



## LAFAYETTE SQUARE RESTORATION COMMITTEE

January 14, 2020 Sqwires Annex

**CALL TO ORDER 7:01pm**

**Matt Negri**

- ❖ **Welcome New Residents:** Kelly; Dawn & Chad moved into Forrest Gallery space; Kyle (?) on Hickory
- ❖ **Review and approval December 2019 minutes**

### ALDERMAN REPORTS

**6<sup>th</sup> Ward**

**Christine Ingrassia: Not present**

**7<sup>th</sup> Ward**

**Jack Coatar**

- Camera discussions have been going on a long time. Ward has set aside \$100K, and neighborhood has made a \$10K commitment. After additional violence last summer (2019), the city wants to spend excess general funds on cameras around the city. There will be cameras on a number of T-intersections around the square: Laf/Jeff, Park/Jeff, Choteau (state intersections)...covering most major entrance/exits. The intention is to have at least some of the cameras up and running by the summer. In addition, this will free up additional money for other LafSq projects, such as traffic calming.
- **Question:** What are we going to do about the petty crime that is springing up in this neighborhood and around the city, such as porch pirates, as well as increase in carjackings? **Answer:** Police are working on partnerships with camera companies (i.e. Ring) so that police can send a request for footage of crimes. Regarding the bigger crimes...the Mayor will answer.

### POLICE REPORT

**3rd District**

**Officer Sherdon Douglas**

- December Stats: 13 crimes
  - 11 larcenies: 5 stealing packages off porches, 2 thefts from restaurants, 4 from vehicles.  
**Suggestion:** Have packages delivered to a different location or let your neighbors know that you are expecting something. Be neighborly! Have your neighbor's cell number and text each other when packages arrive.
  - 1 burglary on 12/7, 1200 block of Mississippi, kicked front door of residence in and walked out with TV. The suspect is known to the resident.
  - Robbery on 12/30, victim exited car and suspect pointed gun at her and demanded keys. Suspect drove off in her car.
- **Question:** High speed chase that ended on S 18<sup>th</sup> on 12/21? **Answer:** Officer Douglas does not have information about this. She will talk to the resident who asked the question.

## GUEST SPEAKERS

### Office of the Mayor

### Mayor Lyda Krewson

- Introduction of team: David (Last name?) Communications; Steve Conway Chief of Staff; Todd Waelterman, Director of Operations; Randy (Last Name?) with Refuse Department; Jamie Wilson, Director of Dept of Streets; Frank Oswald, Building Communication; Alan Jankowski, Forestry; Andrew Hernandez, Admin Assistant to the Mayor
- Provided statistics about number of streetlights, pounds of refuse, miles of streets, etc.
- Positives—don't forget about all the great things happening across the city!
  - \$10 billion of development that is recently completed, in process, or going to happen
  - 18 months ago the Arch re-opened, Kiener Plaza, Enterprise Center, Union Station Aquarium, the Wheel, etc.
  - NGA Site...open 2024 or 2025...3100 jobs, 1500 construction jobs
  - 20<sup>th</sup> St ramp will close because new soccer stadium will be built --\$450 million stadium (north side of Market) and practice fields (south side of Market); will break ground by end of 2020
  - SSM/SLU Hospital in progress, Cortex has been growing steadily
  - St Louisians tend to be humble but... top city for startups (Forbes), top city for women entrepreneurs, a top place to visit in 2020.
- Getting ready to vote on bonds to renovate Convention Center so it has the perks that modern convention-goers want. Half paid for each by city/county.
- **Earlier question about crime:** This is a concern everywhere. There is the law enforcement side and there is the prevention side; both are extremely necessary.
  - **Law Enforcement Side:** We are 138 officers short; 1340 authorized. We have currently 99 in academy, but every year ~140 retire. We have difficulty recruiting officers—not as many people are going into the field.
  - We need to raise our pay so we're competitive with the county and lift the residence requirement. It's still important that our officers look like our city and have cultural competence. Can we expand our recruiting into a broader area? In Jeff City today, there was a bill in Judiciary Committee regarding lifting the residence requirement for police AND all city employees. We are the only jurisdiction in the entire area that has this requirement.
  - **Prevention Side:** We need to keep doing what we're doing. 1000 young people had summer jobs, and others got training and bank accounts. We're tackling vacancy; taken down 800 buildings in past year. Enough voted in 2017 to make LRA properties watertight so that they are attractive to rehab buyers. Vacant buildings are *not* good for crime. We need to invest more money for recreation programs in parks and rec centers.
- Working with highway patrol to intercept drug and gun-related crime. This is helpful since the city is short officers.
- **Question:** Development of NGA, Chateau, Soccer Park, etc....is Jefferson going to be redone/changed to accommodate? When will we see plans for that? **Answer:** There are plans

online, and there was an Open House about a month ago...it's in design. It should be designed by the end of 2020. Jefferson will be turned into a full 4-way interchange at highway 64/40; there will be paving and improvements up to new NGA site at Jefferson and Cass.

- **Question:** As a retired federal officer, I know that no one does law enforcement to get rich. There is another piece—prosecution. How do we make the work officers are doing *valuable*? **Answer:** We have a lot of federal partnerships, and we are working more than ever before with those partners, i.e. the federal prosecutor. We have ~132 people held in city jail on federal crimes. Our prosecutor is elected...there have been some struggles there. For the entire law enforcement piece to work, everyone has to do their job, from police to prosecutors to judges to parole officers. We try to give the tools for that to happen. The prosecutor's office budget is \$9 million (up \$2 million a few years ago).
- **Question:** What are your plans for closing the workhouse, and how many people are in there now? **Answer:** I get a report every morning of who is in our jails—everyone in our jails is a detainee. There are just under 900 people being detained (~240 at MSI, ~660 at CJC). MSI has an old section that is a dorm-style facility with a gym, food service, medical services; the “pods” have a living area in the center with rooms around it. Right now there is no one in the dorms, and there are ~240 in the pods. We almost have all women in the pods because they are small units. The more “serious” cases are at CJC. This is *down* 500 people from (#?) years ago. This is due to a change in procedures where we only hold people who are a threat. We are working toward closing the workhouse, but we have to have a place to hold people. (David Glass is the head of corrections.) 10 beds does not equal 10 people...people may need to be separated. We have closed the dorm section of the workhouse, but...we need places to hold people. There are many violent crimes happening in the city. Almost everyone being held there is there on a felony (there are 5 levels); almost no misdemeanors, except special cases such as someone who might have a stalking charge.
- **Question:** We (in LafSq) put in requests to the Citizens Bureau online, and when we don't get feedback, we try to get multiple people to submit requests or go to alderpeople. What is the recommendation to be heard on these complaints? **Answer:** Complaints are not all equal, i.e. one light out versus a whole block. We try to triage the requests and address the more major problems first. Sending photos can be very helpful to see what the problem is. You can use Twitter, too.  
**Answer from Mauria Tomlin, Department of Public Safety/Neighborhood Stabilization:** Please DON'T send in multiple requests. You can give me a call or email me with the request/photo or to get updates.
- **Question:** Thank you for working on not privatizing the airport! Regarding Larry Rice's building downtown....what is happening with that downtown? **Answer:** 23<sup>rd</sup> Ward Alderman Joe Vaccaro has opened a discussion of re-opening Larry Rice's building; we'll see where that goes. I'll say this: we have enough beds—among different agencies—to get everyone in shelter at night. We've been awarded \$20 million to address homelessness and prevention of homelessness. Last year we spent \$17 million....we use a housing first model. We think you cannot get your life together from the sidewalk. We are focusing on trying to get people into housing, transitional housing, permanent support....we know we have a chronic homelessness problem, but it's not as large a number as many other cities. We try through our outreach workers and partner agencies—we award that money to

these agencies—to address the problem and provide wraparound services. A large percentage of the homeless have substance abuse problems; it's a complex problem. It's the city's position that Larry Rice was not taking good care of these folks.

- **Question:** We have very rough roads in this city, and we seem to trust our Alderpeople versus city management to address issues. Is there a more efficient way? **Answer:** Alderpeople receive \$400K/yr to...pave streets, alleys, buy dumpsters, plant street trees, do 50/50 sidewalks... this is a procedure that has been inherited from years ago that was voted on. **Jamie (streets):** We have to make the best of the system we have, as leaders of our departments, working with the Alderpeople.
- **Question:** Is there anything that can be done regarding fireworks and gunshots on July 4 and gunshots? **Answer:** This is a problem in many neighborhoods. The cops can't go after every single person that sets off a firework. It is a problem because people get hurt, and buildings can catch fire. Shaw neighborhood had some impact with a big neighborhood program where they went door to door, put information out on social media, and had a big public awareness/education campaign.

## NEW AND ON-GOING BUSINESS

### House Tour Update

Suzanne Sessions/Pat Jones

- Thank you to homeowners and all volunteers.
- There is a spring tour, and we need homes! 😊 Talk to Suzanne Sessions or Pat Jones.

### Strategic Plan Update

Emily O'Brien

- ~150 people attended the feedback meeting in November. Shockey Consulting got so much information that it took longer than initially planned to compile it.
- The major issues span the Lafayette Park Conservancy, Arts Council, LSRC, and neighborhood at large—all parties are represented on the Strategic Plan Committee.
- The committee meets later this month to look at compilation of ALL feedback (online and hard copy surveys, pop-ups, reachouts to Shockey, feedback meeting, etc.) → *There will be another public meeting/Launch Party in March to go over the results.*
- Remember that this is a 5-year plan for how to maintain the quality of life in LafSq and progress this neighborhood with changes in population, the environs (i.e. stadium, NW Quad development), etc.

### 2020 Budget Approval

Clark Affholder/Sheri Mistretta

- We do not have the LSBA budget yet (or their numbers after 9/30).
- We're operating at about a 40K deficit but that's with conservative house tour numbers, and we don't have LSBA's numbers yet.
- We've added ~\$5K expense for each house tour and added ~10K expense for renovations on the Park House.
- Vote on budget as is, and we will return next month with amendment:
  - Motion: Suzanne Sessions
  - 2<sup>nd</sup>: Tom Murphy
  - Budget passes 😊

### Legal Matters

Matt Negri/Steve Wilde

- **Former Near Southside/TIFF Property:** There are 3 properties in the neighborhood consisting of 7 lots that the LSRC maintains—parking lot on Choteau across from Ameren, the Fountain Plaza, and

the pocket park on Miss/Park. They are owned by the Near Southside Improvement Co, which was put together to manage TIFF funds. The TIFF has expired, and the LSRC is generally interested in taking ownership of these properties since we maintain them anyways. (i.e. We spent \$10K to refurbish the fountain, and we pay the liability on it.) To help us move through this process, we are consulting with David Harris, a real estate attorney; we have already budgeted for this investment. David will help us with the title work and working with Near Southside to see what our options are.

- **Small Claims Court Summons:** The LSRC received a summons to small claims court in the amount of \$5K stemming from homeowners from the 2015 house tour. The motion was filed two days before the 5-year statute of limitations expired. The board is very aware of the situation and is addressing it. We have help looking into the details. The claim is that there was a deck on the house that pulled away from the house/foundation. At the time of the damage, the LSRC offered to make the repair, but that was not satisfactory to the homeowners, who requested a whole new deck. The LSRC's insurance covers the \$1 million liability if anyone gets hurt. Homeowners' insurance is the first line of defense if there's any property damage.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Treasurer's Report**

**Clark Affholder**

- Page 1 of the stapled budget is the 2019 operations. We had a good year with two lucrative tours. Operationally we made about \$42.5K, and we spent about ~\$80K.
- Matt: For newer people...the house tours are always an iffy figure so we are very conservative with projecting the income from the 1-day holiday house tour and the 2-day spring tour. Generally, we do much better than budgeted.

**Development**

**Phil Lamczyk/Suzanne Sessions**

- Stray Rescue Building: It's a slow process. The owner is seeking federal tax credit. He's working on electrical and flooring. We do not have word on what is going in there other than a restaurant. The restaurant would have street parking; guests would be parking on the street, like Clementine's. [Residents expressed concern about this.]
- Mayo Ketchup building is scheduled for a major redevelopment inside and outside. There will be a new roof, mansard window replacement...the owners want to take off the back 1<sup>st</sup> floor roof and put on retractable awnings to become a summer use area. The owner wants to add wooden roll-up windows on the Mississippi side. The owner will have to follow a historic model from the 1900 block of Park. The proposals are in Cultural Resources right now.
- No word on Hickory Reserve or LaSalle apartments.

**Beautification**

**Linda Weiner (not present)**

**Community Affairs**

**Dixie Gillaspie (not present)**

**Capital Improvements**

**Mary Visintainer ((not present)**

- Broke ground on Rutger/Jefferson entrance columns and ironwork. (~\$6K of ward funds + LSRC \$).
- Bill O'Dell with NW Quadrant project is planning to replicate entrance features in the project.

**Membership**

**Christina Ryan**

- Currently at 172 household memberships
- Tax letters for members at Preservationist and above will be snail mailed tomorrow.

**LSBA**

**Bethany Budde/Matt Brazelton (Not present)**

**SAFETY REPORTS**

**Problem Properties**

**Kyle Keenan**

- Been working with Mauria and Travis Warren (attorney who enforces housing issues)—this is a great partnership/communication avenue between neighborhood and city.
- Working on a guidebook...we have general housing codes and historic codes → make one easy-to-read document to know what is a housing violation eligible to be cited.
- 1625-27 Carroll (that had the fire): \$75K of permits have been approved in last three months.
- Broken window on commercial building will be addressed with a letter from Problem Properties.
- Scaffolding that has been up for several months is not allowed.
- Scientology Building is still sitting for sale...there have been rumors of different development groups looking into it.

**Block Captains/Safety**

**Glenn Eckert/Steve Wilde**

- Jack had the great news regarding camera project moving forward.
- Interior Cameras: We've had a contractor come look...we need to get more information/commitment from property owners that have verbally expressed interest. Then we can get a survey/estimate.

**NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS**

**Lafayette Park Conservancy**

**Ward Buckner**

- Fence: Originally the fence had a "skirt." Pieces that were replaced in the 1980s...many of these pieces were stolen. Many posts are failing at the ground, and pieces held together with rust! We need a better plan for another 100-year fence. We've engaged the expertise of a local structural engineer, Dick Stockmann.

**Lafayette Square Arts Council**

**Donna (Last Name?)**

- Concert season will start with Jeremia Johnson...Ralph Butler on July 4<sup>th</sup>....next Marquis will have 7 of the 8 concerts listed. We'll also have our income/expenses record in the Marquis.

**Barr Branch**

**Tanya Joy**

- As of 1/6/20, the STL City and STL County library have done away with overdue fees.
- The Board of Trustees voted to waive all existing overdue fines. Patrons are just responsible for lost/damaged fines.
- There is a "Creative Experience" at the downtown library. Barr Branch will be getting one! It is under construction in the downstairs auditorium. Digital maker space for all ages—computer stations, small recording studio, 3D printing, virtual reality station, laser-cutter, Cricut machine. Soft opening is end of February.

**ADJOURN: 8:38pm**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Next LSRC Board Meeting is Tuesday, February, 4th at 7pm at the Park House, 7pm**

**Next LSRC General Meeting is Tuesday, February 11, at 7pm at Sqwires Annex, 7pm**

**AFTER-MEETING SOCIAL: Thank you, Bethany and Sqwires Staff!**