

HISTORIC URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS OF INDIANAPOLIS (HUNI)

QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, May 3, 2018

Indiana Landmarks Center, 1201 Central Avenue

Attendees: Garry Chilluffo, President; Glenn Blackwood, Vice President; Sharon Butsch Freeland, Secretary; Paula Brooks, Editorial Board and Ransom Place; Marjorie Kienle, Editorial Board and Past President; Julia Pratt, Editorial Board and Old Speedway City; Lorraine Vavul, Editorial Board, Past President, and Historic Meridian Park; David Pflugh, Chatham Arch-Mass Ave; Jim Lingenfelter, Fletcher Place; Desiree Calderella, Fountain Square; Katherine Carlton Robinson, Herron-Morton Place; Patrick Dubach, Holy Cross; Bryce Mosey, Lockerbie Square; Jordan Ryan, North Square; Pete Houpers, St. Joseph; Tom Abeel, Woodruff Place; Chad Lethig, Indiana Landmarks; Mark Godley, St. Joseph; Vernon Compton, Brightwood; Willie Hawkins, Hillside Neighborhood, Russ Sipes; Trish Whitcomb; Ruth Morales, Mayor's Neighborhood Advocate; Meg Purnsley, Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission.

President Garry Chilluffo called the meeting to order at 5:48 p.m. He welcomed all present and noted that besides HUNI neighborhood reps, individuals from other neighborhoods affected by the I-65 / I-70 North Split Reconstruction project had been invited to the meeting. Attendees introduced themselves and the neighborhoods or organizations they represented.

Mayor's Liaison Ruth Morales announced that the final meetings to update the city's land use plan will be held in coming days. The next one is at the John Boner Community Center on Monday, May 14th. Complete information can be found online at plan2020.com.

Indianapolis City-County Council President Vop Osili spoke about the meeting on the I65 / I70 North Split project, which was held at the Indiana state Museum earlier that day. He was not comfortable that the commissioners understood all of the issues that need to be considered. This project should not just be about traffic. It has to consider a broader perspective that includes the quality of life for the neighborhoods that the project will impact.

The coalition thinks that the State of Indiana, the City of Indianapolis, and the MPO all need to work together. Until quality of life and urban planning issues can be addressed, INDOT should do just the most basic of repairs. Although INDOT is good at building roads that move traffic, it doesn't have any expertise in quality-of-life matters. There needs to be an independent study. The Governor of Indiana does not want to get involved but defers all comments and questions to INDOT Commissioner Joe McGuinness. The Governor has said that the Rethink 65/70 coalition is "a small band of renegades." However, the coalition includes dozens of well-respected organizations and businesses. Jim Lingenfelter made the point that people in Indianapolis didn't vote for the Governor, that his base is from outside Marion County, so he doesn't care.

Marjorie Kienle commented that although Mayor Hogsett has come out in support of the Rethink 65/70 coalition with a nice statement, the City has committed no money. Unless money for a study is forthcoming, the City doesn't have skin in the game. Transportation is changing. Not everyone today has the love affair with the automobile that past generations had.

Councillor Osili asked if other organizations would step up to help with the funding, if the City did. Marjorie believes other organizations would participate if the City stepped up. Actions are stronger than words.

Garry Chilluffo noted that if INDOT does what it says it plans to do, it will devastate the neighborhoods. He knows from firsthand experience of moving to the St. Joseph neighborhood. The connectivity and quality of life went down the tubes as a result of the Interstate, and it took years to revive the neighborhood.

Glenn Blackwood made the point that the Cultural Trail made a huge impact on the city. It is a shining example of how important connectivity is.

Trish Whitcomb was asked by Diana Hamilton, former member of the Metropolitan Development Commission and President of Sycamore Advisors, to get involved in the Rethink 65/70 effort. Trish is aware of federal highway funds that the coalition may not be aware of. She acknowledged that Vop Osili is well-informed on the subject, but there are many other City-County Councillors who are not well-informed. They need to understand that their stand on the highway project could affect their ability to be re-elected. A badly designed project could become a ballot box issue. May 14 will be Special Session Day, and politicians statewide will be in town. Trish is available to help the coalition in any way it wishes her to and can be reached at 317-818-1728 or whitcomb@gkbaum.com.

Garry introduced the guest speaker, Meg Purnsley. She is the new Administrator of the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission (IHPC). Meg gave a brief history of the IHPC and her involvement in it. She's been with IHPC for almost eighteen years, so she knows both the old sign ordinance and the changes being made now. Although the IHPC is housed in the City-County Building, it is not technically a city office. It is an office of the State of Indiana and operates under a state statute. Because IHPC is under the state, its preservation plans take precedence over local ordinances, regardless. The sign revisions for Indianapolis are causing some concerns, but Meg has proposed language that will prohibit digital signs within 200 feet of a historic district. Even if one doesn't get added, a variance for a digital sign will have to go to the IHPC for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Meg then discussed the Cultural Districts. Plans were devised as recommendations for the designated districts. The plans do not trump the IHPC. A certificate of appropriateness still is required in a Historic District. Plan 2020 initiative was to consolidate all of the plans into one single adopted plan. The IHPC plan still trumps Plan 2020. The sign ordinance is still in draft form, so now is the time to register any additions, comments, or questions.

Marjorie Kienle summarized HUNI's involvement in the sign ordinance issue. It's now been almost four years since it all started on the day before Thanksgiving, when Marjorie learned that the full City-County Council would be voting on the sign ordinance the following Monday. It was on a fast track to being approved. We were able to prevent its being approved. Two years ago, a task force was formed to study and discuss the subject. David Hittle presented our position, which was "sunsetting" billboards, so that eventually we would have NO billboards. Digital billboards, as well as digital signs, are disruptive and not appropriate in the city. Eventually a draft of the sign ordinance was created. The good news is the draft prohibits billboards inside I-465. The bad news is that for every static billboard converted to digital, they would take down two static billboards. They would be able to convert 20 a year, up to a cap of 65. The goal is NO digital billboards, not conversions. The Task Force will work for getting lower caps and ratios. HUNI neighborhoods will need to help the Task Force in coming days.

Meg Purnsley made the point that what is referred to as a sign on the Montage was not a sign. She noted that a sign – by definition -- refers to a distinguishable logo or text that markets a company. If an image

does not have a logo or a name, then it is not technically a sign. The Montage screen is being touted as a digital canvas.

Garry Chilluffo commented on the Rethink 65/70 issue. He announced there are seven so-called concepts being considered. They haven't decided if they will just be fixing the safety problems, like bridges and asphalt, or if they will pursue the design. Everything is online at NorthSplit.com. The coalition is working hard to get the word out, but scheduling presentations has at times been difficult. In addition, organizations have asked for only a fifteen-minute presentation, which is not enough time. Next Monday night, there will be a presentation at the Joy of All Who Sorrow Church at 16th and Delaware Streets.

Lorraine Vavul asked that neighborhood reps review the info about their neighborhoods on the HUNI website to be sure that it is current. Many of those pages were created six or seven years ago, when we first started the website, and info may be outdated. The next HUNI Editorial Board will meet on Friday, May 11th. The big push that we would like to take on is publishing neighborhoods' activities on the website and on Facebook.

Gary asked for a motion to table the reading and approval of the February meeting minutes to the next meeting. A motion was made by Jim Lingenfelter and seconded by _____? _____, and the motion carried. Neighborhood reports were then given.

North Square reported that the Indiana Historical Society will be doing more architectural beer tours this year. As a result of its popularity last year, the Rubush and Hunter tour will be repeated in May and July. A new tour will start in June and August, called "Ugly Ducklings – Blueprints, Buildings & Brews," which will focus on Mid-Century Modern and Brutalist architecture downtown. Preserve Greater Indy and the Bates-Hendricks Neighborhood Association will team up on May 19th for an architectural scavenger hunt and a one-hour presentation on how to research your own historic home, led by Jordan Ryan. On June 16th, Preserve Greater Indiana and the Indiana Medical History Museum have teamed up for a "Painting for Preservation" event in which they have invited *plein air* artists to paint on the grounds. You can walk around and look at the old buildings. It's free. The Virginia Avenue Music Fest will be from May 9 through 13th with 130 bands, 10 stages, most of it is free, so come out and party.

The Fountain Square Neighborhood Association is currently defunct. There are three projects in the works that required approval. A new Fountain Square Fire Station 3 is under construction, which will contain approximately 14,000 square feet, including a 3-door apparatus bay, living quarters, office area, storage, a fitness room, and a Battalion Chief's quarters.

Lockerbie Square will have a neighborhood cleanup on May 19th. At some point, there will be a brick dedication ceremony. People in the neighborhood kicked in the money to buy 31 trees to replace those lost by the Emerald Ash borer. Many gave in memoriam or want their names put by their trees.

Old Speedway City Neighborhood Association noted that it's racing season in Speedway. The Mini-Marathon will occur this Saturday, May 5th. Carb Day is on the Friday before the race. Upcoming activities include "Rockin' on Main Street" on May 25th. The neighborhood association is offering a speaker this coming Monday, May 7th. The Harding Group will occupy the building that was formerly the Sarah Fisher-Ed Carpenter Racing Team, and they will provide the speaker. A block party will be held on Saturday, June 23, in the park, replacing the usual annual picnic. There's another social July 2nd. The annual garage sale will be the weekend after Labor Day.

Ransom Place reported good news in that the developer who proposed private dormitories at 1010 Dr. Martin Luther King Street has decided he can't build there. He's put the lot up for sale for \$895,000, which he bought for \$350,000. The plans expire in December, and it's unlikely anyone will take them up. There's a budding partnership with IUPUI, The Walker, and the Urban League to do an inventory of structures left, record stories, and create some signage.

St. Joseph had a good cleanup with a great turnout. A local real estate agent has pledged to donate 10% of her commissions to the neighborhood foundation for any sale within the neighborhood. St. Joe is restructuring its board for better continuity and sustainability to have a better knowledge transfer. Also trying to engage local businesses. One of St. Joe's earliest residents, Leah Orr, has sold her building, due to health issues.

Chatham Arch reports that development is finally slowing down a little. Four projects before IHPC are dragging due to technical reasons. Utility work is underway on College Avenue for Auto Works. Chatham Arch Night at an Indians game is June 11th. Brew Ha Ha, Indy's original craft beer festival, is on Saturday, June 26th.

Fletcher Place had its neighborhood cleanup. Italian Festival will be on June 8th and 9th. The Fletcher Place Kids Association is having a poetry party on June 3rd. They're raising money by selling lemonade and their poetry book.

Meridian Park had a tree planting with KIB. It was a miserable, rainy day, and not many residents turned out, but KIB brought about 30 volunteers. They just had a Cajun brunch this past weekend. Neighborhood is working on more lighting. The Sports Legend Experience just opened at the Children's Museum. Nearby, the Decorators' Show House at 4140 N. Illinois Street is currently open through Mother's Day.

Woodruff Place will host its 40th Annual Flea Market on June 2nd and 3rd. Thousands of people come through. Regarding the earlier mention of transfer of knowledge and institutional memory, Woodruff Place noted that the City struggles with it too. There was an article in the paper the other day about the first LED lights recently going in. However, Woodruff Place did a conversion to LED lights in 2012. They paved the way by "betting the ranch" on LED lights six years ago.

Garry Chilluffo announced that IPL is asking for a rate hike. He has heard different figures of \$11 a month and \$17 a month as probable average increases. Let your neighborhoods know, especially if you have many people on fixed incomes. Comments can be submitted until May 17th.

The third quarter HUNI Meeting will be held on Thursday, August 2, 2018, at 5:30 p.m. at Indiana Landmarks, 1201 Central Avenue. The second quarter HUNI Meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Butsch Freeland
Secretary