**We had a great turnout for the March NHNA General meeting (>50 attendees). Despite the change of venue\* (Gethsemane Lutheran Church basement), strong attendance was likely helped by the interest in our guest speaker, Circuit Attorney Gabriel Gore. In addition to our invited guest speaker, we had a Ward 5 update from Joe Vollmer and a safety/crime update from Officer Karagiannis from the 2nd Patrol District 2. Nick Kimble from Donna Baringer’s office (State Representative for the 82nd District) gave a brief update on the MO State House and Senate legislative activities. We had brief updates on Buder library activities and a reminder about the spring Tilles Park cleanup event on April 13th. The next NHNA General meeting will be held on April 22nd with location TBD.**

**\*Due to the continuing renovations at Buder, NHNA will be holding General and Executive Board meetings at alternate locations through July 2024. When repairs at Buder are completed, we hope to resume meeting at that location.**

**Please email the NHNA admin at** **admin@northamptonneighbors.com** **with any questions.**

**3/25/24 Northampton Neighbors Network meeting:**

* Adam Jung opened the meeting at 6pm and reviewed the agenda items:

Joe Vollmer, Alderman for Ward 5

Officer Gus Karagiannis crime report

Nick Kimble, Donna Baringer’s Office (MO State Representative, 82nd District)

Marissa Owen, SLPL Activities

Circuit Attorney, Gabriel Gore

* Joe Vollmer, Alderman for Ward 5 \* (Contact: vollmerj@stlouis-mo.gov, (314) 622-3287)

-He reviewed several road projects that will affect residents in the coming year. One project on Kingshighway includes plans for lane reduction, speed control and streetscaping. Another major project on Southwest involves the bridge replacement at Columbia, which will reduce SW to single traffic lane starting in the Fall 2024 and is expected to take 1 ½ years.

- A bill proposing the use of automated cameras for speed/light violation enforcement, the “red light camera bill” has been voted out of committee. The law, if passed, would require images identifying both the vehicle plate and driver in order to issue a ticket. The revenue raised from the violators’ fines would go to a general fund aimed to improve driving and pedestrian safety.

-Q/A issues included conditional use permit for 5755 Chippewa, BB185 involving surveillance technology use by law enforcement being negotiated by Chief Tracy and Mayor Jones, Ace Hardware opening is the old Save-A-Lot site at Macklind & Southwest.

* Officer Gus Karagiannis, SLMPD South Patrol Station, Second District Community Outreach Officer. (Contact phone 314-444-0161, gkaragiannis@slmpd.org) presented crime trends and arrests for last month.

-Trends:

Thefts of firearms from vehicles are on the rise so he recommends either not storing your firearm in the car or having a gun lockbox professionally installed in the vehicle.

Use caution when selling items via social media. Meet at a public parking lot like the police station or use a buddy system.

Skycops stationed on various streets not to spy on residents but positioned in response to increased criminal activity or as a deterrence.

-Crime details for Feb/March:

Three garage burglaries

Four car thefts

Multiple assaults involving customers at businesses (gas stations) with arrests or suspects identified.

Multiple vehicles tampering and license plate stolen.

Multiple reports of packages stolen from porches.

- Captain Zipf, the new Commander of the SLMPD South Patrol Station, District 2, introduced

 himself and gave a brief overview of his history with the SLMPD. He served as Detective

 Sergeant in District 5, working in anti-crime and sex crimes units. Most recently Captain Zipf

 served as a Lieutenant in District 4 prior to his promotion to head District 2 of the South Patrol

 Division.

 -For detailed Q/A please see the video recording of the meeting.

- For weekly crime alerts, email request to Gus Karagiannis, community outreach officer/2nd

 district at gkaragiannis@slmpd.org.

* Nick Kimble, spokesperson for Donna Baringer, State Representative for the 82nd District.

-The 2024 legislative session had a slow 1st half with many bills being introduced. The house and senate are currently on spring break.

-Most legislative action on the bills introduced early in the session takes place when the house and senate return from break, so look for more news about legislation being passed during the second half of the session.

-Donna Baringer is currently working to reconcile requirements to serve in county and city offices.

* Marissa Owen, St. Louis Public Library, Buder Branch community engagement librarian

- Marissa updated the remodeling at Buder, including basement repairs due to water damage

 and HVAC replacement on each floor (one floor/month).

-The 3rd floor HVAC project is completed, so the children’s library will be open in April.

-The repairs will still affect the spring/summer activities usually held at the library. Buder will

 not offer early voting for the April elections.

- “Buder in Bloom” event will be held on May 18th at Buder elementary school (5319 Lansdowne

 St. Louis, MO 63109) that will include presenters and yoga.

-Check events calendars at nearby SLPL branches.

* Tilles Park clean-up event reminder – Spring clean up will be held on April 13th 10am-noon. Meet at the pavilion. Contact Tina Wong if you want to volunteer (916-627-5541, tinaawong@gmail.com).

Justin Thurman introduced our guest speaker.

* Gabriel Gore, St. Louis City Circuit Attorney (https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/

departments/circuit-attorney/index.cfm or external <https://www.circuitattorney.org/>)

- CA Gore highlighted progress made during the 10 months he has been in office:

Many of the attorneys and staff returned to their jobs, including 17 senior prosecutors, who collectively represent 150+ years of prosecutorial experience. This restaffing has restored the capacity of the office as a strong law enforcement organization.

They faced a daunting backlog of warrants when he entered the CA office, >100 of which were for murder or other violent crimes. These were prioritized out of necessity and cleared, but they still have >2500 lower-level felonies under review. His office intends to enforce the laws—violent crimes and so-called lower-level nuisance crimes.

He has rebuilt relationships with the mayor’s office and the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department.

- Gore also spoke about goals for the future:

The first major area of focus is to bolster the Diversion Program, which gives low-level offenders alternatives to prison, connecting them to educational, training and other community services. It is modeled after the St. Louis County program, which has a 97% success rate. The programs offer offenders a chance to break the habitual cycle of crime and incarceration and free up law enforcement resources to concentrate on violent offenders.

The second program highlighted is the Conviction Integrity Unit, initially set up by Gardner to correct wrongful convictions. He has appointed Judge George Draper III to lead the unit inside the office to review cases that might need a second look.

The office is investing in the future by increasing salaries and devoting resources to training young attorneys with help from the leadership of its Deputy Chief of Staff Becky Rentchler.

-For detailed Q/A please see the video recording of the meeting.

* Adam Jung, final announcements

- Adjourned meeting at 7:20.

**To be added to the general meeting agenda, please submit a request though the NNN website: https://northamptonneighbors.com/**