

Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association Meeting

November 27, 2012 7:16 p.m. 37 attendees

The Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association (TGHNA) meeting was chaired by President Richard Seifert.

St. Louis City Comptroller Darlene Green spoke about being the Comptroller for the past 17 years. She pays the bills for the city and is responsible for protecting the credit of the City. As Chief Fiscal Officer, she is a member of the Executive Branch of City government, the Board of Estimate and Apportionment. She helps the Mayor put together the budget for the Board to finalize. This year, the operating budget is \$465 million dollars, versus \$450 million for last year's operating budget. Add in other items and that makes a \$900 million budget for the city of St. Louis. Trash fees helped increase revenues this year, as well as the Cardinals' post-season games. The budget is balanced, as per the law. The City has appropriated hot spot police funding for over a year to help decrease crime. There have been various financial crises since 2008 but St Louis was given an A+ credit rating in 2008, the highest the City had for over 35 years. We have maintained that high credit rating since then. Her conservative fiscal practices have helped keep the rating high. All budget, audit and other city information is public information and is online at <http://stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/comptroller/>.

President of the Board of Alderman Lewis Reed thanked the attendees for getting involved in their neighborhood community. This helps keep the communities strong. The Neighborhood Ownership Model is something in which he recommends that communities get involved. This is aimed at addressing crime at the grass roots level. It involves training stakeholders in the communities to help drive crime out. He is working to try to get all the city neighborhoods involved. His office number is 622-4114 if we want to get more information. Our Alderman Jennifer Florida commented that we actually are involved, with the new Tower Grove South Police Substation that opened at the Grand Oak Hill Community Center and the Citizens on Patrol program. He feels that we need to get more funding into the Police Dept. A bill has been created to help give Police some tools to help resolve prostitution problems. This includes counseling services to help show these women that there is a better way, rather than just fining them.

Heather Tucker and Dr. Pam Clary are opening the [Tower Grove Animal Wellness Clinic](#) on the corner of Connecticut and Spring. Dr. Clary has been a veterinarian for 20 years. They will provide low cost, high quality spays and neutering to animal rescue services (they are not focusing on the public at this time.) Their address is 3735 Connecticut. Their number is 824-8020 and they can direct callers to organizations that will offer services to the public. They will be open two days a week, although they will have phone service every day. They will open the second week of December. The e-mail address is Tgawclinic@wix.com. They are receiving grants for this service from organizations such as PetSmart. They are not going to store controlled substances at the store, to help minimize the issue of crime.

Jay Haines won a door prize and first time attendees were introduced.

President Richard Seifert presented the current slate for the TGHNA Board for 2013. A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to elect these officers:

- Jim Zakibe, President
- Michael Newsham , President Elect
- Claudia Seifert, Secretary
- Marilyn Browning, Membership Secretary
- Rick Stein, Treasurer
- Richard Seifert, Past President

Ellen Wilson spoke about the neighborhood's plan to support the 100 Neediest Cases. This is the ninth consecutive year that TGHNA has participated in this program. We selected two families with two children each to support and we collect presents and cash which we use to pay towards their utilities. Ellen provided flyers about the program. The presents are dropped off at Ellen's house for a wrapping party and she takes them to the shelter the

next day. Volunteers were requested to help wrap and to distribute flyers in the neighborhood. The donation due date is Dec. 14th and the wrapping party at Ellen's house (3617 Juniata) is Dec. 15th at 10:0 a.m. Contact Ellen at 771-1732 for additional information.

In response to resident concerns about recent crimes, Police Officer Amber Gottschall, Community Outreach Officer Joseph Calabro and Assistant Circuit Attorney Mahrya Fulfer discussed crime in the neighborhood. Officer Gottschall is the neighborhood liaison officer and is at the new substation at Oak Hill which is where the Citizens on Patrol program is based. Four significant arrests were made relating to neighborhood crimes. Officer Gottschall was also named officer of the month. Officer Calabro noted that that we need to be more observant of the people around us. This helps with identifying someone if a crime is committed. A flyer was available with information and Officer Calabro noted the Web site www.slpd3d.org. A crime matrix is used that involves reviewing the field interview reports (FIRS) that they collect when there are problems reported. They also review the penitentiary reports showing which former criminals have been released. They have overlaid patrols in the hot-spot areas to have more officers available at the peak hours and they are using the shell cars as well as license-plate recognition cars that automatically recognize license plates and check against stolen cars, etc. They have directed patrols where they concentrate patrols in specific problematic areas. They had a decoy operation with unmarked cars driven by officers on duty and have used overtime for foot patrols. Officer Calabro had suggestions for avoiding holiday crime. It's easy when carrying too many bags to not be aware of your surroundings or to be careless with your purse or wallet. Do not leave blinds open when you have all your presents out. Mark your belongings with the invisible ink pen that can be seen by officers who carry a black light that can display these invisible markings. Pawn shops can also check for these markings. In addition, you can borrow engravers from the Police Station to mark things like an outside air conditioner. The Police Station has the invisible markers for \$2.00 and the TGHNA officers have them. Higher bonds are now being asked when people have been caught in crimes using guns and this has helped. Court watch is used to track the court dates where we send neighborhood impact statements or neighborhood order of protection letters. A meeting at the 5 Star Senior Center at 7:00 p.m. is scheduled on the 3rd Wednesday of the month to discuss local crime issues. Officer Calabro recommended that residents complete the [Citizen Absent from Residence notification](#) (found on the Police Web site) to tell the Police that you're out of town so they can watch out for your house. Our [Neighborhood Stabilization Officer](#) is Judy Lane who does issue action resolution, especially managing problem properties.

Various events are scheduled for December:

- Dec.6, 2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. – Cookie making at the 5 Star Senior Center (2832 Arsenal) in preparation for the Police Christmas party (see below)
- Dec. 8, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. – The Grinch will be arriving on south Grand at MoKaBe's Coffeehouse and Tower Grove Creamery to collect funds that will benefit the Shriners Hospital for Children.
- Dec. 13, noon – 6:00 p.m. – District Three Police Christmas party at the 5 Star Senior Center (2832 Arsenal)

The next TGHNA meeting will be on Jan. 22, 2013, the first meeting of the year,

The meeting concluded at 9:10 p.m.

Claudia Seifert, Secretary