

Benton Park West Neighborhood Association Membership Meeting

Five Star Senior Center, 2832 Arsenal

Thursday, June 18, 2015

Attendance: 44

Board

- President – Linda Hennigh, Present
- Vice President – Becky Martinez, Absent
- Secretary – Scott McIntosh, Present
- Treasurer – Frank Becker, Absent
- Member At-Large – Dan Geary, Present
- Member At-Large – Roz Ball, Present

1. Call to order – 7:04 pm
2. Review and approve May meeting minutes – Hold until July meeting
3. Review of June Board meeting minutes
4. Review and approve May Treasurer's Report – Hold until July meeting
5. Review 2015 Budget
6. Guest Speaker: Mayor Slay
 - a. Milkweeds for Monarchs – Thank you to all the volunteers who planted in Benton Park last fall.
 - b. Crime
 - i. One crime is too much; we all should feel safe in our homes
 - ii. We've had our crime drop by half in the past 7 years, but are seeing an upward trend in homicide and violent crimes
 - iii. Spend the most in dollars and hours on crime in the City
 - c. Affordable Housing
 - i. Dedicates \$5 million/year in affordable housing
 - ii. Removed all Federal high rises
 - iii. Provide opportunities for low income families to live all over the City
 - iv. Access as much Federal dollars for affordable housing as any other city
 - d. Education
 - i. Have had some great public schools, but not enough
 - ii. Working to improve our education system
 - iii. Know it's a struggle with a large low-income population
 - iv. Asked State to take over the system and now have one of the best superintendents
 - v. Is an advocate for Charter Schools that provide a high quality education; competition is a good thing
 1. Did ask for Imagine Charter Schools to close b/c not one year in one subject did any grade meet the State standards in testing
 2. Worked with City private, charter, and public schools to take the 3,000 students displaced when Imagine schools closed
 - vi. For the first time in 50 years, enrollment in City schools has increased
 - vii. To Mayor Slay, the most important issue is the children and getting a quality education, not the school, not the building, etc.
 - e. Working to create other opportunities for families in the City

- i. Have started after school programs in highest crime neighborhoods
 - ii. Created STL Jobs programs to get 1,500 at-risk children jobs during the summer
 - iii. Teach live and work skills, get them off the streets, and money in their pockets
- f. Homeless
 - i. We provide most of the homeless services for the metro area
 - ii. Not to say there aren't services in the counties, but predominately they turn their backs on homeless
 - iii. County Police Dept's bring their homeless into the City and drop them off at City Shelters b/c they don't want to deal with them
 - iv. \$50 million is spent in the City on homeless through private and public funds
- g. Law Enforcement
 - i. State has lax gun laws
 - ii. State passed a law that it is everyone's right to bear arms
 - iii. A felon was arrested for possession of a gun (Federal crime) and the judge throughout the charges because of the state's law
 - iv. Need to ensure police officers have the resources and support they need to get the job done
 - v. Crime is going up around the country since Ferguson
 - vi. Racial disparities have come to the surface, emotions are running high, and criminals are more brazen
 - vii. Mayor speaks daily with the Police Chief
 - viii. Police are under intense scrutiny
 - ix. Civilian Oversight
 1. Strengthen the relationship between officers and the community
 2. Everyone thinks the bill either goes too far or not enough; signs it's a good bill
 3. Transparency so the community has confidence in the Police Dept
 4. June 5 the application was made available
 5. There will be 7 appointees, selected by the Mayor and approved by the Board of Alderman
 6. All appointees will go through training to understand what the police do and why they do it
 7. Board won't be in place until the end of the year
 8. Will be an important job and very time consuming
 - 9.
- h. Bond Issues
 - i. Public safety and investing in our future
 - ii. Had deferred investment in fire trucks, salt trucks, trash cans, etc
 - iii. City streets and bridges, City buildings
 - iv. Demolition and stabilization of buildings
 - v. Need to catch up, haven't had a bond issue since 1999
 - vi. Working to keep the NGA in the City
 1. would keep 3100 jobs in the City
 2. Infrastructure is needed in the target site to make it more attractive to the National Geospatial Administration
 - vii. The longer we wait to fix these issues, the more costly it will be to fix
 - viii. We need to help our workers have the right/proper tools to get their jobs done for public safety

- ix. Please consider supporting this bond issue
- i. Business Regulations
 - i. Looking to eliminate hundreds of pages of regulations to improve and encourage small and large businesses
 - ii. Removing 9 categories for home based businesses, but keeping some regulations such as no signs outside, employees coming and going, keeping residential character of the property
 - iii. Reducing business license fee for those with 2 or few employees
 - iv. For some items, you won't need to get approval to be added, but will give residents options to remove items if they cause a problem
 - v. Wanting to make it easier to start and grow a business
- j. Gun Dockets
 - i. State legislature can pose or Judges can pose
 - ii. NOM – citizens sit in the courtroom during sentencing to get stronger sentences by the judges
- k. Red Light Tickets
 - i. Not declared illegal, so considered valid and are collecting the fees
 - ii. The funds are in a fund until the court decides if the lights are illegal
- l. Gravois Closures
 - i. MODOT has conducted a study on how to make city streets safer
 - ii. In their analysis, Gravois has 5-6 streets intersecting which makes it dangerous
 - iii. Public reaction to proposed closures was strong
 - iv. MODOT has stepped back and is having a conversation
 - v. Gravois Community Visioning meeting is July 14 at 6pm at Five Star Senior Center
 - vi. How do we make our streets safer for walking and biking
- m. Paul McKee/Northside Properties
 - i. NGA site is within the Northside development area own by Paul McKee
 - ii. McKee is involved in some law suits
 - iii. Land maybe purchased from McKee or lenders who foreclose on his properties
 - iv. Paul McKee is also still committed to his vision for north St. Louis and doing something good
- n. Minimum Wage
 - i. Have a growing inequality issue in the US
 - ii. Most Americans believe minimum wage should go up
 - iii. State of MO hasn't stepped up, so the City is looking to do it
 - iv. Productivity of American workers has gone up 80% since 1960, but wages are 30% of where they were then
 - v. Seeking to increase minimum wage to \$15/hour; gradual increase over 5 years
 - 1. City employee minimum wage is already \$10.10/hour
 - vi. Engaging restaurants and hotels to get their input on what makes sense
 - vii. Not going to do it in a reckless manner or a way that would eliminate jobs
 - viii. Bill is up for discussion, opinions are being heard
- 7. Guest Speaker: Robyn Wiens, Principal, Hawthorn Leadership School for Girls
 - a. First public all girls school in Missouri
 - b. Tuition-free, STEM school (science, technology, engineering, and math)
 - c. Full-time dance and P.E. teacher
 - d. Will eventually grow to be a full middle and high school

- e. Institutional sponsor is Washington University in St. Louis
 - f. Located on north Kingshighway
 - g. Many enrolled are from BPW, are pulling from all City neighborhoods
 - h. Open house this Saturday, June 20 from 10am-1pm
 - i. Currently renovating the building and will open in August
8. Guest Speaker: Dan Gunther, Milkweeds for Monarchs
- a. Neighbor in Benton Park and new project manager for Milkweeds for Monarchs Project
 - b. Goal to have 250 gardens, have 130 gardens currently
 - c. Conservation Agency is doing a study to see if program is working
 - d. Missouri is part of the spring and fall migration for monarchs
 - e. Reason for loss is lack of natural habitat
 - f. Has a handout on the 9 plants that are needed, can also buy on your own from garden centers
 - g. Gardens need to be 3ft x 3ft and can be on private or public land
 - h. Nine foot gardens can get a yard sign
 - i. Information is available on the City's website under the Office of Sustainability
9. Visitors and New Members
- a. Tom and Cindy Verhoff, 3100 block of Nebraska
 - b. Brandon Lambos, Nebraska
 - c. Dillon, works for Cara Spencer
 - d. Clark Biarson, Michigan
 - e. Eddie Williams, Texas Ave
 - f. Andrea James and Clayton Young, Marine Villa NA
10. District 3 Community Outreach Officer: Pat Clancy, 314-444-2564, pmclancy@slmpd.org
- a. Crime Report
 - i. Burglaries are down in this 4 week period (83%)
 - ii. Violent Offenders – going after top offenders and did a house search on Virginia last week and did make 2 arrests
 - b. Summer Camp on Safety
 - i. Ages 6-9
 - ii. Week of July 13 in the morning until noon
 - iii. Registration ends June 20
 - iv. Breakfast and lunch included
11. Neighborhood Stabilization Officer – Dena Hibbard
- a. Had to leave, but can contact at hibbardd@stlouis-mo.gov, 314-657-1359
12. 9th Ward Alderman – Ken Ortmann
- a. NOFA process, 3 projects were approved including one in BPW – 3100 block of Ohio
13. St. Louis Library: Tonya Joy, Barr Branch
- a. Reading Challenge: read or listen to 10 books and receive a completion prize of 2 Cardinal game tickets (while supplies last)
 - b. Have an exhibit in the main library on travels of Campbell family in Europe
14. Cherokee Station Business Association Liaison, Anne McCullough
- a. Sending check for Cinco de Mayo dunking booth to BPWNA
 - b. New Businesses
 - i. Johnny Walkers, 3211 Cherokee, new bar
 - ii. Box, 3350 Ohio, sex therapy, sex shop, midwifery
 - iii. Guardian Angel Settlement House's Angel Boutique, Cherokee will open in July
 - iv. HopStop, Cherokee, craft beer sales

- v. Four Hands Brewery opened their offices in the former APOP Records location, Cherokee
- vi. Bridge Bread on Jefferson at Cherokee is hoping to open in July
- vii. Flowers & Weeks is holding an opening party July 17
- c. STL-Style House 5 Anniversary on Cherokee Street, Sat, June 20 from 2-7 pm at their store

15. Upcoming Events

- a. Cherokee Neighborhoods Happy Hour
 - i. Thurs, June 25 @ 6-8 pm
 - ii. The Filling Station, 1924 Pestalozzi, Benton Park
 - iii. Wear your BPW t-shirt
- b. Fair St. Louis
 - i. Thurs, July 2 (evening only) and Fri, July 3 (all day)
 - ii. Sell beer, soda and water
 - iii. Fundraiser for BPWNA
 - iv. Sign up online – bentonparkwest.org, Nextdoor, Facebook
- c. 10 Minute Litter Challenge
 - i. Take 10 minutes a day to pick up litter on your block
 - ii. If your neighbors are doing your block, pick an adjacent block
 - iii. Will keep neighborhood looking nice and brings up property value

16. Prizes

- a. Attendance Prizes
 - i. Star wreath: Mike Schmidt
 - ii. Star welcome mat: Shelley Henderson
 - iii. Star Wall Art: Bill Byrd
- b. 50/50: \$20 won by Bill Byrd

17. Adjournment – Mike Schmidt moves, seconds, passes at 9:00 pm