



LAFAYETTE SQUARE RESTORATION COMMITTEE

May 12, 2020 via Zoom

CALL TO ORDER 7:05pm

Matt Negri

Welcome New Residents: Andrew Diaz and Cassie on Rutger

Review and approve March 2020 minutes: David Visintainer moves and Suzanne Sessions seconds

ALDERMAN REPORTS

6th Ward

Christine Ingrassia (6th ward)

- ingrassiac@stlouis-mo.gov
- Christine wants people to know that she is around if anyone has needs. She has been focusing on small businesses. Gateway Resilience Fund has given out 1.2 million to about 4,000 individual businesses to help in the interim.
- Will be introducing legislation to cap fees (at 5% of purchase) on 3rd party delivery platforms (i.e. UberEats, GrubHub); platforms have been making a lot of income and independent businesses getting shortchanged.
- Also looking at how to safely close/address parking lanes, parking lots, etc.
- Of course, city budget has been greatly affected. Ward capital funds have been completely zeroed out. Parks improvements, lighting upgrades, street paving, park upgrades, etc. has no funding at all.
- Christine has about \$100K set aside for emergencies, but not alderpeople do.
- Also introducing legislation that would require public utilities (i.e. Spire) to put meters on side or back of buildings (with exceptions).

7th Ward

Jack Coatar (7th ward)

- coatarj@stlouis-mo.gov
- **Question:** Neighbor has been trying to get sidewalk re-paved for several months; possibly sore lateral or utility line. **Response:** Please email Jack/Christine so they can ensure it gets on the list. Expect a wait because the city addresses these only once per year. As a homeowner, you're not responsible if anyone gets injured on sidewalk in front of house.
- Today the Mayor released Phase 1 re-opening guidelines that go into affect Monday, May 18. You can look them up on the city's website. They are broken down by industry and they are enforceable to an extent.
- Jack has been working closely with traffic division, health department, excise, etc. to allow restaurants to expand their footprint beyond their walls into adjacent parking lots, onto sidewalks, and, in certain instances, into streets. This will allow people to spread out more. The goal is to streamline the process for restaurants to go through one office to present a plan and be able to receive all necessary permits. Looking to have guidance by the end of May.
- The budget situation, like in many municipalities, is bleak...\$40million shortfall. Half is general revenue; sales tax revenues have ground to a halt in the 3rd quarter and into 4th. There will be significant revenue shortfalls...because of lack of largescale events. There is a hiring freeze except for first responders. There will be cuts across almost all departments. Ward capital funding is 22million/year, and yes, it is looking like it will be completely cut. We can't count on much in terms of ward capital projects.
- There will be a series of public meetings (posted on city's website on public meetings section) to address budgets in various departments.
- Traffic:
 - Jack has asked Streets Department to touch up existing stop signs, paint on the ground, etc. Probably will add a 4-way stop at Park and Missouri. This usually takes a few asks, but traffic department said yes right away to this request.

- Traffic on Choteau: Christine Ingrassia last heard that city was looking at traffic calming following a study.
- **Concern:** about rolling stops at stop signs and people not even looking at stop signs. What are the options?! Jack: Some of this is going to be an enforcement piece, and some of it is re-doing the lines to get people's attention in the wide intersections.
- Traffic department has been short staffed; several employees have contracted Covid-19.
- **Appreciation:** for Jack's help getting irrigation for Park Avenue landscaping (in business district) and for new plantings.
- Jack confirmed with Board of Public Service and the Police Department that all (real time) camera locations on perimeter of neighborhood are still good to go; they are in the design stage. They are hopeful for fall implementation.

POLICE REPORT

3rd District

Officer Sherdon Douglas

- **Total Criems from March until now:** 17 criems
- **March:** 4 larcenies, 1 vehicle theft
- **April:** 9 crimes, 1 burglary, 3 larcenies, 5 vehicle thefts
- **May 1-12:** 3 crimes, 1 aggravated assault, 1 burglary, 1 larceny
- Most larcenies were items stolen from vehicles
- Burglaries: Simpson Place: Suspect entered vehicle in garage (both unlocked) nothing missing, there is camera footage; Princeton Place burglary reclassified as trespassing.
- 4 auto thefts: relative who refused to return vehicle; stolen company truck; stolen motorcycle; construction vehicle was stolen (key was under floormat and vehicle's door and window were open)
- Assault was on I-44 and involved road rage. One driver was cut off, and words escalated to a shooting. Detectives have some good leads based on vehicle and suspect descriptions and are following up.

NEW AND ON-GOING BUSINESS

LSRC Outreach Efforts

Sheri Mistretta

- This is a community effort to vet organizations and help them with monetary and needed donations. There is a gaping need for food. The school district and Operation Food Search have been amazing, but there is still an enormous need.
- Each week a different organization will be highlighted.
 - Week 1: Lifewise
 - Week 2: LPA Families
 - Week 3: Four Muddy Paws Pet Food Pantry
- Posting on Nextdoor and Facebook community → please help get the word out!
- There will be in-person collection at the Park House on Saturday mornings. Let Sheri know if you'd like to help: sheri.mistretta@gmail.com

House Tour Cancellation/Future

Matt Negri

- The spring tour is obviously canceled. The holiday tour is in danger, as well.
- The House Tour and Finance Committees and LSRC Board are brainstorming on how to address this. All the budgets are slashed and all committee leads know that the budgets approved in December/January are moot.
- We are looking into a Virtual Tour for December and researching details for high-quality video production and narration. Perhaps we'll even get a wider audience for such an event.
- If anyone knows resources/people who could contribute to working on a virtual tour or other great ideas, please pass them along to Matt.

Membership Drive

Christina Ryan

- **Front Steps Photo Shoot Promotion:** 17 new members or upgraded members have raised about \$1700 so far.
- Additional members have upgraded early at the same level.

- Very grateful to professional photographers and residents Dede Doering and Micah Usher for their in-kind donation.
- Working on a direct mailing to all neighborhood residents to educate on what the LSRC is and does and to encourage new members to join and current members to upgrade if possible.

LSBA Business CoVid Impact/Update

Bethany Budde

- Bethany will check in with Sheri to get word out to LSBA members regarding specific needs.
- Bethany has been talking with Tom Murphy regarding introducing the “Passport” program to new, as well as current members who renew; it would be an additional member benefit.
- The majority of LSBA membership has responded regarding what they are currently doing and what they are planning to do with the re-opening on May 18. Bethany will get this list up on the website.
 - Bailey’s: not open. Rolling out curbside in coming weeks, followed by dine-in. They do have groceries through Rooster on South Grand.
 - Square One: open 7 days for curbside pickup and delivery. Starting 5/18 limited in-room dining.
 - Polite Society is launching on 5/21 dinner and Sunday brunch for delivery.
 - Hamilton’s opening all of their restaurants to in-dining services.
 - New Look Cleaners: open M-Sat.
 - Four Muddy Paws: curbside and local delivery, opening indoor services (and grooming) to 3 people at a time.
 - Acosta Hair Design: opening June 2 by appointment only.
 - Mayo Ketchup: curbside M-Sat.
 - SqWires: open 7 days/wk for lunch and dinner curbside. Patio dining starting week of 5/18. Working on additional indoor dining.
 - Park Ave Coffee: Open.
 - Haven’t heard from: Charleville, 33, Southtown Yoga...keep checking websites.
- Thinking about putting out patio tables around fountain plaza for people waiting for curbside pickup in business district.
- Businesses are very grateful for neighborhood support!

CoVid Volunteers/Update from Safety Committee

Tom Murphy

- Early on the Safety Committee put the word out for people to notify the committee if they a) needed help or b) needed assistance with errands, food, etc. To date, 15 people volunteered, and no one has written with a need.
- Keep checking on your neighbors.
- safety@lafayettesquare.org

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Treasurer’s Report

Clark Affholder

- We have enough \$ to get through this. 😊 Revisiting budget to see what we can reasonably cut out versus completely shut down. We have a \$75K operating budget deficit that we can probably get down to \$40...this factors in holding some kind of Holiday Tour.
- We’re not spending \$ on anything we don’t have to right now.
- Matt: One of the LSRC’s bigger expenses is running/operating the fountain (\$5-7K w/o repairs). There was a question whether or not we should open the Fountain. There was overwhelming input that running it keeps some sense of normalcy and positivity in the neighborhood this spring and summer.

Development

Suzanne Sessions

- **Choteau Development:** The latest holdup is because of a request from Bill Odell (who is handling the apartments that will be between Missouri and McKay). He wishes to put front garage entrances into those apartments off LaSalle—to redirect traffic away from the Square. All involved (Development, Cultural Resources) think this makes a lot of sense, but right now there is not a design that can be approved. He will re-work the design. The other holdup is getting the permits for underground utilities; he’s otherwise ready to go on that.

- All other developments are residential, and no one has come back with updates yet.
- **Stray Rescue Building:** Owner does not have a tenant. Under the building, he has laid new pipes. Then will lay new floor inside and start working on the exterior.

Beautification

Linda Weiner

- We are without a contractor. Many people have stepped up to volunteer. There are a couple spots on Lafayette that need help.
- As previously mentioned, BPS is considering how to create a new automated watering system for Park Avenue. We currently need watering volunteers to water between now and likely next year.
- Just planted marigolds. 😊
- In the Fountain Plaza rain garden, which was installed in 2002, low-growing grasses were installed. They are now overgrown, and we will update that large area with Prairie Grasses and some more-controlled, perhaps English Garden-inspired plantings.

Community Affairs

Dixie Gillaspie

- Not present. Matt shared that Dixie has done a great job putting out resources on Facebook Community Page and Nextdoor.

Capital Improvements

Mary Visintainer

- The Rutger entrance continues and should be in progress in about a month. This was previously approved and paid for in part. (Second part will need to be paid for later this year.)
- Danny Schutte is running brick program. Place your ASAP; next order goes in soon! (Only every six months)
- Park House Sign: Beginning to move forward with this project because it is funded by a private donation—no LSRC funding necessary.
- We are receiving free dianthus, and they need to go in public spaces.

SAFETY REPORTS

Block Captains/Safety

Glenn Eckert

- **Interior camera research:** We have budgeted money for this, and will be able to install the first one at Park and Mississippi, where there is much concern with erratic driving in a high foot-traffic area. Talking with contractor and hoping to have this installed in about a month!

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS

Lafayette Park Conservancy (LPC)

Ward Buckner

- No updates.

Lafayette Square Arts Council

Donna Korando

- We're dealing with a lot of questions right now. We hope to have concerts this summer, but we don't know what the situation will be. We don't have a permit yet; as of now, concerts are not allowed, but parks are open.
- If we do open for concerts, do we have responsibility to enforce distancing? How would we do that?
- As soon as a decision is made, the Arts Council will happily get the word out through all media!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Thank you to everyone for attending.**
- **Our by-laws require meeting once per quarter; we usually have monthly meetings. Last month (April) was the first time we hadn't met in years.**
- **Please provide feedback to improve the June meeting.** 😊

ADJOURN: 8:22PM