

**Council of Neighborhood Associations (CONA)
Monthly Membership Meeting
John R Hooker Room, City Hall, February 18, 2015**

Attendees: Jon Lawrence, Bryan Park, Paul Ash, McDoel, Elizabeth Cox-Ash, McDoel, Bill Milroy, Old Northeast and Northeast Downtown, Cynthia Bretheim, Prospect Hill, Bradley Carlson, Broadview, Nick Leisure, Clayton Tow, Jim Williams, Park Ridge East, Carrie Winkel, Crescent Bend, John Kennedy, Spicewood, Don Granbois, Blue Ridge, Sandi Clothier, Near West, Athina Bikos, Serve IT, Michael Valiant, Service Learning, Tom Shafer, Park Ridge East, Dave Walter, 6th & Ritter, Georgia Schaich, Green Acres, Judy East, Eastside.

Approval of Minutes

The Meeting was called to order at 6pm; introductions were made, and the first order of business was to approve the minutes of the December 2014 meeting (there was no meeting in January due to the Annual CONA party). Minutes were reviewed and Don Granbois made the motion to approve, with Georgia offering a second; minutes passed unanimously.

Jon noted that after the meeting last month, two letters were sent out to local officials and INDOT. The first was regarding support for the Crescent Bend NA, and their request for both temporary and permanent safety enhancements along 17th St, and the second letter was in regards to the Fullerton Pk. Interchange and support for the neighbors in opposition to the interchange and the road widening project along Gordon Pike/ Rhorer Rd. A short discussion followed, and Don Granbois expressed concern with the process around the Fullerton Pike/ Gordon Pk, Rhorer Rd. issue. He was concerned about the process which seemed rushed. Discussion followed about guidelines for CONA votes, and that this was, in fact, an unusual situation which the Executive Committee discussed later in some detail. It was generally felt that the action was necessary, given the time frame, but not a policy members wanted to see repeated unless in unusual and urgent circumstances.

Treasurer's Report

The treasurer's report was presented by Elizabeth, who explained that the report showed both the Waterman and Green Acres Neighborhood Associations earned only interest, so were blended into one. The Annual CONA party bills have been paid, and receipts have been submitted to the HAND department, who will reimburse CONA. The total costs were \$1,150, of that \$1,000 will be reimbursed.

Jon noted that two awards were presented at the CONA Annual Party, the Neighborhood Pride Award was presented to Mayor Mark Kruzan for his support of neighborhoods throughout his tenure, and the Neighborhood Hero Award was presented to Nancy Hiestand, HAND staffer, and Preservation specialist, who has worked closely with neighborhoods in their efforts to preserve them.

IU Service Learning Program- Michael Valiant

Jon introduced Michael Valliant, who is the Community Engagement Coordinator with IU's Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning. Michael explained that his work involves helping nonprofits or community groups connect with IU professors interested in service learning opportunities for their students. It is important that the work the students will do be connected to the learning goals the professor has for his/her class, as well as meet a genuine community need. Michael gave an example of a good collaboration of student/professor/ community need that involved a class tracing items in water and water runoff from commercial properties; this was an urban watershed class, and the class was able to actually monitor the water, helping the neighborhood prepare a plan to address the problem, and giving the students a chance to learn skills from class in the real world.

Michael also explained direct service projects, where students work directly with an agency for about 20 hours a week, but felt they would probably not be what we would be interested in.

Questions: How does someone contact you? Jon will send out information to CONA email list, also on the information packet that was passed out to membership. Email is the preferred method of reaching Michael.

New Neighborhood Associations outside the City limits

Jon reviewed discussions that took part in an executive meeting concerning acceptance of neighborhood associations that exist outside of the city limits. Our bylaws state that any NA listed with the City has automatic membership in CONA, but there is no comparable County organization for accrediting NA'S outside of the City. Sandi spoke with Cheryl Munson about the possibility of the county creating a process for recognizing NA's and Cheryl is very interested in pursuing this. She will be presenting the idea when she next meets with her fellow County Councilpersons on February 26th, and will get back with us. However, the drawback is that the County does not have a department like the HAND department, so where it would be located is not immediately apparent. Tom Shafer asked if CONA sees itself as a mentoring partner to NA's? Jon replied that yes, it is in our bylaws to encourage new NA's to form. For now, if NA's come from outside the city limits, we can simply give them a provisional membership, until we have a clear guideline.

Serve IT update

Jon introduced the Serve IT group and explained that this semester's agenda for the Serve IT group is to set up a template for Neighborhood Associations websites. Athina, the leader of the IT group this semester, led the CONA membership in a discussion of what we felt would be important for individual Neighborhood Websites. The first question was should there be a template, or should NA's be able to just "do their own thing." The general consensus was that there should definitely be a template, so that there is some uniformity between sites, and so easier to navigate and to update throughout. A discussion followed and many questions were answered. There will be a message sent out to neighborhoods to see which NA's want to work with the IT people this spring, and a date to begin the process.

Growth Policy Plan

Jon noted that no meetings have taken place recently. Sandi introduced a question for the group having to do with the issues being brought up by several recent downtown developments. She noted a report on radio station WFHB concerning the height of the newest building, a hotel on E. Kirkwood, and the controversy surrounding it. The building is approximately 30 feet over the height restriction, but was given an okay by the Plan Commission. Dave Rollo, Bloomington Council member, District 4 Representative, was reported saying it may be time for a moratorium on building, until the new Growth Policies Plan is adopted. He was quoted as saying that the council is concerned about the way new developments have bypassed the Bloomington Common Council, and that these issues need to be addressed. Sandi felt that this issue should be an issue CONA would consider taking a stand on, and asked the members how they would feel if such a resolution would be brought forward, and if CONA should support it. A discussion followed, with general agreement that this is a problem, but a desire to go back to each neighborhood to be sure there was an agreement within that membership.

Bloomington Hospital Reuse Committee

Jon informed the members that he has been asked to take part in the group that will look into possible reuse of the current Bloomington Hospital site. He will be reporting on the progress once the meetings begin. Elizabeth added that Council member Steve Volan has been studying the repurposing of campuses in an urban setting, and that he should be able to bring good ideas to the table.

Certified Tech Park

Dave Walter gave an update on the Certified Tech Park- The first phase of utility work will be at 10th St. Brock Ridgeway, of Eagle Ridge Civil Engineering will be designing the underground utility system needed for this area. There will also be work done to help with naming and branding the area, with public input sought during this phase. An RFP is expected to be ready by the end of October. More complete information can be found on the City's website, under Certified Tech Park.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45pm.