

Broad Ripple Conservation/ Preservation Discussion Group

Minutes of meeting on May 14, 2008. 6:30 PM

Location: Old caboose at 6535 Cornell (Host: JR Walsh)
Present: J.R. Walsh, Mark Demerly, Carol Isaacson, Diane Hitchcock, Linda Shikany, Cindy Cunningham, Jan Guttrey, Sharon Freeland, Sue Zilisch, Elizabeth Marshall, Karen Brogan, Chris Carlson, Jim Michelson,

Group members: (if you wish to be removed from the list, please contact Chris Carlson)

Karen Brogan	Diane Hitchcock
Chris Carlson	
Bridget Carson	Carol Isaacson
Cindy Cunningham	Chad Lethig
Mark Demerly	Lynn Levy
Tom Evaniew	Elizabeth Marshall
John Fager	James Michelson
Bill Ferguson	Brenda Rising-Moore
Rhonda Finney	Linda Shikany
Sharon Freeland	J.R. Walsh
Jan Guttrey	Sue Zilisch
Tom Healy	

If there are others not listed above who should be part of this dialogue, please contact Chris Carlson to have those individuals added to the list. Please provide name, phone and email.

Email addresses needed

We need to involve Catherine Moore, our neighborhood liaison from the Mayor’s office, as well as our City County Council Rep, Vaughan Ryan. If anyone has their emails, please forward to Chris.

Discussion of house at 6471 N. Central (for sale by CJ Roberts)

This topic was not discussed due to other items taking up all our time.

Group Concerns and Consensus

This subject constituted most of our time and discussion. We attempted to determine what our priorities are; what we are trying to achieve and what is the most effective way to do that. Group members spoke about their own priorities, hopes, visions and concerns.

It was suggested that we need to coalesce our thoughts, preferences and goals. Individual remarks were recorded; they have been grouped into the following subjects;

A. Focus of the Group

- Mark D suggested we define our concerns; he put forth the following: zoning, preservation, quality of life.
- Focus: Zoning, land use, preservation of the unique character of broad ripple, setting a vision for the future.

B. Zoning & Planning Concerns

- There is no firm zoning designation for some areas. Developers can get their own variances and override whatever is in place. How do we stop the precedent which has been set of variance after variance after variance? How do we stop the encroachment and the “creep?”
- We need a cohesive plan of what we want Broad Ripple to look like, instead of letting things happen piecemeal. Need to cover variances, parking, taking the profits out of town.
- We need more teeth in a long-range plan which maintains mixed use of Broad Ripple, (which is part of the uniqueness of our Village) yet which protects us from a total takeover and makeover.
- The BRVA, our committee and our residents should have some control over our own neighborhoods. Too many people from the outside are coming in and making decisions which forever alter the charm and sense of neighborhood which is Broad Ripple. We should have the ability to direct our own traffic. We know this area best because we live here. Need to limit speculative building and quick profits. Once an investor has made his or her money they don’t care about the long-term livability of the area. Love ‘em and leave ‘em. We are being used!
- The militant meter company is driving business away.
- Meters are a huge problem.
- Why don’t we get the parking meter money???
- We need a broad but structured vision which provides for progress, but preserves our uniqueness and diversity.
- Our infrastructure desperately needs help. It is old, and more development just adds problems without contributing to the solution. Perhaps new construction should be required to pay huge fees to support infrastructure and other areas of concern to the Village.
- We need to know where to go for solutions to problems. And we need support of the city.
- We need significantly more influence over what’s happening to our neighborhood. We want controlled evolution to retain our unique character.
- In favor of controlled growth and controlled density—this is OK if it is planned and fits with mixed use. Must figure out how to grow and preserve. The more dense an area, the greater chance you have to support a local butcher or other local specialty stores; and the “walkability” of the area improves.
- We need to come together to build a safer community which supports our businesses.
- When something has to come down, what do we build in its place? We need better guidelines for this.
- We need more control over the density. Want to retain the cool old stuff, replacing what needs to be replaced with appropriate mixed use and something more pedestrian friendly.
- What do we lack? Need to envision what we lack and then add it to be a more self-sufficient Village. Available lots could be filled with what we need....not what the developers need.

C. Broad Ripple is unique and Hot!

- We are hot! With mixed use and charm, we are unique.

- No more piecemeal! – we want a good plan going forward, a plan with teeth . What makes BR unique? It’s all the cool goofy eclectic stuff...the yarn shops, the coffee shops, the pottery, poetry, Boogie Burgers....
- What he said! (in other words, “ditto”)
- Have had a business here 19 years. My fear is that I cannot survive much longer. Rent prices are going up, driving small businesses out. Parking is still a hassle. With the small businesses leaving, I worry that we will loose our character.
- Parking meters are driving business down and out.
- We need to fight to preserve our uniqueness; otherwise, all the charm will be torn down and we will look just like all the other cookie cutter communities which are being built to the same low standards of mediocrity.
- We want to put in place some controls, but still be eclectic & artistically expressive – not too controlled. Broad Ripple was originally a retreat community; it can still be that. Let’s not loose that special-ness. How can we plan and work to save it?
- The zero-lot-line developers don’t care what the building looks like; once business declines they move on. They don’t care about Broad Ripple....just the quick \$\$\$.
- I loved BR! It was funky, eclectic and had character. Then all the condos started going up and it all looks the same.
- And then there is the tax rate! It is killing everyone except the chains and the developers (for now...)
- Development is changing the character of BR. We need a plan with teeth to stop the pillage and bleeding.
- We need density control...but we don’t want to be a “nazi” community with tons of restrictions. We need to have more of a say in what happens to OUR OWN COMMUNITY!!!
- Don’t be a “ho” – it shouldn’t be about quick money.

D. Broad Ripple as a Conservation District

Many of the Conservation District thoughts expressed at this meeting have been expressed at earlier meetings.

- It was suggested that we move toward a conservation district because that would give us more tools and more teeth.
- The group was reminded that, if we again attempt a CD designation, we would need to be very certain that this project would fly this time. We need a solid strategic plan to neutralize objections and win over those who may misunderstand what this is all about. Our plan would include encouraging those who desire a CDistrict to remonstrate in support as needed. We also need a strong knowledgeable leader who will head up this effort.
- Neither the Broad Ripple comprehensive plan nor an overlay effort have any “teeth.”
- A Conservation district seems to be the way to go because it offers the authority to protect and preserve.

Coordinating/cooperating with other groups

Elizabeth M suggested that what we do needs to be tied to BRVA and coordinated with the core groups such as Green Broad Ripple, HARMONI and BRVA. These are slightly different in focus, but they overlap. Harmoni is an umbrella group for the central north side of Indianapolis; Green Broad Ripple is a companion group concerned with green building, recycling, etc. It is in our best interests to join forces with similar groups who share some of our goals. Our group falls under the Broad Ripple Alliance for Progress (BRAP), the 501(c)(3) companion of BRVA.

A “Visioning” session is scheduled for May 29 in the College Avenue Library (College Ave. & 42nd St.) All in this group are encouraged to attend. (someone promised to forward details)

Communications

How do we communicate to the community? The group was reminded of the offer from Jim Michelson and John Fager to produce a communications piece or pieces to assist in this effort. We will need the voice of everyone who is supportive to build critical mass. Jim said that they could do a mailing to the entire area prior to the visioning session.

“Visioning Session” May 29, College Avenue Library

This is an attempt to bring together several groups which share certain concerns to see what might be accomplished. Need as many people as possible getting together. There will be several sessions in this charette process.

Next Meeting

JR Walsh again offered to host the next meeting (thanks, JR!)
Wednesday June 4
6:30 PM
6535 Cornell -- the red caboose across from La Piedad

Everyone is asked to please bring refreshments to share.

Agenda for next meeting could include:

- More info regarding 6471 Central
- Report on the visioning Session May 29
- Continued refinement of our focus and direction
- Perhaps some action plans???

Please forward to Chris Carlson any additional agenda items.

Accuracy of these minutes

If anything is incorrect or misleading, please notify Chris who will make corrections.

Miscellaneous

I have someone’s notes from Wednesday – written on the back of a WhitePages.Com search. Please let me know to whom they belong and I will get them to you.

Karen Brogan, an attorney, has joined our group.

Unfinished business

1. A leader for the Conservation district effort if we go that direction
2. Discuss with city and HLFY leaders about our plans & approach to develop a proposed strategy which has the highest likelihood of success
3. Update on 6471 Central
4. Jim Michelson has some ideas for a possible funding source to help with supporting our efforts. He promised more information later. As a 501(c)(3), BRAP would be able to accept charitable donations on our behalf