

**LAFAYETTE SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**

**SqWires 7 PM**

**10 April 2024**

**CALL TO ORDER 7:01pm Chris Budde
Welcome New Residents** *president@lafayettesquare.org*
**Review and approve March 2024 Minutes -** tabled to May due to technical difficulties uploading to shared folder

 **GUEST SPEAKERS**

**8th WARD ALDERMAN REPORT  Cara Spencer**

spencerc@stlouis-mo.gov

* 1st session ends on 4/15
* Red Light Camera Bill expected to pass
* Reckless Driving idea – put boots on these cars! 11 people have died in the city this year because of reckless driving
* Homelessness – couple bills that did not pass. New resurrection of a bill that would make it easy to open homeless shelters; Cara thinks we need to do more to protect the neighbors in this bill.
* Hiring Freeze – sprung on BOA…learned from the newspaper. Cara is chair of the budget committee, which oversees employees. Meeting request to Mayor, who declined. Did talk to the Personnel Director. Police Officers/public safety CAN be hired. We are operating at 70% of what we are authorized to do.
* Budgets come before BOA in May – Cara leans toward focusing on infrastructure and functioning of city government.
* WSJ pointed to the city of St Louis as an example of how not to be a city. Sobering realities regarding vacant buildings. Cara is pushing for eminent domain with vacant buildings downtown, such as the Millenium Hotel, for which there are interested buyers, but the owners in Singapore are not willing to sell even though they’ve sat on it for 10 years.
* Question: How do you plan to get boots on vehicles involved in reckless driving? Answer: PD only has the option to give tickets or tow/impound right now; not issuing warrants, and people don’t pay the ticket. Boot allows a middle ground – no arrest and accountability for paying the ticket. The parking enforcement contract allows booting, but none have happened since 2020. This contract is up for renewal.
* Question: Has anyone considered approaching outside vendors for groceries because of the downtown food desert? (There’s only Culinaria.) Answer: It’s not necessarily appropriate for an elected official to approach companies, but the STL Development Corporation is looking into that. With regard to Fields Foods, it’s privately owned, and there’s a complicated set of incentives that are in place with that development.
* Population Loss (in headlines) – since 2020 census, we’ve lost 20K people in the city of STL. This is just as much a problem of WHERE people are leaving from; the population loss is almost exclusively from north St Louis. The city is failing to serve residents on a very basic level.

**POLICE REPORT-3rd District Officer Rojas**

 rrojas@slmpd.org
March 11 – April 7: 4 major incidents:

* 1 robbery – 4/4, 2600 block Choteau, stolen vehicle at gas station, suspect taken into custody (Question of why this counts as Lafayette Square, which ends at 2300 block)
* 2 felony thefts – 3/18, 2200 block of Hickory, storage container broken into; 3/24, 1800 block of Lafayette, victim discovered her tires and rings stolen
* 1 auto theft – same incident as robbery was filed as
* 69 calls (pie chart shown with breakdown)
* Concern regarding residents confronting (in one case tackling) individual who has repeatedly stolen packages throughout the neighborhood; Officer Rojas requests available footage of the individual. If there are no reports being made, the police are not going to do anything.
* Concern regarding drug activity at a property; Officer Rojas says continue to make reports and keep footage and contact burglary unit.
* Officer Rojas shared honestly that there are, at any given time, 1-3 officers for the 3rd district, and it’s true that police are not generally going to respond to low level crimes called in.

**NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION UPDATES**

**Barr Branch Library Tiger Reed**

* *Not in attendance.**treed@slpl.org*

**Lafayette Prep Academy (LPA) Dee Dee Arms, Director of**

* Last day of school is May 24, Field Day is May 23 **Development and Communications**

**Lafayette Park Conservancy (LPC) Michael Bushur, Executive Director**

*Michael.Bushur@lafayettepark.org*

* Spring Membership Drive (2nd year); increased neighborhood donations from 4-8%...hoping to get up to 20% neighborhood membership.
* Lafayette Park Field Day: This Saturday 4/13, all ages event with races, food trucks and bar, tree planting, inflatables; free event, sponsored by Glenn Eckert with State Farm)
* Question: When will the dead tree trunk at corner of Park/Mississippi be removed? Answer: Originally, the LPC was going to take that out. The city specifically asked that the LPC NOT do that and said they’d do it. (FYI, the city owns the trees as well as the liability.)

**Lafayette Square Arts Council**

* Concerts start June 1!

**NEW AND ON-GOING BUSINESS**

**Update on Legal Action for Problem Properties Christina Ryan**

*pastpresident@lafayettesquare.org*

* LSNA submitted our interrogatory responses several months ago, and we received the property owners’ responses. In the response, the owners claim that much work has been done and will be done by the end of February and end of March, which didn’t happen.
* The LSNA subcommittee working with the attorney has advised him to move forward with writing/requesting a summary judgment on the nuisance statute, which would allow the court to order the owners to abate the nuisance; this may be limited to the structures’ exterior - we’re not sure.
* Until we see how things move forward with this first statute, we are pausing on the receivership statute; the result of the latter would be that the LSNA becomes the receiver and works with a developer to rehab the properties. The owners still retain ownership but have to pay back within two years all of the rehab costs.

**Block Captains Wayne White**

* Wayne just took over as Captain of the Block Captains 😊
* Welcome and inform; optional to organize social opportunities
* It’s really about welcoming new neighbors. Also, when there is a safety issue, alerting your neighbors.
* Block captains keep a contact list of their neighbors.
* Question: Is there a master list of the captains? Answer: Wayne is working on that and making sure the information is accurate.
* There will be an article in the Marquis about block captains with more information and Wayne’s contact info.

**Community Directory Donna Hagerty-Payne**

*memberatlarge4@lafayettesquare.org*

* In the near past (last two years), we’ve had a Community Directory. The most recent phonebook style directory in 2 years, and it hadn’t been updated for 2 years before that.
* In November 2022, there was renewed interest in having a phone book style directory.
* Ray is working on the data side of the directory. Having a community directory is a way to value our relationships with each other; it’s an investment in social capital.
* We have a map of the neighborhood, know every single address, and have a database (of 1300 names) from the past as a starting point. Using the White Pages, we’ve filled in 1800 data points.
* Directory will have three things: Name, Address, Phone Number.
* Door Hangers and signs around the park have the QR code for residents to scan to input their information. Want to prioritize the inputted information over white pages data.
* July is the target publication date with STL Programs.
* It doesn’t cost us anything to publish this directory.

**Fountain Plaza Lawn Service Chris Budde**

*president@lafayettesquare.org*

* The Fountain Plaza is owned by an old TIFF – the Near Southside Development Corporation. The LSNA pays for the water, electric, fountain maintenance, and the beautification; Linda Weiner spearheads the latter. SqWires has been paying for the weekly lawn service, but is not going to do that anymore. The LSNA is absorbing that cost; we got 4 bids and went with JaCo at $90/week (mow, blow, edge) for the growing season.
* Question: Do we have liability for the Fountain Plaza? Answer: For our events, we take out insurance for those individual events.
* Question: Did we entertain getting volunteers to mow? Answer: we thought about it, but it’s a big space, and it’s already hard to get volunteers.
* Question: Could we buy the Fountain Plaza? Answer: We would not have to buy it. We are in talks with the manager of the TIFF to turn it over to us. It would be one non-profit turning over to another non-profit; this is actually required by the TIFF (to turn it over to another non-profit). We’d have to pay the title fees and additional insurance; we would fold this additional property into our general liability policy.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Treasurer’s Report (Jan/Apr/Jul/Oct) Tatiana Clader**

*treasurer@lafayettesquare.org*

* We don’t do a lot of events early in the year so not a lot of income coming in; revenue is mostly membership. We also have a corporate contribution and community garden revenue coming in, as well as antique fair vendor fees.
* Expenses: Regular ongoing maintenance, Waverly Fence project finished. Community donations happen in the 1st quarter, and we increased that to $5K this year.
* We’re right where we need to be; in fact, we’re under about $2K.
* $255K in cash accounts, plus our endowment so we have plenty of cash

 **Business Affairs Bart Lissner**

*lsba@lafayettesquare.org*

* *May 29 – Cocktails in the Plaza, all income goes toward security*

**Fundraising Jill Peckinpaugh**

*fundraising@lafayettesquare.org*

* June 1 – spring in the park
* Looking for a committee and houses for the holiday parlor tour and Light Up the Square, or even next year’s Spring House and Garden Tour
* Masquerade Ball

**Membership** *membership@lafayettesquare.org*

* The LSNA board is seeking a new Membership Chair. This person serves as a primary - and often very first - link between the LSNA and its members.
* The primary duties include managing our membership software, sending meeting reminders and other notices out to LSNA members, and responding to emails. Additional duties may include spearheading recruitment efforts and fostering member engagement (i.e. arranging for member perks). These combine for about 4-6 hours per month. The Membership Chair also attends the monthly LSNA board meetings and general meetings.
* The board is looking for someone who is personable and enthusiastic about Lafayette Square and the LSNA and who possesses communication, customer service, and collaboration skills. This is an important role but also an *enjoyable* one for a person that appreciates getting to know their neighbors!
* If you think you might be a good fit, speak to anyone on the LSNA board and/or email Chris Budde (president@lafayettesquare.org) and Christina Ryan at pastpresident@lafayettesquare.org.

 **Preservation Marsha Delcour**

*preservation@lafayettesquare.org*

* Starting a monthly feature to highlight aspects of the Historic Code and answer pre-submitted questions:

What is the Code?

* We are a historic neighborhood, and because of that we have a historic code that dictates what you can and can’t do to the exterior of your property. This is a CITY ordinance, but we do have input as a neighborhood. When you have a project that you want to do to the outside of your house, first go to the code and see what aspect speaks to your project. You can find the code at:

What types of projects fall under the historic codes?

* The standards speak to the exterior of your home, garage, carport, retaining walls, fences, and other things on your property – i.e. ornamental objects, freestanding lampposts.

What is different about the building code process for historic projects?

* Where you start and the different avenues you have to take. The best place to start is the Preservation Committee of the LSNA. You don’t have to; you can go directly to the Cultural Resources Office (CRO), but they’ll ask you if you’ve talked to the Preservation Committee and direct you to do so, and that could delay your project. The Preservation Committee can write letters of support that will make the process smoother.

Who approves or disapproves of projects? Is that the city or the LSNA?

* The Preservation Committee is a subcommittee of the LSNA. We don’t disapprove or disapprove of anything. We can offer a letter of support or, more rarely, a letter of non-support. The purpose of the committee is to honor the historic code of the neighborhood for everyone’s benefit to maintain the historic integrity of the neighborhood. Who would disapprove of a project is the CRO, and from there, the St Louis City Preservation Board. If they deny, homeowners can appeal. Ultimately, the city approves or disapproves.

What happens when someone doesn’t go to the Preservation Committee and doesn’t go to the city and then does work that is not according to the historic code?

* Someone can make a complaint to the Citizens Service Bureau (CSB), they will send it to the CRO. This can be done anonymously.

How do I submit my project to the Preservation Committee?

* Email preservation@lafayettesquare.org, and you’ll get on the agenda for the next meeting. The committee meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at the Park House. Sometimes there are multiple folks on the agenda. You may be asked, for space or privacy, to wait outside before your time on the agenda. It’s just a courtesy and consideration of space.

 **Communications Tim Strickfaden**

No updates.*communications@lafayettesquare.org*

 **Safety George Boulware**

Not in attendance. No updates.*safety@lafayettesquare.org*

**Improvements/Maintenance Mitch Hunt/Matt Negri**

*improvements@lafayettesquare.org**maintenance@lafayettesquare.org*

* The Fountain is on until early October.
* There is a column at Jefferson/Lafayette that has been missing the top finial. The city says that it will be installed “shortly.”

**Beautification Linda Weiner**

*linderweiner@gmail.com*

* The Plaza area has been gardened by the Visintainers for a VERY long time, along with a few other helpers.
* The Mulch: Volunteers have been reducing the mulch piles. We get volunteer high school students from Principius on Friday 4/19 from 12:30-2 to mulch on Park Ave and cleanup at Lafayette/18th. Saturday 5/4 we will have flower planting and need volunteers. We also need an army of watering volunteers. We have hoses available from the businesses and LPA. Consider adopting a spot in the neighborhood (i.e. bumpouts, mini-park) to take care of.

 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

* Yard Sale – Sapna Bakhta - May 18 and 19 (rain date June 22 and 23); Look for updates on the community Facebook page and the Marquis
* Marty Joe Murray – (5th?) District Committeeman - Make sure to vote on August 6. If you are Interested in being a delegate for Missouri: missouridems.org
* Sent a letter to Alderwoman regarding contractors doing subpar work on streets and sidewalks following utility work. Also shared this letter with other neighborhoods in Ward 8 to use it as a template. Asking the city to enforce the ordinance that requires contractors that get a permit to dig up a road to return the road to the same condition as when they started.
* Review of Volunteer Opportunities

**Next Board Meeting:** Tuesday, 07 May

**Next General Meeting:** Wednesday, 08 May 7pm @SqWires

**ADJOURN at 8:47pm** (moved/2nd by Mark Kapp and Linda Weiner) ****LSNA Membership Sign Up