

Written Questions & Answers from the 2/16/23 SBD Meeting

- **Question:**

If I have several properties in the SBD, will I be able to get a break on this new “tax?” I used to have 4 properties—2 houses and 2 duplexes—but taxes kept going up and I got rid of 2. I love St. Louis Hills. Have been here 25 years. I would love to help w/my taxes going to Police and Parks but how much can I keep giving in my taxes and not see a difference?

- **Answer:**

Each property will be taxed according to its assessed valuation, which can be found on the City web site (www.stlouis-mo.gov ; click on Real Estate & Land Records; then on Address & Property Search; enter your address and you can see current taxes, assessed total, appraised total, etc.). We will look at providing help for property owners in need and developing guidelines to address need-based issues. Owning multiple properties in and of itself wouldn’t necessarily qualify an individual for a break. SBDs have made a difference in the lives of residents where they currently exist—the St. Louis Hills SBD can make a difference for us.

- **Question:**

Will we know the exact taxable amount per assessed value before the proposal is put to a vote or will the amount fluctuate as needs change?

- **Answer:**

The exact amount won’t be able to be determined until the 2023 Property Assessments have been finalized. However, you can estimate your SBD contribution by going to the City site noted above. When you see your current “Assessed Total” (approximately 19% of your Appraised Total), divide that number by 100 and multiply by .35 (the SBD anticipates using \$0.35/\$100 of assessed value as its basis). That will give you an **approximate number**. For example:

Assessed Total = \$81,850

Divide by 100 = \$818.50

Multiply by \$0.35 = \$286.48 (**Approximate Tax** based on current assessed total)

NOTE: if your Appraised Total increases or decreases for 2023, your SBD contribution will increase or decrease based on the change.

- **Question:**

If we pass the SBD and issue a tax levy, what incentive does the city have to put any money/effort into St. Louis Hills?

- **Answer:**

By statute, the City may not decrease services to an area that has an active SBD.

- **Question:**
If the SBD tax is enacted, will there be a sunset feature?
- **Answer:**
Yes. The initial term of the SBD is seven (7) years. After that, there would need to be a new vote to re-authorize the SBD.
- **Question:**
Would the city/SLHNA consider an exemption to the tax for citizens over a certain age?
- **Answer:**
There will be guidelines developed on need-based issues.
- **Question:**
Will the STL city get the tax money? Who is in charge of the SBD?
- **Answer:**
The SBD funds will go to the City as part of the annual Real Estate Tax collection. For its part in collection and disbursement of the funds to the SBD, the city will retain 1.5% of the total collected. The balance of the funds will go to the SBD and will be spent based on the budget developed by the SBD Commissioners, who will oversee the SBD. Park Central will administer the funds for the SBD as well as advise the SBD on compliance with existing statutes.
- **Question:**
How much money will be spent on the parks and why when the city already takes care of them they cut regularly in Willmore Park behind where I live. How much will go to protection of security guard?
- **Answer:**
The SBD budget hasn't been determined yet, so it is difficult to say exactly how much money will be spent in each area. Security will likely be in the range of 40% of the budget; parks could be in the range of 20%. If the Parks Department will consistently maintain the parks, there will be other opportunities identified for capital improvements in the parks.
- **Question:**
What beta testing has been done? On the 4 week study, 2 arrests. What is the status of the 2 arrests?
- **Answer:**
You mention the first beta test (4 week study) in your question. Details can be found at: <https://stlhills.com/safety/SLH-Four-Week-Test.pdf> . As of March 1, the security patrol will

begin for three (3) nights each week. Enough contributions have been made to date to provide security at this level for the balance of 2023.

- **Question:**
Can you further define what “public infrastructure” means and how much money would go to Awarenet?
- **Answer:**
Public infrastructure can be defined as many things—a 50/50 sidewalk program, street/pothole repairs, speed humps, tree removal/trimming, etc. The cost of AwareNet is \$1.50 per camera per month. Currently (3/1/23), there are 110 cameras active in St. Louis Hills.
- **Question:**
How will Rockwell be taxed in the SBD?
- **Answer:**
Rockwell does not own its location—it leases the building and surrounding premises from the City. Since it does not own property, it will not be taxed through the SBD.
- **Question:**
Some of us recall that a security guard hired by a CID in Shaw shot someone and the district was sued. There were also protests in the neighborhood. Has the possibility of a similar incident been discussed? What are the plans to address?
- **Answer:**
No one involved wants shots fired by criminals, residents, or police officers. Although we are working with Campbell Security to minimize the chance of such an incident, it could occur. That’s why the SLHNA engaged a law firm to help ensure the legal terms of the contract addressed indemnity and liability. Additionally, Campbell Security, SLHNA, and AwareNet all have insurance coverage. The SBD will, of course, obtain coverage that mirrors the coverage obtained for the test by the SLHNA.
- **Question:**
Who would control the percentage surcharge of the SBD?
- **Answer:**
The rate of assessment (currently \$0.35/\$100) will be controlled by the SBD Board. The Board will seek input annually from the citizens of the district and will base it on the developed budget for ongoing services and projects in the district. It cannot, based on the

bill passed in the Board of Aldermen, exceed \$0.50/\$100 at any time during the seven year term of the district.

- **Question:**

Will the security resources be deployed to other neighborhoods in case of emergency?

- **Answer:**

The SLMPD has the authority to cancel any private-duty shift, in part or in whole, based on their need for resources. However, the St. Louis Hills SBD security patrol would not patrol other neighborhoods during their shifts for our neighborhood.

- **Question:**

Why are we paying for security when the city is supposed to provide same? Same with mowing the parks?

- **Answer:**

The primary reason we are engaging security is that regular-duty police officers cannot use the tablet which displays the automated alerts from the 110+ neighborhood security cameras. The secondary reason is the SLMPD does not have the resources to consistently patrol our neighborhood or consistently respond quickly to calls for service.

The park would be mowed because the city often doesn't have the resources to consistently mow neighborhood parks. The answer to us on mowing the park is that it would be done every two weeks "as resources allow." This has been a major issue in past years.

- **Question:**

Why for 7 years—not just for 2-3 years?

- **Answer:**

We need time and experience to make the SBD work for us. A shorter period would barely allow the SBD to get established before having to re-authorize. The rate of assessment can be adjusted on an annual basis and there will be an annual budget process as well, so that spending is well documented.

- **Question:**

Is being a member of the SLHNA and a board member of the parks (receives funds) a conflict of interest?

- **Answer:**

The idea is to get representatives from various organizations that are invested in the neighborhood on this board. So, no, there is no conflict with having a SLHNA or Friends of

Francis Park member on the SBD Board. And to be clear, it doesn't require a "board member" from those organizations, just a "member."

- **Question:**
For Oldenburg: why have you along with the other elected alderpersons held the gentleman responsible for hiring police and ask why he's not doing his job? If it's money why are they not DEMANDING a pay increase for ALL policepersons? Are you going to quit your job to be a full time alderperson?
- **Answer:**
Honestly, these are not questions that can be answered by a neighborhood group. Any questions regarding specific actions taken or not taken by our elected officials would be better directed to the Alderman or to the Mayor's office. While the Alderman has assisted in getting the Board Bill and Petition written and passed, he is not directly engaged in this effort.
- **Question:**
Why can't the Board of Aldermen "push" the Mayor to allocate the funds received from the Rams Settlement and Covid Relief to public safety and security issues that plague the city?
- **Answer:**
Again, that's not a question we, as a neighborhood group can answer. Any questions regarding specific actions taken or not taken by our elected officials would be better directed to the Alderman or to the Mayor's office. While the Alderman has assisted in getting the Board Bill and Petition written and passed, he is not directly engaged in this effort.