

HHIA Meeting  
March 28, 2016

Roll call

Present: Lisa Bertke, Anna Baldwin, Mike Dauphin, Eileen Muir, Beth Murphy, Jim Sahaida

Absent: Mike Dauphin, Ted Disabato, Tara Ohler-Jenney, Kendal Dauphin, Stacy Ross

Introduce New Neighbors:

Guest Speakers

Mayor Slay:

Came to talk about two things. Two propositions on the ballot, neither one will result in a tax increase. Prop E. Vote Yes on Prop E to retain the earnings tax. 1% tax, everyone who has earnings (living or working in the city). No one is exempt. You are getting some misinformation from flyers. This individual is opposed to the tax. 60% of the earnings tax is paid for by people who do not live in the city. They benefit from our police and fire protection, roads and infrastructure, visit our parks, etc. So they benefit from that. Across the board 1%. Only charged to wage earners. If you are on disability or pay social security do not have to pay the tax. Just earned income. Generates \$160 million into general revenue fund. Pays for parks, ambulances, prosecutors, etc. If we were to lose that it would cause us to have to cut a lot of things. We have an A+ S&P rating. We have eliminated nearly 1,000 positions in city government. Working leaner and meaner. We are not flush with cash. We have done a great job of streamlining govt. "Cut that fat"...they work every day to balance the budget and Chief Jenkerson is here and can tell you about this as well. Previous mayors had 27 employees, he has 14 employees. Has even cut the fat in his office. If it goes away then we have to ask you to raise the taxes to replace it: property taxes would go up 50-60%. Sales tax from 8.6% to 13% in order to replace this tax. There was a study done by Rex S. on the earnings tax and his own study states that there isn't near enough money to replace it with other taxes and if we were to replace it, it would have a larger negative impact on the city in the future. It is easy to say get rid of this tax...firstly, the tax itself that 60% would fall on all of us instead of non-city residents. The other thing is they are trying to divide the city economically and racially by stating that the rich lawyers do not have to pay the earnings tax but a janitor does. This just isn't true...everyone pays the tax. Peabody Coal for example or a law firm downtown...they pay a lot of earnings tax. They come to the mayor looking for more space...how do we finance it. What we do is a TIF. If you bring more employees or if they get pay increases in the future, we will rebate back to you 50% of the growth on the earnings tax. They are still paying the earnings tax, but on the original salary until they finish their build out. Helps us maintain our tax base but grow it. They act like we are giving these rich lawyers big breaks, but it isn't true. In the end, everyone pays it. Only used as an incentive on the growth of new employees for a limited time to encourage investment and grow jobs in the city. The earnings tax has been the fastest growth tax. The earnings tax has consistently grown more than our general operating budget. Nobody is coming up with any ideas. It is absolutely irresponsible to take away the earnings tax without having a plan in place that is acceptable to the people of St. Louis. His argument is based on a flawed argument. The other thing is Proposition F. Proposition F is no tax increase. Just allows us to borrow money from bonds for new fire trucks and equipment for maintaining bridges, equipment, acquiring fire trucks, police vehicles, refuse trucks, renovating rec centers owned by the city. \$25 million. Items were put together with city officials and a capital committee that includes elected officials and city residents. Have not gone to the voters since 1999 for firefighters. This bond money is used to buy fire trucks. Hook and ladders are \$1.3 million. We really need \$200 million.

Earnings tax is not a tax increase, but if it goes away it could mean a tax increase or cutting of city services.

Q&A:

Question: Big baseball players also pay their 1% earnings tax.

A: Absolutely, they are paying while they are in St. Louis. Over 4,000 cities that have an earnings tax around the country. Are we perfect? No. Is there a better way to do it? Maybe, but we need to find that way first. Goes on the ballot every five years. Earnings taxes were outlawed 5 years ago except St. Louis and KC. Now there is a funded and organized opposition. No one has called the mayor on his argument yet and he has been speaking at meetings for months about this. Peabody Energy had to continue to pay because they didn't increase hiring.

Q: \$25 million impact on city resident.

A: No tax increase whatsoever. Just gives the city authority to issue bonds, but will pay it back with revenues already in place. No tax increase.

Thank you all for listening, thank you for being involved in your community. Let's show the opposition that we are going to pass Prop E. I'm asking you to vote for Prop E. Tell your friends and family members to get to the polls.

Chief Jenkerson:

Mayor did an excellent job explaining. Prop F is all critical needs equipment. \$15 million will go to the fire dept to replace our trucks. Last time we had a bond issue was 98 and 99. 2008 economic downturn we didn't have one then. Very important and we really need your support.

Marnie Miceli-Clark with DESCO:

Update on Loughborough Commons. Big point of contention with security issues at the center. They have really stepped up security on our end. Working with Capt Mueller. Security guards are removing panhandlers from the lot. Increased the security and meeting with tenants on a weekly basis. Increased lighting and more lighting upgrades. It is a big deal to us and all of you. Few questions about Office Max vacation. Office Max does still have a lease. Have also advised security staff that they will need to keep an eye on a vacant space. Just wanted to let you know that we are working to make it a safer place.

Capt Mueller: DESCO only owns to the end of Schunucks. Lowes owns its own property. Had a meeting with 8 people from Lowes. They also are very cooperative and working to help rectify the situation. Even though Lowes is not part of DESCO we are working with them too.

Brian Hoelscher MSD: Prop S and Prop Y

Exec Dir of MSD. Two ballot initiatives involving MSD. Prop Y has to do with wastewater system. MSD is executing a 23 year capital program for improvements mandated by the EPA. Overflows caused by stormwater getting into the system. Dept of Justice has done this with every city in the U.S. Have to start 1.5 BILLION capital dollars for this work. Another set of projects for the next four years. Two ways to fund it: ballot initiative MSD will sell bonds if you currently pay \$40 your bill will go up to \$60. We are right in the median for bills around the country. Cincinnati currently pays \$70 a month. Atlanta \$100 a month. All in the same place that we are with consent decrees with fed govt. If you are in the city and you do not have meters (billed by attributes) everyone's bill will go down 9% then add the first month of increases in for city residents. Take your average now, subtract 9.7%, then add in the

increases. If you vote No on Prop Y then we will have to do the capital work due to the consent decree. Then they will do all cash. If your bill is currently \$40 you will end up paying \$95 per month by 2020. Because we are funding with cash.

Q: How long are the bonds for?

A: Maximum of 25 years and sometimes less. Sell them by an auction to get the best rate. MSD has an AAA bond rating from S&P. Predecessor indicated that we could reach \$100 zenith for bills in the future and then it will start to drop again.

Q: At the end of the 23 years will the rates go back down a bit.

A: They should start going down before that. Consent decree has some operational activities that they negotiated to reduce rates. Get to a peak at some point then stay there for a while but it will start dropping after the hump.

Q: What neighborhoods will you be addressing first? Older city...all need improvements desperately.

A: Back of the handout they have a plan in place, go to their website. There is a map of Service Equalization. Most of the work is completed by outside contractors.

#### Prop S

Stormwater revenue. Yellow area on map is city of St Louis. Proposal asks for approval of a 10 cent property tax increase for stormwater sewers. What that means for you depends on where you live. Outside 270 they are paying a 2 cent property tax. Half our storm sewer systems in the area we are collecting no money because they can't afford to repair it. Real issue is to address the issues in the county. Green area within 270 outside the city, they pay a lot of taxes. They pay the most as they have the most issues. If you are in the yellow area, all of you pay 2 cent property tax to MSD for environmental issues. 7 cent property tax for operation and maintenance of storm and sewer. Combined sewer but components are separate. Funds 1-2 year cleaning of inlets and storm sewers. What we don't collect is any money for capital work. Currently can't put systems in to avoid erosion or flooding. 2 cent prop tax stay in place...if you vote yes the 7 cent prop tax will go away and be replaced with 10 cent tax. Your rates will go up 72 cents a year. This will bring lots of improvements. The impact on your overall property tax bill is 2/10<sup>th</sup> of 1%. Your property tax will go up 20 cents for every \$100 of property tax that you pay. Allows us to equalize the service throughout the entire district (city and county).

If you vote no, it will stay AS IT IS and they won't be able to make capital improvements.

#### Ella Hungerford with St. Louis Public Schools Prop 1:

Thank you for allowing me to speak. Volunteer Mgr for public school in St. Louis. Proposed tax increase to fund city schools on Apr. 5<sup>th</sup> ballot. Prop 1 would be a 75 cent tax increase. If it passes St. Louis Public schools will still have the lowest tax levy in the area. Haven't passed once since 1991. Four key areas: early childhood education (free preschool to any child in St. Louis), children that attend preschool score higher on standardized testing. Character and alternative education, teaching our kids to be good citizens. Teaching kids to be caring and responsible, honest. Alternative education is for the kids that cannot handle traditional class room setting (emotional issues). Competitive salaries for our teachers and staff. St. Louis Public schools has the lowest salary FOR ANY district in the region. Our teachers do important hard jobs and we want to compensate them. Fourth improving security and safety personnel. Safety place for our children is in school. Want to continue to keep our schools safe. Because of the relationship with the charter schools (1/3 of students). So they will get 1/3 of the funding. Based on the

assessed value of your home. If your home is assessed at \$100,000 extra \$12 per month. Even if Prop 1 passes, still have the lowest tax in the region.

Liaison Officer Steve Wilson:

Welcome you to the neighborhood. I work hard for your neighborhood. You have one of the nicest and safest neighborhoods in the neighborhood. Please send me an email, updates with neighborhood activities. Anyone that doesn't have my card please send me an email. I also serve Bevo and Princeton Heights. If you look at your crime stats you have a great neighborhood. If you see suspicious activity please report it. Usually gets hit with scrappers and copper thieves. A lot of copper in this neighborhood. Summertime is coming and these scrappers pretend that they are alley pickers. Contact me via email. Current homicide was in Bevo, not Holly Hills. A lot of you guys know me.

Q: Big light show with police vehicles last night. Police SUVs circle so many times with red and blue lights. Any connection with shooting at noon on Leona?

A: No connection. Neighbor reported that there were no visible police vehicles so Capt Mueller made sure that we saw the vehicles patrolling.

Q: Shots fired? This has never happened in Holly Hills.

A: The shots were a random uncontrollable thing. It has happened in Holly Hills, but probably not near your house. There was no drive-by shooting. There was no shooting, a person shot a gun. We don't know who or why. We normally get a number of reports of shots in the area, look around for 15-20 minutes and no one has a description. They just heard the shots.

Q: Scrappers, some people find it quaint and they think it is a great way to recycle and repurpose. Any reason to continually indulge this? Find a proper way to get rid of it...putting it in the alley may not be the proper place. Are we inviting criminals? They are like panhandlers and it's not illegal.

A: True point, but they use it as an excuse to go into your neighborhood. What do you define as scrap? What's the tolerance on digging through the dumpsters. He can put a warrant out for dumping the trash. 9 out of 10 times they are looking for opportunities. Excellent point but the reality is that scrappers are gonna scrap. Keep your doors and windows locked. Not going to be able to keep people from coming through the alley. Best approach is to secure what you have as best as you can. Alarms and monitoring. Officer Wilson can do a house survey for you. Inexpensive improvements.

Q: Bought our house a few years ago, renovating, always saw police driving around. Shortly after we moved the redistricting occurred and has that had a negative impact on the police presence in our neighborhood? Since that occurred more crime seemingly.

A: Can't speak for the other 5 districts. No it didn't have an effect. Retained currently level of staffing covering the same square mileage. Lost one of the busiest part of the district and picked up the quietest. Manpower is down from a year ago...100 officers short. Divided among the 6 districts means we are 10 people down. Attrition is causing more of an impact. Currently have a class of 34 that will graduate in June. Another class of 27 graduating 6 weeks later. Another class now. Didn't have the funding to rehire now they are trying to make up.

Q: Increase activity in Carondelet Park. Police officers were trying to get people to vacate the park. Somewhat unusual. 3900-4000 block of Holly Hills Blvd.

A: The parks have a curfew and the park rangers have been very active ensuing that the curfew is obeyed. Park rangers, not police officers. More activity yesterday because of Easter.

Q: Response time is down...false alarm last Monday at 7:02pm. Police arrived at 8:02pm.

A: Acceptable? No if I was a citizen and it happened to me, no it isn't acceptable. 7:02pm is relief time. Alarm sounding is priority 3 call. Priority 1 and 2 are life safety issues. That is what caused the hour delay. If we have more officers it wouldn't be like that.

Beth Murphy:

We are not in session right now. Come back April 15<sup>th</sup>. Still answer calls and emails. Locally for 13<sup>th</sup> ward, there is a person interested in going into the Hobart's (Dewey and Wilmington). Young man is interested in opening a café. Meeting tomorrow with him personally. CID Community Improvement District from Christy to Taft on Gravois. Extra tax on businesses there, results will be similar to the Grove. Grand and Arsenal are all CIDs. Goal is to create a unified section on Gravois. Talking to all the owners, coming along nicely. Still in the beginning stages. Bungalow has some new owners and they are going to more of a restaurant rather than a bar. Chef trained at Pappy's. Works now at Adam's Smokehouse. Renovating currently. Going through the procedures with permits now. Want to make it more of a restaurant than bar. Looking forward to that.

Biggest problems and concerns are speeding cars and problem properties. Work on them diligently. Call me or your NSO. It takes time, this doesn't happen overnight to get rid of a problem property. It can be frustrating but we are working on them all the time. Visiting with a Building Division guy this morning about a property on Concordia. Please lock up your guns, city giving away free gun locks at City Hall.

Q: Do you know what the square footage of the Bungalow will become?

A: Should be the same.

Gerry Beckerle, bumping out 14 feet for the kitchen. Just to put a new upgraded kitchen in.

Mr. Villa is not here.

Mechelle Minden is not present.

Greenspace Gardening will be hosting upcoming volunteer days.

Patrick Hamacher running for Circuit Attorney. Not a politician yet, I am a prosecutor at the Circuit Attorneys office. Murder cases, robberies and assault. Jennifer Joyce is retiring. First time in 16 years for a new circuit attorney. Four of us are running on the Democratic ballot. Important to have someone with firsthand experience and wants to modernize the office and move forward with Jennifer's reforms. Has had a lot of success in the courtroom recently. Easter Sunday incident in this neighborhood. Want to be aggressive with gun offenses. How long have you been in your position? Trying murder cases for a little over a year. Been in the prosecutor's office since 2011. Came straight from law school.

Dee Brown: Invite you to the next St. Louis Safety Group meeting, to supplement or complement your neighborhood associations. North and South city involvement. Last meet-up was at the Real Time Crime Center. Next meeting is at the Carpenter Library speakers on Sex Trafficking. Great line-up. 6pm on April 18<sup>th</sup>. May meeting will be about heroin epidemic. Try to talk about controversial and timely items. Leave cards in the back.

June 25<sup>th</sup> is the date of the area yard sales

Woerner will have an open house on Sat, April 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Next HHIA meeting is May 23<sup>rd</sup> here at the RecPlex.

Q: foot traffic, car traffic, new drivers, etc. unfamiliar with intersections. Intersection where Holly Hills goes into the park. It is still the park. Solutions: NextDoor we talk about some concerns to control traffic in lieu of costly signs and signals. Temporary things...there is a need for a solution. If no one in this room is the right person to talk to about the solution. Who can we talk to about this?

A: Trailnet just did a traffic calming in several neighborhoods.

Dee Brown: NextDoor training on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Michael Powers will be providing training.

Fred Wessels: former alderman for a few years. Jake Hummel is term limiting out of office after 8 years. Running for his seat, has Jake's support and Tom Villa's. That election is in August.

Lori Crawford has lived here for 32 years also running for the same position as Fred to replace Jake's seat.