

City of Jennings
Business Watch Meeting Minutes
April 29, 2022-11:00 a.m.
Via Zoom

ATTENDEES

The Honorable Mayor	Yolanda Austin
Irvetta Williams	City of Jennings Consultant
Verna Charles	Mayor Administrative Assistant
Myra Randle	Economic Development Specialist
Jane Brown	Councilwoman Ward 2
Gary Johnson	Councilman Ward 3
Captain Norman Mann	St. Louis County Police Department
Detective Jerry Cochran	St. Louis County Police Department
Detective John Halliday	St. Louis County Police Department
Tim Swope	Director of Operations St. Louis County Prosecutors Office
Steve Pokorney	Owner STS Automotive
Nyran Buchanan	Owner This That and The Other Resale Shop
Alice Logan	Executive Director - A Caring Plus Foundation
Daryl A. Neal Sr	Retired Fire Captain St. Louis City
Pastor Michelle McGhee	Christ Community UMC
Carma Henderson	Regions Bank

Meeting Called to order at 11:00 A.M via Zoom.

Introductions were made by The Honorable Mayor Yolanda Austin

Let us take a moment of silence in honor of Rev. Leonard D. Dennis, Pastor of Metropolitan Missionary Baptist Church, located at 5300 Hellen Avenue in Jennings.

Tim Swope – Director of Operations St. Louis County Prosecutors Attorney Office

Tim Swope is the liaison for the 55 Police Departments in St. Louis County. They have been building a relationship with the Police Departments and have made Jennings a priority. He emphasized that they have a great relationship and are continuing to evolve in that relationship. Organized retail theft is an incredible challenge for St. Louis County. They get 10 to 12 thousand theft cases a year. They created a new unit, Organized Retail Theft Unit, with two Prosecutor Attorneys that prosecute people that are charged with theft for both businesses and residential, because information is, at times, left behind in relation to these crimes.

Captain Norman Mann – St. Louis County Police Department

Highlighting some great investigation work that the St. Louis County Police Department has been doing behind the scenes. They have a Special Investigations Unit that does a lot of undercover investigations. Captain Mann introduced the Special Investigation Unit to talk about human trafficking.

Det John Halliday & Det Jerry Cochran

The Special Investigation Unit which includes Commercial Sex Industry and Labor Trafficking. They are also known as the Vice Unit. Force, Fraud, and Cohesion are the three key words that identify these trafficking crimes. Typically, the force has four detectives, but currently they only have 2. Typically, they see the cases from the road, but also are referred to hotels and other sites. They also do undercover sting operations when reports are made. The intent behind the operations is always trying to find the victim. Once it's confirmed that they are the victim, they are the focus and are given resources rather than a citation or summons. Some indicators of human trafficking are: large sums of cash that can't be explained, disappearing with little to no information/contact about who they're with or what they're doing, purchasing numerous gift cards, having expensive items that can't be explained, multiple cell phones, and being contacted frequently at all times of the day. Traffickers frequently use social media, Craigslist, and other websites to recruit and advertise. Often, when young women run away from home (especially around 14 years old), they are more vulnerable to traffickers. If you suspect of someone being trafficked, call the non-emergency number and report it. However, if you think they're in immediate danger, you should call 911. Be aware that calling 911 may result in the victim being in more danger, so make sure if you're doing that it's appropriate. Be prepared that reporting this will result in a lot of questions from police regarding the location of the trafficker/victim, why you're suspicious, etc. There are numerous resources for victims, including a safe house, to help them get back on their feet. Labor trafficking is also a big issue that often is a result of people saying that the victim 'owes' them and they're forced to work. Child labor trafficking is also a huge issue that results in the delayed cognitive, social, and emotional development of the victim. They note that they are always developing their techniques to intervene.

Det Halliday's phone number: 314-615-8620

Det Cochran's phone number: 314-615-8696

Det Sgt Shanika's phone number: 314-615-8618

Captain Norman Mann

Crime Trends Report

Crimes against persons are up 24% compared to last year at this time, mostly driven by simple assaults, fights, and domestic violence. Crimes against property are down as compared to last year, but there's a bit of an uptick in larceny, so please be careful about what you leave in your car and report any suspicious activity. There is contact information specifically for situations that aren't an immediate threat: pct8intel@stlouiscountymo.gov; 314-330-1037. Please call 911 if you see something that requires immediate attention. In response to Mr. Buchanan: STLCPD started a group to have more police presence during those hours, both marked and undercover vehicles.

Nyran Buchanan- owner of This That and The Other Resale Shop on West Florissant

In response to Captain Mann, Mr. Buchanan mentions that most crimes happen between 3-6am with break-ins. He notes that a lot of the challenge with having a business here is that it's very difficult to get insurance simply because of the location. He requests more police presence between those hours. He'd like to get more people involved in the Business District on West Florissant.

Mayor Austin- ARPA Funds

As of the March Council meeting, everything was approved for the budget. A portion of the funds will be used for gang enforcement officers to assist Captain Mann with combatting the gang activity in Jennings. The allocations of the funds are the result on input from numerous sources, resulting in the specific services available with the funds. The applications are online and are available at City Hall. Curb Appeal is a portion included for small businesses to assist in improvements that will help: 50 businesses put up awnings; 50 businesses get exterior signage; 50 businesses get security cameras; 50 businesses get lighting; 10 businesses get air purifiers; 50 businesses get glass replacement; 25 businesses get fencing and gating to assist with security; and 5 businesses get parking lot repairs. Churches and non-profits are also eligible to apply for curb appeal programs funded by ARPA. These include awnings for 25, exterior signage for 25, cameras for 25, lighting for 25, and air purifiers for 25. Non-profits can also get involved in the Youth Community Resource & Empowerment Fair that focuses on youth safety and wellbeing. 8 non-profits can be involved with up to \$5,000 granted through ARPA. There is a community camera program that the City is asking businesses to register with the city so that the PD can know exactly where cameras are in the City. Please only apply for 1 of the available programs until notified otherwise.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 P.M.