

# Benton Park West Neighborhood Association

## Board Meeting

August 10, 2020

Start at 6:32

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

## DeSales Housing Corporation. Tom Pickle and Becky Reinhardt

Tom Pickle, Executive Director, DeSales Community Development  
Senior building at the corner of Jefferson and Arsenal

DeSales applied to the Missouri Housing Commission for Low Income Housing Tax Credits to help finance the project last year but did not get funded by the extremely competitive program, so Becky and Tom met with MHDC staff in early February for feedback on the proposal and recommendations to make it more competitive.

Last year they proposed a 40 unit, three story senior housing building at the corner of Jefferson and Arsenal with 1,000 square feet of corner commercial space. T. Five Star Senior Center will still be the service provider on the project. The number of units is increasing to 49- 29 one bedroom and 20 two bedroom units- to make it more efficient from a development, construction, and management standpoint. Secondly, it will now be a mixed income project as MHDC would want to see at least 10% of the units be market rate. Five of the units will be market rate with rents about 20% higher than the income restricted rents. Last year, it was an L shaped building at the southwest corner of Jefferson and Arsenal. To improve traffic circulation at the rear of the building the Arsenal wing was turned about 10 degrees to make it conform to the street pattern like a lot of historic buildings. They proposed to

Alderman Gunther to vacate the north end of the alley, but that is still under consideration; the plan has nice traffic circulation from that alley whether vacated or not. The previous plan left room for future development to the south of the building, but with the additional units, there isn't enough room left for a future phase; that changed to a garden amenity and rain garden feature that earns points and potential funds from MSD and will improve the environmental impact of the building.

They don't have the landscape design but have been looking into city and MSD requirements. MSD's preliminary review didn't require onsite stormwater retention as so much of the site was already impervious. DeSales is interested in making a portion of the surface parking area a pervious surface and is looking at funding sources for that, but MSD isn't requiring anything.

The community garden has alley access to Arsenal for things like mulch drop off while also having a safe access point for residents of the building to join the garden and for people coming and going from parking to the commercial amenity at Jefferson and Arsenal.

MHDC suggested an outdoor space for passive recreation or resident seating area so the southern end has a resident garden amenity. They're still working on details of that.

The renderings haven't changed much aside from the dimensions. The design is varied so it's not one monolithic building; it looks like a collection of buildings with multiple exterior materials including brick, shingles, metal awnings, standing seam metal dormer roofs, cement panels, and siding.

The corner commercial is a single storefront for a casual food service business that would draw people to that location and be an amenity for the building residents. There is 600 square feet of exterior seating set back from the street at the corner.

There won't be direct access to the commercial space from the interior of the building but by the corner on Jefferson there will be an entrance into the lobby with a canopy that extends over both entries. The side of the building facing the parking lot will be a main entrance for residents but not a public entrance. There's a canopy to provide sheltered access for buses pulling in and another resident entry at the south end of the building. They will all be key card entry like a hotel.

The affordable one bedroom would be around \$600 and the market rate \$720.

DeSales is looking at potentially putting solar panels on the roof to power the common meter of the building and maybe the parking lot lighting; apartments would be metered separately.

The Missouri Housing Development Commission came out today with a public notification that applications will be due October 30, so they're in a good position for the application. They usually try to make the awards by the end of the year. They feel they have a very competitive, high impact project.

### **Nevada Thomas, Aspiring Arms Childcare, 2810 Arsenal**

Ms. Thomas moved to her home 10 years ago, was approved for a home health care business from her home five years ago and would now like to move out and convert the home into a daycare. Ms. Thomas worked in childcare for about six years, and is renovating the home for use as a daycare for up to ten children ages six months to 12 years. Hours would be 6am to 7pm Monday through Friday, no weekends.

The house has a fenced backyard for the kids. Parking for child pickup and drop-off on Arsenal could be a concern, but there are three parking spaces for employees on the rear parking pad. At any one time there would be up to two employees. There is a need for additional daycare providers in the city as several of them closed a couple years ago.

Home occupation waivers explicitly don't allow signage, but with the zoning approval for this there could be signage. Whatever concerns the neighborhood association has can be addressed in a letter of support.

Ms. Thomas is renting, but the owner is okay with the modifications and will provide written documentation if needed.

### **Jessica Patterson and Alana Ross, Dig Annuals and Perennials, 3128 Pennsylvania**

The company's name is Dig Annuals and Perennials and is a wholesale plant propagation company. The lots are residential so they are looking for a letter of support for a variance. There will be no retail space here; this will strictly be a plant propagation space. Along Pennsylvania Avenue there will be large display beds; the existing fence and gate will stay. At the top of the incline they'll build a greenhouse of metal hoops covered in industrial strength plastic with a gravel path around it and behind it a large field growing space. The hoop house will focus on annual plants, so flowers and a handful of vegetables. The outdoor space will focus on growing native perennials.

There'll be a display garden or cold frames along the alley and some other small structures about 24 inches tall behind. What you'll see is mostly a display garden with a greenhouse behind it. The parking pad is already there. Between the hoop house and parking pad, they may put a small office and bathroom, some sort of temporary structure to go inside when working in wintertime.

Jessica lives a few blocks away so everything will be stored at her home until they have a structure. They will have lots of motion lights; they haven't talked about cameras but will consider adding some.

They will have a lock on the gate on Pennsylvania and have a big gate across the parking pad off the alley. They haven't talked much with neighbors besides the owner of Taylor Auto. It's important to them to become a part of the neighborhood. The residence just to the south was previously used as an office, but it is unclear what its current use may be.

The compost used would be finished and not smell bad. They'll use peat free products and local products; peat moss is a finite resource, and harvesting peat moss destroys ecosystems in Canada and parts of northern Europe. They'll primarily use St Louis composting mix which is delivered as a pallet of bagged material.

They have to run a new water line to the property from north of the small gate so the water line will run to the east of the hoop house, so. if they extend the waterline, they won't have to dig up the hoop house; it'll be in the middle of the property. The office addition is probably a couple years down the road, because running the sewer is going to be pretty costly so the first years will be focused on site work and building the greenhouse. They'll use rain collected off the hoop house for watering.

With Covid an issue, they're trying to figure out how to talk to people, maybe creating a flyer, and putting it on doors.

They're marketing to independent garden centers and small landscapers and plan to make up a newsletter saying what they're doing and distribute it.

Patterson has been in horticulture for the last 12 years, and is a teacher at St. Louis Community College at Meramec. Ross is a horticulturist for U City In Bloom, a nonprofit that maintains all the public gardens in University City, but will be leaving there at the end of the season to start this business.

She teaches art and design at St. Louis Community College at Meramec and worked with landscape architects and on projects that focus on native prairie plants and pollinator habitats. Before she taught at Meramec, she was in charge of propagation there for eight years.

The majority of the wholesale greenhouses in St. Louis are on the far reaches of St. Louis County and even farther out. They'll be a provider in the City.

It was suggested they distribute a simple flyer to neighbors informing them of the new business. They won't have approval from the city before they close on the property, but are planning on going forward with purchasing the property and will start the process of getting a business loan shortly after.

#### **Other Items:**

Two checks from Bills Facebook fundraiser came in for \$7 and \$135 from Network for Good.

Scott hasn't heard from Jason Deem about possible office/storage space, but there's no pushback from the Salvation Army right now because their building is not open, and the group that was needing that office isn't going to be able to be down there.

Barb Potts is due to receive her yearly donation to pay for her cell phone.

The owner of the house at **3155 South Jefferson**, the Cherokee brewery house, passed away and didn't leave a will, so it's gone to US Bank. The house is original, nothing's been changed, so it does need renovations. Start thinking about people who might have money to buy it so it doesn't get destroyed.

There is an **illegal tent** selling items on Texas, north of Arsenal which Bill reported. They had signs up and it seemed like a birthday party when it cropped up two weeks ago, but there's tables in the back of the tent and merchandise. Barb Pott is on it; Bill sent her pictures. He did not report it to the CSB.

Fall neighborhood events are cancelled.

Neighborhood association nominations are in September with voting in October.

**Pennsylvania** Bill Byrd motioned to submit a letter of support. Tim Thomas seconded. Motion to submit a letter of support was approved.

**DeSales** Bill Byrd motioned to submit a letter of support. Chris Schmidt seconded. Motion to submit a letter of support was approved.

**Arsenal** Erin Godwin motioned to submit a letter of support. Chris Schmidt seconded. Motion to submit a letter of support was approved.

**Board Minutes** Bill Byrd motioned to submit a letter of support, Chris Schmidt

The **Treasurer's Report** was reviewed.

The proposed **Neighborhood Meeting Agenda** for August was reviewed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:28.