



LAFAYETTE SQUARE RESTORATION COMMITTEE

August 11, 2020 via Zoom

CALL TO ORDER 7pm

Matt Negri, President

Welcome New Residents: Guest--Maria Tomlin Neighborhood Improvements Specialist and Stabilization Officer (Tomlinm@stlouis-mo.gov) for Ward 7. Her role is to help verify and identify complaints within the neighborhood, historic code violations, tree limbs falling, etc and also to help mediate nuisance issues such as the situation at the Bordeaux apartments.

Review and approve July 14, 2020 Minutes: Motion by Sheri Mistretta, 2nd by Linda Weiner

ALDERMAN REPORTS

7th Ward

Jack Coatar

- **Covid:** cases are still climbing. Mayor and Dr. Echols are exploring further restrictions. Big issue is large bars and clubs; 75% occupancy of a 1000+ people is a lot of people congregating. Encouraging leadership to go after those breaking rules versus making it harder on restaurants that are following safety guidelines.
- **New stop signs** in the neighborhood; Jack is aware that many are not stopping. Additional signs in the crosswalk are helpful but have gone missing. Takes time to adjust to new stop signs.
- **Speed humps (more gradual than bumps) and traffic control/calming:** more challenging on snow routes and would impede the Gateway Cup bike race. Temporary ones have to be bolted down and are really rough on the streets. Jack is talking to streets department about what can be done, at least temporarily while 44 traffic is routing through neighborhood.
- Officer Douglas will address enforcement of traffic. Traffic enforcement has only been addressing calls for accidents and not doing any traffic enforcement in neighborhoods.
- **The Bordeaux concerns:** Jack has met with neighbors and ownership; ownership has agreed to reduce short-term rentals from 25 down to 10, which is better, but Jack wants to address the bigger problem: this is not what Jack and the neighborhood agreed to. Short-term rentals are a gray area.
- Alderman Coatar and Alderwoman Ingrassia are both working on regulating short-term rentals across the city—standard rules and regs and conditional use process (neighborhood support, alderperson support to operate).
- **Question:** Who is responsible for mowing the park? **Answer:** Jack will get on Forestry/Parks Dept to have mowed.
- **Concern:** June Preservation Board Meeting, there were a couple cases that the Development Committee fought against because of lack of historic model example, materials out of compliance. **Response:** Jack will follow up with Phil Lamczyk on these topics.
- **Question:** What is the situation with the short-term rentals NOW at The Bordeaux? **Answer:** Yes, short-term rentals are authorized, but there is a question of how many units are authorized. There is nothing in the code that will be able to stop them from having “some” short-term rentals on the property. The hope/goal is to make these more extended stays versus single night rental “hotel rooms.”
- **Question:** Do they get taxed if they are doing Air B&B's? **Answer:** They *should* be taxed at a commercial property rate. Jack does not know how that is working currently, but he will look into it.

6th Ward

Christine Ingrassia (ingrassiac@@stlouis-mo.gov)

- **Short Term Rental Legislation Explanation:** Short term is 30 days or less. One bill will be a zoning bill that requires investor-owned properties to go through a conditional use hearing that allows neighborhood and

alderpeople to weigh in. It also allows city to put conditions on the use and allows easier revoking of permits. It levels the playing field with traditional B&B's. It would also require a housing conservation occupancy permit. The goal is to have these bills go through in the fall, but it will require up to a year for full implementation. The sales tax piece is subject to Hancock legislation; Air B&B is remitting sales and hospitality taxes that come back to STL city, but there are other services not doing that.

- **Regarding Choteau:** Christine has never been successful getting MODOT to be responsive to requests for traffic calming measures. She and Jack will try working together on this even more to get a response.
- Will be able to fund fence replacement and tree replacement along Park Avenue. Christine drove the Ward last night following the storm and has reported downed trees. (Park Service was out today as well, removing anything impeding streets.)
- **Question:** About how many short-term rentals in LafSq? **Answer:** There are about 1,000 in the city. It can be hard to find out how many in specific neighborhoods...Christine will get back to us with an estimate.

POLICE REPORT

3rd District

Officer Sherdon Douglas (sdouglas@slmpd.org)

Traffic:

- Traffic Division has been split up due to COVID-19. They are stationed out at North Patrol assisting with calls. Once they return they will address the traffic issues.
- At the beginning of the shutdown, officers were told NOT to do self-initiated traffic stops for safety reasons. They recently received a directive where they can start self-initiations which includes traffic stops, so we should see an increase in traffic stops along Chouteau. If you see traffic violations you can call it in to 911 or the non-emergency number (314-231-1212).

Crimes for July:

- 2 vehicle thefts: 1800 block of LaSalle, recovered; 2300 block of Park, recovered
- 6 larcenies: 2 packages, green trash can, theft of a dog at Four Muddy Paws—recovered! 😊; larceny from a building in 1300 block of Missouri, tools missing from company doing work; theft of wallet/money on front seat from a vehicle

NEW AND ON-GOING BUSINESS

Strategic Plan Update

Linda Weiner

- Final draft is complete, and team is seeking input. Team has been meeting every few weeks and producing information for the community online, seeking re-energized enthusiasm and feedback.
<https://lafayettesquare.org/community/lafayette-square-restoration-committee/the-lafayette-square-strategic-plan/>
- Will have a Virtual Launch introducing people from various organizations, sign up and see what we can accomplish with our resident talent to move the neighborhood forward!

Website Update

Jeff Baird

- Communications Committee is working hard to collect information to get content to Story Power. Everything is going as planned and on par to launch by mid to late September.

Potential Business in LS

Steve Wilde

- The board was approached to provide a letter of support for a business at 1800 Choteau (same complex as chiropractor) that would require a conditional use permit. The business is a tattoo parlor/body art that has been in Benton Park for years, and that owner has closed due to COVID.
- 80% of the clientele is women; the artists are both women, and a large percentage of their clientele is mastectomy patients. They are appointment only (no walk-ins), they are booked 3 months in advance, Hours of Operation would be 10am-7pm.
- Window signage would be classy—no neon—and would need to go before Development Committee.
- Christine Ingrassia: A Conditional Use Permit is required because of the zoning code; this would be a variance. The Board of Adjustment typically asks for the neighborhood and alderperson to weigh in and

takes that input very seriously. The city puts conditions on the business, which makes it easier to revoke the permit if necessary. The hearing is on September 3rd. The underlining zoning is still there so if this business vacated, a new business of the same type would need to go through the same process. Christine feels that this business would be a good fit for the neighborhood because it is NOT a traditional walk-in parlor. Christine would be happy to run calls for service on the previous location to make sure we are not overlooking something.

- Email President@lafayettesquare.org with questions or concerns.

Court Case Update

Matt Negri (President@lafayettesquare.org)

- The LSRC is being sued by plaintiffs regarding a 2014 House Tour incident in which their deck pulled away from their house.
- Steve Wilde and Matt Negri attended a WebEx hearing about two weeks ago. The judge asked for 10 days, which has gone by, so by the next meeting we will have a result on whether we need to pay the plaintiffs.

Fundraising

Sheri Mistretta

- This committee has been meeting via Zoom, and many ideas are being shared from cooking classes, online auctions, etc. The pandemic will not stop us from having good times in the Square at the holidays!

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Treasurer's Report

Clark Affholder (treasurer@lafayettesquare.org)

- Scott and Suzi Jones gave a generous \$2,000 donation toward the police substation. THANK YOU!
- As of today, we have started transitioning banking relationship from Bank of America to Commerce for several reasons, but the major reason is customer service.
- We have about \$160,000 in the bank.
- Thank you to Christina for the membership drive, which brought in ~\$13K to keep us afloat without the spring House Tour.
- The financial statements are available; they are sent to members, and if you are not a member, they can be sent to you.
- Sheri will be taking over the Treasurer role in October. Whenever you are submitting invoices, receipts, etc., PLEASE send it to the treasurer@lafayettesquare.org address versus sending it to Clark's personal email.

Lafayette Sq Business Association (LSBA)

Bethany Budde (not present)

Development

Suzanne Sessions/Phil Lamczyk

- Suzanne not present, and Phil does not have updates.
- Good news: The house on the corner of Carroll has taken an eyesore and has made it much more appealing to the neighborhood!
- We do have a Problem Properties volunteer: lsrcproblemproperties@gmail.com

Beautification

Linda Weiner (linderweiner@gmail.com)

- Many people have stepped up to help; even though we don't have a contractor, the neighborhood is looking pretty good. We'd love to have a few more people take ownership of various spots in the neighborhood for watering, weeding, etc.
- Writing a grant for trees behind the fence on Dolman and the Lafayette median.

Communication Committee

Jeff Baird (communications@lafayettesquare.org)

- Photo Contest for Website: Submit photos for publication online in blogs, website and perhaps in print. Send submissions to: communications@lafayettesquare.org. There will be a 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th place prize awarded (varying values of gift cards to neighborhood businesses). Please submit by August 31st

Membership

Christina Ryan (membership@lafayettesquare.org)

- Currently at 237 household memberships as well as about 35 LSBA memberships.
- Have had almost 50 responses to the Volunteerism Survey. Committee heads are in the process of contacting those interested. If you haven't had any follow up, contact Christina: membership@lafayettesquare.org

- Working with Communications Committee to provide membership database, which will streamline renewals, allow auto-renewals, and allow monthly payment plans.

Capital Improvements

Mary Visintainer

- Entrance features at Rutger/Jefferson: there was an issue with the streets department (with lining) that had to be worked out. Looking forward to the concrete pillars to be in place soon! (They have been poured.)

SAFETY REPORTS

Block Captains/Safety

Glenn Eckert

- Asking Block Captains to know more about their neighbors.
- Tom Murphy has been active in several projects including The Bordeaux and traffic.
- We'll be reaching out to new interested volunteers.
- There are lots of issues that the committee is aware of but, unfortunately, we can't do much about (i.e. loud Mustang, "pocket rocket" motorcycles, security light on 18th St). There are conversations taking place behind the scenes.
- There will be a closed-circuit camera installed on Park and Mississippi; waiting for it to be installed.

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION UPDATES

Lafayette Preparatory Academy

Gail Buffington

- LPA has decided to start the school year fully virtual. There will be no students on-site in the first quarter with the exception of specific services such as Special Education, ESL, academic support, and food pickup.
- Will be looking for assistance with school supply and food drives. THANK YOU for your past support!

Lafayette Park Conservancy (LPC)

Ward Buckner

- On Monday 8/3, a car lost control and drove into the fence. It hit one fence post directly and knocked over both bordering sections, which are currently leaning. It did not do significant damage to the post nor the fence! The driver stayed for the police to come and has insurance.

Lafayette Square Arts Council

Donna Korando (not present)

Barr Branch

Tonnya Joy (tjoy@slpl.org)

- Libraries are open at all locations with limited hours and services; all in-house programming cancelled for the rest of the year.
- **General FAQs:** Up to 30 minutes of browsing, computer use of 1 hr/day; closed seating areas and meeting rooms; 9 years and up wear masks and staff wearing masks; materials returned to outdoor book drop and quarantined for 96 hours (no overdue charges)
- **Creative Experience @ Barr Branch**—Similar to Central Library with newer equipment. (Barr is the 2nd location.) There are 3D printers, laser printer, virtual reality (closed for social distancing), recording studio, large format printer with photo paper and canvas. Currently free with library card!
- **New and Expanded Services:** Curbside Pickup, virtual events (mostly for youth but ramping up adult events), virtual tech connect (phone, email, or up to an hour of one-on-one scheduled Zoom assistance), personalized recommendations (all ages, online form, and staff will curate a selection of items that they think you would like, for all media)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The graffiti on Choteau (Lafayette Walk) has been cleaned up already. The property was tagged on Saturday night...looked like gang-related from Chicago. The manager was on it and had it removed quickly.

Gateway Cup's Tour de Lafayette has been cancelled for Labor Day Weekend

Next LSRC Board Meeting Sept 1st

Next LSRC General Membership Meeting Sept 8th @7pm

ADJOURN: 8:22pm Motion by Phil Lamczyk, 2nd by Linda Weiner