



LAFAYETTE SQUARE RESTORATION COMMITTEE

May 14, 2019 SqWires Annex

CALL TO ORDER 7:04pm

Emily O'Brien

- **Welcome New Residents:** Bailey on Hickory St; Kara and Alaina on Rutger; Lance Carpenter on Rutger
- Motion made and approval of April 2019 minutes

ALDERMAN REPORTS

6th Ward

Christine Ingrassia

- Not present.
- From email: Co-Sponsoring campaign finance reform for Clean Missouri. Supports Strategic Plan and LED lights for business district and will update on problem properties this week.

7th Ward

Jack Coatar

- LED lights: Christine and Jack have set aside capital dollars to replace the lights on the major strip through Park Avenue and then will work around the park. City is working on a longer term plan to replace all the lights in the city with LED lights (a few quadrants at a time based on burnout timeline).
- The Mop Factory → *The Bordeaux* → will open this summer with 50 apartments. Jack has talked to them about cutting the grass.
- Jack is on top of making sure the park will be mowed; it's been a challenge with the rain. The department has enough equipment this year but needs people.
- Real Time Crime Center visit with Marcos Silva and Lieutenant Fie (sp?): Jack is working with the police department on analysis and walking the neighborhood on where cameras will go and how to liaise between the neighborhood and police on getting private cameras up and running.
- Problem Properties in Court: 1713 Carroll (no one showed up) and 2018 Lafayette. Judge had choice words for the owner of the latter and ordered her back in two weeks or sell the house.
- Re: 1645 Carroll: this issue continues because title is in deceased owner's name. Need to change that and then work with family to market and sell the house.
- Zoning Changes to bring into compliance for Amendment 2 (medical marijuana). Impact on LafSq is minimal. Maximum 24 dispensaries in the city and will be treated like any other pharmacy. Cultivating marijuana will be zoned industrial (i.e. near the river). Hearing on June 5 at HUDS committee.
- Finalized Convention and Visitors Center....months ago city passed its proposal to spend 90 million on upgrades split with the county. The county passed its ordinance to approve 90 million, and it became law so now there is a way to move forward with the upgrades.
- Met with Emily and Matt regarding Strategic Plan and Jack supports this plan; nothing like it has been done in a long time.
- **Question:** How much money is allocated from Ward funds for LafSq? **Answer:** This month's Marquis will have an article on this. ☺ Jack takes input from various neighborhood organizations based on need. Works out to about 430,000 per ward....which actually doesn't go very far in the 7th Ward. Last

year in LafSq, we set aside \$100K for cameras (still there) and \$50-60K for capital improvements in the Square. This fiscal year starting July 1 will see a need for paving a lot of streets, especially downtown.

- **Question:** Will the gas company pave before the paving? (Hahahahahah!) **Answer:** Jack hopes so.
- **Question:** Any plans with Chouteau's Landing by the river? **Answer:** There are developers looking around....may be an investment for "opportunity zones," which includes lots of riverfront from the Arch to the north. It's being marketed nationally.

GUEST SPEAKER

Assessor's Office

Michael Dauphin/Caroline Brethauer

- **Full Presentation Here:** <https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/assessor/reassessment.cfm>
- Michael started in November. Caroline is the statistician.
- Properties are reassessed every 2 years. Sent out 90k letters to people whose property values went up. If your property stayed the same or decreased, you won't receive anything.
- **What are the appraisers look at?** Size of lot, finished basement, age of house, condition, livable square footage, # bathrooms, etc. The Assessor's Office has to use records (i.e. building permits) and doesn't know exactly what's INSIDE your home.
- **What happens after your property is reviewed?** The estimated value is compared to neighborhood sales to align it with the market.
- **What are sales doing in the city?** What about in your neighborhood? Average sale price of a single family house across the city compared to Lafayette Square neighborhood. →LafSq is doing better than the city as a whole.
- **What happened to values in the past?** The market/prices have been coming back up. Since 2013
- **Where do your taxes go?** School district gets the most—60%. City gets less than 20%. Then the zoo, community health, community colleges, etc.).
- **What's changing at the Assessor's Office?** Voters approved a bond measure allocating 2.5 million for ultramodern updates, such as digitizing paper plat maps, and upgrading computer systems for personal property and real estate (coming in 2020)
- **Appealing:** The office WANTS to get it right. *You can appeal*, and it's a fair process. The best thing you can do if you have an issue is providing a recent appraisal because it's a detailed an objective report on your home. If you DON'T have that, you can come to the office and provide photographs or other information to the office's appraiser. Following an appeal, the disagreement would go to a board of volunteer citizens who would decide.
- **Michael Dauphin:** zasr@stlouis-mo.gov
- **Question:** How do you get an appraisal? **Answer:** You would have to pay to do that. It's about \$300-450. You absolutely don't have to have that though; you can use the office's appraiser.
- **Question:** How recent of an appraisal would work? **Answer:** Ideally within the last year, but if it's in the last two years, bring it.
- **Question:** Is there a limit on how much the office can raise it? (homeowner with 150% increase) **Answer:** No...there is no limit on the percentage increase. An increase that high likely has to do with abatement.

REPORTS

3rd District

Officer Sherdon Douglas

- Not present.
- From email: There were 4 crimes in April: a robbery, an unlawful use of a weapon, and 2 larcenies. No one was injured.

Block Captains/Safety

David Visintainer

- Summary of the last year: April of 2018 vs 2019: *Decrease from 12 to 5 incidents*. Year to date for 2019 vs 2018: *Decrease of 33% for the neighborhood*.
- Additional Incident Details:
 - Officer Sherdon's April stats didn't include the 3 additional incidents in the east part of the neighborhood classified as "Clinton Peabody."
 - 2 incidents were 20 minutes apart—an assault followed by a car theft. Maybe related?
- April 17: Met with Real Time Crime Center (same meeting referred to by Jack Coatar)
 - Waiting to get feedback from Police Department.
 - In the past, had been stymied by areas controlled by state, which weren't allowed to have cameras. → This has been worked out. There is red tape with permits, but it's now possible!
 - Now have ability to connect private camera systems with their center. May be something that the business district, large buildings, and perhaps homeowners will be interested in.

Problem Properties

Kyle

- Alderman Coatar gave a good summary of the municipal court hearing.
- 1713 Carroll owner didn't show up....that means there is a warrant!
- 2018 Lafayette Property: Hearing was reset to June 12. The violations are \$10-12K. The judge was firm but gave her a few more weeks to figure it out. The judge stressed that yard maintenance is not a one-time fix. ☺ There isn't a clear end...but there comes a point when the city is allowed to enter the property, bring it up to code, and bill the homeowner.
- In order to look up a violation in our neighborhood, you need a lot of details: the name of owner and DOB; case ticket and number; their court date and name (most popular for the Problem Properties Team); for an abandoned car you need VIN #, registered state, and owner name, and date that police filed.
- **New Problem Properties Email:** lsrproblemproperties@gmail.com Will be able to keep all the documentation (photos, letters, emails, etc.) in one place and share easily.
- When Ron started the committee there were 50-60 problem properties; currently there are 12.
- **Question:** Will new tax assessments be helpful? **Answer:** Yes, but it's more the market price versus the taxable value.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Strategic Plan

LSRC/LPC/LSAC

- Volunteer committee has been meeting for 16 months. All meetings have been open to anyone. Steady members have included: Emily O'Brien, Matt Negri, Linda Weiner, Rachel Witte, Bill Odell, Tom Dahms (LPC), Bethany Budde (LSBA), John Weston (Arts Council).

- The neighborhood currently does not have a plan, and the demographics of the neighborhood have changed dramatically in the last 5 years. We need to know what everyone in the neighborhood wants—new residents, old residents, dog walkers, moms group, renters, owners, etc. We need to know how to progress in this neighborhood.
- Back in February, RFQ's (Request for Qualification) were sent out. Six offers came back. 5 out of 6 were asked to send an RFP (Request for Proposal)—how would they conduct a Strategic Plan. 2 of the 5 were outstanding, but 1 stood out as incredible: Shockey Consulting.
- The LSRC has already set aside and budgeted for 20K. Tonight asking for UP TO another 20K for this strategic plan.
- Rachel Witte: LafSq resident; Executive Director for the Community _____ in South Grand. Oversaw the transformation. One of the keys to success was the subcontractor that created the strategic plan, which guided.
 - The firm has a background in public administration, public police, planning, and finance.
 - We are a very advanced neighborhood, but we are at the point as a community where we need someone to guide us in the process.
 - Their cost is so much more because they will be the 3rd party disinterested interviewers.
 - We could do it for 20K, BUT....dozens and dozens of residents would have to be involved in the data collection process.
 - They want to meet with all the stakeholders. We have a lot of opinions in this neighborhood, and the firm wants to hear all of them. they don't want to just email everyone.
 - This consulting firm also had the best and most experienced financial guide who can help the neighborhood come up with reasonable, coordinated strategies for fundraising.
- **Question:** Many strategic plans tell you what to do but not how to do it. What is their plan? **Answer:** This firm's plan referred to historical (house tour) fundraising and provided an implementation plan.
- **Question:** Beyond the funding aspect, what other things would this plan entail? **Answer:** It's focused on what do ALL the stakeholders want. The firm mentioned, "When you put out a neighborhood sign for a meeting, you know who is going to be there." The firm wants to find all the other voices, too.
- **Comment:** At least 3 of the proposals gave examples of neighborhoods that were failing, and the firm was trying to "save" a neighborhood. LafSq is in a much different position. We're trying to build on what we already have and improve the neighborhood to what it's going to look like in 10 years. Shockey took that into consideration.
- Right now, our only major funding source is House Tours. For major projects such as the park fence, the Bandstand, etc., we do not currently have the fundraising capability for that.
- **Question:** Can we see the proposal? **Answer:** Yes, the plan can be shared...
- **Motion Made to Approve and seconded....** MOTION PASSED.
- **Next Steps:** Sign contract and work out the timeline!
- **Question:** What is the timeline? **Answer:** May - December

House Tour**Pat Jones**

- Wonderful tour posters to distribute.
- Phil Lamczyk: WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!!! Only at 36%.
- Dick Stockmann: We have a strong theme for this 50th tour: “Lafayette Square saved a place for you.” (borrowed with permission from a National Trust motto) We want to celebrate and educate about the Square. There will be an insert in the upcoming Marquis with a brief but specific history and a map that accurately shows the houses that have been rehabbed, places where new places have been built, and houses that have been saved from destruction.

Capital Improvements**Linda Pallman**

- Next Meeting: Thursday May 16 @7pm @Park House.
- New Street Signs...unfortunately won't be coming before House Tour. ☹ Taking a loooooong time to work out the permits with the city.

LSBA**Bethany Budde**

- Not present.

Development**Phil Lamczyk/Suzanne Sessions**

- Meetings are 3rd Tuesday of the month @ Park House
- Upcoming: Preview of streetscape view on Hickory Street, formally known as Sherwood Forest, with 12-14 homes.

Membership**Christina Ryan**

- Email Christina with any corrections to Marquis or website list of members.
membership@lafayettesquare.org

Beautification**Linda Weiner**

- Saturday 5/18: Marigold planting on Park Ave medians.

Community Affairs**Dixie Gillaspie**

- Resident Directory
 - Floyd has kept this project going and is not doing it anymore. No one else has stepped up to take that on. ...**THANK YOU TO MOLLY AND JEREMY FOR STEPPING UP!**
 - There has been discussion about digitizing the directory....it could be password protected.

Treasurer**Clark Affholder**

- House Tour Sales: 28K to date after sponsorship.
- 285K in the bank; 145K is spoken for...+ an additional 20K for Strategic Plan.
- treasurer@lafayettesquare.org

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS**Lafayette Park Conservancy****Ward Buckner**

- The conservancy is opening and locking the restrooms.
- Looking to hire someone at \$15/hr to work in the park, removing debris, etc.

Lafayette Square Arts Council

- Not present.

ADJOURN: 8:38pm**AFTER-MEETING SOCIAL: Thank you, Sqwires!**

- ❖ Next LSRC Board Meeting is Tuesday, June 4 at the Park House, 7pm
- ❖ Next LSRC General Meeting is Tuesday, June 11 at Sqwires Annex, 7pm