

## St. Charles Hills Subdivision Meeting – February 24, 2026 – 6:00pm

- Introduction of Trustees: Paul Stumpe, Cathy Ganahl, Margaret Wolfinbarger
- Review of the Agenda
- **Mike Elam - St. Charles Council Chairman** [Mike Elam - District 3 | St Charles County, MO - Official Website](#)
  - The original plan was to have Patti York, and Mike was a great substitute.
  - Patti joined the council - was a former mayor - Joined in 2024.
  - Neighbors had sent questions through on the sewer lateral program and Mike brought copies with more information.
  - Mike provided the Annual report the county executive gave two weeks ago (and was very engaging!)
  - **City Hall Acquisition** – We agreed to build roads in exchange for the building. The County will get this building, but it requires a lot of work - \$19m in repairs. The windows are not manufactured any longer and the seals are broken which is expensive. It is a great location for the County administration; literally across the street. The County executive building is on top of the hill. Also, this preserves the parking garage. We won't move in until the new city hall is built.
  - **Crime stats** – have been going down for five straight years [from 537 in 2021 to 248 in 2025]. We were the only county open during the pandemic, so everyone came to St. Charles and when they went home, they stole our cars. We feel secure in St. Charles County. The one thing you can do, lock your car and take your keys.
    - Vehicle task force. County Prosecutor - 90% of cars stolen are unlocked and have keys in them.
    - Major crimes are going down. The only one that went up was rape. Most rapes are between people who know each other but don't understand boundaries.
    - Our crime rates compared to the region are much lower. Our law enforcement works well together with other counties.
    - Everyone saw crime decrease from 2024 to 2025.
  - **New Parks for St. Charles:**
    - **Henges Westland Park** and Education Center. Great Rivers Habitat Alliance. We will have it 9 months out of the year. The other 3 months are for duck hunting. 785 acres. This is a passive park with a focus on hunting safety, especially for women and children hunters.

- **Kinetic Park** – located in Dardenne Prairie. Includes Pickle ball. The playground is all inclusive for children with disabilities. A fabulous skatepark is there with a half pipe ramp that was so famous it had its own website.
- **Heritage Center Museum** -The County has an arrangement with the history museum and library district. If anyone wants to do geology and look back at your history or the history of St. Charles, you can go there to look up ancestry. This is a really cool new thing we never had the opportunity to be a part of before. First partnership with the library district.
- **Spring Bend Park** - 126 acre park. Donated by the family. This is another passive park. No swing sets or ball fields. More walking trails. In phase 2 of engineering.
- How the parks stack up: 1,225 acres per 100,000 residents in St. Charles.
- **Roads** - 1-70 & I-64 expansion – the plan is to extend from 2 lanes to 3 lanes across the state. At 70 and 40 - where Hwy K starts. That is now 3 lanes.
  - Work at railroad bridge will continue until fall 2028.
  - The railroad people don't have to do anything they don't want to do, so there has been some work getting them to move the railroad tracks. You cannot shut down a railroad - temporary railroad crossing. We needed to fix where Hwy 70 narrows down. You have to squeeze under a 2-lane road. Expand the Hwy K down to Hwy 70 - that is 4 projects rolled into one. Largest single MODOT contract at a cost of \$631 million.
  - There is a new planned \$650 million Mercy hospital. \$1.3B economic development to be completed by 2029.
  - Route N Corridor. MODOT didn't have money before the gas tax and couldn't keep up with road repairs. We are the 29th most populated state. We have the most roads of any state in the country. MODOT has been prioritizing road programs in terms of upkeep.
  - Hwy N is the unfunded road project in the state of Missouri. \$100m road project and the county only have \$25m. They gave up road funding to come up with the other \$25m. They had to go find \$50m to fund Hwy 364. We are using that model again for Hwy N. They desperately need to expand it. Should have something positive by the end of this year.
  - [image unavailable] Decades of work expanding the north-south road grid. North to South blue lines. The green lines MODOT will pay for. The blue are what we pay for with County money. They put together a County Road board and there is a tax (part of sales tax) that pays for all of this. This comes back to taxpayers every 10 years (because there is a sunset clause). The road board tax comes back for re-approval. Since 1985, it has not received less than 73% of the vote in approval.

- **Unemployment:** We are doing very well at 3%. We have led the region and state. We keep developing jobs here. People here used to go to St. Louis County to work. The majority are now staying in STC to work.
- **Job growth and population** - St. Louis County and City are seeing population and job decline. This is the first time both of them have done that. Lincoln County and Warren County are the future of the region. Our children can't afford to live in St. Charles County where a new home is \$600K. Our fastest growing demographic is 60+. Young people are leaving or living at their parents' house. They cannot afford to live. Generally, people want to live where they grew up. This is a negative consequence, if you take advantage of the senior tax freeze - you have to stay at your house. A lot of seniors downsized. They got rid of the big house. Went back to a 3 bed, 2 bath home. People are selling homes in St. Louis and moving to St. Charles. 70% of households in St. Charles do not have children age 17 and under. They are going to Warren and Lincoln counties.
- **Share of Regional Growth 2015-2025**
  - Commercial development - a ton of senior communities are popping up. People sold their houses on the other side of the bridge and are coming here for their 'forever house'.
- **Senior Property tax relief - 2025**
  - 28,000 seniors collectively saved over \$5m.
  - Clarification on what tax gets 'frozen'. We were the first county in the state of Missouri to do this. This was very hard on Michelle McBride and her office. We asked her to figure it out and there was no protocol or process for how to do it. If you are frustrated, she is more frustrated because she has to build and manage the program. St. Louis County changed all the parameters. 67 years old. The court said you can't do that. You have to pass the program the way you wrote it. Once you are in, that is your baseline. You won't see a big savings for the first few years. It will give you savings over the years you live there. If you move, your baseline starts over. The idea looked good on paper but isn't executing well in practicality.
  - **Tax freeze ballot - this April - election.** They put this as part of the "Save the Kansas City Chiefs" Senate Bill 3. This was part of a deal that got made. It will now be available to everyone. To every homeowner in St. Charles County. There are 36,000 affected homeowners. School districts are suing and saying it's unconstitutional because it cuts into their bottom line. If this passes in April, our best guess is 120-130K homeowners will qualify. All of that tax revenue for schools and fire districts is either frozen or will go away.
    - My worry if it passes is that taxpayers will have to recoup those losses to schools, fire and police by getting piled on with sales tax.

- The freeze was on real estate taxes. When households saw 15-20% increase in real estate taxes they were upset.
- Covid - used car prices went up 35%. The assessor has to use the NADA book to assess your car. That is set by the state.
- **School district performance**- is very good. St. Charles made a great recovery and is back into the game. While the performance metric (test scores) is not the end-all-be-all, it is the metric people use to gauge the schools.
- **Emergency Shelter Funding**. The County is granting \$30,000 to local nonprofits for overnight shelters when temps drop to 20 degrees.
- **Wealthiest County** – residents of St. Charles County have an average income of \$120K. We have been #1 for the past 15 years. We have people who make really smart decisions. We are in a battle for our young people. If we don't figure out housing and jobs for our young people, we will die. We will just die slower than the rest of the region. (A demographic winter - dying faster than you are birthing). We have to figure out housing and how to be more attractive to young families.
- **Short term rentals** - working on a program for enforcement through the County. We have City and Rural properties to reconcile so setting up enforcement is tough. We will model it after St. Charles City ordinances.

For more information, visit the County Council webpage:

- [County Council | St Charles County, MO - Official Website](#)

### **Officer Shawn Birdsong - St. Charles County Police Department**

- There are 1,159 homes in St. Charles Hills and it is one of the largest subdivisions in St. Charles.
- Transient traffic can lead to criminal activity.
- Our crime stats are going down significantly, both Property crimes and persons crimes.
- For the year 2025, there were 1,112 calls for service in the subdivision and 82 reports.
- Down 300 calls for service.
- 65% of the 1,112 are proactive, due in part to the " Walk 'n Talk" events hosted by police. They continue to engage with residents as part of their commitment to community policing.
- No shootings.
- What we are doing to bring crimes down: Technology is one of the six pillars of policing. Technology and community policing.
- License plate readers -There are 500 in St. Charles County. Those are insurance policies. That information helps solve crimes and look closely to put the puzzle pieces together to solve crime.

- Drones. To find missing people; children. They use infrared technology. 5-6 man hours that might have taken off that warrants a vehicle pursuit. We had to spend hours looking for those people. On our task force night, officers hit areas that show an increase in crime. The criminals may start West in O'Fallon as they flee from officers. At Hwy 70 and 5th street, police deploy spike strips. It takes 10-15 officers to set up a perimeter with dogs, etc. We have a drone in officer cars. They can turn on the infrared and the heat signature heats up within 2 minutes. Officers get home safe to families. The IR heat signature also shows if the criminal is armed.
- In the community: Walk 'n Talks. Some issues that have been addressed. They are trying to keep the neighborhood clean so you have high property values. We are vested and connected and trying to be as visible as possible.
  - We know traffic is a concern. The traffic unit is engaged in the subdivision. 70% of violators are residents. That is a double-edged sword.
  - Crime Prevention - please leave valuables in your home, not your car. Please bring the garage door opener inside the house. A group was ransacking cars and used the garage door opener to access and rob the home.
  - You are the eyes and ears for the subdivision. If you see something that doesn't belong, please contact us. Do not send money over the phone or email.
  - Anybody who goes to Florida for the winter? If you are gone for a while and your medications or Amazon subscriptions coming, have a trusted individual collect your packages.
  - St. Charles County Police is customer service driven organization. Vacation checks are available. Go to the webpage and put documentation there to check the home. Officer will walk around your house.
  - SCCMO - police - sign up your Ring (or other) camera. All our services are offered there.
    - [Police Department](#)
    - [Community Camera Program](#)
  - If you are having a block party, we will sign up to have people come out.
  - Flock license readers don't read license plates. They are for home invasion. It's basically a game cam. Info is wiped after 30 days. We partner with them as a tool in our toolbox for investigation. The County can't supply cameras on private roadways. They are strategically placed all throughout the county. (License plate reader is a Flock. Genteel is another).
  - St. Charles Hills Subdivision would get a cheaper rate than a \$3,000 lease. You would pay \$2,400 per year. Police then sign a memorandum agreement to access the info but you own them.
  - Neighborhood watch. We could get people together and decide what to look for. Park issues and others.

- The St. Charles Police non-emergency number: 636-949-3000. Ext 1 is dispatcher, Ext 2 is an officer and they can answer questions.
- St. Charles Police can do a traffic study, but we need to understand what we would do with that data.
- Shawn Birdsong will contact the traffic department on our behalf for the children running motorcycles up and down streets and creating nuisances. The Trustees need to formally request this via email. Be descriptive of what you want.

**Trustee Financials** (available on request but not posted to our website)

- Suggestion from Chuck to eliminate equipment in the parks and upgrade one park and make green space in the others to save money – especially in light of families with children shrinking across the County.
- Paul and Bob shared pictures of upgrades to the parks (Fleet, Ipswich, Orton).
  - Cleaned up the brush down by the creek.
  - Work done at Orton
  - Storm clean up - \$20K on trees that came down.
  - Fixed Christine's tree before it came down on the house.
- The trustees need to address storm drains. Sandford creek erosion will get us eventually.
- Please clean up your gum balls.
- 32 home owners are in collections for not paying their subdivision dues. Several liens have been put in place on foreclosed homeowners.
- Trustees request volunteers to help with trustee duties and park clean-up.
  - Question: Can neighbors have a dumpster put up for gum balls?
    - We did this several years ago and the price was \$400. It would be much more now.
- **Elizabeth Kasparie (realtor) - ideas for community engagement:**
  - During the garage sale in May – we could possibly do a pet adoption or pet drive with Needy Paws family, a foster based rescue. They could bring adoptable puppies. Bring people from outside the neighborhood. I would like to sponsor a few of them to the parks for community involvement.
  - Craft table where you could sell things or do a giveaway.
  - We need more involvement in the community. Charity around park clean up.
  - Involve Neighborhood businesses to help raise funds for the BBQ.

- Garage sale is the second Saturday in May.
- If you need a sign for the Subdivision meeting, Elizabeth can provide one from her realty company. Just reach out to her.

**Meeting adjourned at 7:50pm.**