

# HISTORIC URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS OF INDIANAPOLIS (HUNI)

## ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

Saturday, February 6, 2016, 9:00 a.m.

Garfield Park Arts Center

Attendees: Clay Miller, Chatham Arch-Mass Ave; Bruce Buchanan, Cole-Noble; Joan Hostetler, Cottage Home; April Fisher, Cumberland; Georgia Cravey, Fletcher Place; Glenn Blackwood, Fletcher Place; Jim Garretson, Forest Hills and Meridian-Kessler; Ashley Lewin, Fountain Square; Jim Simmons, Garfield Park; Darrell Unsworth, Garfield Park; M. Jeanne Pontious, Herron Morton Place; Chris Maroldo, Irvington; Linda Sturger, Lockerbie Square; Lorraine Vavul, Meridian Park; Robert Kennedy, Old Northside; Judith Essex, Old Southside; Julia Pratt, Old Speedway; Ben Langebartels, St. Joseph; Gary Chilluffo, St. Joseph; Kent Schwob, Watson Park; Tom Abeel, Woodruff Place; Sharon Butsch Freeland, Individual Member; Marjorie Kienle, Individual Member; Jay van Santen, Individual Member; Chad Lethig, Indiana Landmarks Staff; Jeff Miller, City-County Councillor; Jordan Ryan, Guest.

President Marjorie Kienle called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. She announced that the new edition of *Indianapolis Then and Now*, by Nelson Price and HUNI members, Garry Chilluffo and Joan Hostetler, is available. Marjorie then thanked everyone for allowing her to serve as president for the last three years. Marjorie noted that as President-Elect, Garry Chilluffo, will now assume the position of President. Chad Lethig of Indiana Landmarks serves as our treasurer. She noted that a person never leads an organization by himself or herself, and she really appreciated the help of everyone who assisted in any way. She was especially appreciative of Tom Abeel's support as her vice president and Lorraine Vavul's diligence in updating the HUNI website.

Marjorie introduced the slate officers to be elected and indicated that nominations may be made from the floor. Glenn Blackwood from Fletcher Place was nominated to be vice president, and Sharon Butsch Freeland was nominated to continue another term as secretary. Marjorie asked if there were any nominations from the floor. Hearing none, she asked for the members to approve the slate. The vote was unanimous.

Garry Chilluffo then continued in leading the meeting. Before continuing the published agenda, Garry presented Marjorie Kienle with a small token of the organization's appreciation for all that she had done. The gift was a Morris-Butler House Christmas ornament.

Garry then introduced our speaker, Jeff Bennett, Deputy Mayor of Community Development. He has been working in neighborhoods for a couple of decades. Marjorie Kienle noted that today is the Democratic Caucus, and Jeff should really be there, so we really appreciate his making the HUNI meeting his priority.

Jeff told a little of his background. He went to work at Indiana Landmarks straight out of college. He then went on to work in Mayor Bart Peterson's administration. He then ran for office and was a township trustee for eight years. He was working for a nonprofit when he got the call from Mayor-Elect Hogsett to join the present City administration. His specific role is to work with the City's four non-Public Safety departments: Metropolitan Development, Public Works, Code Enforcement, and Parks. Jeff gets to make policies and investments in neighborhoods that are coordinated.

Due to the makeup of the audience and due to his own background, Jeff said his talk would be a little more on historic neighborhoods than on neighborhoods in general. He mentioned several iconic Indianapolis building that were demolished before the importance of preservation was understood. Indiana Landmarks was founded in 1960. Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission was established in 1967. There were nine historic districts in 1993. Today there are twelve, and two are in the queue; they are Flanner House Homes and Washington Park.

There have been many studies that document the value of historic neighborhoods. They give buyers more choices in styles, ages, sizes, price ranges, etc. People stay in historic neighborhoods longer than in newer neighborhoods. That stability attracts people to the neighborhood. Their desirability raises the property values.

The Mayor often talks about five decades of Mayoral vision. During the early years when downtown was being revitalized, Mayor Hudnut stated, "You can't be a downtown of NOTHING." The Hogsett Corollary is that "You can't be a DOWNTOWN of nothing." The success of downtown in recent years needs to be extended outward into the neighborhoods. However, it has to start in the neighborhoods.

The Mayor's office will not intervene in land use decisions. While you may not agree with the decisions made by local boards, commissions, and citizen-led processes, the city can assure you that the processes by which it reaches those decisions will be fair and transparent. The new head of DMD is Emily Mack.

Economic development and community development go hand in hand. The city looks for community anchors on which they can build. Capitalizing on anchors, they can use neighborhoods as the economic engines, pushing development further, one street at a time. There are challenges. They are parking, density, bars, affordability, and encroachments.

What's coming downtown? Housing, housing, housing, housing, housing. The digital issue isn't going away. It's ramping back up soon. IPS will offer the Coca Cola plant for RFP. There are at least six bidders. Another property coming up is on East Washington Street, catty-corner from Angie's List.

Robert Kennedy asked whatever became of the referendum for public transit. Jeff stated that IndyGo will make an announcement this month, regardless of the outcome. City-County Council will vote this spring regarding the referendum. Bob reiterated that we've got to get a tax for public transit.

Bruce Buchanan asked about the status of a new jail in the Cole-Noble neighborhood. Jeff Bennett stated that a jail will be built, but how large in scope it might be remains to be seen.

Clay Miller stated that compared to other cities, Indianapolis lags in green space, and the city is not helpful.

Robert Kennedy inquired about what's going on with the Circle Centre Mall. Tom Abeel pointed out that downtown needs stores for average, everyday people, not just tourists and upscale shoppers. Marjorie mentioned Nordstrom's façade repair, Blue Indy, no COA.

Lorraine Vavul mentioned the gas station that sadly will go forward at 32<sup>nd</sup> and Central Avenue

Jay van Santen referenced a local group called Verge

You can reach Jeff Bennett at [Jeff.Bennett@indy.gov](mailto:Jeff.Bennett@indy.gov), 327-4532.

Jeff Miller reported on City-County Council activities. Four councillors who were opposed to the billboard proposal are gone.

Lorraine Vavul reported on the Editorial Board's efforts to make the HUNI website and social media more useful.

President Chilluffo asked if there was any new business to come before the group. There was none.

Neighborhood reports were then given by the representatives in attendance.

Lockerbie is excited to have a number new neighbors join its annual cleanup.

St. Joseph noted that crime is up in their neighborhood. They are starting several new committees. There is lots of new development in St. Joseph.

Ransom Place recently finished a pocket park. It hopes to have a street party later this year.

Cottage Home will probably have a home tour this year. Some people who would like to live in Cottage Home are being priced out due to new construction and higher sale prices in recent years. It's an interesting challenge to encourage diversity, while keeping it affordable.

Old Speedway is gearing up for the 100th running of the Indianapolis 500-Mile Race. Mardi Gras on Main Street is coming up.

Meridian-Kessler's Washington Park is a sample of a "neighborhood within a neighborhood."

Watson Park has a cleanup scheduled for April 2nd. The Indiana Landmarks/HUNI walking tour of Watson Road will be on Thursday, May 19th. Watson Park's annual yard sale will be June 4th.

Irvington reported that the Pennsy Trail is completed. Dufour's in Irvington has closed. The Coal Factory is going to be having Jazz at the Coalyard. The 70th Halloween Festival will occur in October.

The Old Southside was created when three adjacent neighborhoods merged. They meet monthly. They will participate in the Great Indy Cleanup on April 23rd.

The Old Northside will have a home tour this year. Underpasses are being lighted with LEDs and painted in variable colors.

The St. Joseph Historic District's website is being revamped. Watch for its reappearance.

Garfield Park is working on a long-term quality of life plan. A vision summit will be held on February 27th at St. Roch Church. On April 23, 250-300 people will plant 150 trees in an event called "Reforest the

Park.” The Mutt Strut is moving to Garfield Park. A farmers market will open in May. Big Car is moving to Garfield Park, where it has bought nine houses for artists to live in.

Woodruff Place is now an Economic Investment District (EID). WP Flea Market will be June 4 and 5. The Winter Farmers Market continues in the C C Industrial Complex.

Cumberland reported that the German Church is in better shape than either the church members or the media has reported. The neighborhood had a great Christmas event. They have orderd banners for the Bicentennial. Founders Day will be celebrated on June 25<sup>th</sup>. Work has started on the Buck Creek Creek trail, which will connect to the Pennsy Trail.

North Square has about 100 houses, one-third historic, one-third remodeled, and one-third modern infill. The Indianapolis Public Library board plans to close the Fountain Square branch at Virginia and Shelby, but nearby residents are opposing it.

Fountain Square Neighborhood Association is rebuilding the organization. No one has been monitoring developments, and it shows.

Chatham Arch reported that the former Day Nursey site will be developed, but they have no idea what it will be. BlueIndy has been a problem in Chatham Arch. It should have had IHPC review before installing its equipment and cars, but didn't. The utility poles do not conform to standards. Also, the kiosks don't always blend in with historic neighborhoods.

Meridian park has lot of new residents with lots of kids. The pocket park, which was created out of three residential lots on which there were once homes, is continuing to be developed. Meridian Park continues to fight the approval of a gas station at 32nd and Central, but the project was started before the current moratorium on gas stations was instituted.

Cole-Noble is an area that has long been forgotten. Buildings like the Nature Conservancy are helping to revitalize the neighborhood.

Herron-Morton Place will host a walking tour on May 12th. The neighborhood was founded in 1886. The 61st Talbot Street Art Fair will be on June 11 and 12. Youth Works built a park with play equipment and now there are youngsters. There were 65 kids for Trick or Treaters. They are looking for new blood in the neighborhood organization.

Fletcher Place reported that it's been 218 years since the birth of early settler Calvin Fletcher. Dunaway's Restaurant has closed. A new restaurant called Slate has opened. The Indianapolis Cultural Trail will open March 26<sup>th</sup>. Virginia Avenue Film Festival SEND plans bike tours

Joan Hostetler's Indiana Album project will come to your event and scan old photos for your attendees.

The second quarter HUNI will be held at the Central Indianapolis Public Library on April 28, 2016, at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was adjourned at 11:26 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sharon Butsch Freeland, Secretary