

Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association Meeting

April 26, 2011 7:15 p.m. 30 Attendees

The meeting was chaired by President Marilyn Browning. Marilyn thanked Claudia and Rich Seifert and John and Amber Schwarz for being on the Grand South Grand House tour. The next TGHNA meeting will have Jim Merkel, author of [Hoosiers and Scrubby Dutch: St. Louis's South Side](#), speaking about his book on South St. Louis.

Maddie Earnest, owner of [Local Harvest Grocery and Café](#) spoke about her local businesses. The grocery opened in June 2007 and moved two months ago to a larger store. They had 600 square feet originally. They aimed at 50% local farmers and food producers. Partner Patrick Horine had prior food experience but Maddie did not, as her background was in social work. They started the [Tower Grove Farmers' Market](#) first. When they opened the grocery, they tried to have at least 50% of their products provided locally (within 150 miles of St Louis). In their new space, they now consider a 300 mile radius as well, to get a more regional approach for wider variety. Maddie noted that food keeps more nutritional value if it doesn't have to travel so far or so long. Most employees can tell you what farm the food came from. Local Harvest considers that community is important—they are trying to build a local food community with vendors and farmers, which then keeps the money within the region. The community has been very supportive of Local Harvest. They opened Local Harvest Café 13 months after opening the grocery; it was not in the original business plan. They had lots of catering requests and wanted to be more creative with local foods. They try also to support farmers who use sustainable agriculture like crop rotation, not just organic certified. Smaller farms have more diversity as well, so they don't deplete the soil as quickly and don't have to use as much fertilizer. They sell a wide variety of products and have something locally available for almost all areas. They carry [Belle Journee](#) soap products, produced in TGH. They now have bulk olive oil from California, since, like coffee, we can't grow it locally. All eggs are local, pasture raised. They also have locally-produced salsa, potato chips, chocolate (award-winning chocolate, made in St. Louis, like [Kakao Chocolate](#).) Locally produced goods help reduce fuel used to move the food around. They calculate that they are keeping 80% of the money in our local area. The new store now has more prepared foods from the Café. They also have more alcohol including local spirits like tequila and rum. They added food from an organic food distributor such as organic yogurt and cottage cheese. They now have room for more bulk products and more bread variety. Maddie distributed Local Harvest brochures that included a store coupon. She noted that if customers use the parking lot, they should use the metered spots.

Jennifer Florida, 15th Ward Alderman, reported that the Great Streets' 2nd phase may be off schedule due to some bidding issues. This phase may not be able to move forward at the same time as Phase 1. They are trying to fix it by rebidding and hopefully can proceed during this planting season. The city is currently redistricting per the census results. The City has 28 Wards that are planned to be of equal population. The 15th Ward currently has too many people. The plan must reflect reduced North-side Ward populations and increased South-side Ward populations. The redistricting will try to focus on neighborhoods in redistricting. They hope to complete this redistricting effort by end of June and then will focus on the budget. Jennifer hasn't seen the budget yet but the biggest driver is the firemen's pension. She noted that we're holding off on street paving until utility work is finished with pipes, lines, etc. The first pervious alley has been bid out and the process is proceeding—work may start sometime in May or June. There will be one additional recycle dumpster added per block in the 15th Ward. Jennifer reported that she is working with the Dutchtown West neighborhood where an elderly man was murdered, to help them work on crime prevention and other neighborhood-building strategies such as the ones that have been effective here in TGH. In addition, Tower Grove South is working toward citizen mobile patrols.

The meeting concluded at 8:25 p.m. The next meeting will be May 24, 2011.

Claudia Seifert, Secretary