

**HISTORIC URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS OF INDIANAPOLIS (HUNI)**  
**QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES**  
**Thursday, November 1, 2018**  
**Indiana Landmarks Center, 1201 Central Avenue**

Attendees: Garry Chilluffo, President and Editorial Board; Glenn Blackwood, Vice President and Editorial Board; Sharon Butsch Freeland, Secretary and Editorial Board; 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, Historic Meridian Park, and Past President; Beth Whitaker, Bates-Hendricks; David Pflugh, Chatham Arch-Mass Ave; Clay Miller, Chatham Arch; Andy Beck, Cottage Home; Jeff Miller, Fletcher Place; John Hornberger, Garfield Park; Sandra McGuinness, Herron-Morton Place; Jim Obermaier, Irvington; Bryce Mosey, Lockerbie Square; Jordan Ryan, North Square; Pete Houpers, St. Joseph; Mark Godley, St. Joseph; Chad Lethig, Indiana Landmarks; Mark Dollase, Indiana Landmarks; Shannon Norman, Principal Planner, City of Indianapolis; Hope Russu, Mayor's Neighborhood Advocate.

President Garry Chilluffo called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. Attendees went around the room and introduced themselves and the neighborhoods or other organizations they represented. Garry then introduced our speaker for the evening, Shannon Norman, Principal Planner for the City of Indianapolis, whose subject was the new sign ordinance. To help us understand her position, Ms. Norman explained that Tammara Tracy was her predecessor.

Shannon explained that when Indy Rezone was updated in 2016, the sign code was intentionally taken out of that process. Because it was an important part of the code and because it had some controversial areas, the decision was made that the sign code be tackled separately from the rest of the zoning areas. In 2016, the zoning ordinance that was in effect then dated to 1968 and need to be passed as soon as possible. Updating the sign code too would have delayed the passage of the rest of the zoning code. In addition, there were several legal challenges to sign codes around the country, and the City of Indianapolis had entered into litigation regarding the sign code.

Therefore, the rest of the zoning ordinance was completed and went into effect in 2016. A sign task force of 32 people had been formed prior to that to discuss the existing provisions. When Shannon started her job in November of 2017, she got the task force back together. They met in six meetings between February and August of 2018. Throughout this period, sections of the sign ordinance were constantly rewritten. She also solicited input from citizens via the civiccomment website, where 139 comments were received. She talked to many neighborhood groups, the Mayor's Neighborhood Advocates, and the City-County Councillors. The final draft of the sign ordinance is scheduled to be presented to the Metropolitan Development Commission on Wednesday, November 7, 2018.

Questions were raised about how the people on the task force were selected. Shannon noted that signs are the most litigated area of zoning law. The City of Indianapolis must be concerned about legality and enforceability, to reduce the city's risk. In 2015, GEFT Outdoor LLC sued the city on the grounds that it violated the First and Fourteenth Amendments. The judge agreed. Under the settlement, GEFT was able to convert two traditional billboards near Interstate 70 on the city's east side and near Interstate 70 on the city's west side into digital signs. We are now stuck with these two digital billboards forever.

The sign code revisions began in 2013, but it became obvious that the sign code needed more work than other portions of Indy Rezone. In 2014 and 2015, when the GEFT case came up, the sign code was separated from Indy Rezone. It went before the City-County Council without the sign code portion of it. We have six more districts now than under the old ordinance. One of the good things that came out of the task force is that in Indy Rezone, protected districts have special allowances. IHPC districts and locally designated districts and sites are included.

Lorraine Vavul asked if National Register neighborhoods are included, as they are not locally protected districts. Shannon will check, but she believes the intent of the sign code included all historic districts, whether or not IHPC designated. Mark Dollase asked if a neighborhood is National Register-eligible but is not listed yet, but a later become a national register neighborhood, is it protected? Shannon said, "Yes." Indianapolis has 32 or 33 National Register districts but only 17 IHPC districts. Mark also asked if a map was created of Marion County, showing which districts would have this protection. Everything orange on Shannon's map is protected. New billboards and existing billboard have different requirements. Getting permission for a brand new billboard is more stringent.

Marjorie Kienle noted that HUNI has been actively following this situation for four years, beginning on the Monday before Thanksgiving of 2014. Our goal was no digital billboards. As technology has changed over the years, our concerns have only increased.

Shannon will send the draft ordinance to Garry to share with the HUNI members. She will also let HUNI know the legislative schedule, so HUNI members will know when the hearing will be.

Why not go with a complete ban on billboards? The administration feels getting blighted billboards down and out of neighborhoods is a priority. If they went with a complete ban, that would not get the existing ones down, as they would be grandfathered in. Allowing digital billboards was a way to incentivize removal of old billboards. The City is always looking at best practices, and this was the one that reflected the market in Indianapolis. When a billboard is removed, to get the full amount of credit, both the sign and the pole have to be completely removed to receive the maximum credit.

Paula Brooks discussed the fact that neighborhoods that aren't well-organized don't have the protection they need. Jeff Miller questioned the maps Shannon showed to the HUNI meeting attendees. Anyone can ask for a variance in any area, regardless of code, even if there is a ban. It's hard to get a use variance. Marjorie announced that Martin University has asked for the largest billboard ever erected in Indianapolis. The hearing will be on November 29th. She also noted that in the past there was an annual fee. Now it's a one-time fee. How do we pay for someone to monitor billboards without funds?

Shannon stated that there has been no deception on the part of the two people who drafted the language of the sign ordinance. She's only interested in making an enforceable, lawful, and doable code for Indianapolis.

We need bodies at the MDC meeting at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 29th in the City-County Public Assembly Room on the second floor.

Marjorie Kienle moved to approve the minutes from the last HUNI quarterly meeting. Pete Houpers seconded. The motion carried.

Marjorie discussed the preferred solution for the I65 / I70 north split project. It somewhat meets the four criteria the Rethink 65/70 coalition proposed. It has some walls and some expansion. She's been told that INDOT has never moved this much on a project before, so we have in fact made a major impact. Even though it's not all that we wanted, we really need to think of this as a win. Monday was the last day to get your points in. The Arup Advisory people will be in town on Monday, November 12, meeting with the coalition committee and city officials. At 6:00 p.m. Arup will make a presentation to the public at Indiana Landmarks. There's still work to do. We're not done, but we made a difference.

Lorraine Vavul reported that the Editorial Board has added maps of all the historic district to the HUNI website. We will also be adding audio interviews to the website. The first one will be an interview with Nancy Holliman Johnson, a 97-year-old resident of Ransom Place.

St. Joseph recently had its quarterly meeting. They got input from neighbors. They are monitoring developments in the neighborhood.

Herron-Morton Place had a successful Pizza In The Park last week. Their next big event will be a progressive dinner in February. They too have a lot of construction going on in their neighborhood.

North Square suggested that for a full list of their events, go to [discoverfountainsquare.com](http://discoverfountainsquare.com). Coming up November 16th is Tonic Ball, which is a fundraiser for Second Helpings. It is almost sold out. Last week they had their annual Halloween block party, "Nightmare on Elm Street" because they still have a few blocks of Elm Street left in the neighborhood that the highway didn't take away. Their officer elections are in December. They have two sort-of high profile rehabs on the Virginia Avenue commercial corridor. They had a whole weekend of 10 free events for more than 70 people. Glenn had a captivating urban highways introduction. They hope to do more things with HUNI in the future.

Cottage Home's land use committee had a resident who wanted to demolish her family home. It was continued six or seven months. The woman recently withdrew her request. Hopefully, the home will instead be renovated. They also have a little new construction going on.

Fletcher Place will have its board elections on Tuesday, November 13th. The Iaria demolition case was finally decided. They were fined about \$30,000. This was a difficult case for IHPC.

Ransom Place has another new construction at 10th and California Streets, a duplex or multi-family. Another house is being built at Camp and St. Clair. Also, 930 California is undergoing a rehab. It's been a nightmare for the investor who bought it. The old Ransom house at 824 California Street has just been renovated. The IMPD Downtown District is planning a community conversation to talk about homeless and panhandling ordinance that's before the City-County Council now.

Garry mentioned on behalf of St. Joseph that Leah Orr's former house is back on the market. The people who bought it gutted the interior and then decided not to move forward.

Old Speedway City will have a progressive dinner on December 10th, which will include board member elections. They usually have a "Light the Night" Main Street event on the first Wednesday or Thursday of December. IMS is having its second lighting event this year. There are always new construction issues going on in Speedway.

Irvington held its annual Irvington Halloween Festival in October. It began with a charity ball, which had 350 people at the Irvington Lodge. Over 60,000 people came to the Irvington Street Fair, which is probably the largest number they've ever had. Coming up on the 23rd of December is the Irvington Winter Luminaria. The Benton House Home Tour was in September with ten different properties on it.

Chatham Arch's Foundation's main activity recently was the restoration of the Myron Street brick alley from Arch to 9th Street. They partnered with the City of Indianapolis, which managed and designed the project. Chatham Arch writes the check. The project cost \$235,000. Because the project was so expensive, the City is allowing Chatham Arch to pay \$125,000 of the \$235,000 cost this year and the remainder at a minimum of \$40,000 per year thereafter. They will probably have a ribbon-cutting later in November or early in December. On September 29, Chatham Arch had their annual block party at the Firefighters Union Hall. Board elections are coming up on November 29th. On January 31st, they are having their second annual wine-tasting fundraiser at Liberty Street. There are a few small construction projects. Huge utility poles are going up for Bottleworks.

The Mayor's Neighborhood Advocate for Mid-North and Northwest Downtown, Hope Russu, announced the Mayor's Neighborhood Resource Fair will be at the Fay Biccard Glick Neighborhood Center at 2990 W. 71st Street on Thursday, November 8th from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. It's like an open house, and each table will be staffed by a representative from a different city department or service. Hope also passed out a leaf collection flyer. If you have questions about anything, call 317-327-4622.

Historic Meridian Park will have a progressive dinner on Friday, November 8th. They had their annual chili cook-off, which was won again by Dr. Stephen Towns. Thank you to Hope Russu and her husband for being judges. A HMP residence will be on the Midtown Holiday Home Tour.

Lockerbie Square had its block party this fall. Unfortunately, it was on the same night as the famous Cottage Home block party. Lockerbie's Christmas party is at the St. Joseph Brewery.

Garfield Park reported that the Red Line and Big Dig projects are well under construction. Shelby Street is a mess, but they'll get through it. There's a new place called Garfield Brewpub. The emphasis of the Friends of Garfield Park this year is going to be getting the fountains working. The Garfield Park Conservatory will have its annual poinsettia show in December.

Bates-Hendricks lost two board members who moved to Fletcher Place, so they've elected a new treasurer and a new chair of marketing. They are starting weekly dinners sponsored by Dathouse Center at Lincoln Center Coffee. Their monthly supper club continues. They raised \$1,000 at their Oktoberfest. They held flu shot clinics and their good neighbor cleanup weekend. All their city parks had work done in them. They're excited about their new neighborhood discount cards. Coming up is their annual chili cook-off. They will also hold a holiday dinner in December.

The HUNI Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, February 2, 2019, at 9:00 a.m. at the Irvington Lodge, 5515 East Washington Street. The third quarter HUNI Meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sharon Butsch Freeland  
Secretary