

UNWA Town Hall Meeting

Neighborhood Beautification Committee Discussion October 14, 2004

FACILITATOR: Linda Hill

MEMBERS: June Carpenter, Sandra Eubank, Emma Henry, Leona Hurd, Lucian Jones, and Robert Polk

BACKGROUND: UNWA has always been a community with beautiful parks and open spaces. The neighborhood has over 285 acres of parks, golf course and parkway. Burdsall Parkway has over 6 acres of tree-lined medians, plus there are medians on other east-west streets in the Riverside neighborhood. As trees have died in these areas, they have not always been replaced. Many areas could be enhanced with increased landscaping.

Over half of the properties in the neighborhood contain buildings that are in some form of deterioration ranging from a need for new paint to being dilapidated. The recent Abandoned Housing Survey, conducted by the City, identified 750 abandoned houses in the neighborhood as being abandoned.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

- What can be done to improve the appearance of properties in UNWA?
- What can be done with unsightly buildings?
- What role can code enforcement play in improving the neighborhood?
- What should be done about vacant lots?
- Where will additional landscaping improve the beauty of the neighborhood?

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION: Linda Hill asked everyone to introduce themselves and started the discussion by asking people to express their opinions regarding the discussion topics. The responses follow. There is no prioritization in the listing.

1. **APPEARANCE:** Lack of maintenance, particularly in neighborhood housing (front, back and side yards) and vacant lots is a concern that needs to be addressed. More programs to improve dilapidated and vacant properties are needed. Would like to identify property owners and utilize code enforcement and other techniques to encourage or mandate that improvements be made. Street cleaners are thought to be ineffective. Dumpsters should be provided to assist with neighborhood clean-up efforts and illegal dumping. Residents should try to obtain the license plate numbers of offenders. Adults should work with youth to instill proper values and work ethic. Communications are important to developing a coordinated effort. Problem areas in need of assistance included 26th Street at the I-65 overpass, the 1900 block of Kohene, and the old Stouffer's Inn.
2. **UNSIGHTLY BUILDINGS:** Funds for rehabilitation programs, increased code enforcement by DMD and Health and Hospital Corporation were suggested as a primary means of dealing with unsightly buildings. The committee would also like to make use of the vacant housing survey to begin addressing the problem

Visit <http://www.unwa.org/> for more information regarding the plan.

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3. **LANDSCAPING:** Landscaping is needed along Martin Luther King between 38th and Fall Creek – sidewalks, flower pots, street lights. It is also needed for the median on Burdsall Parkway – tree trimming, sponsors for maintenance, etc.
4. **VACANT LOTS:** Need to build homes on vacant lots and conduct neighborhood clean-ups in the interim. Would like to schedule heavy trash pick-up for some of the sites. The committee would like to see increased patrols near the Sunoco station.
5. **CODE ENFORCEMENT:** See #2 above.

The group felt it is important to involve young people, especially couples in the neighborhood, possibly by providing incentives for them to stay or move back. Older people have difficulty doing some of the things that need to be accomplished. The large number of liquor stores and illegal drugs in the neighborhood are a detriment to improving the area. The group discussed having a competition and award for well-kept properties. They would also like to develop a key improvement project that is highly visible as a way of exciting people to improve other parts of the neighborhood. 22nd and Sugar Grove, 21st and Dexter, and the Bryant Heating lot were mentioned as well.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of the UNWA Neighborhood Plan Neighborhood Beautification Committee will be Thursday October 21 at 6:00 PM at the Riverside Family Center. 2420 Riverside Drive, 3rd Floor.

Notes taken by David DiMarzio, Department of Metropolitan Development, City of Indianapolis