhood for the unhoused.

Vacant Property at 3326 Michigan may be donated to the neighborhood so the current owner doesn't have to deal with it. Michael Sullivan is taking care of this. Sarah has some thoughts about historic properties. Erin suggested we discuss her thoughts more fully during our next board meeting.

Michael motioned to adjourn and Tom seconded. Passed. Erin closed the meeting at 8:20