

HISTORIC IRVINGTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes for August 15, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT (quorum at 10): **Alyssa Lauer, Andrea De Mink, Carrie Yazell, Chad Cerda, Charles Miller, Jacob Lauer, Kyla Thompson, Lesli Gibson, Robert Uhlenhake, Ronak Shah, Roxanne Hilton, Sue Beecher**

COMMUNITY IN ATTENDANCE: 34

The meeting was held in person at the Irvington Presbyterian Church, open to the public, and called to order by Sue Beecher at 7:00 pm who opened the meeting by welcoming Council members, guests, and public attendees.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes for the previous month, July 2023, were approved.

City of Indianapolis and Indianapolis Parks

Don Colvin (Deputy Director for Indy Parks), Judith Thomas (Deputy Mayor), and Rusty Carr (Director of DMD)

- Indy Parks manages 215 parks, with 130 playgrounds, and their condition is rated on an A-F scale to prioritize which playgrounds need to be upgraded first. Ellenberger Park's playground was installed in 2002 and has a rating of D, which qualifies it in need of replacement.
- Of all the playgrounds rated C- to F, 40 of them are currently unfunded, while the remaining 46 have received funding for replacement by either Lilly or the American Relief Program.
- Ellenberger did not fall into one of the DEI census tracts required by the previous funding sources and is currently one of the unfunded playgrounds.
- Current investments in the park include improvements to the restrooms, concession area, and other improvements to the family center; the bridges; and the new restroom, field, and path near Citizens impact.
- Irvington Garden Club contract for the Farmers Market is in the e-signature stage, to be finalized hopefully in the next week to two weeks, though the timeframe is not definite.
- Fundraising for the fountain at Irving Circle Park is possible through Parks policies and procedures, which depends on the size of the project and includes a long-term maintenance plan
- Note on the Irvington TIF: Private developer for Irvington TIF wouldn't be able to pull from the broader pool of TIF funds for development, and would only have access to the increase in increments that come from their own direct development. Increments from the Navistar site would be immediately available to parks, greenways, and infrastructure and would not be pulled into the development of Irvington Plaza.
- Closed bridge at Ellenberger that was unsafe for pedestrian traffic was estimated to be open by Spring 2023, but has not reopened yet. The project has moved into DPW as part of the Greenways division which has been removed from Indy Parks. This could be part of the Pleasant Run Greenways Phase II or III project if the base bid isn't fundable, which is part of Circle City Forward.
 - Indy Parks is responsible for running recreation, facilities, playgrounds, and pools at parks
 - DPW is responsible for grounds maintenance, trash pickup, weed trimming, and street plowing
 - Greenways are managed by DPW, but often on Indy Parks land (and occasionally owned by DMD)
 - Urban Forestry and Land Stewardship has moved from Indy Parks to DPW (due to its role in streetscaping and stormwater)
- Multiple neighbors mentioned concerns about the bridges in parks and golf courses, many of which are part of the over \$500 million backlog of deferred maintenance
 - Revenue from golf courses goes back into the general fund
 - When privately managed golf courses aren't maintaining their sidewalks

- Mr. Colvin says that the best route of advocacy is to start with the park manager – every park has a specific park manager. Parks staff should respond to emails and requests for information and Mr. Colvin apologizes on behalf of those who have not.
- Friends of Ellenberger did a walkthrough of the Park with Director Boyd, which led to the removal of some downed trees, but many of their concerns relate to DPW and the overlapping responsibilities where sometimes Parks doesn't have ownership over problems on Parks land
- Ellenberger and Irving Circle Park received a few hundred thousands dollars in capital improvements over the past seven years, as part of a little over \$200 million spent citywide. Indy Parks receives \$5.8 million per year so most of this money comes from federal or state dollars, philanthropic investments, and other funding streams.
- With limited funding from the city, Indy Parks tends to partner with Friends groups and philanthropic organizations to invest or match funds in the parks. Indy Parks doesn't float referendums or levee taxes to be able to fund its initiatives.
- Related to the Lilly Endowment money awarded to Indy Parks, the main criteria were related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, where census tracts were determined based on these makeups. The census tracts were provided by the federal government. Timing also played a role depending on when the Citizens work would be finished. Recreational facilities are scored internally on a A-F scale, while structural integrity issues like buildings and bridges require outside firms and consultants. Condition of the asset matters more than attendance in weighing whether improvements are prioritized, as well as the availability of other parks in the nearby area.
- Indy Parks doesn't have a systematic way of tracking usage for free, unscheduled use since most parks don't have gates or places to check in or register.
- Deputy Mayor Thomas also recommends reaching out to Brennan or directly to her

Michelle Pleasant, President, School 57 PTSA

- Tactical Urbanism project was installed last week – four barriers on Washington Street to create a protected sidewalk and four barriers in the middle turn lane on Arlington near the middle school
- Goal is to slow down drivers during active school zone hours
- Barriers will be up until November 4th
- Data was shared with DPW and IMPD Traffic Division
- Long-term, hope is for long-term DPW infrastructure improvements to build into permanency, depending on the results of the short-term project

Old Business:

- No updates on the Brookeville Road development yet, but we will follow up

New Business:

- Request for a flashing amber light at Pleasant Run and Bolton where the pedestrian crossing is

The meeting was adjourned at .

Respectfully submitted by Ronak Shah