



MARCH 2008

March 27 Meeting in Maplewood

Upcoming League Events

- Thursday, March 27, Membership Meeting, 7:30 pm, Maplewood City Hall
Thursday, April 24, Membership Meeting, Hazelwood City Hall
Friday, May 30, Installation Dinner, Norwood Hills
Thursday, June 12, Golf Tournament, Golf Club of Florissant. See our website to register.

The next League meeting will be held at 7:30 pm on Thursday, March 27 at the Maplewood City Hall, 7601 Manchester Rd. (Directions: from I-170 go east on I-64 to the Hanley Rd. exit. Go right (south) on Hanley to the traffic light at Manchester Rd. Turn left and city hall will be about 1/2 mile on the left, across from Steak n Shake. From I-44, exit at Murdoch Ave. and continue 1/2 block. Make an immediate left onto northbound Laclede Station Rd. Go approxi-

mately 1 mile to the stoplight at Manchester Rd. and turn right. Take this to city hall.) Program: Transit Oriented Development (TOD) - Many regions that have implemented light rail systems have also established TOD overlay zoning districts to help promote and guide development near stations. Citizens for Modern Transit is promoting these concepts in St. Louis and a representative will discuss what types of development are compati-

ble with transit systems.

Variable Speed Limits on I-270 - MODOT will soon be installing variable speed limits signs on I-270 to try to control congestion and increase capacity. It will allow MODOT to lower speed limits before a jam to try to prevent stop and go patterns by evening out speeds.

Tom Blair from MODOT will attend to discuss the proposal and how it may impact local traffic.

Inside this issue:

February Meeting Synopsis 2
Park Commission Approves Planning Grants 2
Nominating Committee To Meet in April 2
Legislative Update 3
MO American Water Offers Watershed Grants 4
AAA Members Support Red Light Cameras 4
Property Tax Program 4

League Hosts Seminar on Electronic Records

During the last few years, the Missouri legislature has enacted several significant changes to the State's Open Records Law. Municipal clerks and elected officials need to have an understanding of what constitutes a record under the law to ensure compliance, particularly electronic records.

Because of the complexity of these changes and the need for a thorough understanding of

the law, the League has asked Municipal Attorney Ken Heinz to provide an overview of the Open Records Law. Both elected officials and city clerks are encouraged to attend. The program will allow plenty of time for questions.

It will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 2 at the Creve Coeur Ice Arena & Golf Course Meeting Room, 11400 Olde Cabin Rd. (Directions: from New

Ballas, go east at the traffic light at Old Ballas. Continue east past the golf course to the club house.)

The cost is \$25, which covers materials and refreshments. A registration form has been sent to city clerks. The form is also on the League's website www.stlmuni.org under the Current Events link.

February Meeting Synopsis

At the February 28 meeting the membership heard a presentation from Peter Sortino, President of the Danforth Foundation, who described a recent study to try to create a world-class environment on the Arch grounds.

Mr. Sortino pointed out that the Arch and Riverfront are under-utilized and attendance at the visitor's center is down 28% in five years. After viewing the Arch and museum, most visitors leave the grounds as there is nothing else to do. Mayor Slay asked that Foundation to determine options available to create a world-class riverfront park.

The study by the Foundation originally examined options along the river bank, but problems with a relative lack of size, coupled with flooding and dan-

gerous debris limits any type of permanent attractions. On the west side of the Arch grounds is the depressed section of Highway 70 and the high traffic Memorial Drive. Plans to calm traffic and create a bridge over the depressed section are very expensive, but the Foundation feels they need to be pursued to help tie the area to the rest of Downtown, but a few acres of Arch grounds would be needed.

What the Foundation study finally determined is that some of the 91-acres Arch grounds could be developed into attractions initially envisioned for the grounds. However, because the land is federally owned, Congressional approval would be required.

Following the presentation the membership adopted a resolution

supporting creation of a world-class environment.

Also at the meeting the membership formally adopted the outline for use of the 5% cell phone settlement funds that many members have contributed. The League will use the funds for policy analysis, enhanced legislative relations, and to help ensure that local revenue distribution is accurate and maintained to provide adequate services for your citizens.

Des Peres Mayor Rick Lahr reported that Kirkwood Mayor Mike Swoboda is out of the hospital and doing well in a rehabilitation facility.

We appreciate the warm welcome from the officials and employees of City of Des Peres who hosted the meeting.

Park Commission Awards Planning Grants

The Municipal Park Grant Commission recently awarded 9 planning grants to County municipalities to help assess current facilities and plan for future needs.

Some communities requested funding for city wide assessments while others focused on only one park. The maximum

amount for planning grants is \$4000 for an individual community. The use of planning grants also helps cities score additional points when applying for construction grants, which the Commission awards each winter.

Municipalities which received planning grants and the amounts are:

- Berkeley \$4000;
- Creve Coeur \$4000;
- Eureka \$3840;
- Manchester \$4000;
- Oakland \$4000
- Shrewsbury \$4000;
- Sunset Hills \$4000;
- Town & Country \$4000;
- Webster Groves \$4000.

Nominating Committee to Meet in April

The League's Nominating Committee will meet in early April after the municipal elections to make recommendations to the full membership on a slate of candidates for officers and board members.

There will be at least one vacancy to be filled. The Board usually meets about 10 times

per year.

The Board is open to any elected official. If you would like to be considered by the Committee please send a letter to the League office by April 4 indicating your interest.

The staff will compile all of the letters received for the Committee for their review and recommenda-

tions.

The Committee will be chaired by Mayor John Nations of Chesterfield, Immediate Past President. Additional committee members will be announced at the March membership meeting.

Legislative Update

Most of the top legislative priorities have had hearings, but only a few major issues have been debated. Most of the bills passed by each chamber have been non-controversial consent bills.

The League continues to send weekly email and fax updates on legislative actions. If you do not currently receive the legislative update by email and would like to, please contact our office at staff@stlmuni.org.

Some of the bills we are tracking include:

SB 711 (Gibbons) In reassessment years, increased values (as a group) require a rollback, even if the entity is below its rate cap. In the following year, after a public hearing and written rationale, the entity may set higher rates, if it is below the cap. Estimated tax bills must also be mailed with the new assessment in the spring. Entities must provide the estimated tax rate to the County or face a 20% penalty. SB 711 passed the Senate on March 6.

SB 1276 (Griesheimer) TIF bill would correct the unconstitutional definitions in the 2007 law and remove language for a local TIF commission. It is aimed at correcting defects, not at policy issues. Local Government Committee.

SB 1281 (Griesheimer) would change distribution of auto sales taxes so that 1/2 would go to dealer's city. Currently most local option taxes goes to the purchaser's city, but 25% of the one cent countywide tax goes to the dealer's city. Heard in Local Government Committee on March 12.

SJR 42 (Griesheimer) would allow the legislature to enact special laws for any political subdivi-

sion. The Constitution states that a law shall apply to all cities and counties of the same class, but some loopholes exist so special laws are passed. Some are struck down by the courts. This proposal would allow the legislature to pass special laws, some of which could be beneficial, some detrimental. Local Government Committee.

SJR 48 and SB 1217 (Stouffer) would authorize a 1% sales tax for rebuilding I-70 and I-44. Transportation Committee.

HB 1376 (Portwood) fines collected from red light cameras would go to schools. Public safety committee.

HB 1377 (Portwood) phases out property taxes on motor vehicles. Ways & Means Committee.

HB 1378 (Portwood) allows citizen petitions to submit TIF projects to a 2/3 council vote. Economic Development Committee.

HB 1395 (Dusenberger) would require that cities report each year to the legislature that the city has cooperated with federal and state agencies in reference to immigration enforcement. Police must notify Immigration Services if an arrestee is believed to be an illegal alien. Immigration Committee.

HB 1424 (St. Onge) reinstates the overtime pay exemption. Heard in the Workforce Development Committee on February 5

HB 1440 (Roorda) requires elected officials to complete a Sunshine Law training course. Passed the Government Affairs Committee March 6.

HB 1598 (Sater) enacts a sales tax exemption for over-the-counter drugs. However, an MML sponsored amendment would apply the exemption only to those drugs when prescribed by a doctor. Passed by the Ways and Means Committee on February 7.

HB 1663 (Young) changes the standard for violations of the Sunshine Law from "knowingly" to "negligently", which would make it easier for officials to be sued for up to \$1000. Not yet assigned.

HB 1768 (Wildberger) requires cities to pay the difference between the salary and workers comp benefits to public safety workers after a traumatic job-related injury. Workforce Development Committee.

HB 1779 (Emery) Focuses on deregulation of services provided by telephone companies and companies selling VOIP (internet phone calls). The MML is working on language to maintain equal taxation on all telecom services. Passed the House March 6.

HB 1789 (Lembke) Would prevent St. Louis County from instituting its proposed recycling program in the unincorporated area. Local Government Committee.

HB 1853 (Bivins) requires closed meetings to be recorded. Judiciary Committee.

HB 2079 (Stream) property tax rollback after reassessment, similar to SB 711. Heard in Ways & Means Committee on February 21.

HB 2108 (Avery) would end "A city sharing of sales tax with "B" cities. Not assigned.

HB 2177 (Harris) classifies emails as public records. Not yet assigned to committee.

HJR 61 (Harris) in charter cities, prohibits eminent domain to redevelop blighted areas. Heard in Judiciary Committee February 26.

St. Louis County Municipal League
121 S. Meramec Ave.
Clayton, MO 63105

Plan to attend the next League meeting on
March 27 in Maplewood.

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ST. LOUIS, MO
PERMIT # 3754

*Linking Local Communities,
Strengthening Local Government
Since 1918*

*See our website at
www.stlmuni.org*

Watershed Grants

Missouri American Water Company is offering grants of up to \$10,000 for source water and watershed protection projects that result in the protection or improvement of public water supplies or watersheds.

The criteria for selection includes likelihood of sustainability, evidence of community engagement and assessing outcomes.

Projects must be competed between June 1 and November 1, 2008. Examples include: watershed cleanups; reforestation efforts; streamside buffers and citizen education.

The due date for applications is Friday, April 11, 2008. For more information, contact Kristin Ferguson of American Water at 856-3309-4688 or by email at kristin.ferguson@amwater.com.

Red Light Cameras

A recent survey by AAA indicates that motorists overwhelmingly favor the use of red light cameras to catch violators, with 73% in favor. Similar support was shown for photo or automatic enforcement for stop sign violations (61%), construction zone speeding (77%), and school zone speeding (78%). Uses to enforce highway speeding laws were supported, but with only 55% approval.

This survey shows that citizens approve of municipal efforts to improve safety and reduce accidents through the use of red light cameras. These are efficient tools that allow violators to be prosecuted while keeping police officers on patrol - a win-win situation.

Property Tax Seminar

The Public Policy Research Center at UM-St. Louis is holding a seminar on Missouri's property tax system for local government. It will be held from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 2 in the JC Penney Auditorium on the UM-St. Louis campus. Refreshments will be served beginning at 9:00 am. There is no cost. Reservations are not required but are appreciated - call 314-516-7146.

Presenters will discuss how the current system of property assessment and taxation functions, with particular emphasis on the application for local governments. Also to be presented will be a discussion of current legislative proposals relating to setting tax rates after reassessment and the potential impacts.