

Council of Neighborhood Associations (CONA)

Monthly Membership Meeting

John R Hooker Room, City Hall, August 17, 2016

The meeting was brought to order at 6:03. Introductions were made. Attendees: Nick Carter Old NorthEast, Carol Wise, Sunflower Gardens, Scott Robinson, City of Bloomington Planning and Transportation, Jon Lawrence, Bryan Park, Paul Ash, Elizabeth Cox-Ash, McDoel Gardens, Janice Sorby, Bryan Park, Judy Berkshire, Eastside, Nicholas Carder, Old NorthEast, Tim Mueller, Elm Heights, Don Granbois, Windermere Woods, John Grigutis, Blue Ridge, Cynthia Bretheim, Prospect Hill, Sandi Clothier, Near West, John Kennedy, Spicewood.

The minutes were reviewed: motion to approve, Judy Berkshire, Paul Ash, second, vote was unanimous. The treasurer's report was reviewed, Elizabeth Cox-Ash noted that the check referred to was for Green Acres; Elizabeth was unable to have the check picked up, so she re deposited it. The motion to approve was provided by Jan Sorby, Carol Wise made the second and the vote was unanimous.

Scott Robinson, Planning Services Manager with the Plan Department, introduced himself to the group; he explained that he has been with the Plan Dept for 14 years, and so is familiar with issues in this town. He discussed that the task of looking towards the future, through the "Imagining Bloomington," is an attempt to look at what we see Bloomington will be in 20 - 30 years, then creating a visioning statement which will be what guides the plan. In 2002, the process took 4 years, and stalled after the visioning process. With the merger with the Engineering Department, and the change in Administration, this process was put on hold. Mayor Hamilton, upon taking over as the new Mayor, hired a consultant to put together a plan to look at what we need to prepare for in the future. He explained that the Plan Department doesn't have much impact on various other things, for instance, sustainability and other issues. Each chapter introduce and how to participate.

There is another Town Hall Meeting in the Monroe County Public Library on the 15th of September. If someone cannot attend that meeting, he or she can go online, where there is an online form for comments, easy way to participate, it also can be anonymous. Anyone can also email Planning@bloomington.in.gov.

Several questions were asked, about whether we could focus on any changes being proposed to single family zoning, since that is a primary concern of CONA, and the speed of this process, with the Mayor and Planning Department's desire to bring this to the Plan Commission by November or December.

Scott replied that it would be hard to say what changes are being made, whether they are good or bad depends upon how you view it. Consultants, Ratio Architects, were hired to take our information and

make it look pretty, they didn't do an in depth analysis, just made it look good. At the September 15 meeting, they will be going to groups to get feedback, they would like to wrap up by end of September, with the idea of going to Plan Commission in November or December. Changes to the Plan are easier to make now. Scott explained that the draft was posted near the end of July, has been sent to the various Boards and Commissions. During the last Comprehensive, or Growth Policy Plan (GPP), 198 amendments were proposed. Suggestions were made as to how to get word out and how meetings could be set up. Paul Ash offered that one thing he really likes is looking at Bloomington as a series of districts.

Scott said they are interested in the big picture stuff right now, and noted that the GPP was adopted in 2002, but the zoning ordinance didn't actually happen until 2006. Density changes etc. take a long time to actually get focus on certain areas, for finer scale studies and balance, so they won't be concerned with minute zoning changes. Tim Mueller said he would like to see more in depth information within the neighborhood, including a land use map. Scott indicated there are no clear definitions on this yet, just vaguely, that yellow indicates more suburban, and urban more around IU and core neighborhood, not quite the same as the old core neighborhood. It is more reflective of an urban mixed use, and not form based zoning.

Question about downtown- Tim said that planners would never tamper with the suburban areas, they would not allow planners to duplex buildings in those areas. So the core has always been under attack, and now it appears to, again, be targeted. There has been a history of tampering with the core neighborhoods, Tim felt. Elizabeth Cox Ash added that most core neighborhoods do not have the protections that the suburban areas have.

John Grigutis added that his neighborhood, Blue Ridge, is not served by any bus routes, and asked if there were other neighborhoods unserved by the Bloomington Transit. Scott said this is dealt with in a different entity, Planning is not about mass transit, they would like to expand out on Tapp Road, Ivy Tech, but that is not in their area of concern. Jon Lawrence noted that this could be put as a mandate in the GPP to encourage that to happen, the document can be a bully pulpit for the process of moving forward on initiatives.

Cynthia Bretheim made the point that regarding the majority of plans that come forward in town, the interests of the development and investment communities are better represented than single family occupancy interests. It may have to do with who shows up, or that the core neighborhoods have to scream in order to be heard. There should be more effort and concern for single occupancy, all over the city, for all around the city. Jon added that we as neighbors spend a great deal of time on these issues, as neighborhood volunteers, and have to be at meetings for free, whereas developers are being paid when they show up, we have to be ready to organize and spend our free time to lobby in order to not be rolled over. Judy Berkshire asked what the process is for correcting the mistakes in the land use map. Scott said the land use map shows future land use, anyone can look online before plan commission, and

bring this to their attention, they will collect feedback, change graphics, and update the staff report, and then highlight changes that are made. Judy suggested having a side by side, to see changes. .

Scott said he would be happy to talk with other neighborhoods; he can go to Neighborhood Associations. Scott said that the Planning Dept. doesn't feel like what is in this document will degrade neighborhoods, but will fix it. The land use map will have more changes, etc. The Plan Director wants this to be updated more often than 14 years.

Scott noted that the Comprehensive Plan is divided into Chapters:

Chapter 1 is about Community Services, Bloomington has a wide range of services, and the impact of those services is important to the community; the goals and character of the City are implemented through these services.

Chapter 2. Culture and identity- events and activity, how does planning and transport interact and affect culture and identity? How do we support historic preservation, public spaces, roads, maintenance?

Chapter 3. Environmental- making sure we have a good balance, and continue to build on successes, reduce greenhouse gases, understand the built environment; adopt and hire consultant for a sustainability plan. Asked about water quality, Scott said Planning doesn't directly affect or interact with water, planting, etc; there is a relationship, but not direct oversight. Waste management, air, food

Chapter 4. Downtown Bloomington. Question of how do we thrive and do well, businesses, preserving the Historic Character; where is the housing tipping balance, how do we dial it back, how do we deal with overlay districts? Nore Winter made some recommendations, ideas of how to deal with downtown, do we allow expansion of downtown area, south and north, to Grimes, and up to 17th?

CONA participants: Tim Mueller noted the conversation (at the last meeting) was interesting, many people realize student density taken load off neighborhood, giving up amenities. How do we get diversity in housing, citizens want affordable housing, and we need housing geared towards the elderly. , housing, create a reward for affordable or other wanted housing. Set density high in downtown/ tax credit housing. Have a couple in town, trigger for higher density. Fed govt takes care of things. Jan-money is with retirees, Jon and Tim, that is where we would like to lean, provide by right or incentive for the by right. Expand the Downtown core. Scott: Are there neighborhoods that would be affected, yes, but that is 2 or 3 steps down the road. What are the tradeoffs, if we do expand? Prospect Hill wouldn't be as affected because it is under historic guidelines. Today down to Dodds, part of the downtown. More definitions of what the downtown overlay has dealt with.

Chapter 5. Housing and Neighborhoods- Jon- noted that there is something wrong if every neighborhood has to have a Historic District to protect their neighborhood. Built in to code, that we don't have to push for protections via historic preservation. The Mayor will be making an announcement about affordable housing and city programs, on Thursday at 10:30 in the Council chambers. Discussion followed.

Chapter 7. Land Use and Design- the challenge with Bloomington is that it's already built out, retrofit, and make those changes, and land uses that people like, sidewalks, access to parks, easily walk anywhere to get to your needs.

Jon said he would send an email, with a link to a new document, public presentation, to send out to CONA list serve. Will be sent out to neighborhoods. September 15 public meeting.

The Meeting was adjourned at 8:25pm.