

February 11, 2020 General Meeting Minutes
LSBD & ECID

Joe Edwards called the meeting to order and opened the floor to announcements after introductions. The next general meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 10, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. (Blueberry Hill's Piano Room).

Joe mentioned an article in the U City ROARS newsletter regarding the new mural in the City garage on Delmar and praised the effort as a good example of the East Loop and West Loop working together. Joe also stated that two Loop locations had been awarded medical marijuana dispensary licenses (one in the West Loop and one in the East Loop).

Executive Director Rachelle L'Ecuyer reported on The Loop in News and gave the Executive Director's general report. Rachelle noted the monumental amount of work that went into organizing the Loop Ice Carnival, and the excellent, positive media coverage resulting from those efforts. In addition to tons of social media buzz and other local coverage, AAA Midwest Traveler designated the Loop Ice Carnival as an "official Midwest Travel Treasure," and Great Day St. Louis covered the event. Many thanks to Rachelle for her outstanding work!

University City Mayor Terry Crow next gave the update on City Council matters. Mayor Crow explained that the City was reviewing the Loop Special Business District's bylaws and related matters, including the manner in which LSBD board members are elected. Mayor Crow indicated that the process historically used by The Loop to elect board members (which has always been subject to City approval) probably would not be permitted going forward. Attendees were encouraged to contact Mayor Crow by phone or email to discuss as desired.

City Manager Gregory Rose stated that City Council had approved a part-time position for an "LSBD Coordinator," noting the City's belief that greater resources and assistance are needed to make The Loop even more successful. The Coordinator would act as a liaison between the LSBD and the City and provide administrative support and event-planning services. Mr. Rose stated that the City would create a committee consisting of building owners to provide input on hiring matters. As far as future events, Mary Gorman mentioned her work on Style in the Loop as well as Loop Literature events with Nakita Smith. Joe asked if the City had issued an RFQ on the Coordinator position yet, and Mr. Rose stated that the City will advertise the job soon. Joe also asked if the Coordinator would prepare the LSBD annual report, with Mr. Rose indicating that the City's intent is for the Coordinator to provide whatever assistance is needed to be sure the LSBD is in full compliance with applicable laws and requirements.

In the security update, Captain Fred Lemons reported that UCPD was continuing its presence on The Loop and also had hired full-time and part-time parking attendants. Businesses with parking agreements for the garage should ask their employees to post their parking passes. UCPD has partnered with the Washington University Police Department on security matters relating to Mardi Gras. A crime prevention study has been completed and will be reported on soon. Business owners are urged to contact UCPD to schedule a free security audit. Citizens can call Chief Hampton anytime as needed, and the UCPD non-emergency line (314-725-2211) is always available. In response to a question from Michael Alter, Captain Lemons stated that UCPD will increase their presence for the upcoming warm weather crowds, especially during weekends. Bike patrols will be

increased, and more uniformed officers will be on patrol in general.

Councilmember Tim Cusick reported that TriStar Companies has purchased the property of the Delmar/Harvard school. Its plan to demolish the easternmost building and build a Tru Hotel was heard in front of the Historic Preservation Commission. The initial plan was thought to need improvement and the Commission is waiting to hear more. Joe noted his hope that the existing façade will be retained. Mr. Cusick stated the I-170/Olive project is still working on acquisition matters. The City's consultant for an economic development strategic plan may be reaching out to people for interviews regarding U City and/or The Loop, and attendees were urged to participate.

U City Economic Development Director Libbey Tucker noted that there is a lot of interest and activity in potential hotel developments in U City. A consultant is reviewing four proposed sites, including the Delmar/Harvard site. The economic development strategic plan task force has started its work, and the consultant will meet with the LSBDD board at today's meeting. Funds are still available under the façade program for those interested. One of two U City medical marijuana dispensaries will be located in the east end cap of the building Which Wich is located in (two other vacant spaces in that building have letters of intent). Craft Alliance is moving to the east of The Loop, after outgrowing their current space. CBRE is marketing the spaces owned by the City under the parking garage, with the hope of leasing the entire space to one tenant. City Council is working on an ordinance to ensure that scooters are not allowed in U City due to clutter and safety issues. In response to a question from Dan Wald, Libbey stated that there continued to be redevelopment interest on the Commerce Bank property, but nobody had purchased it yet as far as she knows.

Joe stated that there was nothing new to report on the issue of sidewalk events/performers. Things have been a lot more peaceful recently, especially at Chuck Berry Plaza. There also was nothing new to report on the Duck Walk project, as a simpler version of the project is still being bid. The bids to replace worn-out holiday lights came in very high this year (the SBD and CID usually budget \$2,000 each), so Joe has found another company that can provide similar lights for close to the historical annual cost. Joe indicated that future SBD and CID budgets should each probably increase this line-item by \$500.

In the East Loop CID update, Joe noted that the East Loop and Skinker-Debaliviere neighborhood are working on a form-based code.

In the Washington University report, JoAnna Schooler praised the partnership between the Wash U police, UCPD, and Clayton Police Department. The departments were preparing for Mardi Gras and warm weather in general. Spring Break will be March 8-14.

On the Loop Trolley front, Joe reported on the proposal that had been put in front of Bi-State Development Agency (the operator of the region's transit system). The Loop Trolley costs approximately \$1.3 million per year to operate on the originally planned seven-days-per-week schedule, which would provide the predictable service that was lacking due to the unavailability of the third trolley car. Joe stressed that the Trolley is a transit vehicle, intended to connect to MetroLink and the Forest Park circulator. The current income from the Loop Trolley TDD is \$860,000 per year and will be over \$900,000 in 2020, which increases expected with CVS opening soon, and much other new and upcoming construction along the line. Joe stated the Trolley therefore is close to sustainability on its own even without operational revenue and advertising

revenue, which had been low due to unpredictable service. The proposed plan is to take \$1.9 million in “federal flex funds” that Bi-State hasn’t used, and free them up for the Trolley in order to guarantee operations for four years, after which the Trolley should be self-sustaining. Advantages of Bi-State operating the Trolley include economic efficiencies (insurance, etc.) and operational and maintenance expertise. The alternative is to lose the Trolley on a permanent basis and have additional construction to remove the tracks. Joe asked attendees to urge the County Executive to support the plan.

Kevin Barbeau, Executive Director of The Loop Trolley Company, reported that the repaired wheel sets for the third trolley were finally arriving. Tameka Stigers questioned why the Bi-State solution wasn’t part of the original plan, and Kevin explained that that wasn’t permitted under the federal rules at the time. The Federal Transit Administration is willing to accept the Bi-State plan, but the Bi-State commissioners and County Council have to agree. Closing of the project is expected to have a negative impact on the receipt of federal transit funds in the future.

Dan Wald asked about the status of a hotel project at Skinker and Delmar. Mr. Edward stated he wasn’t aware of the details. Mr. Wald asked whether a finance report for the LSBDD was available and Mr. Edwards stated the quarterly financial report would be discussed at the Board meeting.

No public comments were made, and no other old or new business was discussed; accordingly, the meeting was adjourned.