

Benton Park West Neighborhood Meeting

May 16, 2019

7:06 meeting began

22 people present

Review of April meeting minutes. Pam Welch motions to approve. Gloria Graves seconds. Passed.

April Treasurers Report. Eddie Schmid motions to accept. Pam Welch seconds. Passed.

New Members. None tonight.

Visitors: Roger Monyhan 3100 block of California.

Speaker: Shawn Ordway, Deputy Assessor. Reassessment is a state function that happens once every 2 years. Brings everything to current value. St Louis has seen good residential growth in property values recently. This year there is a lot of growth in the commercial market as well. He gave a handout about how BPW compares to the rest of the city. Our growth is a little less than the city proper, but still good. It was around \$115-120,000 now about \$130,000 (this is the median). The more your property value goes up the more our taxes go up. Value goes up with neighborhood changes as well as improvements to the property. Questions: *What's the appeal process?* Notices are being mailed out with instructions to appeal. You have until June 21 to request an informal appeal with a city appraiser. If you're not satisfied you go to the Board of Equalization, which is made up of 4 taxpaying volunteers from the city who listen to your side as well as the assessor's side. If you don't like that you can appeal to the State Tax Commission where a State Assessor will come and collect more information to make a determination. If you don't like that you can go to the Appellate Court and the Supreme Court. *Does all the tax money go to the city?* No, a little bit goes to the state pension fund. Most of the taxes go to the public schools (60%) beyond that they go to libraries, the zoo, the city, the disabled..... all local. *How many years can you not pay your taxes before the city takes your property away?* They will set you up on a payment plan if necessary. If you really can't make your payment for 3 years, on the 4th year your property will be sold on the courthouse steps. Email is better than calling to get in touch with the Assessor's Office. (ordways@stlouis-mo-gov) This time of year the office is very busy.

Upcoming Events/Committee Reports:

-We need committee chairs and board members for Membership, Fundraising, Youth, etc

-Easter Eggstravaganza: 300 Participants enjoyed searching for 2000 eggs. Lots of activities.

-Dog Park: New name! This is because a new dog park is opening in Benton Park (neighborhood) and ours is being confused with theirs. Cherokee Dog Park t-shirts are available. This the Dog Park at Nebraska and Utah.

-Give STL day raised \$125.00!!

-Litter Clean Up this Saturday at Cherokee and Jefferson at 9am. Snacks at Teatopia after for 10% off.

-Indie Hop is Saturday June 1. It's a joint beer tasting fundraiser between Cherokee and the Grove between 1-7. They are searching for volunteers to pour.

-Back to School Event. Rosy Jackson spoke to tell us about it. Last year about 450 children. This year we expect 550 children. In the packet is a list of items that need to be donated to help it go more smoothly. This includes general household needs because some families don't have soap, clean clothes, deodorant... to be ready for the first day of school. Dan Guenther has been a great help in the past. Planning meetings are happening. It is a 501C (Arthur Roy Johnson). This year they're trying to team up with the neighborhood elementary school, Buder Elementary to be sure all the kids have their needs met. Rosy's phone number is 583-7461 if you'd like to make donations of things or money. They're looking for a home for the 501C at this point.

-**Neighborhood Cameras** We keep a list of exterior cameras in the neighborhood to help solve crimes in our area.

Alderman Dan Guenther It's budget season. They've been hammering things out. 1.15 billion dollar budget to be sure that everything gets what it needs. We are now up to 4 million dollars for building demolitions. Public Ways and Means Hearing is coming up next Thursday 5/23 in City Hall in the Kennedy Room at 6pm. Review the budget before coming to be more informed. Property values are going up so taxes are going up. Because of this we are doing OK with the budget. We need more NSOs because the current ones are overtaxed. Other topics: medical marijuana, public vote for the airport, The Luminary Counter Public Program hosting a Complain to your alderperson event this Wednesday from 5-7 in front of Earthbound Brewery. Burger 809 on Cherokee is hosting Homework Happy Hours and they'll get a free sandwich if they complete their homework. The Luminary is also hosting a children's program at Love Bank Park on 4 days in June. Lots of development is going on. Phil Grippe was at the meeting and we were told that the 9th Ward is #2 out of 28 Ward for building activity in the city. There's an LRA meeting coming up and several lots are likely being purchased soon. There is one very large section of lots on Pennsylvania that has a controversial thing going in, possibly. A Juneteenth Celebration will be on June 16 from 11-5 at Love Bank Park. Questions: *What's going in to the old Hoods building?* Guardian Angel Settlement Association is redeveloping it for their resale store and social services. *Can we have some speed humps?* Traffic commissioner has checked them out and says we don't need them. *Ally dumping?* It was turned over to the trash task force and the detective is checking it out. *Potholes?* Report to Dan or Barb. They have so many that they can't get them all done. They need at least 2 days of dry weather to repair potholes. They're doing their best! *What's the status on the Penny Saver?* It's closed and not allowed to reopen for a year. The owners are going around asking for signatures to reopen.

Officer Gagik Khoudian There was a peak in April from 10 last year to 16 this year. Last month was odd. Things are better right now. He passed out papers with details. One rape. An officer involved shooting. A couple of car jackings by children. 2 of 3 stolen vehicles were recovered. Be sure you know what you drive and the plate number. A couple of burglaries of vacant buildings and one where someone broke while someone was home in the steal a mattress. A couple of unlocked vehicles, one had a gun stolen. Don't let homeless people stay in their house unless you know them. If you're dating someone PLEASE know their names. Overall 13 arrests this past month. 104 self-initiated events by police. Shootings they've been targeted and there are witnesses who won't talk. Random acts of shootings are rare in St Louis. There has been an increase in gunshots since Cinco de Mayo. With this warmer weather be more

aware. Crime is expected to go up. Be aware of people around your house. Drive around the block before going home if you're nervous. Stuff can be replaced. People can't. 3rd District Community Outreach Meeting is on June 13 at 6:45. A helicopter will land at 7pm. Rachel Greathouse from Brightside will be there with recycling bins. Tabbi Katt-Miss Gay MO 2017 will be hosting.

Barb Potts: Potholes have been turned in. She's trying to get derelict cars towed, but it's slow going. (flat tires, broken windows, if it hasn't moved in a long time....) Let her know if there are cars that have been there for a while. The tow lot may be full. There were a number of gang members at Cinco de Mayo which implies that there may be gang activity in the neighborhood. That's the gunshots we are hearing.

Scott asked folks to put out yard signs the week-end before the neighborhood meeting.

Attendance Prizes: won the shot glass!! Gloria Graves won an insulated canvas food cooler.

50/50 winner: Phil Grippe won 11.50 and donated it back to the neighborhood!

Mercedes Savala motioned to end meeting. Cletus Terrell seconded. Passed.