

Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association Meeting

April 24, 2012 7:14 p.m. 64 Attendees

The Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association (TGHNA) meeting was chaired by President Rich Seifert. First-time attendees raised their hands for acknowledgement, since the full schedule meant we didn't have time for introductions.

We have summarized the results of the TGH survey for an article in the upcoming Gazette and the complete data will soon be available on the [TGHNA Web](#) site.

The 2011 TGHNA financial audit was completed successfully.

Two dates to note:

- Sat. May 5 [Tower Grove South Yard Sale](#)
- Sun May 6 [Morgan Ford Pet Parade](#)

Joyce Reece is a volunteer working on the TGHNA 25th anniversary celebration scheduled from 3:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. on June 16, 2012. She reported that a save-the-date card will be distributed to residents, an article will be in the Gazette and an invitation will be sent for the party. Beverages are being donated by InBev and food donations are in the works. The party will be over several blocks on Spring Ave. and will be a free event.

Lori Lamprich, from Representative [Mike Colona](#)'s office, noted that the legislature is still in session. However, Rep. Colona will be at the next TGHNA meeting. The legislature hasn't passed the budget yet so they may need a special session.

Jennifer Florida reported on several activities:

- 15th Ward Candidates Forum, May 3 at Carpenter Branch Library, 6:30 p.m.
- TGS Public Safety meeting. May 16 at the Grand Oak Hill Community Center, 7:00 p.m.
- Grand Oak Hill will hold a fundraiser on May 21 for things like senior programs and Citizens on Patrol
- The next training for Citizens on Patrol is on May 23 at the 5 Star Senior Center
- Hartford Coffee Co. is interested in expanding to a patio on the rear and utilizing the adjacent commercial structure behind building; this will require an additional usage permit
- A proposal has been received for the old CompuSoft building on Grand—a former resident is planning on opening the space as a [Bikram Yoga Studio](#)

Judy Lane (our Neighborhood Stabilization Officer) requested that if you see standing water, get rid of it, especially since we might have a problem with West Nile disease. Call the [Citizens Service Bureau](#) if you need them to help take care of these cases.

Suzanne Carron reported that there will be a sustainable garden tour on June 24. This event is free and is a grassroots, self-guided tour of backyards throughout St. Louis, showcasing a range of green living practices such as chicken and beekeeping, organic gardening and low-impact lawn care. For more information, or if you would like to have your yard included in the tour, stop by [Home Eco](#) at 4611 Macklind ([314-351-2000](#)).

John Karel, Director of Tower Grove Park (TGP), discussed how the park plans their plantings. A Tower Grove Park brochure was distributed by John. The park is a benefaction from Henry Shaw, since he founded the Park from land he owned after the Civil War. He talked to the mayor then and wanted to hand over the property to the city, with conditions. One was that the park land would only be used as a park. The operational expenses are paid by the city but the governance is vested in a Board of Commissioners originally appointed by the Missouri Supreme Court. The park is public, like Forest Park, it is just not run by the city. Since the city can't afford all the park

expenses, the Friends organization helps raise money to supplement the city funds. Over \$25 million has been donated to TGP through this fundraising. TGP is not a natural forest like Forest Park. Originally, the park was a prairie, bought from French farmers. So the park's forest was explicitly created. The size is a long rectangle because it was purchased from French farmers in the 1830s who farmed in long narrow plots of land known as arpents. He designed it in the gardenesque style that combines informality and formality to create the impression of "charming". We have the most diverse collection of trees in any park in America. There are 270 varieties of trees, as listed in the brochure. The trees got overgrown after Shaw died in 1889, and the blooming trees were dying out and not replaced. In the late 1980s and 90s, the park commissioners created a master planting plan to set out the intellectual framework to go along with Shaw's vision of the park. In 2004, a large survey was done of every tree in the park. Every time a tree is removed or added, it is added to this database and it is the blueprint for action. In 2006, a big storm thinned out some of the older trees—10% of the trees were lost (600 trees). FEMA helped clean up the damage. It took 6 months but it worked out well. Trees are never maintenance free. Several objectives are followed:

- Restore spring color and bloom
- Reorient the summer shade trees over the sidewalk so you can get the shade and still look over the meadow
- Restore a more vibrant fall color display
- Diversify the winter form with evergreens like holly and magnolia as well as coniferous trees

Officer Joseph Calebro, Community Outreach Officer of our [3rd District Metropolitan Police District](#), said burglaries are really down and this may be due to the new scrap ordinance that prevents independent scrappers being paid cash on site. Dealers have to get addresses and then mail a check so this may have prevented some theft. After a Shaw resident reported a suspicious man in a neighbor's back yard, the police arrested a person who had been responsible for 41 burglaries. They were able to trace several stolen items taken by this person. If you see anything suspicious, please report it immediately. Crime is down 18%--car break-ins and robberies are both down.

Larry Davis, Rep. Carnahan's field representative, left brochures and said to please contact his office if you have questions or concerns -- larry.davis@mail.house.gov, [314-962-1523](tel:314-962-1523).

Dan Buschmeyer, from the city Board of Public Service, and David Johnson from David Mason & Associates, discussed the green alley project. Three additional blocks of the alleys still remain to be done; one was done last year. First they remove old Hydraulic bricks. Some are salvaged to be used at alley ends to lend to the historical nature of the alley. They excavate down about 27" into the subsoil and then replace it with clean drainage rock and top it off with some finer rock. The pavers are then placed on top. On the edges, there is a band of concrete to transition into garages and yards. There may be some garage transitions replaced, based on the condition of the old one. These green alleys prevent storm water overflow from overwhelming the drainage system. The alley is designed to be flat to keep the water within the alley, although there is a relief grate to catch any overflow of storm water. A display of materials about the alleys was available for review. Next month, bids will be put out for 30 days. The contract is planned for June, and construction should start by the end of summer. They will start on the Northern section, to complete the alley that was started last year, and the contractor will choose the order to work on each of the remaining alleys. They will take ½ block at a time, as was done the first time. One part takes about 5 weeks; 10 weeks total for each block. They will work as long during the year as weather permits. The contractor gives several weeks' notice on when they will be working and arranges with residents to plan for opening garages, if necessary, etc. They probably won't finish this year. In the future, the city will come through annually and vacuum sweep out the debris between the pavers. Operation Brightside just purchased the vacuum. MSD is doing sewer liner installation to help strengthen the sewer lines. Dumpsters will be placed on the street; parking may be allowed on both sides of Utah to help with parking. They will work on whether we can reschedule street sweeping—it was suspended during the project last year although some parking tickets were still issued. Jennifer will work with the city to try and avoid this problem.

The meeting concluded at 8:20 p.m. The next meeting will be held on May 22, 2012. Emily Luten from Trailnet will speak.

Claudia Seifert, Secretary