

## **Binford Redevelopment and Growth (BRAG) Fact Sheet**

### **May, 2009**

**BRAG's short history:** On April 27, 2005, 350+ disgruntled businessmen and residents met at Skiles Test cafeteria to vent their frustration about the visual blight and deterioration at the intersection of Binford and East 71<sup>st</sup>. As a result of that initial meeting that Larry Riggle inspired, a group formed and called itself BRAG, as in working together to have something to BRAG about!

Within a few short months, 700 volunteers joined with BRAG to plant hundreds of trees, perennials, and thousands of daffodil bulbs, under the direction and with generous grants from Keep Indianapolis Beautiful. Since then, BRAG has expanded its focus with these projects:

**Building a sense of community:** In 2007, BRAG established the Binford Farmers Market that ran between June and October between 8 am - noon as BRAG's major project to bring 750 to 1,200 residents together every Saturday morning for this unique "agri-cultural" event. Neighborhood volunteers, community groups, quality vendors plus local entertainment made this BRAG's major community gathering place. Community Health, Chase Bank, Stan's Signs, Stanley Security, LISC, Lucky Dog Retreat, Boatman Geller, and others contributed funds to help us launch this brand new concept to the area.

BRAG has opened its 2009 Market on Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup> and will run it with volunteers until October 24<sup>th</sup> with an expanded numbers of vendors, even more business sponsors and neighborhood participation, and more entertainment.

There were also special Easter indoor Markets on April 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> inside Divine Savior Lutheran Church. These harvest and Christmas markets will resume on November 21<sup>st</sup>, December 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> 9 am - noon.

BRAG closely collaborates with Friends of Skiles Test Park to ensure that the only 85 acre public park in our area is a gem for everyone to enjoy. Added landscaping, construction of a Nature Center, and trails that connect to Fort Harrison and the Fall Creek Trail are being planted because of generous grants by LISC and the Central Indiana Community Foundation.

**Retaining existing businesses:** Joe Komenda and Peter Courtney have formed an effective electronic Crime Watch system that alerts all neighborhood associations and businesses about suspicious activities. BRAG has also been instrumental in getting donated space supplied by Rick Barratt to house a police substation for northside IMPD officers 24/7. Residents and schools keep ready supplies of snacks to show our appreciation for the added protection in our area.

On **Saturday, April 19<sup>th</sup>**, 2008 Deputy Mayor Olgen Williams dedicated our new police substation sign and thanked BRAG residents for their support of this community locale for officers to work and relax in.

**Attracting new businesses to the BRAG area:** Under Karen Kryah's capable leadership and the generosity of INPAWS and KIBI, BRAG has conducted 8 major beautification projects since October 1, 2005 and countless trash clean-up, fence removal, watering, mulching, and weeding campaigns with the expertise of Mike Baldwin, IPL's Urban Forester and BRAG Tree Keepers. BRAG's latest beautification party was held on April 18<sup>th</sup> when new trees and thousands of native wildflowers and grasses were planted courtesy of a United Water grant. More beautification is already scheduled for Fall 2009 with BRAG volunteers and grant money.

More than 15 local businesses beautifully mow, mulch, water, and weed 1.5 miles of Binford Boulevard, its median, and its berms on BRAG's behalf during the growing season.

In addition, BRAG works closely with the landowners at Binford and East 71<sup>st</sup> to help them attract businesses that benefit the area and trails and parklets to make it easier for residents and employees to enjoy a healthy lifestyle.

For example, BRAG has worked closely with Kroger and Donna Carr on the extensive landscaping design for the northwest corner of Binford/East 71<sup>st</sup> Street. Kroger graciously allowed BRAG to hold its annual meeting at the brand new Kroger on January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Meanwhile, the revamped Avalon Crossing on the southeast corner is doing very well with a nice selection of upscale stores, shops, and restaurants with plenty of BRAG residents as regular customers.

**Growing toward a brighter future:** The City of Indianapolis awarded BRAG one of its six coveted GINI grants in December 2006. This has enabled BRAG to identify and quantify the priorities of residents and businesses and to move forward with definite plans to ensure that the BRAG area will be THE best place to live, work, play, learn, and worship in.

During the first two years of the GINI grant, BRAG conducted resident surveys and interviews and held many public meetings and six working groups to develop its Quality of Life Plan. This Plan concentrates on these priorities:

- 1) Supporting and improving Lawrence Township schools;
- 2) Encouraging new business development and working with the 3,000+ businesses in the area to help them succeed;
- 3) Ensuring that the BRAG area is crime free and that all residents and businesses are instantly alerted online re any suspicious activity;
- 4) Working on long term goals for the BRAG area, such as light rail and infrastructure improvements along I-69 and I-465;
- 5) Planning pedestrian/bicycle walkways throughout the BRAG area; and
- 6) Improving the numbers and kinds of green spaces, parks, landscaping, and playgrounds that add to the quality of life of all businesses and residents.

**There are regular monthly GINI working group meetings.** The next one will be held on **Tuesday, June 11th at 5:30pm at Divine Savior Lutheran Church.** Help make our future even brighter!

**BRAG Quarterly meetings:** All BRAG meetings are open to the public. Please join us on **Wednesday, July 8th at 7 pm** at Divine Savior to discuss our extensive plans for 2009.

**Special events:** BRAG held its third Leaders Luncheon on Thursday, April 23rd at noon at George's Neighborhood Grill. Our guest speaker was John Elliott, Kroger's Marketing and Community Outreach Manager. Our next event will take place on July 22nd with Jim Stockman, Stanley HR Vice President, as our special guest.

**BRAG boundaries and demographics:** East 82<sup>nd</sup> Street on the north side, Sargent Road on the east side, East 56<sup>th</sup> Street on the south side, and Dean Road on the west side for crime watch reporting purposes. BRAG includes 35,000 residents and 350+ businesses. It has diverse, stable family neighborhoods with more than 50% of BRAG adults having a minimum of Bachelors Degrees.

**BRAG needs you!** To write grants and raise funds; to collaborate with local businesses, apartment complexes, churches, political leaders, schools, and neighborhood associations; to help with beautification projects; to join our Board; to maintain our website and email communications system; to help run our Binford Farmers Market, and to liaise with the City and other organizations with mutual interests.

**For more information:** Contact Lisa Angrick, BRAG's GINI coordinator at [lisa@Binford71.org](mailto:lisa@Binford71.org) or Jane Lommel, President of BRAG, to sign up for BRAG's email newsletters [Jane@Binford71.org](mailto:Jane@Binford71.org)

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