

Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association Meeting – August 25, 2015
Convened: 7:15 p.m. Adjourned: 8:45 p.m. 48 attendees

Meeting chaired by TGHNA President Kelly Stout

Neighborhood business/announcements

- First-time attendees were identified and welcomed.
- **Heights Nights:** Guerilla Street Food, 3559 Arsenal 63118, will be the location of our last Heights Night event of the year on Tuesday, September 8, 6-8 p.m. Everyone is welcome to attend.
- **2015 South Grand Fest:** The annual event will take place on Saturday, September 19th, 10 a.m.-10 p.m. TGHNA will have a booth. Lily Dodenhoff has volunteered to organize it and will create an online sign-up to staff it.
- **Autumn Fest 2015:** TGHNA's popular annual event is scheduled for Saturday, October 10 and will feature food, beverages and new, this year, bike taxis to transport attendees from house to house. The cost is \$16 in advance; \$20 at the door. Details and ticket sales through PayPal will be available on www.towergroveheights.com in the near future.
- **Crime Report:** Officer Ed Slade, SLMPD 2nd District liaison, distributed crime statistics and a graphic illustrating crime in the area. He reported that total crime is up 4% and while there doesn't appear to be any kind of pattern, cell phones, wallets, and laptops are increasingly being stolen from patrons on South Grand.

Garage burglaries are also up and a resident reported several on Utah. To alert neighbors of specific incidents, he recommended forming small listservs of interested parties. He reported that burglaries occur most often between 10 a.m.-4 p.m. He advised to "keep your property as secure as possible."

In response to a resident's question about area delivery drivers speeding down Hartford, he said he would talk to the management in an effort to curb this practice.

Officer Slade reports that the sentencing hearing for Robert Maul, who has been charged with various crimes in the area, is scheduled for Thursday, August 27 and enough residents have signed a Neighborhood Impact Statement to have it presented to the judge. Officer Slade can be reached at edslade@slmpd.org.

- **South Grand Community Improvement District:** Executive Director, Rachel Witt, announced several upcoming South Grand and Ritz Park events including the next movie night, featuring "Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs 2" on September 18. www.southgrand.org

She announced that there will be 50 cigarette urns attached to existing light standards, etc. along South Grand that will be emptied by St. Louis Earth Day. The contents will be sent to Paracycle to be recycled into benches, etc. Everyone is encouraged to attend the cigarette debris clean up on September 12, 8-11 a.m. – bring garden gloves. A resident who picks up trash regularly along South Grand mentioned certain "hot spots" that seem to get the most cigarette debris – Witt will reach out to the management of businesses in these locations since much of the littering is being done by their workers.

She reported that a new Iraqi/Turkish restaurant will open in the location formerly occupied by St. Louis Wok and a new hair salon will open in the former Upcycle Exchange location, both on South Grand. Work is continuing at the Old Post Office on Hartford to transform the building into an incubator space.

A resident inquired if South Grand businesses are alerting patrons of the free parking lot behind the Commerce bank so that the residential areas off South Grand are not constantly filled by customers. Witt said she has repeatedly encouraged them to do so. One suggestion was to place cards with information about the lot on the windshields of cars parked in the first blocks off South Grand. Another suggestion was

to erect several signs on the first blocks off South Grand requesting business patrons be respectful of the residents by parking in the designated lot.

- **15th Ward Aldermanic Report:** Megan-Ellyia Green reported that although the Aldermanic Board is on hiatus, they were called back into session regarding the minimum wage bill. She states she is still “on a high” from all the activity around this bill and believes there will be enough votes to pass it. At this time, the bill is a compromise that calls for \$11 per hour by 2018. It will start with \$8.25/hour in October, rising to \$9/hour in January 2016 and increased by \$1/hour each year until 2018. She says there are some restrictions in the bill and it should not affect South Grand businesses.

Traffic Study: She reported that she has asked for liaisons from area stakeholders for the working group. She is not a fan of speed bumps, but believes speed tables, as used in the county, can be helpful. She says there needs to be more legislative tools in the toolbox to implement the recommendations. The traffic study should be complete in 3-6 months.

A resident asked for follow up on the “Tenant Bill of Rights” that Green mentioned at last month’s meeting. Green reported that one piece of this involves preventing landlords from evicting tenants who are victims of domestic abuse because of the increased police calls for service at their properties. She said there have been 27 such documented cases in the area. Green said she had been a victim of a stalker and knows what this feels like but had an understanding landlord who gave her the time she needed. Another resident said she understands the need for services but questioned why so many of the limited resources are allocated in this way and whether they could be allocated in a more efficient way, such as going after the perpetrators of the domestic violence. Green says she is also trying to eliminate illegal lock-outs and wants to use model legislation to hold landlords accountable.

A resident expressed concern about the lack of information provided to the neighborhood, especially neighbors in the 3600-3700 block of Hartford about a plan to close off their entire block for a recent event. Green had facilitated getting a late permit for groups which she identified as the Organization for Black Struggle and Missourians Organizing for Reform and Empowerment (M.O.R.E.) for the event. Green agreed that the timeline was not ideal. She stated she has spoken to Rachel Witt and the president of the South Grand Business District Board about establishing a policy for future events.

- Drawings for gift cards to the Guerilla Street Food were made at various times during the meeting and it was announced that the beer wagon was present.

Featured Speakers

- **Michelle Night, St. Louis Foodbank:** Night, who is an area resident, reports STL Foodbank serves 520 food pantries, food kitchens, and agencies in 14 MO counties and 12 IL counties. STL Foodbank also offers Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (S.N.A.P.) outreach to help individuals sign up for this program. September 3, 2015 is Hunger Action Day, organized to bring awareness to the issue of hunger. Many voluntary opportunities are available at www.stlfoodbank.org.
- **Kat Cecil, ServiceWorks (United Way):** This is a program that includes workshops for low to middle income youth (16-24 years) to learn skills such as networking and project planning and to gain an understanding of the positive influence they can have in their community through a series of service projects. They are looking for volunteers and mentors. <http://www.stl.unitedway.org/get-involved/serviceworks-st-louis/>
- **Megan Boyer and Catherine Gilbert, Young Friends of Tower Grove Park:** This group is for 20- to 30-year olds to help support Tower Grove Park. More information at: <http://www.towergrovepark.org/index.php/get-involved.html>.
- **Alice Layton, Rupununi Learners Foundation:** Layton, a Juniata resident of Tower Grove Heights, spoke about the Rupununi Learners Foundation (RLF), “a social enterprise dedicated to a holistic approach to

environmental conservation, encompassing wildlife research, education, economic development and cultural preservation” located in Guyana, South America. RLF has been a United States nonprofit foundation since 2001. It has received funding from many organizations including *National Geographic* and has even been supported by the Peace Corps. She encouraged us to partner with the group, for example, by donating children’s books for their library. Children’s book donations can be dropped off at 3644 Juniata. For more information on the foundation: <http://rupununilearners.org/foundation/>

Respectfully submitted,
Debra Knox Deiermann
Secretary, TGHNA