

**HISTORIC URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS OF INDIANAPOLIS (HUNI)  
QUARTERLY MEETING  
THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 2015  
INDIANA LANDMARKS CENTER**

Attendees: Richard Campi, Fountain Square and Irish Hill; Joe Shierling, Lockerbie Square; Lorraine Vavul, Historic Meridian Park; Amy Levander, Old Northside; Peter Kuhns, Old Southside; Julia Pratt, Old Speedway; Gary Chilluffo, St. Joseph ; Kent Schwob, Watson Park; Tom Abeel, Woodruff Place; Sharon Butsch Freeland, Individual; Chad Lethig, Indiana Landmarks; and Connie Zeigler, Guest Speaker.

Vice President Tom Abeel called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m. Those in attendance introduced themselves and the neighborhoods they represented. Tom reminded attendees of the HUNI-sponsored Mayoral Forum planned for Thursday, September 10th at Indiana Landmarks. Both candidates, Joe Hogsett and Chuck Brewer, have agreed to participate. Neighborhood representatives were encouraged to get the word out.

Tom then introduced our guest speaker, Connie Zeigler. An architectural historian, Connie has written nominations for a number of properties seeking National Register status. She writes articles about architectural design for various publications. She is also available to research individual properties, but noted that she does charge for that service.

Connie related that HUNI President Marjorie Kienle had asked her to show some "Before" and "After" images of properties. However, since Connie was about to do a walking tour of Virginia Avenue for Spark Indy, she decided to focus on Virginia Avenue properties. As probably everyone knows, Virginia Avenue is one of the diagonal streets emanating from the center of town and was one of the earliest streets outside of downtown to be developed commercially. Connie noted that not all of her photos were "Before" and "After," and not all are historic.

Among the structures Connie discussed were Hotel Tango, the Broadbent Building (formerly known as the "Zipper Building") the Vance Block, Indiana Oxygen building, Fletcher Avenue Methodist Church, Villaggio, Vance Block, various art installations, historical markers noting buildings that are no longer there, Virginia Avenue State Bank, Bluebeard Restaurant, Siam Square, Fountain Block Building, Indianapolis Public Library branch, and the replica sculpture in Fountain Square.

Connie noted that the Interstate highway divided the neighborhood. The area used to be one large, cohesive neighborhood. After the highway was constructed, Fletcher Place and Fountain Square became distinct entities. A definite difference in quality of building design and materials can be seen over time. Connie realizes a city can't keep every single building, but it should keep some of its gems for posterity.

Following Connie's presentation, Lorraine Vavul gave an update on the editorial board's activities to update and tweak the HUNI website. We'll be beefing up the archive section with info on past speakers and copies of past meetings' minutes. She also noted that HUNI members can post items on the HUNI Facebook page directly, without having to go through the Editorial Board. Lorraine announced that info will soon be posted about free or low-cost ways to research your own house yourself.

Richard Campi asked when HUNI dues are due. Several chimed in to say that are paid yearly and due by the time of the Annual Meeting in February.

City-County Councillor Jeff Miller reported on items currently being discussed in the Council. Indy Rezone was recently introduced to the public, as well as the City-County Council members. It's a total overhaul of city code. Jeff attended the residential meetings. One of the items he thinks is a good change is allowing carriage houses with living spaces over garages. On the commercial side, an adjustment was made in the amount of open space required around a building. Animal control guidelines have been tightened up. In an area where property taxes are going up rapidly due to lots of renovations, development, or gentrification, a cap will be placed on the property taxes of longtime property owner. So-called "zombie homes" (the bank has foreclosed and owner has disappeared) now must be maintained by the bank. The BlueIndy electric car sharing service is controversial in many areas, because their charging stations are taking up valuable parking spaces, plus there's a question about how it was funded.

Chad Lethig announced that there are several Indiana Landmarks events coming up, and all are free. He encouraged everyone to take the brochures on the tables.

Woodruff Place will have its annual Senior Tea on Sunday, August 16th, although very little tea has been consumed at past teas. The neighborhood is working on becoming an Economic Improvement District (EID), as a means of maintaining its historic infrastructure, like its fountains, statuary, esplanades, streetlights, and town hall. 78% of the owners have already signed up to support it. They hope to get it approved by the City-County Council in September.

Old Southside has been dealing with a strip club called Lenny's on Morris Street and a smelly Metalworking Lubricants Co. on Senate Avenue.

Lorraine read a statement from Mark Reynold, who could not attend the meeting, expressing Cumberland's gratitude to HUNI for its support of saving the German Church.

Historic Meridian Park held its home tour on the last weekend in May. Due to rain, attendance was down. About 600 people came through. The tour resulted in great camaraderie among residents, good publicity in the media, but the ticket sales were disappointing. It did not raise the money needed for neighborhood needs.

Watson Park Historic District, along with Historic Meridian Park, opposed a gas station-convenience store on the northeast corner of 32nd and Central Avenue. The Board of Zoning Appeals voted it down 5-0, but the petitioner filed an appeal. Watson Park held its spring cleanup in April with at least 45 volunteers. In June, David and Shannon Forsell's home was featured in an Indiana Landmarks tour. In July, the neighborhood held its first annual progressive dinner, and the Double 8 Foods store on Fairfield Avenue a closed unexpectedly. In August, Watson Park joined with other neighborhoods for National Night Out at Tabernacle Presbyterian Church, which had over 100 people in attendance. Coming up later this month is the former Bethel Zedeck / B'nai Torah Temple was featured. Their fall meeting will be on November 5. Two Watson Park homes will be on the Midtown Holiday Home Tour on November 6th and 7th.

Richard Campi of Fountain Square and Irish Hill pointed out that he represents the oldest formally organized neighborhood association in the city. He's taken on a lot of responsibility himself for maintaining the neighborhood over his 30+ years of involvement. He avers that the best neighbor is a nosy neighbor, one who is going to watch out for what's going on around him or her. People need to try to get their neighbors to comply with ordinances. People are afraid of retribution, but they need to be proactive. A homeowner is responsible to maintain not only for his own property but also the city's property to the middle of the street and to the the middle of the alley.

Lockerbie reports that the neighborhood plans a yard sale on September 19th.

St Joseph also participated in National Night Out. During Preservation Month in May, St. Joe was on one of 4 neighborhood walking tours. It was so popular that on September 23rd, it will be on a pop up tour. The Central Avenue bridge mural painting is now done. People in the three neighborhood are invited to pick one of the faces or heads and sign their names to it. St. Joe complained to IHPC about the bright border lights in the gas station windows at St. Joseph and Delaware Streets and 22nd and Delaware Streets. As it is against city code, the lights were removed.

Old Speedway is seeking new board members. The neighborhood association is dealing with tension between residents and new commercial enterprises that encroach on their properties. The association seems to be more focused on social events than dealing with relevant issues affecting owners.

Old Northside will host its annual Treasure Hunt on July 11th. It will hold "Meet, Greet, Eat!," a neighborhood social gathering, on August 30th.

The next quarterly meeting of HUNI will be held on Thursday, November 5, 2015, at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sharon Butsch Freeland,  
Secretary