

Benton Park West Neighborhood Association

Neighborhood Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 18th, 2020

Submitted by Erin Godwin

Call to order, Scott McIntosh - 7:04 pm

Attendance - **18 adults- 13 members, 5 guests**

- 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/Pam Welsh - 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**

Tanya, Barr Branch, St. Louis Public Library

Libraries have been closed. Carpenter, Bruder, Schlafly, Julia Davis and Central are open for limited services; you can pick up your holds, but there is no browsing. Current hours are Wednesday 5-9, Tuesday-Saturday 10-2. Book drops are all open; books are being quarantined for 72 hours before being checked back into the system. You must wear a face mask to enter the library. A lot of library programs are now virtual, and there will be more over the summer for children and adults. Summer challenge started June 1st and goes to August 8th. Get Back to Reading is the adult version. Virtual tech sessions are available to help with Zoom, Microsoft programs, etc. You can schedule online over phone or Zoom. Personal recommendations are on the right-hand side where you fill out the form for music, books or movies and get personalized suggestions; this is a virtual version of Reader's Advisory. Mobile printing available online; call for curbside or come pick up at the open locations. Hotspots and Chrome books are available for customer checkouts. The waitlist is long but some are unreservable; if you go in

person, there may be some available. Dd and large format printing, collaborative workstations, a recording room etc will be available at Barr once the branch reopens to the public.

Scott McIntosh, BPWNA President

There isn't much neighborhood association programming right now but residents can still get involved with neighborhood gardens, the dog park, etc.

Please let Christ Schmidt know if you have an exterior security camera to add to the list.

Dan Guenther, 9th Ward Alderman

COVID numbers plateaued; please continue with masks and social distancing. Free testing is available in the city now for anyone on South Broadway. Health department issued Executive Order #10 to reopen parks and street festivals etc. is in effect. July 20 is expected to be the day things completely reopen and venues will be able to operate at 100% capacity. Masks will be recommended not required.

Close the Workhouse experienced a push. An amendment was going to be put before the Ways and Means Committee, but the chairman of the committee refused to hear the bill. Supporters are still working to convince other aldermen why the workhouse should be closed; please reach out to other aldermen.

Lewis Reed put a bill forward and a petition is circulating to put privatization of the airport on the ballot. It is the only petition circulating right now so please be careful and don't sign it.

There is a hiring freeze and some service cuts to cover a \$40 million budget gap. The ward capital budgets will be half of their original size next year. Paving Wyoming recently cost \$70k alone, so larger projects may have to wait a few years.

There will be a Juneteenth celebration at Love Bank Park. The street will be closed between Cherokee and the alley on the north. Jackson Pianos will have pianos on trailers performing on Cherokee starting at noon. A band will be on a trailer and will perform in Benton Park at 2pm before traveling through Cherokee, Fox Park, and Shaw.

Board Bill 24 was just passed and would allow direct input on where speed humps will go.

Package thefts have increased as so many people are ordering online; if you won't be home please have it delivered to cvs, Save a Lot, etc.

If an alley light is out, call Ameren and give them the pole number; they will come fix it.

The recent shooting that occurred involved a man and woman walking down the street and a person shooting from a passing car. There is a person of interest identified.

Emily Thenhaus- Cherokee Street CID

Cherokee CID hired a landscaper to mow Love Bank Park, weed Cherokee Street sidewalks east of Nebraska in the next two weeks, and trim large trees on the western portion of street that are blocking street lights and stop signs in the next week. Mulching and watering of trees will also occur. They may also water some of the metal planters as needed; most of the plants are Missouri natives now thanks to a Neighbors Naturescaping project and shouldn't need as much care.

There is a new Art Committee and will have new arts funding for murals, projection ideas and more. Information will be available soon.

The Mexican Independence celebration in September will be different this year, but they are looking for ideas on how to celebrate the occasion safely.

The Show Up For Cherokee campaign raised over \$18,000 and was distributed to Cherokee Street workers who have been unemployed due to Covid.

Love Bank Park was purchased by the CID in May and community members will be working to improve the park. They created the Love Bank Park Committee which meets Mondays at the park at 6pm, weather permitting. All are welcome. It is important to build relationships to improve public safety and engagement. They are working to improve and clean the space. The basketball hoop has a lock on it due to Covid, but will be available in future. The park will be available to reserve online for events. There are plans that were created in the past, and there will be work to reengage the neighborhood about updating those plans and seeing what assets the neighborhood would like to see added to the park.

No businesses have closed on Cherokee Street, and some new ones have even opened, but businesses are operating at reduced capacity and incurring additional costs due to Covid and will continue to need support even as things continue to reopen.

The CID is looking at other options for safety instead of the planned secondary patrols as there is concern that not all people will feel safer with them there, and they are extremely expensive. Pedestrian safety and traffic calming is a huge concern.

Barb Potts

Towing is not common right now.

BPWNA secretary lost internet connection at this point.

Meeting adjourned ~8pm