Meeting Date: Sunday, November 1, 2020
Location: Pontiac Square Park, S. 10th Street & Ann Ave.
Time called to order: 2:12 p.m. Meeting was held outdoors due to COVID Restrictions.
Date Minutes APPROVED by Membership: December 2, 2020
SRG BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Neil Putz (Pres./ Mtg Chair), Jim Dallas (President Elect), Jeff Roberts (Treasurer), Gary Toribio (Secretary), Scott Plackemeier (Past President), Taylor Bodine, John Durnell, Beth Hoops, Marilyn Morris; Billy Tomber (Editor, Renaissance)
GUEST SPEAKERS: Mayor Lyda Krewson, 7th Ward Alderman Jack Coatar, 9th Ward Alderman Dan Guenther.
1. CALL TO ORDER & OPENING REMARKS: President Neil Putz
   • Nothing in a “book” on SRG operations during a pandemic
   • In recent months we have been communicating through the SRG Blaster and emails
   • Held an election for the new President Elect through email voting.
     o The Membership email data base was updated for this.
     o Members can email the Membership Committee with any additional email address changes.
   • Everyone was thanked for wearing face masks and maintaining social distancing.
   • The new SRG 2020-2021 Membership roster was mailed to each member along with a custom SRG mask.
     o Additional masks can be purchased for $5
   • Questions can be submitted on 3x5 cards available on the Membership sign-in table (include your name and email address).
     o If there is not time during the meeting to answer all questions, Neil will reply by email.
     o If any questions are applicable to several members, Neil will reply through the SRG Blaster.

2. GUEST SPEAKERS
   • Mayor Lyda Krewson, Mayor of the City of St. Louis
     o Update on COVID in St Louis.
     o Reviewed development projects continuing to progress in the City.
     o Responded to questions regarding bad driving in Soulard by explaining a shortage of law enforcement/police officers as well as decreases in City revenues this year expected to be approximately $67 million.
     o Explained Proposition R for Early Childhood Education that was on the November 3rd ballot.
     o Explained that property taxes are increasing due to the rise in property values.
When asked about reduced property taxes for elderly/retired homeowners, she replied that it is an issue for the State Legislature to establish; and that we should contact Rasheen Aldridge, our District 078 State Representative.

- **Jack Coatar, Ward 7 Alderman**
  - Asked for a moment of silence in memory of recently deceased SRG Members, Don Kirby and Paul Kjorlie.
  - Explained the City’s current removal program for emerald ash bores and other diseased trees. The remaining stumps to be removed in phase 2 and new trees will be planted later in the Winter or Spring.
  - Part of Russell Blvd is being repaved and the intersection of S. 13th and Russell is being reworked.
  - To help with the problem of drivers running stop signs, he wants Soulard Community Improvement District (CID) funds used with City funds to improve stopping at major intersections.

- **Dan Guenther, Ward 9 Alderman**
  - Recently as 3 weeks ago, they were trying to ease COVID restrictions for bars and restaurants. However current COVID surges are causing problems doing that.
  - He is helping residents in need due to COVID with financial assistance, food drives and coats for Winter.

3. **FINANCIAL REPORT:** Treasurer Jeff Roberts

- **Financial Report**
  - Jeff Roberts reviewed the SRG Budget packet that was available for all members to download on the SRG website prior to the meeting as well as paper copies available at the Membership sign-in table.
  - At the end of FY 2019 (6/30/2020) SRG had a net loss of $4,000 and the current assets were approximately $90,000.

- **Budget for FY 2020. Approval of the SRG annual budget**
  - The Board had 3 nights of Zoom meetings with our Committees and received each Committee’s original budget request for FY 2020. The combined total of these requests would have reduced our assets by 60%.
  - Neil Putz explained that the Zoom videoconferences between the Board and each of the Committees on September 8th and 9th 2020, were for budget requests and informational purposes with no actions taken by the Board. They were not called to order as an official Board Meeting, so minutes were not necessary.
  - The SRG officers met to review the original requests and identify expenses that could be delayed until post-pandemic.
  - SRG’s fixed costs include Soulard Station, insurance, and audit fees.
  - The Fundraising Committee was challenged to come up with needed income.
  - The Board decided that the maximum FY 2020 spending should not reduce our assets by more than 40%.
The Board also adopted a procedure for budget amendments including consideration of financial impact of the requested amendment and keeping our organization solvent.

- **Discussion:**
  - Several members were involved in the discussion.
  - Lillian Thompson expressed concerns about what SRG is going to do to stay solvent even with the reduced budget the Board was recommending to the Membership for approval. She asked for a broader discussion with options and what should be done with SRG’s finances.

**Motion to approve the SRG FY 2020 Budget as recommended by the Board for General Membership approval.**
Motion by Jeff Roberts.

- **Discussion Continued:**
  - Initially the motion was not seconded as there was additional discussions between members.
  - Michael Pastore expressed his concern with the proposed budget just being made to the Membership through the SRG website on Saturday, October 30th. His opinion was that the Membership should be allowed more time to review the proposed budget and that the vote should be delayed a week and then conducted electronically.

**Motion to postpone the vote on the FY 2020 Budget for 1 week and then have an electronic election/vote for the Membership to consider its approval.**
The motion and its second were made between Neil Putz, Lillian Thompson, and Michael Pastore so that it could be voted upon.

**Discussion on the Motion to postpone the vote on the budget:**
  - Julie Price spoke in favor of approving the budget as presented at the meeting today.
  - There was further discussion such as a question about the financial risk of holding off on the budget vote for a week.
  - Neil Putz called for a vote on the postponement by a show of hands that would be counted by him and the Treasurer.

Votes in favor of the postponement: 22
Votes opposed to the postponement: 27
The Majority opposed the Postponement and this Motion Failed.

Billy Tomber made a second to Jeff Robert’s **Motion to approve the SRG FY 2020 Budget as recommended by the Board for General Membership approval.**

- Neil Putz called for another vote on approving the Budget by a show of hands that would be counted by him and the Treasurer.

Votes in favor of the Budget Approval: 35
Votes opposed of the Budget Approval: 8
(Although no one abstained, apparently 6 did not vote.)
The Majority were in favor of approving the FY 2020 Budget as proposed and this Motion Passed.
4. OLD BUSINESS

- **Update on Community Topics**: President
  - Dave Perry resigned as a General Director on the Board, so the President will appoint a person to fill this vacant position with Board approval by the third week in November.
  - Neil Putz stated that additional members are needed on various SRG committees especially the Soulard Station and Safety committees. Members Jeffrey Bachmann and Scott Fiedler volunteered to join the Safety Committee.
  - The City’s tree cutting program in the neighborhood was explained by Alderman Coatar earlier in the meeting.
  - Neil explained that SRG will have memorials for recently deceased Soulardians Don Kirby and Paul Kjorlie as well as Peyton Keene (murdered Bastille employee, May 2018). The budget includes $500 to plant trees or other appropriate memorials.

- **President Elect Actions**: President Elect Jim Dallas explained that he has been working on:
  - Pub Crawl legislation
  - Bylaw revisions along with Gary Toribio and others including a working group of interested members.
  - Historic Code update that was to be done every 5 years, but it has not occurred.

5. NEW BUSINESS

- **Mardi Gras 2021 Announcement**: President of MGI Board, Gary Toribio
  - Gary Toribio explained that MGI’s planned events for the 2021 Mardi Gras in Soulard were announced on the MGI Facebook page the evening of October 31st.
  - The events are being planned to meet all current COVID restrictions although those restriction may be less severe in February.
  - There will be 8 events, but they will all be virtual/on-line except for two, a Scavenger Hunt and a Drive-Thru Taste of Soulard.
  - There will not be any parade on February 13, 2021, as is the custom on Saturday before Fat Tuesday. There will also be precautions, such as parking restrictions, to avoid large crowds that might still come to Soulard on Saturday, February 13th.
  - The SRG Board has adopted a resolution expressing its general support of the Mardi Gras 2021 events, with some questions about some of the planned events.
  - MGI is coordinating plans and precautions with the appropriate City Departments to ensure everything is done per City COVID restrictions for the health and safety of residents, businesses, employees, and visitors.
  - MGI intends to have some type of Pre-Mardi Gras updates for residents to understand the associated details as they develop during the planning process over the next month.
  - Any questions can be sent to Gary Toribio’s SRG email address, secretary@soulard.org
• **General Membership Meetings**: President
  
  o SRG will try to do indoor meetings as soon as allowed by the City’s COVID restrictions.
  o SRG has purchased our own subscription for Zoom Pro and we will be trying to do online/virtual meetings. The first attempt will be for the December 2 General Membership meeting.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

• **BEAUTIFICATION**: Richard Eaton
  
  o Richard Eaton explained that the trees the City is removing will be replaced. The City has developed an approved list of trees as well as planting requirements such as being 20-ft from light poles.
  o Richard thanked the following:
    
    - SRG members that volunteered for the planting and maintenance of the approximate 60 large pots throughout the neighborhood.
    - Those volunteers who maintained Pontiac Square Park and the Celebration Garden at the Market Park.
    - Special recognition and appreciation for Marilyn Morris and her beautification work throughout the pandemic.

• **CODE & ZONING**: Jay Gibbs
  
  o Jay Gibbs reported that recently 3 buildings in Soulard had partial collapses.
  o Jay stated that construction is proceeding in Soulard during the pandemic.
  o The vacant property on Allen Ave. next to Soulard Coffee Garden has approval for two townhouses as single-family residences.
  o Two larger apartment complexes are being potentially being proposed:
    
    - 9th & Soulard Sts, 20 Apartment units with store fronts on first floor.
    - 7th and Shenandoah at old plating plant, currently proposing 60 apartment units, but the Code & Zoning Committee is trying to persuade the developer to reduced it to 25 to 40 units to have a density similar to that appropriate for a quarter block of property.

• **COMMUNICATIONS**: Jeremy Mehrle
  
  o The Committee is continuing operations during the pandemic with Blaster emails, online voting for the President Elect, the Renaissance (2 issues so far), and the SRG website that has a new SRG Documents section.

• **FUNDRAISING**: Christopher Schwarz
  
  o Christopher Schwarz reported that he and this Committee has gained a new insight on needed fundraising efforts during the budget development over the past few months as well as Board direction for needed money raising assignments.
  o Events were cancelled due to the pandemic so SRG could not make money from pouring beer as we normally did in past years.
  o There will be a virtual online Smarty Gras Trivia event on January 16, 2021. ($50 per team)
• Considering outdoor Summer Concerts as COVID restrictions might allow. If so, to obtain support from and coordinate with the St Louis Blues Society.

**MEMBERSHIP**: Julie Price
- Julie Price explained that the pandemic caused the Membership Drive/Party to be cancelled. Due to this and members’ economic hardships, the Board decided that Membership is free for everyone this year.
- The SRG 2020-2021 Membership Roster was recently mailed out to approximately 450 members along with SRG face masks.
- Trying to do wellness checks on members.
- Membership is currently at 426 residents and 95 businesses for a total of 521.

**PARLOUR TOUR**: Beth Hoops (for Jeanne Kirby who could not attend)
- This year the Parlour Tour will be virtual/online.
- There will be a 360-degree view in the nine houses participating on the tour.
- A website page is being used for it starting Saturday December 5th and it will remain available online through 1/1/2021.
- There is no cost to view the tour, as it is to be donation based.
- Nine Houses will be participating.
- The Committee Chair, Jeanne Kirby, appreciates everyone’s efforts for this year’s Parlour Tour.

**RESIDENTIAL PROMOTION**: Taylor Bodine (for Luann Denten who could not attend)
- Taylor Bodine said that interested members can join Res Promo, and they’re still having fun. They can reach out to her or the Committee Chair, Luann Denten.

**SAFETY**: Neil Putz
- Continuing to build the committee and need volunteers.
- Acknowledged and welcomed Jeffrey Bachmann and Scott Fiedler for volunteering to join the committee.

**SOURLARD STATION**: Jim Dallas
- Jim Dallas reported that the previous Committee Chair, Tracy Laxton, resigned from the committee in September due to the workload at her job.
- Jim also explained that the Station is not generating revenue, so it is a fixed cost for SRG.
- To be considering how to use the building and generation of revenue.

7. OTHER REPORTS
- **CID**: Terry Hoffman, Chairman
  - The CID was passed in late 2019 with all businesses charging an extra 1% sales tax with the revenues going back to the CID.
  - CID meeting are open to the public and held on the first Monday of the Month at 5:30 pm, virtually via Zoom.
- Revenues have been approximately $30,000 average per month in sales tax. Originally expected $250,000/yr. in revenues.
- Initial revenues used to pay prior legal fees of approximately $70,000 for the years of effort to form and pass the CID.
- Currently considering projects including: Historic Lighting, Street scape and infrastructure including sidewalks, Trash and clean up and management efforts, and a Strategic Plan for the CID itself.
- Also, may work with the City Street Department on street and traffic calming measures, curb bump outs at intersections, speed bumps, rumble strips, etc.

- **SBA**: Erin Lang from Mission Taco & SBA Board
  - Erin Lang reminded everyone about the Soulard Stronger Together fund-raising campaign that provides grants to Soulard Businesses due to economic hardships caused by the pandemic.
  - Questions can be emailed to erin@missiontaco.com

8. **AWARD PRESENTATIONS**
   - **Soulard Star Awards for Volunteerism**
     - Rick Schneider
     - Janet Neuhaus
     - Chrystal Amber Derkach
   - **Lifetime Achievement Award** (for 30 years of service to SRG)
     - Richard Eaton

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

   Approval of Adjourning the Meeting.

   Motion by Beth Hoops, 2nd by Scott Plackemeier.
   Those present voted in favor of this motion. No votes opposed it.
   **Motion passed unanimously**
   - Meeting Adjourned at 3:54 p.m.

These minutes summarizing the meeting were prepared by SRG Secretary, Gary Toribio.

Minutes APPROVED at the SRG General Membership on December 2, 2020

**Note**: The above information is the Board Secretary’s understanding of the motions, votes and general issues that were discussed but are not intended to be a verbatim transcript of the meeting.