

HHIA Meeting  
November 28, 2016

Roll call

Present: Beth Murphy, Anna Baldwin, Lisa Bertke, Jim Sahaida, Tara Ohler-Jenney, Stacy Ross

Absent: Mike Dauphin, Kendal Dauphin, Eileen Muir

Introduce New Neighbors: Anne Schweitzer moved into the neighborhood in May, house is listed in Boulevard Heights but lives in Holly Hills, has been attending both neighborhood meetings

Guest Speakers

**Kyle Juvers, Better Together** – Deputy Director of Community Based Studies. Better Together is a 501C3 non-profit organization that is looking at how municipal governments operate in the city and the county with an eye toward the fragmented nature. St. Louis is both a city and a county with 90 municipalities in St. Louis County. 115 local governments, 81 municipal courts, 57 police depts serving 1.3 million people. Spend \$2.3 billion annually for these services. They conducted 6 studies: Public Finance, Economic Development, Public Health, Public Safety, General Administration, and Parks and Recreation. They have published a comprehensive study called the “Will to Change”. We currently have a strong focus on internal competition amongst municipalities instead of a focus on regional growth. Because there are 92 elected executives in the region we have a real lack of a vision for how the region will grow and a lack of a single leadership model. We think this is holding St. Louis back. Asked fellow St. Louisans if they have “the will to change”? They do not put forth a specific type of reform. As a nonprofit we can’t advocate but can put info out there and be transparent with our studies and data. For more info visit [www.bettertogetherstl.com](http://www.bettertogetherstl.com). Any questions on our research and findings?

Q: The city and county have extremely different political views. Wouldn’t it be hard to come together?

A: You can have individual space but still retain your identity. Our reports show that you can drive from here to the airport and you will receive 14 different levels of policing. Some are very good depts with adequate level of service, others not so much. These ratings are determined by the police executive research forum. We contracted with them to perform a study on the region. Is it a question of can we collaborate and consolidate services so that we can present the same level of service for all residents? While individual spaces get to maintain their identity.

Q: Have there been other municipal regions that have gone thru this transformation?

A: One of our studies was a regional comparison. Both Louisville and Indianapolis went through this in different ways. Indy has one govt for the entire region. Louisville became the metro govt of the region. They still have 83 municipalities but there is one police dept, one fire protection district, one municipal govt that provides an adequate level of service. More affluent areas of the community can pay for additional services but there is still one level of maintained service for the region. Trash pick up, leaf pick up, police, and fire. One baseline that everyone living there receives.

Q: How did they get from point A to point B?

A: The mayor of Louisville became the county executive and he and the incoming mayor had a very good relationship. They came to an agreement to start consolidating resources and stop competing with each other. The vote was rejected three times and passed on the 4<sup>th</sup> try. Then the region really started to grow.

Q: Isn't Rex Sinquefield a major benefactor?

A: All of our donors are listed on our website. Both corporate and individual donors. He is in the \$100,000 category. He is in the same tier as Centene, McDonnell, and our founding donor Ambassador Bert Walker. Our board is composed of civil leaders in St. Louis, people from business to Labor to former president of the Urban League. We hear frequently that we are a Rex S backed organization but that does a disservice to how diverse our board is.

Q: How does it work with schools? What are you thinking...how does it play out?

A: Schools in Missouri are an entirely different subcategory. They don't adhere to municipal boundaries. If we consolidated the city and county that would not affect school boundaries at all. Finger on the pulse, I think that it is going to take a lot more conversations like this. Those in the county are more resistant and more skeptical of change. There are a number of municipalities east of 270 and north of Olive that have experienced egregious abuses in their municipal court and they are really ready for a level of reform.

Q: Who would be mayor?

A: That is several steps down the road.

Q: I know you aren't advocating one method over another. What is the leading proposition?

A: No emerging consensus yet. The St. Louis County Municipal League did just endorse the city entering the county as the 91<sup>st</sup> municipality. They aren't in favor of further consolidation. Former County Exec Gene McNary introduced a borough plan which would split St. Louis City into 2 boroughs and each county council will become a borough. So we would end up with a 9 borough structure. This is in its early stages, driving a conversation about whether or not we have the will and the capacity to take on a reformation of this scale. All the data points to us having to do it.

Q: Another potential is that once that happens, the city could annex Affton and Jennings then we could expand our boundaries beyond what they are now so we have 35 instead of 91 municipalities.

A: That is certainly possible, yes.

If you have questions, please get in touch with us. I'm happy to go over any specifics with you over coffee. If you're a member of any other group that you think would allow us five minutes I would really appreciate that as well.

**Patrick Brown and the Resiliency Team** – He is the Chief Resiliency Officer housed in the mayor's office. First ever appointed to the office. His salary is paid for by the Rockefeller Foundation. This is a three year program. He had been working in the mayor's office, formerly the mayor's deputy chief of staff and lobbyist at the board of Alderman. He has been asked to help identify inefficiencies and issues within city government. He will be making recommendations for changes. These changes are supposed to help the city become more resilient. Which is really about figuring how the city better withstands what the foundation calls shocks and stresses. Shocks are disaster like events: floods and earthquakes. We need to think about how prepared we are, emergency response, community outreach. How well do we do those things? Stresses are a bit more nuanced. Chronic homelessness and racial inequality, lack of education opportunities. Inefficiencies in government. If left unaddressed or unnoticed these can really impact a city. Year 1 is me writing a report. Doesn't really get anyone excited. Lots of reports out there: Better Together, Ferguson Commission. What we don't have is resources to do anything with those reports. Year 2 will be tasked with implementing recommendations from the report. He will soon have a new boss, he will be one of the few individuals to cross over into the next administration. There

are lots of resources available to us. This is a global initiative. We are one of 25 U.S. Cities. All other cities are across 5 different continents. This is a great opportunity to learn from our global counterparts. One of the perks is that other cities will share some of the same concerns and we can work with the resiliency offers in other cities. The Rockefeller Foundation has a lot of money. They have spent approx. \$1 mil in each city. Probably not enough money to do everything that we need. Will spend a lot of time forging partnerships with other non-profits and academics to find solutions. They are currently in Phase 1 of this work which is about introducing this concept to the community. It can be about faulty schools, also about racial inequities, vacant land. Community cohesion. Does that make it more difficult for us to react and threaten our resilience. He is out making people aware of this initiative. Hoping that you will be able to spend some time with me in the future to share your concerns. You can contact us at [www.stlouis-mo.gov/Resilience](http://www.stlouis-mo.gov/Resilience). There is a link to their survey on the website.

Q: Did St. Louis apply or were we chosen?

A: We did apply shortly after the shooting death of Michael Brown. We were the only U.S. city to list our #1 shock as riot and civil unrest. That got the attention of the Rockefeller Foundation. You see this in the African cities but this is the first time that a U.S. city said this was a real disruption for us. What led us to riot and civil unrest is that people felt neglected, disenfranchised, unheard. My job is to determine how to address this. He was selected in Dec 2014.

Q: Big cities have a myriad of issues. How will you prioritize? Is it just you?

A: I am not the show. I have a small team that works with me. A few fellows from Wash U, AmeriCorps volunteers. There is a team in New York, two staffers working with us. Proj Mgmt Consultant and a Sherpa of sorts. Lots of back end support for this. In addition to the community support and governmental support that we will need. I'm not a subject matter expert on much, more of a generalist. But I will need to rely on subject matter experts to do the work that we find important. Even the big cities are participating in this. New York, San Francisco, and New Orleans have also participated.

Q: How were you selected to lead this team?

A: The day that the mayor announced that he was not running for mayor, the Rockefeller Foundation was in town to interview our top three finalists but I was not one of them. They didn't like any of the three finalists so the mayor threw me into the pile and said talk to this guy, what do you think about him? To be honest with you I didn't want the job because we tend to squander opportunities like this, we in St. Louis don't do these things well. We don't maximize the opportunity. The mayor has given me a lot of autonomy to do this. The Mayor wants to do as much as they can while he is still in office. I was a bit of a consolation prize to the foundation but I think that I will do a good job.

Q: Is there a reporting period? If we establish the top 5 dire needs how do you convey to the foundation and what is the timeframe?

A: Phase 1, we produce a preliminary resiliency assessment. Exec summary. This will be produced in April after the election as we need to make sure that the next administration feels loved and cherished in this process. Along the way, we will be working with the Rockefeller Foundation, lots of meetings and research. Looking for data to corroborate ideas. Phase 2 would be deep dive into the four or five areas of focus.

Q: Alderman Tom Villa: So if I wanted to weigh in with infrastructure needs, gun crime, more police, how do I do that?

A: I would love for you to take the survey but I know that the internet is not your forte. Actually in the process of scheduling a time with the Board of Alderman to make sure that we are communicating effectively.

Q: You want to look at the city governments antiquated telecommunications systems.

A: Yes, I think in the 21<sup>st</sup> century we are woeful in city government when it comes to that. There are a lot of ways for us to leverage technology to do our jobs better. Luckily for us there are a lot of competent and professional companies that are donating their services (Microsoft, Secrata) so if we come up with issues in the IT world it is likely that we can find solutions for free. I would love to figure out how to leverage that opportunity for us. It is hard to communicate why IT is important since it isn't concrete. We will have to communicate more effectively with taxpayers about how we spent their money.

Q: This just encompasses the city, right?

A: Yes. We were selected on our own, St. Louis County did not apply.

Q: Are there other cities selected that have merged with their county?

A: Not to the extent of Better Together but Berkeley, Oakland, and San Fran entered as a trio. Their study results involve thinking collectively as a region. But we have lots of fragmentation in our city government. Before we reach out to the county we need to figure out how we can better work in our own back yard.

Q: You said \$1 million dollars which in city income is nothing. Doesn't seem like that is enough to accomplish this.

A: That \$1 million dollars is just really Rockefeller's perceived investment here. Salaries, professional staff, studies, etc. Whatever we come up with that is what the foundation envisions spending but does not include all of the donations from companies like Microsoft and Secrata. It is quite likely that the amount of services we will receive is over \$1 mil.

**Steve Butz** – If you're interested in discussing crime and the neighborhood watch program and more police officers walking the beat in Holly Hills please join us this Wednesday at 7pm at Woerner School in the library. Right on Leona, just a few blocks away. If you have noticed there a couple of officers in pairs walking the beat in Holly Hills. That started on Friday and Saturday. We are going to investigate how we can continue that along with Greg Venneman as the head of the neighborhood Watch program, the Rat Patrol. If you want to find out more info please come Wednesday. Officer Wilson is one of the officers involved.

Q: We have had a safety committee for many years...were they consulted?

A: I don't know...we started the Rat Patrol.

Q: It really upsets me....Lisa Bertke has put all of this effort in it.

A: If you would like to come to the meeting, please attend.

We will coordinate after the meeting is over.

**Neighborhood Liaison Officer Wilson** – Another little scam they do is they will come up to your door to rake. They're looking for packages. Found a couple more derelict cars on Dover. 3900 block of Dover, car only sat there a week. Flat tire and bumper banged up, Illinois plates. Was dumped over on Dover. When you see these, send me an email. Holly Hills is a nice area and this stuff should really stand out.

Call me or call 911. I'm quick to tow. The captain has given me carte blanche. Towing in the city is a little bit different now. Look forward to the Wednesday meeting. Foot beats, every little bit helps.

Q: Tom didn't change the 3600 business to a truck zone. There are cable company vans parked there.

A: He has been tagging those cars. There's a trailer there today. He tagged that trailer today.

**Capt Mueller** – Hope you worked off a little bit of turkey. Just want to mention that we are now officially into the Christmas shopping season. Also the Christmas robbery season. Even the bad guys want to get their kids something for Christmas. Remember all the safety tips: parking in well lit areas, walk with a purpose, walk in groups. Any questions or a small group that needs a safety refresher Steve will be glad to assist with that. Just be as safe as you can be. Hope you all have a wonderful holiday season. Quarterly First District Community Outreach meeting at the Gretchen Inn and the Feasting Fox. Serving spiral cut honey baked ham and turkey breast. Working on some entertainment. Good conversation.

Q: Heard of neighbors having packages delivered and they were stolen.

A: Have it delivered to your work or to a neighbor that you know will be home. One of our elected officials just last week had packages delivered while they were out of town. Things had been rummaged through and were missing. This happens everywhere unfortunately this happened in Holly Hills.

**13<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderwoman Beth Murphy** – the white wall at Carondelet Park along Holly Hills Blvd finally got cleaned out. The Parks Dept did that. Placed No Parking on Gravois by Aldi's so now you can get in and out more easily. Going to ask about yellow curbs but Gravois is a state highway. LED lighting starting on Christy Blvd near parks. You will like them, they are a real soft light and they give a much better light and the cameras that we are putting in will be able to read license plates. Alderman Villa and I are going to start in the park. Eventually we will get to all of them. Some of the smaller streets they are going to replace them with LEDs as they burn out. They are very expensive and they last longer and are cheaper for us to run. Advanced Auto Parts was just sold. They applied for an occupancy permit. She keeps on them about not having customers working in their parking lot. Old Roznick Bakery is going to be a bar/restaurant again. It was a bar/restaurant about a year or so. Attended vacant properties summit sponsored by SLACO. Learned about the best practices in K.C to deal with abandoned houses. K.C. passed an abandoned home act. If homes were vacant for 6 months it allows them to react more quickly. Civil litigation can happen faster. These are properties that people just walked away from. Abandoned Housing Act would give us more tools to deal with these vacant properties sooner. Also have legal aid attorneys that adopt a neighborhood. We would work with Legal Aid of Eastern MO to move these cases forward. City attorneys have so much going on, we are trying to bring more volunteers in.

Q: Is that something that needs to be voted on?

A: Two things: SLACO has a vacancy committee. The legal tools committee sponsored that. Also working on a bond issue where you would vote on this in April to address LRA properties. We are hitting this from all angles. Happy to tell you more about it.

**11<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman Tom Villa** – I enjoyed the comments of the first speaker. It is important that the next mayor has a good relationship with the county executive. Next phase of MetroLink, no money to pay for the next phase. But we are going to spend \$ to find out what the proper route is. This seems

counterproductive. We need to open up the lines of communication between the county exec and the next mayor. From a regional standpoint it is so difficult...the complexities of our pension systems, for instance. Our Fire Dept now has two pensions. They will not want to merge but we need to start somewhere. Editorial comment when St James and Our Lady of Sorrows closes it really hurts us. Fractures the backbone of the city. They will merge at Hampton and Pernod. Younger families with kids, neighborhoods will miss that. Since we were here last we renamed our airport. It took us a couple months but we managed to switch two words. After these spring municipal elections in March/April the max amount you will be able to give a city wide candidate is \$10,000 per election cycle. We will force Mr. Sinuefield to write 10 checks instead of one check. We have a whole bunch of tax abatement bills coming our way on the Neighborhood Development committee meeting. A house in the 3700 block of Shaw converting 4 family to 2 family, developer asking for 3, 5, or 10 year tax abatement. You can prove statistically that this neighborhood has done a good job of bringing their property values up. These neighborhoods are hot and trendy. It is difficult to get developers to come into our neighborhood and do these types of things. Running the gamut between phase 2 of Ballpark Village (original 30 year tax abatement) yours truly opposed it. The DeWitts have more money than the Villas. They can come back and use that \$ now...coming back for a 20 story apartment building. 14<sup>th</sup> Ward, Bevo Mill is asking for some tax breaks because they found the heating and cooling unit is shot. We really need to save that. Draw the two comparisons and there is lots of stuff in between. Forest Park between Vandeventer and Grand. New development on the Hill that is asking for help. Traffic cameras, reported on them last time. \$88,000 later we are going to have good cameras at Grand and Bates and Bates and Virginia for the 11<sup>th</sup> ward. Also had to kick in additional \$12,000 for the video server that is in Benton Park. Split among five different wards. PTZ cameras. Pan, tilt, and zoom. The reason that yours truly tried to oppose the traffic calming policy is because it involves consultants. And that delays the project. Nuisance agenda was 528 pages long. So depressing. Domestic quarrel, excessive noise, public urination. 568 pages of that for all 28 wards. It is almost numbing because half of these are over before the police can even arrive. Sr. Marie Charles and Bellerive Parks supposed to be done soon. Handicap accessible ramp. Won't allow parking anymore. The Board of Alderman passed two bills: 21 to buy cigarettes and vapor devices. St. Louis County has a similar ordinance. Payday Loans: initiating new license of \$5,000 annually yours truly voted against that. These are people that prey on less fortunate people. Having said that, we don't want empty storefronts. I voted against it. Spent two hours today with MSD out at Forest Park. We lost a \$4 bil settlement with the govt to clean our water. It doesn't really effect Holly Hills but it will impact the southwest corner of the 11<sup>th</sup> ward at Germania. Tunnel project that will be 200 feet deep and 3.5 stories tall. Takes a year and a half to build it. The idea is that when we get excessive downpours we will eliminate the sewage that bubbles up. We are paying for the sins of our fathers. The Mississippi doesn't ask us when it rises drastically and causes us to have to spend this money to fix this issue. Lion's share is in the 11<sup>th</sup> ward near River Des Peres. Also projects in 12<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> ward. Tunnel will start at the casino and go all the way out to Macklind. Hasn't gone out to bid yet.

Q: What's happening at the corner with the empty building? Grand and Holly Hills

A: Missouri Housing Development Commission who put the proposal together with Vecino, they included home funds. Overseen by Housing and Urban Development. They sent a letter stating that the Southern Funeral Home needs to be saved. Cost of the new building is near \$10 million. That is a lot of investment in that corner. Remember when that kid wanted to put in a Dollar General there? He is still running back home. It's a difficult corner because we don't want a CVS or a Walgreens backed up to that park. The developer really does classy stuff if we ever get there. This is the period for the oppoennts to make comments to the housing commission.

Q: Prop S for seniors passed on the November ballot. Did it also have to pass in the county?

A: The county defeated it, the city passed it. It will go through in the city. We really put a big pot of money to seniors. But that was a very loosely drawn statute that was authorized by the state of MO. Is it hard to be against seniors? Of course it is. CCBF closed our senior center. There is a need for senior money. Thanks. Merry Christmas.

**Fred Wessels:** State Rep elect in the 81<sup>st</sup> house rep. Jake Hummel was your state rep, I am the state rep now. Jake has moved on to the state senate after term limiting out. Legislature convenes on Jan. 4<sup>th</sup>, will be town until then. I will be there in Jeff City Mon, Tues, Wed, half day Thurs from Jan until May 12<sup>th</sup>. If you need to reach me email at [fredwessels@hotmail.com](mailto:fredwessels@hotmail.com). Also in the phone book. Have a website too. After the meeting if anybody wants to give me your email address I will give you weekly or biweekly update. Give you a running scorecard. Sorry Patrick Brown left...wanted to congratulate him on his new job. Unlike Alderman Villa, Patrick bothered me plenty. Then we got along great. It's not an easy job to be the liaison between the mayor's office and the Board of Alderman.

Q: Update on Long School

A: I took part in the planning process that began in Oct. Impacted several middle schools. Too few students and too much classroom capacity. Long School, the superintendent recommended that Long School be retained and morphed into an international studies curriculum. A final decision will be made in December. Looks very promising to keep Long School open.

The Alderman and Alderwoman are at Schnucks every Friday morning 8:30am-9:30am.

Marine Corps League hosting Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup> from 9am to 2pm, Misfit Christmas Brunch. Hosted by Tenacious Eats.

This concludes our meeting today.