

Council of Neighborhoods Associations CONA Monthly Membership Meeting

John R Hooker Room, City Hall, July 16, 2014

Meeting Attendees: Jon Lawrence, Bryan Park, Jan Sorby, Bryan Park, Don Granbois, Blue Ridge, Cynthia Bretheim, Prospect Hill, John Williams, Matlock Heights, Marjorie Hudgins, Old Northeast, Bill Milroy, Old Northeast, David Derkacy, Eastside, Paul Ash, McDoel, Elizabeth Cox-Ash, McDoel, Pat Jeffries, Sherwood Oaks, John Kennedy, Spicewood, Sandi Clothier, Near West, Sophia Hauserman, Near West, David Walter, 6th & Ritter, Molly O'Donnell, Commission on Sustainability, Eastside, Jacqui Bauer, Commission on Sustainability, Kathleen Boggess, Park Ridge East, Georgia Schaich, Green Acres, Patrick Murray, Prospect Hill, Tim Mueller, Elm Heights, John Arnold, Gentry Estates, Carol Gulyas, Near West.

The meeting was called to order at 6:03. Introductions were made, and the first agenda item was tabled to allow for the participants to arrive.

Secretary's Report

The first order of business was a review of the last two months minutes. Marjorie Hudgins called for approval of the May 21 minutes, Elizabeth Cox Ash seconded the motion, motion carried unanimously. Cynthia Bretheim made the motion for the June Minutes, and Jan Sorby made the second, and the June minutes were also approved without changes.

Treasurers Report

Elizabeth noted that no deposits or changes or checks were drawn, resulting in the interest amounting to 33 cents. Marjory moved approval, with Jon Arnold providing the second; vote passed unanimously.

Current Planning Issues: University Courts

Marjorie indicated there was not much new information; the brick streets (where the homes in University Courts are being removed) are being worked on finally (a grant for the Historically designated streets will pay for the restoration work). As to the moving of the houses on this IU property, Historic Landmarks is involved with the issue. Five of the six houses, Jan Sorby added, should be saved, according to Bloomington Restorations and Indiana Landmarks, who have been partnering to try to save the homes. IU said they would move 4, and the 5th house, they are willing to have BRI move and refurbish, but only if IU retains ownership and control of the house, so it is not clear at this point what will happen with this property. Marjorie said that the 4 or 5 homes that are moved will be restored, and will be resettled in the neighborhood. The Neighborhood Association thinks this may be the best of possible results, given that the homes will be removed. She suggested that the neighborhood would like to begin a discussion with CONA and the City Council about noise issues, since they are fairly certain that will happen, given that a noisy Fraternity House will be established on the property being cleared in the University Courts neighborhood.

Commission on Sustainability, Molly O'Donnell and Jacqui Bauer- Guest Speakers

Molly O'Donnell spoke to the group about the Energy Audit that is available to residents to help homeowners and renters understand how their home uses energy and how to improve it's efficiency. A grant will pay for each audit done and she thinks that CONA could benefit directly by getting neighborhoods to sign on to get the audit done.

She also talked about the task of the month, a list of things anyone can do to green their household; it involves a new task each month, turning down the thermostat each evening, wrapping the water heater, and other items on how to green your household, that the Commission would like to share, and would encourage CONA to distribute to neighborhoods. There is a payment, currently goes to SIREN, but some Bloomington religious institutions are also participating, where Energizing Indiana pays twenty five dollars for every audit that a homeowner signs up and has done. They will look at insulation, in walls and the attic, and many other energy issues. They will also give the homeowner CFL

light bulbs. Unfortunately the program will end in December (update: the program runs only through September). The utility companies are promoting this, and they are interested in getting data for each neighborhood.

Jacqui Bauer added that there is a 2 year implementation period, which they are in the course of developing now. The Commission would like help from CONA to get the word out to neighborhoods, so they can get what they need to adopt an energy plan for the City of Bloomington.

Jacqui said that the Sustainability group is meeting every two weeks, and looking for suggestions and ideas for getting landlords involved with and supportive of this initiative, since 2/3rds of Bloomington's housing is rental. Georgia has agreed to serve on this committee, and they are looking for more volunteers to serve, the time for this plan is through 2015 and ending in 2016.

Growth Policies Plan

There is no new information to present this month.

Certified Tech Park

David Walters reported that the City still maintains a website (city of bloom/business); he noted that if you walk or drive by on Rogers Street north of City Hall, you notice a large green area where the IU Printing Services building used to be. Lee Huss, City Forrester, checked the trees on the site; one large oak tree will be preserved. Also, the building at 11th and Rogers is finally coming down, and in about a month will have seed and sod at the site.

Eagle ridge – Brock has been contracted to work on installation of new water lines in the area, and other infrastructure improvements. At 10th and Morton, a couple bids came back in that were not acceptable. The work has been tabled for the time being, and a new request for proposal (RFP) will go out again shortly.



Bylaws/ Election of Officers

Jon mentioned that the new CONA Bylaws were passed last month, and he clarified the election process; since elections were just held earlier this year, the first term will be up in a year, the executive committee will have some officers elected in even years, and the others in odd years. This is in order that there will never be a total change of officers, and will provide continuity to the process.

Education Committee

Georgia Schaich noted that Gary Founds will be at the next meeting, he will be discussing Neighborhood covenants, what they are, how to change and update them.

The Over Occupancy committee, which consists of Jenny Southern, Tim Mueller, Bill Milroy, Jan Sorby, and Georgia, is working on the complexities of the problem, and possible solutions to make the system more effective and Tim noted that over occupancy contributes to noise, traffic, and poor maintenance; it also yields big money. If you have 5 people, often the rent soars to 2500 a month. It also means that landlords look for houses they can convert to rentals, Tim suggested that in their neighborhood, often houses are sold before being on the open market, and they (landlords) look for ways to increase the rental space, such as filling in porches, etc. to convert the space to livable and rentable space.

Bill Milroy has been a watch guard in the University Courts area. Marjory Hudgins noted that we have 3,4, 5 year program of inspections and the inspectors are trained well, but still there are many unregistered rentals.

Jan Sorby noted that the committee is looking for tools that would help the enforcement of the current occupancy requirements. Jan passed around a sheet showing the Multi family zones that stayed at 5 occupants, with the core residential area with a limit of 3 occupants. The city suggested that the occupancy is listed on the inside of the home.

The goals set for committee are to not over reach, and to look for paper changes, and not towards changing the rules. Tim Mueller added that right now just a small paper that is posted that states the rental -- for smoke detectors, submitted to the city- it has to be posted and viewed for that one day, only gets inspected

What the committee has been looking at is a system where affidavits are used, they are more hardball, with all tenants as well as the landlord required to sign; this must state the number of tenants that will be living there. In conversations with West Lafayette it is one of the most important ways to cut down on over occupancy. And this is what is used in Fort Collins Colorado, the same town as the Plan department is using for guidance on their GPP (Growth Policies Plan). The committee has looked at communities with more tools in their toolbox. For instance, sanctions for violations in some communities are \$1000 per person per day, for violations, with strong rules and penalties for over occupancy. The biggest issue is documenting who is actually living in the house. The city allows you to have one non-related person in your household but if there are two or more, you must have a valid rental occupancy permit.

The committee is trying to find ways that can address the affordable housing issue. The next step for the committee is a questionnaire, to find out in what neighborhoods this is becoming a problem, and then will come conversations with stakeholders, best way to present these ideas to the city.

It was suggested that Vickie Provine can show us where the rental units are. How many are families, how many are rentals.

Technology Committee

Serve IT committee at IU. Jon said that we are pretty sure we will be getting help to create a website, and to any neighborhood that is interested in help to create their website, we will start when classes start in fall. He noted that we have approval for using the Bloomington.in.us URL so we can cona.bloomington.in.us.

New Business

Jon noted that CONA can ask for quarterly meetings with departments, but because of all the issues with planning, we think it is most important to have a meeting with them first. Questions that you have for planning, how planning notifies neighborhoods involving a zoning change, or other questions, should be submitted so we can develop a list.

Neighborhood Issues

Suggested topics for next meeting: Issue: how the traffic process works, when do they notify neighborhoods? Do we need a committee to look into the traffic issues in neighborhoods?

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.