



New city manager is featured speaker for 2018 annual meeting

Gregory Rose, the new city manager of University City, will be the keynote speaker at the University Heights Subdivision No.1 2018 annual meeting scheduled for **2 p.m. on Sunday, February 25 at the University City Public Library**. No stranger to University City, Mr. Rose was the deputy city manager here from 1997-2001. He was selected by city council from more than 50 candidates. He has a master's degree in public administration and has served for many years in public service.



Mr. Rose will present his views on the most important issues facing University City, such as the future location of the police department; vision for Civic Plaza area buildings; his vision for community development; the relationship between U. City and Washington University; and last but not least, everyone's favorite topic--the Loop Trolley. Do you have questions for Mr. Rose? If so, bring them along. There will be time on the agenda for comments.

Election of association board members

Two seats on the Board are open for election this year. Get involved! Join the board and be a vital part of neighborhood life in U. Heights. We need you and would love to have you. The more people are involved in our neighborhood the stronger it is and the better we are able to represent you or you are able to represent the neighborhood!

Board terms are three years. To submit your name, call Marilyn Cathcart at 862-2644 or email mj_cathcart@yahoo.com. The board meets once a month, generally on the second Tuesday, and plans events such as the annual picnic, winter progressive party, luminaria, our garden tour and more. The group is a convivial one, and hosts serve really good appetizers, so don't plan on dinner that night. Board member candidates must be paying members of the Association and those voting must be paid members. **Dues for 2018 are \$20.** Residents can pay at the meeting.

Trustee Election at Annual Meeting

Every two years one of our trustee positions is open for election. Trustees serve staggered six-year terms. When a trustee is completing the term of a former trustee, the election of that position will occur on the every-other-year pattern continuing. Trustees may be elected for additional terms, with no term limit other than standing for election at the end of each six-year term. For each election the trustees may nominate up to two and the Neighborhood Association Board may nominate up to two.

Normally property holders vote in person or by proxy at the annual meeting. Such a vote will be taken this year, though in the past sometimes elections have been done by paper ballot with a box located somewhere in the subdivision and a time frame given for voting. Mark Harvey was elected to complete the term of Judy Baernstein. At this annual election that term is complete. He plans to stand for re-election. He will be nominated by the trustees. The Neighborhood Association Board may consider and select other nominee(s.) Or, as sometimes has occurred in the past, they may nominate the current trustee standing for re-election.

Trustees Comments on Infrastructure Projects in the Neighborhood

By Mark Harmon, Trustee

Much angst has been flying around about SPIRE's current work in University Heights Subdivision No.1. We have been asked to give a comprehensive and detailed report. Here goes: A couple of weeks before Christmas, Spire (formerly Laclede Gas) located vehicles and equipment on Harvard Avenue at Cornell. We watched to see if they were beginning to work. They did not. We observed that the work was being done on Delmar and Big Bend. A couple of days later Morty Hyman inquired about why the equipment was parked on our private streets. He received a call back a couple of days later, with a statement that work would begin in the subdivision in mid-January.

At that time Morty asked them to move the equipment out of the subdivision until such time as they would be commencing work. Not only was the equipment not moved even after multiple phone calls from Morty as well as from Andrea Riganti of City Community Development, but equipment pods were located additionally at Yale and Princeton and at Dartmouth and Trinity. Again, Morty was told work would begin in early to mid-January. We were not then told of what the work would consist. When some neighbors expressed safety concerns about the 'blue pod' located at Yale and Princeton, Eileen called SPIRE and they moved it within two days to a safer location.

When workers appeared on Harvard Morty and I both inquired of the foreman, who explained the work. This is a project they are doing across their entire service area; replacing old gas lines with new plastic lines, replacing spur lines across yards, and replacing meters. When at all possible they desire to place meters outside in front of houses, partly because this approach makes for shorter spurs and better meter access.

High pressure lines

But a deeper underlying reason for moving meters to the outside is that they are using a higher-pressure gas line up to the house, and placing a regulator/reducer in the new meter. They do not want this higher-pressure gas entering homes for safety reasons. But they understand the homeowners get to decide where they want the meter. They are consulting each of us one by one. For aesthetic reasons, we (trustees) have asked Spire to install outdoor meters on the sides of houses instead of in front. But the subdivision has no rule on this. Each homeowner may make their own decisions in cooperation with Spire. If you have not already received a door hanger with instructions you will soon. The lines are inserted from the street and drilled to the meter location without yard excavation in most cases.

My own spur line is already in. A very congenial and conversant Spire crew chief caught me a couple of weeks ago, and I invited him in to look at our meter. He said they wanted to install our meter outside. I showed him a preferred location on the side of the house. He said they will first install a spur line to that location. Then they will install a low-pressure line through the brick wall to the connection where the previous inside meter had been. I agreed to allow it. I returned from a week out of town to find Spire has installed the line to the side of our house, per my request. They did no excavation in our yard. They put the line right where I asked them to put it. It terminates to a valve about three inches above the ground. They left a door hanger with a name and phone number for me to call to arrange a time for them to move the meter outside. Yes, it says they will have to briefly cut off the gas to move the meter (of course!). We scheduled meter-moving for a four-hour window on January 31. They completed the work. It took all of four hours. We simply heated the house up to about 80 beforehand, and barely noticed a temperature drop as they completed the work.

Street repair

The street and tree lawn holes are being dug street-by-street. After the lines are inserted and installed the holes are filled with gravel, then concrete up to two inches from the surface, then with machine-tamped cold-patch asphalt. Upon completion of work in the subdivision the cold-patch will be removed and replaced with hot-patch and a sealer. Then the streets will be re-coated with chip and seal. We will contract with West Paving, who did that work for us. We will oversee the work, and SPIRE will pay for it.

We've talked with SPIRE workers at four levels, receiving some conflicting information. Some of our neighbors have also had this experience. We had three crews at work in our neighborhood. Since it is such a massive project across the entire metropolitan area, I imagine some workers might be relatively new so do not have all the answers or even incorrect answers. We were told the spur and meter installations will extend perhaps into May, dependent on weather. But we later learned (from a Neighborhood Board leader) that Spire has already moved two of the three crews to other neighborhoods, leaving only the one crew which has been working on Harvard. She was also told the Dartmouth work had already been done, so must not be done again.

The one crew is also completing meter installations on Yale. That crew will move to Trinity next. As we hope you

Spire/trustees (continued from page two)

can see, the information changes almost daily. We could not possibly keep up with informing every neighbor in this situation. It might even be unhelpful for us to try, since assumptions might be made based on today's facts which might change tomorrow. I judge Spire does not know themselves today what they will do tomorrow. That is the nature of the work. What I am sharing here seems to represent the real situation, for now. It is a complex process, so we should not be surprised if line workers on the ground might give varying descriptions of the work. The process is unfolding still. My observation is that Spire has given work authority to crew chiefs. Be assured that we are communicating with the crew chiefs as well as their supervisors two levels up the chain when needed, and with the meter work schedule.

Communication

Some have wondered why your trustees have not communicated more. We have tried to communicate as new information has come available. We were NOT contacted by SPIRE before the work began, or was scheduled. Please understand that our 1904 indenture gives all utilities full access to our streets, tree lawns and sidewalks. We trustees have no authority over them. Like most of you, we would have preferred they contact us well in advance of their time line for this project. Yes: we would have held off on the chip and seal street coating. But they did not contact us. They are responsible for returning the street structure and surface to pre-project condition, including the chip and seal. Had they planned this in advance and informed us, we might have saved ourselves from making that investment ahead of their project. But it still would have been needed after.

They would NOT have had to do the chip and seal in that circumstance. We will make sure we get the commitment to restore our streets, tree lawns and sidewalks in writing. Should Spire not follow through on this restoration commitment we can pursue legal action. We do not anticipate that will be needed.

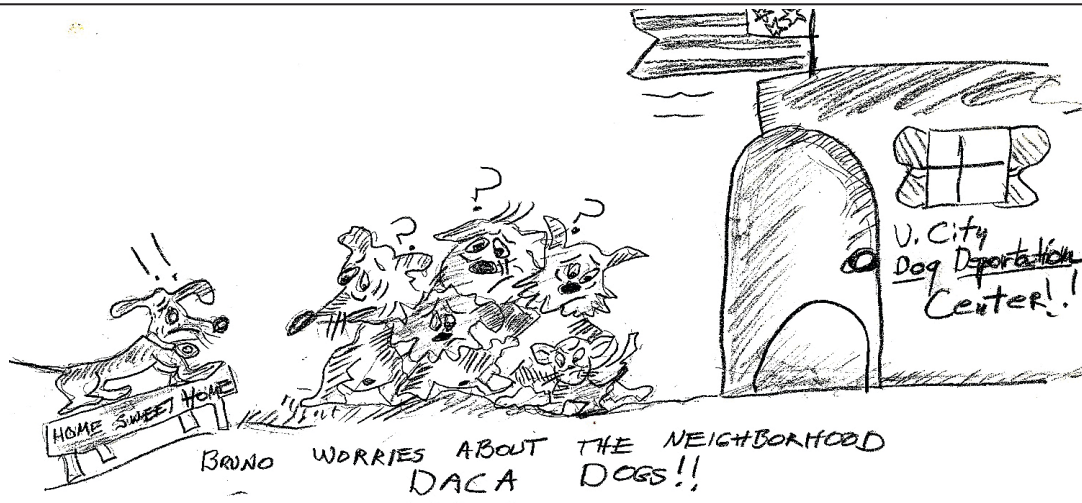
Our trees

Some neighbors have expressed concern about the impact of the Spire project on our beloved tree lawn trees. We share this concern and have expressed it. Judy Harmon scheduled a meeting with SPIRE involving our Droege Tree Service arborist. Morty Hyman attended. In some cases, in order to route or reroute gas spurs to meters, some roots must be disturbed. It will in some cases be unavoidable. Yes, we may lose some trees. Remember, most of these gas lines are older than the trees. Droege Tree Services will be working with Spire staff as much as possible to protect our tree trunks and roots.

Thank you

Thanks go from your trustees to those of you who have noticed issues and communicated with Spire foremen on the ground. Some misinterpreted a comment Eileen made suggesting no more calls be made to Spire about the 'blue cube,' since they had already promised her they would move it (They did.) Sometimes we want universal answers applying to every situation. This project, and life in general, is more complex than that. You should feel free to express any concerns directly to Spire crew chiefs on the ground. I think most of us have found Spire workers

Bruno's Neighborhood Musings by Bruno and Naomi



Who We Are

Trustees

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University Heights Neighborhood Association

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All Association Board meetings are at 7 pm, the 2nd Tuesday of each month. All residents are welcome. Annual meeting Sunday, February 25, 2018, at the U. City Public Library, 2-4 p.m.

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New to the neighborhood?

Contact Diane Davenport
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Join our online community on
NextDoorUniversityHeights1
<https://universityheights1.nextdoor.com/>

University Heights #1 website
<http://universityheightsonline.com/>

Neighborhood tree management

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Fence Talk editor

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Trustee report *(continued from page 3)*

to be friendly and responsive. Please remember that your own cooperative spirit will go a long way to make the project successful for us all.

...And then there's MSD

Meanwhile, MSD has an engineering sub-contractor working on Yale and Dartmouth drilling core samples for future sewer work as part of Project Clear. We have been asking for this work for some time: to separate the sanitary and storm sewers and improve storm sewer function under Dartmouth. An MSD official told us the actual work is probably 3-4 years off. We will let you know if this timeline changes. This will be another major project. Remember, our MSD sewers are over 100 years old, constructed mostly of brick. The separation of sanitary and storm sewers may do more to improve the River Des Peres situation in our neighborhood and elsewhere than anything else imaginable.

Look forward to springtime events

Yes, there will be a springtime and we hope it includes sunshine. Meanwhile, the seed catalogs are clogging our mailboxes, enticing us to order beautiful plants, under the impression that's the way they will look in our garden.

Closer to home and spending money in our own community, U City In Bloom will have its annual plant sale on Saturday, April 28 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and Sunday, April 29 from 9 to 1 p.m. The preview party, always a rockin' good time, is from 5-7 p.m. on Friday, April 27. Admission is \$20 and includes refreshments. Plants will be for sale then too.

A pleasure for gardeners of all skills is the annual Flora Conservancy of Forest Park plant sale on Saturday, May 12. The event is held in the St. Louis City Greenhouse in Forest Park from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Go early.

Not a fan of bush honeysuckle? The Missouri Botanical Garden Honeysuckle Sweep for a Healthy Habitat is just right for you. Sweep weeks are Saturday, March 3-Sunday March 18. Go to missouribotanicalgarden.org/sustainability/sustainability/biodiversecity-st.-louis/honeysuckle-sweep-for-healthy-habitat.aspx for more information.

We have our very own U. Heights garden tour coming Sunday, May 20. If you are interested in showing off your garden (sure you are) contact Anna Ruffin at annarearuffin@gmail.com