



LAFAYETTE SQUARE RESTORATION COMMITTEE

April 10, 2018: Sqwires Annex

CALL TO ORDER 7pm

Houston Smith, President

- ❖ Welcome New Residents
- ❖ Review and approve February 13, 2018 minutes

ALDERMAN REPORTS

6th Ward

Christine Ingrassia

- Not present.

7th Ward

Jack Coatar

- On break; go back next week
- Working on:
 - Short-term rental legislation (e.g. Air B&B)....solution will be in the middle between no regulation and banning! Main concern is safety; would like them to be subject to inspections. If essentially a “boarding house,” then taxing is an issue. Many cities are working on this issue and catching up. Need a process so that if someone is being a poor neighbor, there is follow-up.
 - Utilities have torn up streets with trenching and need to be held accountable for repairs.
 - Question about Mop Factory—Jack will follow-up and get time-frame; last heard was Sept.
 - Question about Scientology Building—Jack will follow-up for next meeting.
 - Question about Neighborhoods working together on camera program—Jack doesn’t want to wait for that and thinks LafSq is in a position to put together a robust program; city is also looking at equitability of camera programs across the city.
 - Question about 1625 Carroll Title issue (building that was on fire)—still working on this...will take months. Title is in the name of someone who is deceased; manager is a known problem-property owner.

POLICE REPORT

3rd District

Officer Sherdon Douglas

- Feb Stats: 5 crimes; 1 burglary at McLaughlin (nothing stolen, entered through unlocked door), 4 larcenies (bbq stolen, license plates stolen, Mardi Gras ride-related incident, and broken-into truck)
- March Stats: 5 crimes; 4 larcenies (stealing from vehicles, several with obvious objects, 1 with unlocked door), 1 auto theft
- Larceny Trend—Tuesdays from noon-2pm and 4-9pm and Thursday from 7-10pm; Officer Douglas and other officers patrol in cars and on foot
- Period from 4/1-4/9—1 larceny

GUEST SPEAKERS

Cori Bush- Candidate for congress, District 1

- Registered nurse in community mental health; single parent, community activist, ordained pastor
- Wants to be the first woman to hold this seat; cares about the community wants to fight for change at federal level

Luke Reynolds- Cameras in Soulard

- SBD entirely funded by a property tax; in process of applying for improvement district
- Cameras funded by alderman, SBD, neighborhood association
- Camera program still in 1st phase; 10 cameras in place; initially took a long time but immediate results after 2015
- Primary problem in Soulard is robberies; police have been able to use cameras to make arrests; carjacking recently with stolen car and LPR's pinged RTCC; suspects caught.
- LPR's are a necessity because they are a preventative measure. If a "ping" on a license plate, immediately notifies Real Time Crime Center (RTCC).
- Some cameras are owned and operated by the city (ones with ward funds), and some are owned and operated by the "cooperative," and Soulard is happy to share that information/be a resource.
- Focused on entrance/access points first—those are city and LPRs; then focused on interior of neighborhood (commercial properties only; *no residential*) funded by neighborhood/SBD; one issue is how the cameras are focused. In some cases, there is more than one camera at a spot—one for LPR and one for wide view.
- The police department shares data/effectiveness with aldermen; e.g. in last couple months, there have been dozens of hits through LPRs on stolen cars (only picks up felony LP's—stolen cars, suspect wanted, etc.)
- Soulard's neighborhood decision was to allow only police department to have access to the cameras; didn't want someone within the neighborhood obligated to collect/report data
- Jack: City cameras need to be on public property; Home systems probably cannot be fed into the police department; possible with business cameras; depends on technology

Cindy Mense- Director of Programs at Trailnet

- Nonprofit that has been around for 30 years—mission is to create a safe network for walking and biking on city streets →STL is in top 20 of pedestrian fatalities (walk/bike)
- Project: *Connect in St Louis*
 - Community engagement phase—what are the networks that residents most concerned about
 - Connect current pathways to increase safety across a 12-mile network
 - 8 city representatives; partnerships with other non-profits
 - Next Open House: April 17th, 4-7pm, at Main Library Branch for input on the routes

Mark Vogl- Great Rivers Greenway- Chouteau Greenway Design Competition (choteaugreenway.org)

- Regional parks and Rec District founded 20 years ago; create greenway connections between existing parks and green spaces
- Linkage between region's greatest assets and institutions and parks—from western edge of Forest Park to the Arch.
- Design Competition Partners: GRG, City of STL, SLU, Wash U/Wash U Med Ctr, Lawrence Group, Green Street STL, Grand Center, Forest Park Forever, Arch to Park Collaborative, GRG Foundation →NO PUBLIC DOLLARS
- Design Competition Manager: Don Stastny (also managed Arch project)
- Some of the goals are: catalyze community building, create diverse and accessible experiences, provide a safe and secure environment, generate economic opportunities, integrate art and culture....and more (see website)
- Review all four plans and take Community Input survey on website

NEW AND ON-GOING BUSINESS

❖ Choteau Redevelopment Project Q&A

- Question about 12 story Permit—*The likelihood is that it will be no higher than 6 stories*
 - There is a height restriction; buildings can't be higher than other buildings on Mississippi/Mop Factory

- there is a significant slope to the property so it won't look out of place with the rest of the neighborhood;
- Anything high will be on Choteau not in the neighborhood
- Original drawings are just concepts to ask city for permission to go forward with the project at that site at this time—no final architecture has been solicited or approved.
- Question about what is the city's role in this process and what will the developer's response be: Years ago, the LSRC started worked on changing zoning (downzoning so not industrial); the city reviews the plans—there are multiple depts./offices—the steps, the community improvement district (taxing selves to support the infrastructure, which has enormous costs associated with this site because of an active sewer, abandoned sewers that need to be taken out, environmental problems)
- Question about public transportation plan in the current plan: There is public trans that is being worked on by the city, which this plan will accommodate in addition to other options the city is talking about; the current plans have set the northern boundary far back from Choteau to allow flexibility for building transportation infrastructure; plan will almost surely have a ride-share and bike-share infrastructure.
- Question about timeline and who calls the shots: Bill Odell, Paul Hamilton (owns Vin de Set), and Tom Gravy (sp?) (from Atlanta) are the three owners; timeline is up to city schedule, but the day the city gives final approval, construction will start within two months. The drawings will be reviewed with architectural review and will be reviewed by neighborhood, cultural resources, etc. **What you're seeing now are drawings of potential buildings and land use to get it passed by the city; this is NOT a final plan, and these plans are NOT architecture.**
- Question about impact on the rest of the neighborhood and Metrolink: Developers have no control over whether metro-link is put in, but think it would be an overall benefit; for the NW Quadrant this is a HUGE step forward b/c the land has been vacant for 30-50 years! Don't want to introduce more traffic to Missouri and McKay/NW Quadrant—traffic for the development will have access from Choteau. Construction will likely take 5 years; as soon as truck lot comes down, there will be a temporary office for construction offices, and construction vehicles should not affect NW Quadrant at all.
- Question about what will happen if a multi-rise apartment building doesn't fill: Nobody is going to build faster than the developers think the market can absorb; part of the problems we've had in the past have been insufficient parking (1 space per unit), and this plan accounts for more than adequate parking. The draws for selling/filling the units will be the multiple amenities—parking, pools, green space, dog park, etc.

❖ Neighborhood Socials

Houston Smith

- After having a few successful socials, we realize that we have guests that attend (alderman, police officer) who need a venue to speak. We also need to be able to take votes. Socials will now have a short 15 minute business portion at the beginning of the social.

- ❖ **Circus Flora**—offering discounts to the neighborhood; may be opportunity for fundraising next year.

❖ Development Committee nominee- vote

Suzanne Sessions

- Rick Ponder voted in.

❖ Band Stand Donation (\$10K)- vote

Houston Smith

- The LSRC will retain these funds until they are needed. Coming out of House Tour proceeds.
- The Bandstand group would need to make a presentation to the LSRC board (which includes a funding plan), who would then release the 10K. Need to be assured that the money is going toward a project that can actually happen.
- Robert Forrest: The estimate...came in quite high. Now assessing what is driving the cost and coming up with phases
- Existing funds are in the Park Conservancy bank account; doing an audit so that funding can properly be pursued.

- VOTE PASSES.

❖ **Projects- Capital Improvement (\$77.4K)- vote**

Mary Visintainer

- Been meeting with BPS and Streets Department
- Jack has \$100K in aldermanic funds sitting for 18 months; only money spent out of it last year was for the Truman fence; we don't lose aldermanic money, but if it doesn't look good to keep it on the books....the city is \$10billion in the red, and we don't know what money will be available to us in the future.
- In addition, capital improvements only spent \$250 last year because of a change in LSRC rules that moved rolled over cap funds to general funds; the LSRC has \$248K ...which is not what a non-profit should have!
- \$4K for Truman Fence along Truman Parkway all the way to Zumwalt; half of LSRC and half 7th Ward money
- \$30K to have Carroll St to have their cul de sac fenced (with openings for sidewalks) resembling those on Jefferson Ave; matched by aldermanic funds.
- \$30K to beautiful the entrance at Rutger and Jefferson; this is the last entry point in the neighborhood that has no indication that it's an entrance to the square; matched by aldermanic funds.
- \$10K for pilot program of decorative historic street signage on Park Ave from Jefferson Ave to Truman Parkway.
- OTHER: Pillar at Lafayette/18th is owned by the city, but LSRC agreed to put it under our insurance...driver that hit it owned the vehicle...hope that insurance will cover it.
- **VOTE PASSES.**

❖ **Mississippi paving (update)**

Houston Smith

- Streets department and alderman does not want to expose cobblestone; originally paved 14 years ago because it was a bus route and the rumbling on cobblestone was an issue.
- In order to pave Mississippi curb to curb (which Jack and Christine are accepting of doing) is \$42K (by city).
- At February's meeting, voted to remove all asphalt, another large group voted to repave as is; no votes for curb to curb paving; pros of cobblestone were traffic calming, rain direction/drainage
- City says could remove 80% of cobblestone "pretty easily." Remaining may erode over time....look at the edges where the asphalt comes up; can't remove tar between the stones
- Maintenance of cobblestone is LSRC's responsibility ; question of liability even though it's a city street.
- **Take up all asphalt: 26; Repave with 9' cobblestone on either side: 26... →Paper Vote: 26 Take up, 32 Repave**

❖ **Camera program commitment (\$20k- vote)**

Houston Smith

- Set aside this money with Jack's 20K to put in cameras; first one would be Park/Truman
- **VOTE PASSES. (Not unanimous)**

❖ **House Tour needs**

- Committee is good! Please be ready to sign up for volunteer shifts.

❖ **RFP- Strategic Plan**

Houston Smith

- Urban Plan (yr 2000) set zoning, land use, traffic calming, plaza fountain, road map on what neighborhood wanted moving forward; cost about \$20K (alderman, city planning, LSRC). We've accomplished a lot, and the plan is aging.
- The best mechanism to move forward is through a strategic plan (similar to what was done on South Grand)—what kind of businesses & infrastructure, how can our organizations work together, etc.
- Small group is working on a RFP (Request for Proposal) for outside firms to bid; firm would research, talk to all stakeholders in neighborhood, work with the city so the plan is realistic.
- Vote: Set aside \$20K (an informed estimate of how much the Strategic Plan will cost). **VOTE PASSES.**

❖ **Community Affairs- Open** **Houston Smith**

SAFETY REPORTS

❖ **VP Safety** **John Weston**

- Clubs available for purchase; support the substation with donations of \$ and snacks.

❖ **Problem Properties** **Ron Taylor**

- 18—3 removed from list; 4 are still problems but being adequately handled; down to 11
- 3 deceased owners of properties; 1 in court (Gasthaus); 2 being reinspected; 2 large ones boarded up and vacant
- City is doing what they can and working with neighborhood

❖ **Block Captains** **Glenn Eckert**

COMMITTEE REPORTS

❖ **Treasurer** **John Schoemehl**

- Reports sent; \$248 in

❖ **Capital Improvements** **Mary Visintainer**

- Already addressed.

❖ **Membership** **Christina Ryan**

- No updates.

❖ **Beautification** **Linda Weiner**

- Not present.

❖ **Development** **Phil Lamczyk/Suzanne Sessions**

- Just about done writing the code; does address rezoning of Choteau.

❖ **Community Affairs** **Vacant**

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS

❖ **Lafayette Park Conservancy**—new water line to increase water pressure to the grotto gardens

❖ **Lafayette Square Arts Council**—season starts with house tour; 8 concerts every other weekend, 3 movies

❖ **Lafayette Square Business Association**—May 24th Cocktails in the Plaza, tickets on sale on website; money goes toward security around business area; crime went down having sec during holiday season Th/F/Sat nights

After Meeting Social- Sqwires

ADJOURN 9:25PM

❖ **Next LSRC Board Meeting May 1st at the Park House 7pm**

❖ **Next LSRC General Meeting is a Neighborhood Social, 7pm, May 8th at Sqwires Annex (but adding a “special guests” and needed voting sections hard stop at 15 minutes)**