

Minutes for July 9, 2008

- The latest update about Kroger and new business development on the northwest corner of Binford and East 71st Street:

Mike Baldwin shared with the group Kroger's plans to plant 90+ trees and shrubs in and around the northwest corner. Questions to be discussed with Donna Carr and Kroger include: pedestrian access along Graham Road; their willingness to help BRAG secure pedestrian markings and signs to allow pedestrians/bicyclists to cross Binford; making the Plaza more friendly to BRAG residents as a village center, with proposed benches, overhead baskets, and shade trees. David Gorden will help BRAG discuss these points with Kroger soon.

Larry Riggle reported that Kroger is on target to open last this year. Donna Carr is working hard to transform the front of her building. The changes should be finished by the end of this year as well.

- Theresa Fahrback and Linda Morgan reported on their new business, Twisted Sisters, which will open in August in the former Taco Bell. It's designed as an art gallery to highlight local artists and handmade items of all kinds.
- Rob Reel, County Prosecutor's attorney, reported on the latest re Wesley Edwards and Isaiah Stokes who are still in custody and due to stand trial next week. BRAG participants were invited to fill out the neighborhood impact statements to point out the mental, physical, and emotional damage caused by these two men in the BRAG neighborhood early this year.

Volunteers are invited to join the Court Watchers, a volunteer group of BRAG folks who will be willing to attend hearings to show support for public safety in our neighborhoods. Joe Komenda is taking names.

Joe reported that National Night Out will be held on August 5th across the country. He recommended that neighbors head outdoors and spend time with one another. Lights on dusk to dawn all around residences are the most valuable (and effective and low cost) ways to keep criminals away.

- Update about light rail transportation options that impact the BRAG area. Jane reported that BRAG had 2 very informative meetings with Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority to discuss the possibility of turning the Nickel Plate into a commuter line from Hamilton County to downtown, with a proposed stop in the BRAG area. A final decision is to be made in August. BRAG will work to find out re the final decision will be and work to make a train stop in our area a reality.
- BRAG's crime watch efforts and collaboration with our police substation: Larry and Joe reported that they are awaiting more info from Major Allender about a proposed under age dance hall in the Hillsdale Tech Center. The owner of the dance hall has had other similar businesses closed down in Greenwood because they were attracting nuisance and unsavory activity. At our August BRAG meeting, there will be an update re what additional info they have gathered, including the views of City planners re this kind of proposed new business.

The police substation continues to draw in police officers from around the northside. Kudos to Kathleen Tracy and Peter Courtney for keeping it supplied with snacks and cleaned up. Continuing donations of food and drink are strongly encouraged since the police substation is open 24/7! You can make them to Movable Feast and the Mailing Station.

- GINI updates: Jane reported that Skiles Test Elementary School service learning project that is backed by Indy Parks was a great success during its first year. She passed around a letter from Lawrence Township schools, citing it as a model of collaboration between BRAG/GINI, the school, and the Parks department to turn Skiles Test Nature Park into an effective outdoor laboratory for budding future scientists.

The next GINI working groups' meeting will be held on Monday, July 21 at Church of the Saviour at 5:30 pm. Please join us to help make BRAG's future brighter with pedestrian access, progressive

business development, a village center, more parks and green space, and more collaborations with Lawrence and Washington Township schools.

- The Binford Farmers Market continues every Saturday morning with more and more vendors, entertainment, and community booths. If only the weather would cooperate better!

Jane described the BRAG-athon that will take place on **September 27th** at the Market to feature the health and fitness businesses in our area and to provide the opportunity for walkers and bicyclists to stroll through our neighborhoods. Volunteers are needed to secure sponsorships, guide the walkers and bicyclists, provide bicycle safety and tricycle opportunities, plus work with local health organizations to hold a mini-health fair on the grounds of the Market.

- Bob Berting reported on BRAG's next Leaders Luncheon on **July 23rd** at George's at 11:30 am. Our featured speaker is Mary Weiss, Publisher of Indianapolis Woman, BRAG businesswoman, and community leader. Make your reservations now with Kas Vargo kasvargo@gmail.com! Only \$15 for lunch and excellent networking opportunities.
- Mike Baldwin and Dan Anderson set a date for perennial bed maintenance on Monday, July 14th at 5:30 pm at the Speedway at 65th and Binford. Additional maintenance dates will be set throughout the summer to redevelop beds and clean out weeds. BRAG is waiting to hear from KIB re tree planting dates this Fall.
- Jane reported that BRAG is applying for a United Water grant to continue the native plantings along Binford median. She and Mike Baldwin are also applying for another KIBI Greenspace grant
- Jane Vawter, Hillcrest Historic Foundation, reported on the joint effort by BRAG and Hillcrest to hold a joint fund raising event called Oktoberfest plus Monte Carlo on **Saturday, October 11th** at Hillcrest County Club starting at 6 pm. Tickets are only \$25/person and will be available in August at the Farmers Market, Mailing Station, and George's. BRAG needs volunteers to help collect silent auction items and to sell tickets. We're hoping for 400-500 in attendance with many more making donations to these joint local efforts.
- Scott Motter was given a round of applause for his generous donation in shipping 840 lbs of paperbacks to soldiers overseas. He invited continuing donations of books that could be distributed to the Veterans Administration Hospital and the USO as well as more soldiers overseas. Jane passed around a flyer that showed the thank you's from 3 soldiers and invited BRAG folks to email them back and keep up a dialogue and their morale.
- New business: Phyllis Starke of Kessler Commons reported an increase of graffiti on buildings and utility equipment in and around the BRAG area. Joe Komenda will find out from the IMPD Task Force re ways to remove the graffiti quickly legally. Mike Baldwin suggested that, if a piece of utility equipment is covered, to check the phone number on the box and report to that utility about this problem.

BRAG's next monthly meeting will be held at Eastwood Middle School on Wednesday, August 13th at 7 pm