

HHIA Meeting  
March 27, 2017

Roll call

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

Absent: Mike Dauphin, Eileen Muir

Lisa Coleman – new member at large has lived here a year and a half. Chose Holly Hills because she wanted a real sense of community. After 20 years of military life wanted to put down roots. Plenty to keep herself busy at home but wanted to do something outside of her own fence. Would like to join the board. Approved unanimously.

Introduce New Neighbors: Lisa Brown lives on Marwinette. This is her first meeting, has been here for a year and a half. Lived in the county before this, prior to that downtown. Relatively new neighbor Ben on Holly Hills, been here four years. First meeting for Kyla who lives on Virginia in Carondelet.

Guest Speakers

Dr. Gerardo Camilo from the Center for Sustainability SLU and Dr. Damon Hall, Assistant Prof with Sustainability Dept. Holly Hills and Ward 23 are our focus for insect pollinator decline. Decline in native bees, 452 species within the state of MO. Gerardo has been sampling many sites around the city. St. Louis has great diversity of native bees. 168 different bee species. 1/3 of all the bee species in the state. In general we have a very healthy bee population. Places where you need bees, agricultural sites they don't have the bees. Why is there so much abundance and diversity in St. Louis? What can they do to encourage conservation? He asked Gerardo what is going on socially that we see here? So they wrote up a grant to figure it out. This is their fourth year exploring the question. Can we plant our way out of the pollinator health crisis? Looked at the two sites with the lowest diversity: Ward 23 (South Hampton) and Holly Hills. Can they encourage home owners to start planting for bees and managing their lawns differently? Most bees do not live in swarms, they are solitary and nest in the ground. Hosted 6 workshops in both communities last year. It can be as involved as planting flowers and it could be something as simple as mowing every two weeks instead of every week. Some of the flowers that we see as weeds are beneficial to bees. Still out sampling weekly at sites around the city. Have applied for more grants. Have seen some early examples, anecdotal success. This year they have received funding again. Will continue to sample at the Holly Hills Community Garden. If you live within 500 meters of that site, we are very interested in your yard. The other part of the study is to try to understand what it is about urban sites that is encouraging bee diversity. Detroit, Singapore... Will send out postcards to ask you to answer some questions through an online survey to talk about yard management.

Q: Do you have a Facebook page? Search for hashtag #Feedbackthebees

Tomatoes and peppers? One woman in South Hampton was watering and fertilizing, doing everything right. Her tomato flowers need bee to pollinate and keep them healthy. Boss pollination: bumble bee has to buzz at a proper frequency then the pollen just explodes. Check out YouTube. A honey bee can get in there and lick all it wants but you won't get a tomato. Same thing with pumpkins...honey bee can land all they want. You need a squash bee to come in and get covered in pollen then go on to the next flowers. Honey bees don't come out until 10am. Busy as a bee? That's just a P.R. gimmick. They are incredibly lazy. We need more diversity of bees...better yield for your crops. The size of a pepper depends on how many times it gets hit with a bee. Alfalfa only gets pollinated by an alfalfa bee.

Almonds and alfalfa are experiencing smaller yields and therefore prices are increasing. Spillover effect when cities have robust populations the bees will eventually move out to the agricultural lands. Until we figure out what is happening at the agricultural sites the cities can serve as refuges for the bees. [www.sustainabilitysciencelab.org/bees](http://www.sustainabilitysciencelab.org/bees).

Q: Posted to NextDoor about General Mills program to “bring back the bees”. Perhaps they could help out?

Q: Someone else posted about a whole in the ground.

A: Most bees live in the ground. The honey bee is the exception that nests in a hive. There aren't a thousand in the ground, there is probably one bee. Honey bees are not having a fun time either. Colleagues back in Texas are losing 30% of their hives. His Dad back in the 70s was losing 1-2 hives a year, he is losing 30% year after year. The economic model is not working for him any longer.

Q: Skipping mowing has a tremendous benefit. What plants are good for the bees?

A: Bergamot. Echinaceas, black eyed susans. Basil. Lavender. Russian sage. Coneflower. Lamb's ear. Study done relating mowing frequency to the number of bees. 1 week mowing vs. 2 week moving 60% difference in the bee diversity. 3 weeks yields a 300% difference.

Comparing sites Tower Grove East vs. Lindenwood Park. Didn't get solid data yet but tomato production in Lindenwood Park was not performing well. The consequences can be significant.

Prop NS: Stacy Ross – Chair of Neighbors for a Stable St. Louis. Campaign committee. Prop NS will create a fund that will stabilize and secure vacant city-owned residential buildings. These are the buildings that you are already own. Repair and replace the roof, tuckpointing. Anything to make the envelope of the building water tight and secure. These buildings are extremely dangerous currently. Beautiful historic brick homes that we want to save. We don't want to see our history end up in a brick pile. Up to \$6 mil a year of bonds issued, up to \$40 mil dollars. Those bonds would need to be approved each year. Repairs will be paid for with a penny increase in the property tax rate. \$100,000 it would be \$11 a year. The work will be put out to bid according to the city's guidelines. \$30,000 per unit can be spent. Homes will be sold at auction. We are putting them in pre-rehab condition so people can buy a home that is ready to rehab. The house then goes back on the tax rolls. We are losing \$7 mil a year in prop tax revenue. Vacant buildings also cause a decrease in prop value for those living near these buildings.

Q: the ones that are ready for rehab...is the city going to make a condensed list of them? The current listing process is insane.

A: That is mentioned in the ordinance. The LRA – Land Reutilization Authority, the owner of last resort. First land bank in the country, created in the 70s. They made it up as they went along. It doesn't function as well as it could. The LRA does not get a penny in general revenue from the city. They receive block grants and revenue from the property they sell. We hear a lot of complaints about how hard it is to deal with the LRA. SLACO has an LRA committee. They are hosting workshops on how to buy an LRA house. Ordinance contains language about the LRA creating a web site.

Q How many LRA houses in Holly Hills?

A Why should I care about this? SLACO vacancy committee is also looking at these privately owned homes. Those homes are also deteriorating, they aren't paying their taxes. And then they become part of the LRA. Legal Tools Committee is looking at different legal approaches. Code enforcement,

volunteer lawyers to help set up a beneficiary deed. Older person, doesn't have a will. Has an adult child living with them. Person intends for them to get the property. If the title is never transferred, the child can't sell the house. Bond issue is just one approach to dealing with these homes that we own. Other tactics need to be addressed with these other homes.

We in Holly Hills are all paying for these LRA homes. As we get more vacant buildings, our city is shrinking. If we can fix up these houses then that can draw new people into the city. There are just as many beautiful brick buildings in Marine Villa, Dutchtown, North City, etc. They can be saved and they can be beautiful buildings.

Q Great idea. Some issues with it...not every old falling down building is beautiful. Hope that some attention is paid to which ones are selling and which ones are a loss. Any potential of rehab? In some instances it might be better to tear them down.

A City has a multi-year backlog in trying to tear down the buildings that are beyond hope. The city has no money for this. It costs between \$8-12,000 to tear down a building and then we are left owning a vacant lot. And it's still not on the tax roll. Also hear that nobody wants to live in these neighborhoods. There are a lot of people...who grew up in those neighborhoods. That really want to be able to return to their neighborhoods and help revitalize. A lot of these people won't have the money to buy the house in that condition. Once it is stabilized they are more likely to get a loan to rehab the house.

Q Competing with the county....functionally bad design (rowhouse). If you clear the lot....you may want to think outside the box and tear that type of home down and let the person next door take over the lot.

A We're not talking about rushing out and doing this with every house. Neighborhood based planning to determine which homes will help the neighborhood.

Q House next to me is vacant but the guy won't give it up. Talked to the inspector 3-4 weeks ago for a condemned sign.

A The state of MO is what causes a lot of these problems as far as what they will let us do. St. Louis LRA reports that contain state statutes: How soon can you do a tax sale? It is 3 years. But someone can pay 1 year of taxes and then the clock starts over. Property rights are very important so it is purposely difficult to get this home away from an owner.

Fire Chief Jenkerson: Fire in a vacant home is a big issue for the Fire Dept. If we respond to a fire in your home, normally something alerts you to the fire. You're standing outside and tell us where the fire is. We know that the building has been secured and kept up. You've told us where you think the fire is at. We normally respond in 4 minutes. Fire in a vacant building...smoke coming out everywhere. We can't consider a building vacant...since we have a fairly large homeless population that moves around. There could also be children playing in the building so we have to make entry into the vacant building. It's unsecured and damaged from wind, water, etc. Impacts the roof and all of the wood inside the building. Pressure of the water causes collapse. I spent 10 years up in NW city. Very decorative brick. People would take individual bricks out of these buildings and then prop them up with bathroom sinks. Very hazardous situation. Any large fires in the city that impacts more than one building it typically starts with a vacant building. The city has really nice buildings. MSD has just started their program and will be eliminating a lot of vacant homes that aren't worth saving. But we have a lot of buildings in neighborhoods that are anchors. The cost to the Fire Dept is large: The injuries in vacant buildings are almost double. People remove the steps. Workman's comp... 30 firefighters and 9 pieces of equipment attending to these fires almost doubles our response time fighting these other fires. You can look at a vacant building and think that it looks terrible. But look at the construction in these buildings, these

things are built well. I live in the Holly Hills neighborhood. A home that is unoccupied is a lot different than a vacant home. They are a hazard to the fire dept and the police dept. On the avg week the fire dept responds to 25 calls for vacant buildings. Lots of drug-related activity. It's going to help the city and help the fire dept. Reduce the wear and tear on our firefighters and fire trucks.

Prop 2: Steve Kickham. Here on behalf of Prop 2. The importance is Prop 1 and Prop 2 passing. The use tax goes up the same as the sales tax. Use tax is for businesses for things that they pay that are over \$2,000 from out of state. AB for example pays a lot of the use tax. \$15 mil from the use tax. Additional taxes on tickets. In that respect the county residents are paying an additional tax. When I look at what soccer does...I played it all my life. Jim Cavanaugh who runs WWT, big company here in St. Louis. Just voted 5<sup>th</sup> best company to work for in America. He grew up in Bellefontaine Neighbors area. Middle class guys has done really well for himself. And has poured money back into the city. 350 emps in the city of St. Louis with the company Asynchrony, growing to 500. He is about giving back to St. Louis. Board President for St. Patricks' Center for years. I know people are pessimistic about sports. They see what Kronke did and it upset a lot of people. When I look at Jim and the ownership group, they are born and raised here and it is extremely important that they help revitalize the City of St. Louis. It's not just about getting more police on the streets and making house more affordable. How am I generating economic development and jobs? The more people that want to live in the city. I live in the county but it doesn't make me love our city any less. One of the first questions I heard "Why isn't it a city-county partnership?" Quite frankly, Dave would have loved that but the timeline that MLS put in place was too tight of a timeline to pull it off. The city has done a great job of negotiating this to where it is a net revenue positive deal. Conservative numbers from an independent study \$17 mil revenue positive. If it is truly revenue positive, then the city is getting all of that revenue. The county won't be sharing in that. If you look at soccer, it is a very passionate sport. The avg watcher of football is 40-50, avg watcher of soccer is 20-30. Most played sport by the youth, fastest growing sport. NFL has issues with how big they have become. That's our pitch.

Q How many games would be played?

A 17 league games over 9 months. 20 total. They will also host international games. Dan Flynn, President of US Soccer, played for SLU. World Cup qualifiers will be hosted here. They also have worked out community benefits agreement, first one of its kind. Pouring another \$5 mil into job creation and into developing the game of soccer with inner city youth. Also have the potential for hosting the women's league.

Q Heard that the Cavanaugh Group the financiers were from the Mitt Romney Bain Capital group.

A Yes, a few of them are from Bain Capital. Dave Peacock feels that they are doing this for the right reasons. Heard some bad things about Bain Capital in the 80s back when Mitt was around. But they have been successful since. Always beneficial to have soccer fans involved in the project. And in this case we do. Kronke didn't care about football, he was just in it to make money.

Q Is it any of their money?

A It is all their own money. By the time it is said and done they will have invested \$300 mil in the project. The avg franchise is about \$180 mil value. They're buying a house that's worth \$180 and hoping that it appreciates in value.

Q City investment?

A For the stadium itself, the city will own 1/3. \$100 mil to stadium, \$130 for team. They're return on the investment is the ticket sales but the city will collect the ticket tax.

Q The literature seems a little deceiving since it didn't mention the MLS stadium at all.

A A Vote for Prop 2 is just sending the use tax funds to MLS.

Q In St. Louis we are always rushing to get things done. Looks at the list of investors. \$60 mil is not big money to those guys. But they have said the deal doesn't make sense without \$60 mil from the city. If it doesn't make sense for Jim Cavanaugh...I am doing it for love of sport. Feel that we have other issues that are more pressing. How strong is the league?

A started in 1995, 22 years old. Continuing to expand. Most teams are making money now. Atlanta just started a new team. First game, 55,000 people at their first game. 4<sup>th</sup> largest attended game in the world. \$60 mil extra dollars, they do have the money. When they look at it...they're already risking a lot. How much can we risk? It's a degree of risk for them. They love the game of soccer, which is why they are already committing so much money.

Q We are also so taxed already

A I understand. But when I look at that business. \$250 mil dollar that will bring 400 jobs to the city of ST Louis. Jobs to run the organization.

Q Anything in this deal about in 10 years it has to be a top tier stadium?

A Any cost overruns and maintenance are paid for by the owners for the next 30 years.

Q We get part of the ticket tax...what is the estimated payback from that tax?

A I don't know specifically, the studies say that out of the \$50 mil there is a \$17 mil net revenue at the end of the day.

Prop 1: Beth Murphy, ½ cent sales tax to generate \$20 mil a year. The bulk of that would go for the Metrolink expansion. It won't build it...it will start the design project. We would be putting money in the pot to be matched by the fed govt. But we have to come up with something in order to get that match. \$12 for Metrolink expansion, \$2 mil for neighborhood revitalization, \$2 workforce dev, \$2 publicity safety, \$2 mil infrastructure improvements. Roads, bridges, lighting, vehicles, equipment. Some people say that the problem with sales tax is that everyone pays it. Rich and poor pay the same amount. In this case everyone will benefit. It's up to you to make the final decision. I haven't decided myself. The sales tax increase would trigger the use tax for Prop 2.

Q St. Louis has one of the highest sales tax in the region. 9%

Q This is only impacting the city. Why can't it be shared by the city?

A This won't take our Metrolink to the county at all. This will not have anything to do with the county. Jeff and Cherokee on the south and near the NGA on the north.

Q Doesn't Prop 1 have something to do with Prop 2?

A If we don't bring the county residents in for these entertainment items we cannot support ourselves.

Q Is Prop 1 for the study? Or for the first phase?

A A lot of study and design. The feds won't kick in if we don't get a bucket of money ourselves.

Q We keep doing these studies and then they get old.

A Feds only consider the studies for 5 years shelf life. Last study was in 2007.

Q Remodeled a restaurant on Leona. Stellar Hog, but they didn't allow for parking. Off street parking. Fri, Sat, and Sun it is a madhouse. Both sides of the street. It is a mess. What is the explanation? When can we get a stop sign at the end of Leona and Bates (on Bates).

A There isn't any explanation. There has always been a business in that location.

13<sup>th</sup> Ward NIS Andrew Hernandez: Almost a year that I've been in the neighborhood. If you didn't notice, your yard waste was continually picked up through the winter. The refuse division decided that they didn't need to stop it. Going through the alleys reviewing dumpsters with holes or damage. Found almost two dozen, most have been replaced. If you see any in your neighborhood call the CSB. Lights out, pot holes, etc. We can get those repaired. Report on problem properties. Since January added a few more: these properties have accumulated enough police calls to add them to our nuisance list. Received a cease and desist order. Notice for up to a year. 5200 S. 37<sup>th</sup> Street shooting and a disturbance. 3915 Dover Pl. has also been added to the nuisance property list. Bevo neighbors are hosted Bevo bizarre on 5/20<sup>th</sup>. Rides and booths. 9am-3pm. Located in the Bosnian Park across from Bevo Mill.

13<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderwoman Beth Murphy: Prop S passed \$5,000 license fee for pay day loans. Redirect people with lower incomes to credit unions. We do have LRA properties in the 13<sup>th</sup> ward. A small developer bought three empty lots. One on Frieda, two others on Grace. Three new homes to be developed. One rehab on Eichelberger that a police officer bought. Lemmon's restaurant keeps telling me they're going to open soon. Applied for their occupancy permit. Stop signs have to go through the traffic commissioner. We need traffic enforcement, hopefully the incoming mayor can help with that. The traffic commissioner looks at the traffic patterns and accidents to determine the need for a stop sign. Prop A combining the Recorder of Deeds into the Assessor's office, estimated to save money to pay for body cameras but it will not provide that savings. This will remove an elected office. And will not save money since the office is required by state law. Prop B move elections to Nov. Turnout in Mar and Apr elections is low. Rex S wants to make it easier for him to pass his bills. Prop C to give extra points to city residents when they apply for jobs. Just so you know if anyone gets hired in the city, they are given 120 days to move to the city.

Q What is the residency requirement?

A Police officers have to live in the city for 7 years. Also for the firefighters. Specialized job positions do not have to move to the city. Mechanics is an example.

Next meeting will be May 22<sup>nd</sup>

Off during June, July, and August

Quick announcement: Tues 4/18 for Cops Walking a Beat, 7pm at Epiphany Lutheran Church, final push for the spring/summer