
The Pacer

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Olive/I-170 Approved

City council meets

The City Council of University City approved the Olive/I-170 redevelopment at its meeting June 10. In public comment, citizens opposing the redevelopment said that residents of the Third Ward, where it will be located, opposed it, because property taxes will increase and people of color and the aged will be displaced. Other criticisms: there has been no public meeting since the pool-tax error made by consultant PGAV was discovered. The error wipes out funding for community improvements. There's less in this for the city than originally assumed. The city's decision-making process has been flawed, and the numbers they have provided don't add up. Contrary to what officials have said, the city will have to resort

to eminent domain to take property for the development site. Long-established, locally-owned businesses will be dis-

Online shopping is steadily taking away business from traditional stores like the ones in the redevelopment.



Clemens community gardeners at their June workday.

placed. The public has not seen a commitment letter from a lender. There is no community benefits agreement. The developer can abandon the project without consequences. The flawed process will lead to a state audit and civil litigation.

Supporters of the project said it will reduce vacancies in the Third Ward and provide jobs. Infrastructure will be repaired and updated. The sellers are willing. The redevelopment is popular across U City. In a poll on nextdoor.com, 73% voted for it. The city needs the revenue and will be sorry if it lets this opportunity slip. Former Councilmember Paul Schoomer (Second Ward) said that in U City too much space is taken up by entities that for one reason or another do not pay tax. There isn't a long line of developers waiting to do deals here. He commended current councilmembers for doing great work.

After the unanimous vote approving the project, Mayor Terry Crow announced that the

anchor tenant is Costco. Everybody already knew that, but his announcement was a great relief to reporters who no longer have to write, "the anchor tenant, which may be Costco...."

Seeking American Art

Library show and other events

Calling all artists to submit their work for a show entitled *Illustrating American Creed*. Wall-mounted art, short video and written word works should be brought to the public library, 6701 Delmar, July 22-28. An artist statement is required. For thematic guidelines and other information go to ucitylibrary.org/gallery. The exhibition is a project of Citizen Film in partnership with the American Library Association, the National Writing Project and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The summer adult reading program continues. The books are *Moby Dick* and *The Bluest Eye*. Discussions are at 7 pm July 24, 3 pm July 25 and noon July 26. The John Huston film of *Moby Dick* will be screened at 7 pm Aug. 14. The *Ville and the Hill*, a storytelling event with Bobby Norfolk and Beverly Brennan, is at 7 pm Aug. 7.

U City Events

School looms...but not yet

National Night Out against Crime and Back to School Rally is 5-8 pm Aug. 6 at 8136 Groby Road. The event will feature music, food and drink, bounce

house, face painting, backpacks with school supplies, hair cuts and styles, immunization clinic, community information booths. Free and open to the public

Swim-In Family Movie Night is Aug. 2. *Aquaman* is screened at 8 pm at Heman Park pool. Free to pass holders, \$7 to others. The Farmers Market continues every Saturday morning until November at Market in the Loop.

Weather Forecasting

A flawed art

The weather forecast is the main event of local TV news programs, the reason most viewers tune in. Stations vie with each other in promoting the accuracy of their forecasts. But all are still wrong a lot of the time. I have another idea for a selling point.

On the evening of June 21, Channel 5 forecast that June 22 would be sunny and warm, with no chance of rain. That was 100% wrong. The 22nd dawned stormy and chilly. The rain didn't let up until mid-afternoon. This was a Saturday and the first day of summer. The weather put a damper on the Loop Arts Festival and Farmers Market, along with countless games, picnics and other outdoor activities all over the area.

That evening, Channel 5 didn't acknowledge the error, which is standard practice. They're missing a marketing opportunity. We live in the age

of apology. Higher ratings will go to the first station that advertises itself as having contrite forecasters. When they get it wrong, they'll apologize. Throughout the telecast, a little banner will run along the bottom of the screen, like the one they use on snowy days to announce school closings. Only this one will say, "Loops Arts Festival, we're sorry we blew it. Midtown Farmer's Market, we beg your pardon." And so on.

Music Events

Opera and orchestra

Union Avenue Opera opens its 25th season with *Candide* by Leonard Bernstein, based on Voltaire's picaresque satire, with a special appearance by Illinois diva Christine Brewer, on July 5-6 and 12-13. Puccini's *La Boheme* follows on July 26-27 and Aug. 2-3. The season closes with a new opera about a prisoner of war's return to America, *Glory Denied* by Tom Cipullo, Aug. 16-17 and 23-24. Performances take place at 733 Union Boulevard. Ticket info: 361-2881.

Gateway Festival Orchestra will be holding three of its concerts in the Loop this year, at 560 Music Center on Trinity Ave. July 14, the musicians welcome new conductor Darwin Aquino. The July 21 concert is entitled *A Summer Carnival*. The season wraps up July 28 with *Piano* at the Movies. Concerts are free and start at 7:30 pm.

U City Schools

Issues of race

A panel discussion about the School District of University City was held at the library June 19. Jim Kirchherr of Channel 9, the moderator, said that he lives in U City and his children attended the public schools. He admitted that like many parents he had a Plan B (move the kids to private school) but in fact the public schools were fine.

Sharonica Harden-Bartley, superintendent, said that many parents choose private schools, and not just in U City:

"It's a St. Louis thing."

She added that parents do ask her about quality and safety. She said, "We have pockets of excellence which I try to make pervasive." John Lubeck, an author, said, "I went to U City High in the '50s, when it had the reputation of being one of the best in the country."

Then, all students were white and most were Jewish. He returned to teach from 1965-85, spanning the time when the schools became majority African American. Rapid change was hard to manage, he said, but those who embraced change learned so much. He recalled how it hurt to hear people say, "Isn't it a shame what happened in U City?" He said, "We lived with a lot of anger. When white families left we saw that as a defeat, eroding what we were trying to build." Tracy Hinds, a

current administrator, said, "There's a lot of pride in U City schools."

Linda Thompson, a retired teacher, said that it was a great experience teaching 95% African American classes. Kayanna Wymbs, a recent graduate of the high school, said that the public thinks "kids doing crazy stuff in the Loop" are U City public school students, and



The Farmers Market on a June Saturday. .

it's not true. As a student she felt that troublemakers and academic high achievers were claiming the lion's share of teachers' attention. Little was left over for average students. She said that she felt unprepared for college.

Kirchherr speculated that now a lot of U city parents can afford private school, more than in the past. Harden-Bartley stated that 52% of school-age kids in U City attend public schools. Private schools recruit aggressively in U City, offering

scholarships to athletes and other desirable students. The U City population is aging. In the future there will be fewer students. Lubeck stated that as far back as the 1930s, many Flynn Park children went on to a private junior high school. Today, "Plan B" kicks in at 7th grade. Many parents believe that the primary school are satisfactory, but as students enter adoles-

cence, problems set in. Hardin-Bartley said the advice is widely given that if you live in U City, plan to pay for private school. She said, "My goal is to make U City schools as good as private ones." The issue is not the kids but many parents not having "tools and perspectives" to support them. Since the '90s, 60% of U City students qualify for free lunch. Thompson, having taught in

several U City schools, noticed the difference in parent involvement in schools between north and south of Olive. "Kids were not supported in the same way," she said. North of Olive, "I brought breakfast for kids and held study halls where they could do homework. I used to judge parents who wouldn't show up for conferences. Now I understand they maybe had bad experience at school or have other worries now." Wymbs said, "U City is diverse but the

schools are not." Other panelists noted that Flynn Park is about 50/50. But as grade level goes up, diversity goes down.

Big Book Sale

Support the Y

The YMCA Book Fair has been moved up from mid-August to July 19-23. As well as thousands of books, the fair offers CDs, DVDs, etc. It is the Y's largest annual fundraising event. Proceeds go to strengthening communities. The Campus Y at Washington University is a major participant. Hours are 9 am-9 pm. On July 19, early birds pay \$10 admission for first pick. Succeeding days entrance is free. July 22 is half-price day. July 23 books are \$10 a box. The location is Queeny Park, 550 Weidman Rd. There will be food trucks, entertainment, family activities and author appearances.

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