

## **Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association Meeting**

**Tuesday, January 24, 2023**

*The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m. by President Erica Westbrooks, who expressed thanks to the Center for Divine Love for providing the venue (again) for us to meet in person.*

*St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department Second District Neighborhood Liaison Officer Nicola Walker brought copies of recent incident reports and indicated that the best way to reach her is via email ([ncwalker@slmpd.org](mailto:ncwalker@slmpd.org)). There have been a couple robberies in the neighborhood, and they recently locked up one individual for a number of crimes on Grand. Citywide there are issues with crime being up; catalytic converter thefts are a big issue, as are auto thefts. An auto club is a recommended deterrent, available for \$20 at Five Star Center at 2832 Arsenal. Our neighborhood had 14 auto thefts in this month, 5 burglaries, and 24 larcenies.*

*Board of Alderman report:* Erica reminded us that TGH was formerly in the 15<sup>th</sup> Ward, but we're now in the 6<sup>th</sup> Ward. We don't currently have an alderperson since Megan Green is now the President of the BOA, but Megan's office has indicated she can assist in the interim if needed. We will elect a new alderperson April 4<sup>th</sup>. The TGH board is looking into possibly having candidates for alderperson of the 6<sup>th</sup> Ward appear at our March meeting, and Jennifer Florida indicated that the League of Women Voters and the Shaw neighborhood (also part of the new 6<sup>th</sup> Ward) is looking to set up a candidates' forum or debate as well. Information regarding these events will be shared via the TGHNA website/e-mails.

*Neighborhood Improvement Specialist Christian Saller spoke next. Although his assignment to the Heights is new, he's not new to the NIS system. He's a Tower Grove East resident with 10 years of experience in the Neighborhood Stabilization department. His focus is on problem/nuisance properties and he works with residents and block captains to resolve issues. Code enforcement is key in preventing problems. Trash is an issue across the city – problems with illegal dumping and construction trash exacerbate the problems with the refuse department being critically understaffed to deal with regular trash and bulky item pickup. (The city is looking for employees almost across the board, so if you know someone who is looking for a job – check the city website!) As for overall stabilization issues, TGH is a good model for resident involvement and taking community development seriously.*

Q: Who deals with trash along interstates?

A: Adopt-A-Highway program groups, or MoDOT.

Q: Vacancy at the top of the Department of Public Safety? Dan Isom resigned.

A: Yes, that was announced today; anticipate a search for a new department head.

Q: Alley north of Gravois at Roger is a repeat mess/problem, overflowing with trash.

A: If businesses are dumping excess refuse (i.e., they don't have a commercial hauler) that could be part of the problem. Any prior reports to Citizens Service Bureau or continuing issues should be referred to Christian. Phone 314-657-1375, e-mail [sallerc@stlouis-mo.gov](mailto:sallerc@stlouis-mo.gov).

Q: What department are Neighborhood Improvement Specialists in? Do they report to Alderman?

A: They are in the Department of Public Safety, and report to the director.

#### *President's Report:*

Erica expressed thanks to Ellen Wilson for spearheading the efforts to support 100 Neediest Cases; this past year we donated \$5,650 to support 2 families. Also, thanks to Joyce Reese, Jim McClaren, and Jennifer Florida for distributing doorhangers to help reduce New Year's Eve gunfire. Although reports indicate mixed results in reducing gunfire this year, it helped to get the information out as to who to call to report it... Thanks to our block captains for their work through the year and for assisting with the luminarias that lit up the neighborhood in December. And Thanks to Debra Knox Deiermann and Barbara Gilchrist for their help over the years with the Gazette, serving on committees, and supporting and being involved advocates for TGHNA.

#### *Treasurer's Report:*

Rick Stein stepped through our recurring expenses and income for 2022, noting that the Gazette was nearly revenue-neutral this year. Our income for 100 Neediest Cases gets a little complex since the incoming donations and outlays to the recipients cross over two years for each holiday season. As Erica noted, the 2022 donation to the 2 families we adopted was \$5,650 plus the expense for flyers of \$76.75. He also reported totals for our designated funds for specific purposes (street signs, cameras, and safety) and donations to neighborhood nonprofits/fundraisers. In all, our net worth (minus the funds still to go to 100 Neediest) at the close of 2022 was \$8,843.40.

#### *Committee Reports:*

*Membership* -- Jean Iezzi reported that we have 401 members and distributed new membership forms to several attendees at the meeting.

*Safety* -- Jennifer Florida reported that the Safety Committee met via Zoom on January 16<sup>th</sup> and discussed the problem property at 3627 Utah Place. The camera initiative is in place with 10 running, 2 down, 2 set to come down due to residents moving and 4 non-working (which are being addressed.) In 2022, the streetlight inventory was completed, as was a sidewalk report. Convex mirrors for select alleys will be considered.

Q: Mirror might be needed at the alley between Juniata and Hartford where they meet with Spring due to a blind spot and a sewer grate breakdown/hole that makes it difficult to maneuver.

A: That area will be reviewed, and Christian will take a look at the sewer grate issue.

*Social* -- Erica reported on behalf of Sharon Angle (who was unable to attend tonight's meeting) that the committee is looking for a chairperson, or co-chair, as well as committee members. Heights Nights are set to resume in April.

*Communications* -- Jennifer Florida reported that the committee is in need of a chairperson, primarily to handle Mail Chimp communications. Patrick Weber is producing the Gazette.

*Block Captains* -- Jennifer Florida reported that the block captains meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month. This is a neighborhood-wide meeting, not just the Heights. The most recent meeting topics covered the luminaria initiative, trash and street sweeping issues.

*Old Business:*

Erica reported that the Board will be reviewing the bylaws, particularly regarding the membership voting for officers later in the year.

*New Business:*

As noted previously, we are in dire need of volunteers to move the organization ahead!

We need a Safety Committee Chairperson, as Jennifer is filling that role on an interim basis. The Safety Chairperson runs the safety committee meeting via Zoom; manages details of the camera program (but the technology part is handled by Adam) and reports at the neighborhood meeting.

We need a Social Committee Chairperson (or co-chair with Sharon) who would contact local business for the Heights Night events and help plan the Block Party.

We need a Communications Committee Chairperson who would send out the Mail Chimp e-mails, oversee the website, proofread materials that are sent out, and manage our Facebook presence.

One last item of new business – we are deleting our Twitter account. It hasn't been in use since 2021.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

UPCOMING DATES:

Block Captain Meeting: 2/13/23 @ 6:30 p.m. @ Oak Hill Presbyterian Church, 4111 Connecticut

Safety Committee Meeting: 2/20/23 @ 6:30 p.m. via Zoom

TGHNA Meeting: 2/28/23 @ 7:15 p.m. Center for Divine Love, 3617 Wyoming