

**VANDEVENTER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORP.**

**YTD Annual Report**

**January 1-Dec 31, 2024**

It has been an exciting and busy time for us in the Vandeventer Neighborhood. The mission of Vandeventer CDC is to deliver an orderly and cohesive development of Vandeventer Neighborhood per the North-Central Plan. Development plans can be canceled or put on hold for reasons like crime, the neighborhood isn't kept clean and maintained, and vacant houses. Many long-term plans for development are finally being built. What you have is what you worked for, and that hard work has paid off. In the past 2 years, shovel-ready projects and commitments totaling more than \$160,000,000 have been made in the Vandeventer neighborhood.

We have the following report:

**Housing:** Ms. Yvonne Carter completed oversight of the demolition of 4008 Page Blvd. a 1 ½ story wood frame house owned by LRA. Ms. Carter has gotten 4011 Finney through the Prop NS process and reported stabilization work has been done on the home. Ms. Carter after a year of work got 4133 Page Blvd. demolished.

**Development:** AMICSTL has cleared its final steps and is cleared to start construction on this \$100 million project by March 2025. Phase 1 is to be completed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2026.

SLDC Monarch on MLK, located at Vandeventer and Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd. in the Vandeventer Neighborhood, will be open by the second Quarter of 2025. This multi-million-dollar project will be for workforce development and will house several city agencies, such as LRA.

Close to 15 houses have been gutted and rehabbed in the Vandeventer neighborhood.

**The Delmar Streets project:** *It's All About Delmar* led by Judith Arnold, with engagement from the Vandeventer and Gaslight Square residents for the redesign of Delmar Blvd in the Vandeventer/Central West End neighborhoods, is focused on safety measures, aesthetics, and environmental measures. A broader neighborhood engagement with architectural drawings and survey was conducted at the Juneteenth Celebration a big thank you to Judith Arnold, Prof. Catalina Freixas, and Georgia Palmer for their public engagement work. Attached are renderings of proposed changes to Delmar Blvd from Vandeventer Ave. to Taylor. The proposed changes are widening the city tree lawn and adding bump-outs for parking along with rotaries to be located in intersections, which have yet to be determined. These proposed changes enjoy support from 90 % of the residents of Vandeventer and the Gaslight Square neighborhoods. Renderings are on the last two pages.

The MoDOT Page Blvd/Route D project hangs in limbo as neighborhoods become aware that road measures proposed by the state aren't acceptable.

**Membership:** Since April 2024, membership of Vandeventer CDC has tripled, and the Board of Directors has been expanded with 3 new members.

**Engagement and work:**

495.5 cumulative hours in meetings to address problems and attract development and resources for the Vandeventer neighborhood. 2023: 756 cumulative hours

Vandeventer CDC President Michael J. von Gebel has spent 39 cumulative hours (since June 19th) watering 119 trees planted on Delmar. To date, 1510 gallons of water have been given. 2023: 78 hrs.

908 cumulative hours spent picking up litter and removing vegetation overgrowth in alleys Paid staff, volunteers, and Vandeventer CDC members. 2023: 846 cumulative hours.

207.5 cumulative hours of city Lawn mowing and maintenance and neighborhood beautification by President von Gebel. 2023: 209 cumulative hours.

This marked the second anniversary of the 119 trees planted on Delmar by Vandeventer CDC in conjunction with the City Dept. of Forestry and Forest ReLeaf. The trees that are established will no longer need to be watered by Michael J. von Gebel. In March 2025 Michael will collect the last research data and issue a report to the City of St. Louis.

Judith Arnold and Michael J. von Gebel designed the new landscape. Michael has spent nearly 151.5 hours abating invasive plant species, installing new plants, and mulching. To date a donation of 2 Fringe Trees from Forest ReLeaf valued at \$150.00, Judith Arnold donated 18 Spreading Yews a donation of \$553.64; Michael J. von Gebel donated 60 Chocolate Chip Ajugas, 10 Hemerocallis Lilies, 4 Mugo Pines, and 16 Blue Rug Junipers and supplies a donation of \$1237.89. InvestSTL awarded a \$960.00 grant for the project which allowed the purchase of 3 Sugar Thyme Crabapple Trees, 23 Violet Fire Purple Salvias, 1 Crepe Myrtle Bush, and additional Hemerocallis Lilies. Since May 2024 710 gallons of water have been delivered to plants by Michael.

#### Major Cleanups:

April 18, 2024: Cleanup of the Hodiament Tracks from Newstead to Kingshighway. 30 volunteers came out.

May 18, 2024: Major Cleanup of two overgrown alleys in the West Belle Place area of Vandeventer. 29 volunteers showed up to collect 22 bags of trash, 4 dump trucks loads of removed overgrowth, and the removal of 54 tires thank you Missouri Clean Streams for getting them hauled off and recycled.

September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024, at Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd. From Newstead to Pendleton. 9 volunteers spent 2 hours collecting 27 bags of trash in 0.2 miles. Weeds were removed, and 2 trees donated by President von Gebel were planted in city tree wells. There is still a lot more to be done.

September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024, a major blitz of the Hodiament Tracks from Taylor to Clarendon occurred. This effort organized by Judith Arnold went across Lewis Place, Fountain Park, and Academy/Sherman Park Neighborhoods, and took about 4 weeks of planning. The Mayor's office made every city resource available for this effort. The agencies and organizations involved were as follows: Dept. of Forestry, Dept. of Refuse, SLDC, NIS Dept., Mayor's Chief of Operations, St. Louis Metropolitan Police Dept., SLACO, and Vandeventer Community Development Corp.

Due to the high level of crime between Kingshighway and Clarendon Michael J. von Gebel decided to separate into 2 groups (A + B). Group A led by Judith Arnold Vice-President of Vandeventer CDC comprised 48 volunteers who collected 49 bags of trash between Taylor and Kingshighway, comprising 0.7 miles. Group B under the leadership of Vandeventer CDC President Michael von Gebel which comprised 9 men collected 47 bags of trash in 0.2 miles. Forestry removed overgrowth along the tracks which had existed for 10-20 years. In that 2-block stretch, an estimated 25 dump truck loads of brush were removed. The Refuse Dept. emptied all the dumpsters the day before the clean-up and the day after. They also removed an estimated 5 dump truckloads from one lot. Judith Arnold was able to get a walk-in dumpster which was filled with lumber, bulk items, and tires. Police provided security onsite till the volunteers and Forestry Dept. left.

Every goal was achieved, and the project was a huge success. Volunteer support funding was provided by SLACO's Sundry Whiteside Keeping it Clean Grant and Vandeventer Community Development Corp. EPA Grant funds.

On Oct. 1, 2024, Michael J. von Gebel was elected to a third term as President of Vandeventer CDC.

**Oct. 5, 2024, Neighborhoods for Change tour between St. Louis Place Neighborhood and Vandeventer neighborhoods**

**October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Michael J. von Gebel and Vandeventer CDC Board member Yvonne Carter go to MLK Jr. Blvd, to pick up trash and remove brush and weeds around the trees in the city tree wells. We also placed new mulch in the tree wells. The mulch is paid for by recycling aluminum cans we pick up throughout the neighborhood. It was an uplifting experience as people from the Ville neighborhood stopped and thanked us for helping to clean up the area.**

**Oct. 19, 2024, the Neighborhoods for Change tour covering the Vandeventer Neighborhood and Delmar Divine, Delmar Main with neighborhood leadership from across St. Louis City. The tour in Vandeventer Neighborhood highlighted Monarch on MLK, AMICSTL, Foster Funeral Home, Vandeventer Place I & II, and other investments made in Vandeventer totaling over \$160 million in the last two years with more on the way.**

**Nov. 7, 2024- Vandeventer CDC President Michael J. von Gebel is named to the AMICSTL Board of Directors.**

**Dec 4, 2024-Dec. 21, 2024: Numerous neighborhood Christmas parties are attended by Vandeventer leadership including Great Rivers Greenway CDC/Covenant Blu NA, AMICSTL, Vandeventer/Kingsway East/Mark Twain neighborhoods, SLACO Board of Directors, and St. Louis Place neighborhood. Rep. Kimberly Ann Collins annual 77<sup>th</sup> District Giveaway at O'Fallon Park Recreation Complex.**

**Throughout the year the Vandeventer Neighborhood has enjoyed the support of our area churches: Galilee Missionary Baptist, Lane Tabernacle, Hopewell Missionary Baptist, and Christian Union Church. During our many neighborhood cleanups, they have opened their doors so we may have a base camp and shelter. We thank them for always being there for us.**

**Judith Arnold organizes Neighborhoods for Change tours and has conducted countless tours. Vandeventer has partnered with Mark Twain, Kingsway East, Tower Grove South, Tower Grove East, Saint Louis Place, Mill Creek Committee, and leadership tours. We enjoy good working relationships with West End, Central West End, Saint Louis Place, Covenant Blu/Grand Center, and Academy/Sherman Park neighborhoods.**

**Every day throughout Spring, Summer, and Fall we are doing the daily work of trash pickup, cutting back weeds, brush, and doing small beautification projects not covered in this report. I want to thank the hardworking members of Vandeventer CDC Judith Arnold, Yvonne Carter, Catherine Knights, Connie Radke, Medina Brown, Sharlene Hill, Wanda Roland, Barbara Murphy, Orlando Brown, Sean Brown, Michael Corey, Ralph Harvey, Sam Lary, our residents, partner organizations and army of volunteers. You all have always asked, "What can we do to help?" I am honored that together we have had an uphill journey, but we are well underway to reclaiming our neighborhood.**

**May God Bless you all. This is the state of the Vandeventer Neighborhood as of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024.**

*Michael J. von Gebel*

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**Vandeventer Community Development Corp., President**