

HHIA Meeting
Jan. 22nd, 2018

Roll call

Present: Anna Baldwin, Lisa Bertke, Eileen Muir, Beth Murphy, Kendal Dauphin, Jim Sahaida, Tara Ohler
Absent: Stacy Ross

Joint neighborhood meeting with CCBF

New to the neighborhood? Bryan and Ashley Yoch, 1100 block of Dover
Tina Munroe, 3600 block of Bellerive Blvd
Chris and Nicole, 3900 block of Federer Pl

Guest Speakers:

Gregory FX Daly – Good evening. My name is Gregg Daly. I'm the collector of revenue...yeah, I'm the guy. Thanks for coming out. I do this for a living and this is just a great turnout. I'd like to give you a little info about the Collector of Revenue. This is my third term, shooting for my fourth term. There will be a primary this August. Board of Alderman for 18 years, then served as License Collector. I know my way around the building downtown. We collect about \$670 million a year. Earnings tax, personal property, also do real estate tax. Water bills, trash bills. They also have a fee office. That is where you get your tags for your license plates, license plates, driver's license, IDs. We have one of those offices in City Hall. I would recommend if you have something like this, come on down to City Hall. It is easy. If you do have an issue (need a waiver of a birth certificate or death certificate) it makes the experience very easy. Going to the DMV is never a good experience. We try to make it as pleasant as possible. We just had a dilemma downtown. We have had the contract for the Fee Office for 18 years. Comes up for bid every four years. We filed our application and received notice that the contract was going to someone else. We appealed the decision and made our case in front of the Dept of Revenue. We have since been awarded the contract. The people who had bid on the contract, made some critical errors...for example, telling the truth. These individuals had a few lawsuits that they just forgot to put down on the application. We were able to keep the state office with 8 full time employees who live in the city and are raising their families. It's a big deal for us and a big deal for the city of St. Louis. One-stop service. We deal a lot with the homeless. What happens if you're in that way of life, keeping up with your ID isn't number one on your mind. We deal with the homeless, making sure that they do have proper identification. This is something we are happy to deal with...it helps them. The voter ID law is making an ID a necessity to vote. A little bit about what you just paid, your personal property and your real estate. \$22 million collected on real estate. It was a reassessment year. It sounds like a lot of money and it is, but it falls on the backs of us that live here. When you go back, this particular year it worked out well. We were at three area banks around the City of St. Louis. It is our job when you think about paying your taxes, that we are there and we have the mechanisms in place to make it as easy as possible for you as the taxpayer to pay your taxes on time. We have developed all kinds of new and different ways of payment. It really helps with collections. We do have some people in the city that for one reason or another, they just don't want to pay their taxes. The flip side of everything good that I am telling you about, when we run into individuals like this, we make sure that they know that their taxes are due. We file suit, garnishments, etc. We do have to make sure that everybody pays their fair share. When you pay your taxes, we treat you professionally and with courtesy. Customer service is our number one concern. I feel very good about what we're doing down there. Water and trash bill...doesn't come all the time, on a quarterly basis. So you forget. Then you get that yellow

envelope...it's that Daly guy again. We have direct payment...arrangements with your bank of credit union where you can deduct from your checking account.

Any questions?

Q: I was going to pass along that when I paid my personal property taxes. I was delighted in that the software was so easy to use. It was fantastic. Another comment...a situation where I forgot to pay my water bill. You can pay it online but you have to go down in person to make sure that they get the message. Wonder if there is a way so that the water division isn't notified of the payment.

A: That is usually after we have tried desperately to reach you. It takes a couple of quarters before the Water Dept will turn off your water. And if we get to that point where we are going to file a lien, we are only taking cash and money orders at that time.

Q: They accidentally sent out the wrong color letter last March.

A: Collections are tough, we do the best we can with customer service.

Q: A lot of the utilities pro-rate for low income or seniors. They do not.

Q: General comment. Really glad that the office was saved at City Hall.

A: It was somewhat shameful that Jeff City didn't contact us about this. If I could say something about this, you are very blessed to have two elected officials (alderman) who responded immediately without needing any further details. They did an excellent job of joining forces and government worked. Every once in a while that is a great thing.

Q: We are approaching a mid-term election year for our US State and local officials. I hear every day citizens state that our school are bad. I try to remind them that your local schools are funded by local taxes. What % of our everyday life that we complain about ...what are they funding?

A: Real estate taxes and public schools. They receive 64% of tax dollars that come in from real estate taxes. There are 14 different agencies that receive money from your real estate and personal property. SLPS is the #1 recipient of that. Earnings tax goes directly into General revenue. That means streets, parks, everything that you guys are utilizing. That's the goal behind the earnings tax. I know that isn't a favored issue, the earnings tax. A lot of people live in the county and quite frankly, it is one of those things...they are using Morganford and using the Parks and everything else. We have to make sure that the potholes and parks are maintained. Rightfully so, they should be paying these taxes. It is a big deal.

Q: Comment about the fee and interest structure. Employee is allowed to report it as income.

Pretty steep bill for a first notice just finding out that I had missed a bill. 9 months after being notified, it was 20% of what I owed in taxes. If my employer misreports it and I don't catch it, that is a pretty steep penalty to pay.

A: In the Collector of Revenue's office we have an arrangement with the IRS. It takes us a while to realize that taxes aren't being withheld. If these situations arise, it's the employer's responsibility but God forbid, we're just happy you are here in the city. And we will try to work with you because we want to keep people here. When situations come up that you feel concern you, don't hesitate, Beth and Sarah are right here. My goal is to keep people in the city. Keep you paying taxes.

Q: Have a few properties in the Holly Hills area. A few we pay out of pocket for residential taxes. One is in escrow. We never get a receipt for the one in escrow.

A: I have to be honest, I don't know.

Q: I never get a notice on evaluation of my assessment. How do you know when you are supposed to get reassessed?

A: It is every two years and it is done by the Assessor of the City of St. Louis. They assess, we collect. So if you are having issues where you think your property was valued higher or lower, you need to bring that up with the assessor. New assessor, his name is Steve Conway.

Q: Can you get your property tax receipt online?

A: Yes, you can get them online.

Q: The water bill is raised. I didn't know anything about it. I understand things go up all the time, but everything went up \$10.

A: St. Louis Board of Alderman had a bill before them, an administration bill. The mayor thought that the city of St. Louis needed. It generates \$3 mil additional dollars. That was voted on by the Board of Alderman and that happened about a year ago. There were hearing and meetings at City hall. The mayor who originated the legislation signed it.

Q: Delinquent real estate taxes. How long does the city allow the owner to be delinquent before they take action?

A: After three years we file suit. There are penalties and interest that go up a total of 18% during the course of one year. When I became the collector of Revenue it was a market rate. People were using the system, not paying their taxes since the fee was 3%. We had to up it to 18%. If the individual reaches the three years, the property goes on sale with the sheriff's office. If no one buys the property, it goes to the LRA. Land Reutilization Authority. There are 11,328 properties that LRA owns. They are not in very good shape. The city maintains them. If you ever find yourself where cash flow is a problem...the best thing to do is contact our office immediately. We need to keep our neighborhood strong. All it takes is a couple pieces of property and things get a little shaggy and that's the last thing we want.

Q: Often, property owners own multiple properties and they play the game, they get close to three years and then they pay. How can the city combat that?

A: If an alderman calls me and says I have a property, we have tried to work with this individual. I will ask that alderman to send me a letter along with the neighborhood organization and I will move that up so its not three years any longer.

Q: On that vein, they can pay one year or just pay you something...how do we stop that?

A: A lot of people in the real estate business play this game. It is a dilemma, it's a problem. If the property is in that bad of shape, I will work with that. I'm a firm believer in trying to get people's attention. We know when people are playing the game.

Q: Who heads up the LRA?

A: Otis Williams, the head of St. Louis Development Corporation, appointed by the mayor of the city.

Q: After all the mumbling and grumbling about paying the bills yours is the only one that says thank you.

A: It is the least that my office can do. Paying your taxes on time...it's a big deal. We very much appreciate everybody paying their taxes and paying on time. Goes a long way toward what we are all trying to achieve.

Q: thank you for setting up offices at the banks.

Thank you very much. Appreciate the opportunity.

Sara F of the Emergency Preparedness had to cancel, will be at the March meeting

Fred Hessel – CCBF – we are a neighborhood based non-profit. Started by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. Run by two sisters of St. Joe before me. Coming up on my fourth year. Some of the things we do: food pantry two days a week, home improvements (contracts and awards through the city or other foundations), run the Carondelet Concert Series, this year is going to be our 30th year. Going to be a great series. We netted in the black, didn't quite get all of our overhead back. Huge support from the business community. Looking for bigger sponsors this year. We also do the murals on Broadway. Also do property development. Started in Carondelet and Patch, now in Bevo, Holly Hills, Mount Pleasant, etc. Partnering with Build for Resilience for a property on Grace. Christmas Concert as well. Development at Grand and Holly Hills. The neighborhood of Holly Hills is why that neighborhood received tax credits. The developer is out of Springfield, Missouri. Young man and his wife and they have grown this great company, Vecino Group. They approached Alderman Villa, pitched their idea. Their plan was going to take the sacrifice of the Southern Funeral Home. A 56 unit residential apartment complex. 10% of those units will be reserved for young kids aging out of foster care. Turning 18 years old and no longer a ward of the state. Essentially asked to go out and live on their own...there are agencies out there such as Epworth that help those kids transition. After what we call the Ferguson Effect, the state and social scientists all said hey, concentrating poverty in one area isn't good. Let's not fund development and put another complex like that in north city. They looked at census tracts, savvy developers like the Vecino group said we can work with this lot. They aggregates the two lots...the state has some complicated binders. The Vecino group gave a great presentation. Will be completed in late May. Onsite services, CCBF will have an office. Operate a food pantry and other support services. Epworth will have an office as well. The other apartments will be marketed toward seniors. Intergenerational housing.

Q: Will there be opportunities for us to volunteer? Mentoring on technology, etc.

A: That's a good question. HHIA has already reached out to them and Vecino was very receptive to that.

Q: Lampposts on S. Broadway are beautiful. When can we get those on South Grand?

A: That is a substantial match of money from ward capital funds...about a 7 year project.

Q: Can we look forward to seeing anymore development in the Villa triangle. (Ivory Triangle)

A: I really hope so. There is a coffee shop looking at it. We have an economic development committee that meets to discuss. If you know anyone looking at a place. Fro's Place was unable to get their liquor license. They operated behind the sheets for a while. They just gave up...that place is for sale/lease.

James Hardcastle: Been working for a few months now with a few residents from Bevo and Carondelet to put in an all inclusive food forest in the area. Learn about agriculture and permaculture. Gateway Greening, Mark Garlic, Gateway Garlic, etc are working with us. We envision this all-inclusive place where people can gather fresh fruits and learn how to do this on their own. Have the support of CCBF and Ald. Sarah Martin. We need more people to come join us: offer time or skills, resources of any kind. Along with that is a dog park. A place where neighborhood residents can bring their dogs, let them run and socialize with other animals.

Q: Is this going to be in Carondelet Park?

Don't know yet. Looking at Sr. Marie Charles lot and Carondelet Park.

Q: Fruit trees are hard to grow in Missouri. That is a long project.

A: Yes, it will not only be fruit-bearing trees but berries shrubs, etc.

Q: Are you purchasing a plot of land?

A: Yes, that is the goal. Hopefully grow from there into other areas and parks.

Q: Not going to look anything like the plot of land down on S. Broadway? Garden with all the junk in it.

A: That is getting taken care of and cleaned up. This will be well maintained and managed and groomed.

Q: Does the city know that they will be involved in it? Just my experience...we had one person who planted a lot of stuff in the common spaces in Holly Hills. The neighborhood and the city are unable to maintain these sites now.

A: Yes, we are working with the Parks Dept. We are hoping for the Carondelet/Patch area.

Captain Mueller – brought some crime stats. Dist 1 overall, we were down in crime in every category except for aggravated assaults. Almost all are between family members or neighbors. Especially when alcohol is involved. As long as there is alcohol, I have a job. Increase of 48 assaults. Homicides down from 18 to 12.

Carondelet Neighborhood – your person and violent crime is up. From 4 to 5 homicides. Aggravated assaults went from 80 to 100. Property crime is almost all down.

Holly Hills – better picture. No homicides. One rape. Went up in burglaries from 5 to 11. Aggravated assaults from 7 to 12. Down 1 in burglaries, down 28 in larcenies. Vehicle thefts dropped from 27 to 18. Arson went down from 1 to 0. Largest decrease 27.9% person crime. You have probably heard about the new chief's plan to deploy resources to North St. Louis. The resources he is deploying we have not had in South St. Louis in 4 years. Mobile Reserve, Anti-theft, etc. We aren't losing anything, he is not taking any of our street officers. In fact, we will have better response since Special Ops won't be as locked in to the Hayden rectangle as they have been in the past. Three car jackings recently, Special Ops came down and they caught the suspects by noon. We are really lucky here in the 1st in keeping our own in-district Special Ops team. They are very effective. What I want is to build to more officers here in the first district. More people to put in patrol cars. A second Special Ops or expanding the one we have. Very effective burglary squad. We have more of a burglary problem than a violent crime problem. We received 6 officers out of the last academy class. 27 total graduates. They are still in training and they will be useless for another 4-5 months. They're very fresh. We are 143 officers down from where we should be. We have 75 in the academy now. The hiring of officers is and has been the problem. We have openings, we are looking for people. Looking for anyone that qualifies...women and minorities. Several things holding us back. The Ferguson Effect. No one wants to be the police any more. Not the glorious profession that it once was. Secondly is the pay. Very appreciate of the recent raise in Prop P but that still doesn't bring us up to par with the other municipalities. Third, city residency requirement limits us. Expanding my reach and exposure. There will be two opportunities every month to meet with me. At the Steak and Shake Chippewa and Kings first Friday of the month. Cecil Whitakers at Grand, third Monday of the month. Come by and say hi...I will be there looking to talk with you. Will be posting reminders. I will have an assistant there with me. Will do my best to make it as private of a conversation that I can.

Officer Wilson – Liaison Officer in District 1. Work closely with the Alderpersons. A lot of your concerns filter to me, parking, derelict autos. I tag the cars and we get them out of there. That is what starts to blight the neighborhood. I was in the Patch today, car dealership on Broadway, all down the street was vehicles. He said his vehicles had been tampered with on the lot. A lot of excuses. They have to go back on the lot. Princeton Heights has Craightslight car lots. All of a sudden you notice all these vehicles missing plates or bogus plates. I'm the guy that cleans these up. Last year I towed 54 cars. No other district compared to that. It is a big deal. Especially if you have apartments around your house. We need to get that stuff out of your neighborhood. Starts the Broken Window process. Shoot me an email, contact your alderman. I will get on it.

Chris Rumpsa – Still filling in for Lori Wozniak as the community liaison. Coming up we have the St. Louis Police Citizens Academy, 3 month program starts on March 6th. Every Wednesday for a few hours you attend our academy and the divisions will explain what they do. The best advertisement I can give is to ask one of the alumni. I have never heard a bad thing. Almost all commissioned officers that give the presentations. Everyone is a little curious otherwise they wouldn't make as many movies about being a policeman.

Alderman Sarah Martin – Good evening. Very excited that we did this joint meeting. Chance for people to get to know each other, but these arbitrary lines keep us apart in our meetings. Hannah Butz, President of Friends of Carondelet Park and I have announced "Beignets and Coffee" at the Lyle Mansion on 2/11. This is the Historic house that we all drive by. The house is in disarray. This leads me to my next big announcement...we are having a cleanup at the Lyle Mansion on Jan. 27th. We really need volunteers, bring your mops and buckets. If a good group shows up we will be ready to go. The beignet people have also offered to come help as well. Beignet Me is the company serving, there will be activities for kids. Already have over 300 interested on Facebook. Also invited neighborhood organizations to set up a table. Please mark your calendars and please show up with a mop this weekend. Mostly have announcements. Grand-Bates neighborhood they were selected as a 2018 Neighborhood of the year. Getting the award in Jeff City next Wednesday. Spanish Society trivia night is 2/24. Been around for 90 years. Huge part of the Carondelet Neighborhood. \$25 per person. That includes beer. Upcoming Ward meeting 11th, 12th, and 13th wards. Judge Jimmie Edwards and Chief John Hayden will also be attending. Looking at a date in Feb. Health and Human Services Committee at B of A. The chair, Larry Arnowitz, held a meeting where those working with the homeless population could give their feedback. City Dept and the folks also spoke...we got all sides. The city of STL is the only municipality doing anything in this area so it really falls on us. That is a shame. Other municipalities including the MetroEast should also share that burden. There is a catalyst for this...a lot of that is funding by the state. The State Legislature continually turns away federal dollars. SB562 to change the way we handle funding (make it a block grant) which caps the amount of money that the state can spend on homelessness or epidemics, etc. Limits the money and also limits the money that we get back from the Federal Govt. This is our money. Also announced today, Sen Jake Hummel asked the Dept of Health and Human Svcs when you cut the program two years ago you said it was going to be a few thousands kids...they ignored his request for two months. 23,000 kids were actually cut. And it didn't save us a dime. Please contact your state leaders and let them know that you support them...also contact outstate leaders and let them know that this affects you. They need to get a bigger picture of what is happening. If you have any questions or want to come to Jeff City as a resident, please let me know.

Ald. Beth Murphy – The Lyle House is on the improvement plan for Carondelet Park. It won't be totally neglected, but it will be baby steps. Will be shored up. The roof as well.

Q: Stupid idea...has anyone looked into This Old House to come in and help fix it.

A: Good idea. I'm a member of channel nine we will have to call.

Locally, Mr. Yummy's is in a standstill. Supposed to be a Delfino's pizza. His zoning went through. I think he might have run out of money. Hopefully that will come to fruition. B of A, heard about the airport privatization. We were all in the dark as Alderman...a few of us went to a private meeting downtown and they answered questions for us. All I can say is that they know that we are watching them now. They haven't selected any kind of plan. 11 plans were submitted. After we showed up they didn't vote. Trying to force them to be more open and transparent. We haven't seen any lease or privatization offer to know if it is good or bad. It hasn't gone well in other cities. The parking and meter division in Chicago is an example of this. They dangle this upfront money...we haven't seen anything yet. It would have to go through the Board of Estimates & Apportion and perhaps the B of A. The study has been funded by Rex S. The company that is presenting does not get paid unless the lease goes through. We are on it, we are watching. Two marijuana bills in committee. One is a little more severe than the other. Not to legalize marijuana, but to decriminalize it. Fine would be \$25 or something. Wouldn't be the sole reason that police are going to stop you for. State will be introducing medical marijuana which will probably go through. Then perhaps the other part would come after that. City residency bill....not requiring people that work in the city to live in the city. One of the args we hear is that they cannot recruit qualified people for jobs. Sometimes the salary isn't big enough to relocate. Police Dept says they don't have a wide enough recruiting area. Has not come out of committee yet. Held a public meeting the other night.

Stellar Hog is donating 20% to Cops Walking a Beat program on 2/22. Next HHIA meeting will be 3/26.