

Holly Hills Improvement Association

Association Meeting Minutes May 20, 2019

7:02 Meeting called to order by Anna Baldwin, HHIA President

Board members present: Anna Baldwin, Michael Dauphin, Julie Orrick, Jim Sahaida

Anna Baldwin thanked those who were in attendance for the meeting. She introduced Mayor Lyda Krewson who in turn introduced those City Department heads who accompanied her. Some of those she introduced were: Steve Conway, Chief of Staff; Todd Waelterman, Chief of Operation; Judge Jimmie Edwards, Public Safety Director; Andrew Hernandez, Mayor's Office; Michael Dauphin, City Assessor; Greg Hayes, Parks Director. Other attendees were heads or managers from the Building Division, Refuse, Forestry, Street Department, and others from the Mayor's Office.

The Mayor spoke about momentum in the City that includes 8.5 billions of development. She mentioned SLU Hospital, the Foundry, Union Station, and the Enterprise Center. She stated this does not even include the NGA development. In speaking about the St. Louis Blues there is \$300,000.00 that is brought in for each home game. She spoke about the good opportunity of St. Louis getting a soccer team. She stated there is also a lot of City residents making home improvements. All in all she said we have incredible momentum.

The Mayor briefly spoke about public safety stating Jimmie Edwards would speak in more detail. She stated there is a new police cadet program and she stated the police department is 133 officers short. There will be an effort to lift the residency requirement to attract more officers.

In regard to the bridge being out in one of the entrance ways to the Y construction to repair the bridge would begin in about 4 to 5 weeks and said it has been estimated the bridge opening could be as soon as August or September.

In regard to the Parks she thinks considering the weather a pretty good job is being done to keep the grass cut. She stated more grass cutters are needed and there are openings. She

stated City government has lots of openings. Mayor Krewson said due to the passage of a bond issue we do have new lawn mowers and other new equipment. She feel a good job is being done keeping trash picked up in the City.

There were no questions for the Mayor.

Mayor Krewson introduced Jude Jimmie Edwards, the City Public Safety Director, who was the next speaker. Prior to being chosen for this position he was a Circuit Judge and as the Public Safety Director he is over the police, fire, building excise, corrections, and citizen service bureau. He is also the founder of the Concept Academy School.

There were no audience questions for the Mayor.

Judge Edwards first spoke of Operation Ceasefire and how that program started in 1990 in Boston, Mass.. He stated it was started to reduce Juvenile crime. He stated in St. Louis we have not had over five murders committed by Juveniles. He stated in January 2017 our Missouri legislature permitless gun carry. As a result police officers cannot arrest for those who have possession of guns without a permit. Part of Operation Ceasefire is to refer gun cases to Federal Court and he stated we are already doing that – 1,400 of these cases have gone to Federal Court. There is a working relationship with Better Family Life that exists to work on this and to promote jobs through SLATE. He stated that Boston no longer uses Operation Ceasefire. There are six Cities that are now using Operation Ceasefire and the cost of the program in Chicago is 3.9 million dollars. The cost if it was implemented here would be ½ million dollars.

He stated he is very aggressive in regards to law and order. He pointed out we are down 135 police officers. Judge Edwards stated we are down 14 murders compared to this time last year.

Judge Edwards stated that as opposed to the cries about St. Louis being the most dangerous City, we are not. He stated it is a numbers game. At the time Clarence Harmon was Chief of Police there was a design to look at per capital numbers that is misleading.

Judge Edwards pointed to positive trends. DEA is taking an active role related to the Metrolink and ATF is helping concerning gun violence. On June 3 there will be a memo of understanding related to a strike force to concentrate on gun violence and shootings.

Judge Edwards stated that 50% of homicides are in relation to drug activity, 20% of homicides are related to domestic matters, and 15 to 20% of homicides are related to disrespect felt in connection to the interactions between persons. He stated there have been no homicides in Holly Hills.

Alderman Larry Arnowitz stated there have been a lot of burglaries recently on Sharp Street in the ward he represents. He also stated there a lot of vehicles that don't get police attention that have expired plates.

Judge Edwards stated that we are safer today than we have been in the last four years based on data.

Judge Edwards stated something new is that the police department now has two recruiters. He also stated we need to eradicate the residency rule for the police department. He also said there is an effort to recruit an older age demographic to be become police officers as part of the recruitment strategy. He stated that due to the loss of population in the City we no longer have the pool of people to recruit from that we had in the past.

He stated that Alderwoman Carol Howard has a proposal to lift the residency requirement but even if that gets through the Board of Aldermen it can't get on the ballot until the next election. There are now three classes of police officers underway from which 75 new officers are expected but that will be offset by those police officers retiring.

A question arose from the audience about getting judge to move defendants through the court system quicker. Judge Edwards stated defendants have the right to a trial within 180 days but a lot of defendants strategically want delays hoping witnesses will fade and go away. Judge Edwards said judges don't drive trial dates that is done by defense attorneys and defendants.

Michael Dauphin, City Assessor

Michael began by introducing his assistant, Caroline Brethauer, who passed out an Assessor Summary on Holly Hills.

Mr. Dauphin stated every odd year is a reassessment period. 90,000 property owners received a notice their property value has gone up. Only those whose property value rose received letters. There are 140,000 properties in the City. Some considerations affecting property values are how big is the lot, the age of the property, whether there is a garage, what are the property walls made of, etc.. Another component of the value is the sale price of neighborhood properties.

Appeals can be made of assessments. If someone is not satisfied with the appeal a further appeal can be made to the Board of Equalization. The School District gets the largest portion of property tax income.

A bond issue passage allocated 2.5 million dollars for ultramodern updates for the Assessor Office. This will result in digitizing all paper plat mats, personal property system live in January 2019, and a real estate system coming in 2020.

A question from the audience was where can information about surrounding properties and permits pulled. Mr. Dauphin stated a person can go to property search on the Assessor website. Another audience question was is there a cap on assessment increases and Mr. Dauphin responded there is not. There was a question related to Air B&B's. Mr. Dauphin stated 250 Air B&B's are being moved to commercial use from residential and being taxed at commercial rates.

Alderwoman Beth Murphy

Ms. Murphy stated the median recently put in at Holly Hills and Leona has the purpose to slow traffic speed. Epiphany Church will take the responsibility for oversight of this piece.

Our ward has lost its building inspector and our Neighborhood Improvement Specialist has moved to the Mayor's Office. Until a new Specialist is hired Cathy Woodard, the Specialist for the 11th ward is filling in. These are two positions that need to be filled.

Delfino pizza on Bates is still coming along. The parking lot has recently been paved.

There is a speed study underway on Kingshighway from Gravois to the traffic light on Nottingham.

The Ross Dress for Less is going slow at Loughborough Commons. No reason is known for this.

A question arose about the bill to reduce the number of Alderpersons. Beth said this is coming up again. It will have to have 15 Alderpersons support before it would go before voters again.

A speed bump will be going in near Woerner School. Alderwoman Murphy stated she will be asking for a study in relation to any additional speed bumps.

Alderwoman Sarah Martin

Alderwoman Martin stated relative to the reduction of the number of Alderpersons there are some Alderpersons who think the issue was not fairly presented to the voting public.

Alderwoman Martin said since we have not been in session there is not a whole lot to report. She did state she is sponsoring a bill that for any project that receives City funds the jobs that are created should pay prevailing wages. She also said she would like to see a ban on smoking nearby City playgrounds. She stated that there will be a narrowing of Grand Dr. and Holly Hills attempting to slow traffic speed. It is dangerous for pedestrian to cross in that area. Pickle ball courts will be starting. A question arose about noise in Carondelet Park and she advised police can be called.

The next Holly Hills Improvement Association meeting will be September 23, 2019.

Anna Baldwin stated there will be 2 movies in Carondelet Park. On July 12th will be "Meet Me in St. Louis" and on August 9th will be the "Game of Our Lives".

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25pm.