

HHIA Neighborhood Meeting Minutes March 26, 2012

Present: Tara Ohler-Jenney, Beth Murphy, Stacy Ross, Kendal, Brenda Smarko, Anna Baldwin

Speaker: Pepi Pershall – St. Louis Public Library

Carondelet Branch will open in June – it is now accessible to disabled persons; Downtown library – closed since June 2010, will reopen at the end of the year.

History – St. Louis Public Library was created in 1865. The collection we have is vast. Andrew Carnegie – Scotsman, gave money for 2500 libraries around the world. In 1901 gave \$1 million to St. Louis to build downtown plus 6 neighborhood branches, including Carondelet.

Interesting that he chose to build libraries – has to be structurally sound – need lots of steel. It is Carnegie steel. He gave this money, but he got some of it back.

Competition for architect. Cass Gilbert selected to build central library. He also designed Art Museum for and other buildings for World's Fair. Designed Woolworth building in 1913 – tallest building in the world until 1923. Also designed US Supreme Court building.

Started work in on downtown library in 1908. Granite from Mt. Waldo Maine. Current renovation includes replacing a few pieces of the granite with more from Mt. Waldo. All work done on site.

In 1950-60s fluorescent lights added – they will be removed in renovation.

Stack tower was 7 floors. Bookcases were steel and glass (for light) that started in foundation and all the way up the 7 floors with the floors floating around them. Not design for fire or earthquakes so stacks had to be removed and redone.

Celebrated 100th anniversary on Jan. 6. Want to be sure building is complete before the end of 2012.

Carondelet Branch – Drop ceiling taken out.

SLPL voted #2 Library in country. Have been in top 5 for the last 8 years. STL is one of most literate cities.

Library offers many things besides books:

Concert series: 1 hour at central library; Fairy tale exhibit in 2006. In 2013 Wizard of Oz exhibit. Author visits – lots of big names; Homework helpers; “Paws for Reading” Invite children in to read aloud to dogs – gives kids a chance to practice reading skills with someone who won't judge them; Youth services staff bring books to schools, adult day care and senior living centers; Computers – not everybody has their own computer – they have an email address but their computer was at work and now maybe they don't have a job - 900 computers throughout the system.

Central express is newest branch in Old Post Office downtown – set up more like a bookstore.

Renovations is \$70 million project – \$50 m in bond financing, \$20m in fundraising (not there yet) by St. Louis Library Foundation.

Cost includes storage during renovation and moving the books. Special service needed to move books. No one was laid off – a few retired. Amount of book storage – 21 miles of shelving.

The 2nd floor of the library is going to be restored back to the way it looked in 1912. All original oak furniture will be refinished and brought back. Original chandeliers. Back to tables with lights on them; 65% more space. Stack tower will now be atrium. White subway tile is original. Much grander entrance. Children's area will double in size

Renovation involves 3 buildings. Third floor of main building used to be administrative and meeting space will now be patron space - had skylight that was covered, now exposed. Administrative offices moved across the street.

Building originally coal fired. Will now have entrances on both sides of the building. Fine arts room – fluorescent lights removed and areas of ceiling replastered to match original.

100-year-old building needed giant coal storage area. No longer need so that space will now be 235-seat auditorium. Heating, cooling, plumbing – now refurbishing to make more energy efficient. Original lights reworked. Took glass from stacks and used it in décor. Bids specified recycling of materials. Too expensive for LEED certification due to size of building. We're trying to get it ready for the next 100 years.

Drilled through 2-foot-thick granite walls to dig underground room for technology so it wouldn't be unsightly on outside of building. Redid outside steps – numbered the stones and put them back in same order.

Aerial view – square building with great hall in the middle – really 5 buildings connected.

Special collection will now have its own room – used to be behind locked doors could only be seen by appointment. Includes 4,000 year old clay tablets from Mesopotamia. Bibles from 1400s. Regional research area.

History and genealogy – very extensive collections. Access to Ancestry.com for free! Go on web site and download 3 songs a week for free. Ebooks. Federal depository since 1865 for maps. "St. Louis area collection." Grants and Foundation Center currently housed at Schlafly branch will move back

Library has 4.5 million books.

Officer Christopher Rumpsa

Crime is down in Holly Hills 52%. It's a pretty staggering number. It's down in Dutchtown and Bevo Mill and here. We can't take all the credit. Community involvement is the key ingredient to crime going down.

Polaris ranger donated by St. Louis Police Foundation. Four-wheel-drive, ATV-type vehicle – seats 6 officers. Will bring it to community events.

13th Ward Aldermen Fred Wessels

Green building – a lot easier to do when they're new (referring to library project). Rec Plex is a green building. Example: round rubber things used in emergency access path to pool area- rather than put asphalt or concrete. Will try to grow grass in them. This building is at the Silver level (four levels of LEED certification: certified, silver, gold, platinum) He sponsored bill several years ago required that any new building in city has to be at least silver level. Proud of that.

Aldermen on break this week.

Every other month meets with city home builders, etc. He is chair of housing committee. Try to break down any barriers for home builders.

MSD bond issue in June. MSD \$4.7 billion consent decree with EPA. Bond issue is first phase. \$945 million – two choices: bond issue or if bond issue doesn't pass, rates will go up. Bond issue will require interest payments.

Rates are going to go up in July anyway. Sewer rates based on square footage, number of bathrooms etc. Current average rate \$28.70/mo – if bond issue passes will go to about \$31 in July and go up each year until 2015 topping out at \$41/month - increases each July. If bond issue is rejected rates will go from \$28 to \$65 in July. You'll hear a lot more about this in April and May.

They'll tell you exactly what they're going to do with this \$945 million. Will take until 2016. The 4.7 billion I think is going to take a lot longer than 10 years. I think it will take 20 years. It's not in the plan to redo the sewer system. Three huge tunnels will be going under River des Peres.

Q: Traffic lights at Morganford and Holly Hills – it seems like they're replacing them.

A: I don't think they're replacing them – adding signal that will tell you how many seconds they have. I think they must have gotten some federal money for that. It looks pretty expensive to me and I don't think we have money for that.

Tree trimming – on Haven – give address to Wessels and he will see about getting trees trimmed.

Street paving – there will be some – don't know which streets or how much money, not as many money as have had in the past.

Call 622-4800 – Citizen's Service bureau – for tree trimming, dumpster problem. Fred's home phone number is 353-5152.

11th Ward Alderman Tom Villa

Former Alderman Dan Gruen dropped dead a week ago Thursday, age 49.

New Band Stand is finished; New dog pound still not resolved – still fighting increase in cost of building; Bandana's opted not to build in Loughborough Commons; Harris House on S. Broadway is going to expand; Jeff City contemplating a sales tax for the Arch Grounds.

Southern Funeral Home – board of adjustment denied request for rezoning. I have not heard a thing other than there seems to be a fair amount of interest in buying it until they find out how much it would cost to make it habitable again.

I'm not a very good job solving the railroad whistle problem. It seems like they come and go in waves. We had a meeting and the railroad engineer's explanation is if there is a transient or a car anywhere near those tracks they're going to blow that whistle. To them it's a safety issue. There are more responsive entities than railroads.

State-of-the-art industrial park in the old coke plant. They are going after some big tenants. We're really excited about that.

Another accident on northbound 55 exit to Loughborough, took out the sign – cost \$5500 – lady's insurance paid for it.

\$100,000 for new screws underneath the bridge to the Rec Plex– that's \$100k for things we'll never see but I guess we'll feel better when we drive across that bridge.

Charless Home on S. Broadway is unfortunately closing. Villa suggested it to the veterans. Thinks they'll be asking a lot of money for it. That's a big piece of ground. We'd certainly like to find a suitable use for that. Not in his ward.

Casino in Lemay groundbreaking for new hotel with meeting rooms. The gaming issue - whether you like it or not it's a fact of life.

I can tell you being president of the board of aldermen is a whole lot easier than being alderman. Got a phone call yesterday. Are petting zoos legal in the city? Petting zoos? She said there was a camel across the street with a bunch of people with music. I don't know what happened with that. It was on the Blow school grounds. The city didn't issue a permit for that. I don't know what happened to the camel or even if there was a camel.

City pensions - clearly the days of defined benefit plans are over. We'll have to wait until the dust settles. Whatever happens it will be litigated. The fireman have indicated that no matter what we do they're going to take us to court. I believe the longer the situation festers the more the fire department likes it. It's hard to tell policeman and firemen no but the fact of the matter is their pensions are too rich and we have to do something about it.

Foodland building - they're going to cut that building in half - Planet Fitness and Family Dollar. I think a Family Dollar is going to pretty much blow up any desire to have a Dollar General. Family Dollar has applied – they're getting the necessary health permits to sell a lot of groceries. The owner has been

pretty responsive. There are certain zoning things an alderman doesn't have any control over. That building has always been a grocery store so they don't have to jump through any hoops.

Announcements

Please sign up for electronic delivery of the newsletter – saves \$1.30 per newsletter.

Operation Brightside Blitz May 5-6. If you want to organize with a group Beth Murphy can get trash bags etc.

Please pay dues. HHIA merchandise – Flags, boathouse tiles available.