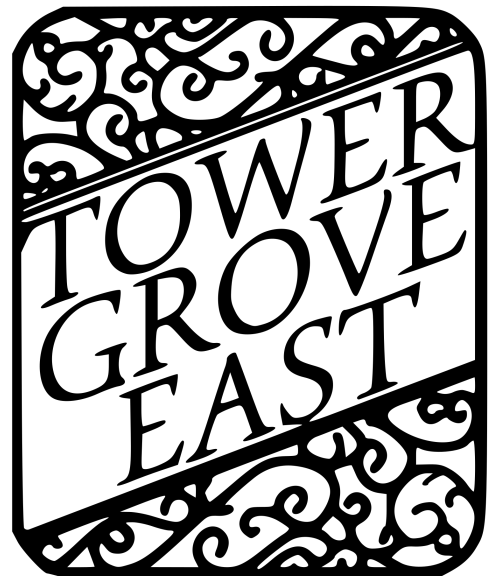


JANUARY 28, 2025

TOWER GROVE EAST NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

JANUARY MEETING RECAP



Tower Grove East Neighborhood Association

JANUARY MEETING RECAP

TGENA President Tristan Mackenzie welcomed attendees at 7:02 p.m. at Stray Dog Theatre.

He shared a budget update, summarizing last year's spending.

- Fair St. Louis work and membership dues raised \$15,000
- Expenses were at \$10,300
- This leaves us about \$5,000 positive

Tristan encouraged interested members to connect and participate in committees to be part of the budgeting and spending process for the organization.

Tristan and the Board welcomed several new neighbors and first time attendees.

BOARD OF ALDERMEN UPDATE - CHRISTINE INGRASSIA

Next, the Board of Aldermen's Director of Operations, Christine Ingrassia, was in attendance to support in the stead of BOA President Megan Green. She shared the BOA is very busy, and about to break for spring recess.

Pres. Green has prioritized modernization and transparency for BOA, noting the BOA website is not user-friendly. They have now contracted with Civic Plus to revamp the site, and allow residents to see what's moving through the BOA, opt in for updates on meetings via a portal, and other advantages.

Regarding delays experienced when calling 911, Christine explained that they finally have funding for the new center, Public Safety Access Point. This should help improve emergency call response times, with dispatchers for police, fire and EMS located in one place.

She shared several charter revisions passed, including Prop V, which will allow the city to break from a \$500 cap on fines to address vacant properties. The BOA can set those

finer more dynamically, as current fines don't support need and urgency for owners of vacant properties.

Christine shared the spring election coming up and encouraged voting options such as absentee and in-person voting. March 4th is election day.

After these updates, several audience questions were brought forward:

A question was asked if they can post name and contact for legislative assistants for each of the alderpeople when the alders were reduced from 28 to 14. Christine shared they are working on pictures, emails, phone numbers, names, to come soon.

A question was asked after two traffic fatalities in the neighborhood in 2022, what can we expect to see long term? Christine shared that traffic safety and mobility is a priority of the BOA, that a large number of ARPA dollars have been allocated. She committed to connecting with the specific neighbor asking the question with more details.

A question was asked about the IT system, Civic Plus regarding the selection process. Christine shared that the city has to go through an RFP process with a selection committee, including representation of someone from the BOA President's office, Mayor's office, and Comptroller's office. In the RFP, they had three respondents, and the selected vendor was the most nimble and cost-efficient and also supported Google and Word platforms. She shared this will go out for bid every three years.

A question was asked about how residents can see where BOA-approved traffic calming measures can be tracked. Christine shared there is not much available for residents today, but she will reach back out to check on specific approved measures for the neighborhood.

A question was asked about how to support competitive pay rates for drivers in the city. Christine shared this has been an issue for a long time, and that it is not just about pay but including benefits like childcare are really critical, the pension is also very good, and that sometimes things get slowed down with the personnel department. They do have a charter revision special committee working on personnel department support. She also mentioned a need to honor the collective bargaining process, noting police and firefighters will get a 7% increase starting July 1st.

POLICE LIAISON UPDATE - OFFICER GREGORY MCCLENDON

Officer Gregory McLendon is the SLMPD liaison for Tower Grove East. He shared that he started in the first district and works directly for Captain Dickerson. He is responsible for moving all mobile cameras for this district or other special projects for the Captain. He also noted that if there are any concerns with derelict cars sitting for a long time to go tag them for tow, he can support them in this neighborhood.

Officer McClendon shared in TGE in the last 28 days, there were six auto thefts and two misdemeanor thefts. He recommended being mindful when getting gas, airing tires, etc. and to lock cars and don't keep belongings in your vehicle.

A question was asked about whether any patterns of theft have been identified in the district. He shared that after officers take burglary reports, those are handed over to detectives. If residents have videos or other evidence, he asked that they please share those reports. However, he is not aware of any patterns or leads.

A question was asked about short staffing, they have heard of a policy for 3 officers per district at a time, if typically 2 officers man a call, how they handle the third person. The officer shared that domestic disturbance or burglary calls are a two-person assignment, traffic stops or well-being checks could be a one-person assignment, so they adjust based on calls coming in.

A question was asked about the BOA's position on people not paying personal property taxes, and the police department's support of enforcement. Officer McClendon shared that two officers recently got let go for failing to act. Christine Ingrassia shared that to some extent their hands are tied due to state laws, but there is likely a state requirement requiring sales tax when purchasing the car to potentially be implemented in the next year, which will make it easier to also pay for insurance as part of their loan. Alderman Sonnier said she disagrees with the Mayor's idea for personal property tax loans, which she does not personally support as it's not realistic if they are already struggling to pay. Alder Sonnier recommended for plates and temp tags, if these are issues for neighbors, to ask questions of the Mayoral candidates.

ALDERMANIC UPDATE - ALDERWOMAN SONNIER

Alderwoman Sonnier shared that she has office hours every single month.

For January, her office hours are 1/29 from 9-10:30am at Rooster, 5:30-7pm at Buzz's Hawaiian. In February, they are February 26 at the new bookstore on Cherokee 12-1:30 and 5:30-7pm. She mentioned that if you reach out to her but it's taking longer for a response, she's following up on a large backlog of snow-related issues. But always feel free to come to her office hours to connect if not received sooner.

Alder Sonnier shared she will have a Town Hall focused on public safety at the end of February, likely at Rung for Women (waiting on date and confirmation of venue. She strives to do these every three months or so. She confirmed Police Chief and Gabe Gore will both be in attendance, potentially also the Mayor.

In terms of legislative updates, she shared they just passed a municipal ID bill, where she is a co-sponsor. She mentioned we have a lot of immigrant communities here, and the ID will support food banks, library cards, etc. It will take around six months to implement.

Alder Sonnier also shared there are use plans that require when police want to put technology in place, they bring a resolution that goes through the BOA. The use plans requested for surveillance were received the same day as the hearing, that neighbors are concerned about how technology could be used, and a lot of information was missed in what was submitted. It will be sent back to the public safety committee for discussion Thursday. She also shared potential concerns about how higher level(s) of government could use that technology.

She discussed the Rams settlement bills, that two separate bills were compromised for a single bill. Some highlights:

- \$40M for water department
- \$40M for mobility (streets/sidewalks)
- \$40M housing development (vacancies, home repairs, development)
- \$20M neighborhood development (support business and nonprofits)
- Proposal to start \$30M for pilot childcare program (2-year pilot)
- St Louis Promise - post-secondary for worker children or worker certifications

She shared discussion around a detention facilities oversight board. The Alderwomen shared that a member from the Board went to the City Justice Center to see the jail commissioner, was forcibly removed, and is currently being pursued by city prosecutor, She is concerned with this not being appropriate, not sure how she will address the issue at this time, but she wants to publicly share she does not agree with what happened.

Alder Sonnier also mentioned she is working with the Streets Department to hopefully get double pick up next week for trash in the ward.

OPEN QUESTIONS

Several open questions were asked toward the end of the meeting.

A question was asked if the BOA is discussing the potential Ameren rate increase, which is an estimated \$17 increase on average. Alder Sonnier shared that she sent a letter in opposition. She shared she hasn't seen justification of why the increase is needed given their revenue and high rates already.

A question was asked if the city is considering any other options around car tag payment other than the Mayor's loan proposal. Alder Sonnier shared she was unsure if the city is considering any other options. Her challenge is that the program would need to be continually funded and she believes there should be some skin in the game from those already late or not paying. Alder Sonnier shared that with any program, she would want it to encourage good behavior and be appropriately funded; hopefully the state will implement that technology so they can support sales taxes with car sales.

A question was asked about situations like ICE on Cherokee, will the city do anything about it. Alder Sonnier shared that any response will be strategic but cautious. She shared we currently have local control of the police department, though current state politics would like to take control and support bounty hunting immigrants. She is working with the Cherokee CID to see if there are resources that can be shared with community members on rights and resources.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TGENA President Mackenzie shared that we will be going live on the TGENA website with a form to submit questions for a Mayoral Candidate Forum at our next meeting in February. All four of the candidates will be here. We will share the Stray Dog venue with Tower Grove South Neighborhood Association, and we will bring questions from both neighborhoods to the forum. Please see the website and social media for details to submit questions.

Beautification Chair Anne Moore shared on Sunday, Feb. 9 from 10am-12pm, there will be a trash and trimming event. There will be an arborist to help prune street trees.

Amy Kurz, our new Social/Engagement Chair, introduced herself and shared that we will be planning some great events coming soon, and would love any committee help or input.

TGENA JANUARY 2025 MEETING

Danielle Langeneckert, Newsletter Chair, shared that the newsletter will make a comeback. For any article or content ideas, please reach out.

TGENA President Mackenzie also praised Orchard Chair Susan Herzberg for her support in plowing many streets and areas for the neighborhood these past few weeks.

DeSales shared that they are excited to be selected once again and will support the Cardinals Care program, which offers free children's baseball in the summer. Registration starts this weekend. Details to come in the next newsletter or on the DeSales website/media.

President Tristan adjourned the meeting at 8:09 p.m. and welcomed neighbors to stay for a social happy hour afterward.

NEXT MEETING

2025 Mayoral Candidate Forum: Tuesday, February 25th, 2025 @ 7PM - Stray Dog Theatre + Zoom
