

# HISTORIC IRVINGTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL MINUTES

## Minutes for January 2025

**MEMBERS PRESENT** (quorum at 12): Jacob Lauer, Alyssa Lauer, Roxanne Hilton, Dawn Cox-Briggs, Jordan Byrd, Ronak Shah, Caitlin Luebcke, Robert Uhlenhake, Francine Calvert-Lee, Sue Beecher, Debi Williamson, Kyla Thompson, John Arbuckle, Charles Miller, Andrea de Mink, Chad Cerda, Billy Payne

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes for the previous month, November 2024, and for our Council retreat, January 2025, were approved unanimously with no noted dissents.

### Updates from IMPD East District

- Very few reports in Irvington recently
- Vehicle break-in report at Historic Irvington Flats
- No additional information about the alleged theft ring that took the rickshaw that was recovered
- Overall crime in the city is down across all levels except for grand theft auto. Warming cars are frequently getting stolen while they are sitting out, and Kia/Hyundai thefts continue to be easy targets. IMPD still gives out clubs which tend to deter and prevent theft since it is also visible from the outside

### Updates from [Andy Nielsen](#), City County Council District 14 (317-283-9680, [andy.nielsen@indy.gov](mailto:andy.nielsen@indy.gov))

- **Snow plowing:** crews have been hardworking and incredible, but the gap is in the city policy not to plow residential streets, which is inadequate and prevents people from getting where they need to go. City-County Council is working on fixing this gap moving forward.

### Jonathan Munro, "Forests for Indy," Indiana Forest Alliance

- Indiana was once 85% forested, but is not closer to 21%
- [Forests for Indy](#) program is a data-driven inventory of Indianapolis' woods, aimed to find the patches of forest that we need to protect.
- Indianapolis currently has 32% canopy and the ideal amount would be 40% canopy.
- Every dollar spent on a street tree gives a \$3.95 return. This is due to carbon capture, quality of life, cooling effects, recreational health, mental health, and many other benefits.
- In a recent report, Indianapolis landed [last](#) in park access. 35% of residents are within a 10 minute walk to a park.
- Purpose today: Eastside Flatwoods is at the corner of Rawles and Franklin north of the old Post Road airport. 76 acres of good quality woods next to some open space. Forests for Indy wants to see this as a park, and the owner is willing to sell it at a discount for this purpose, either to the city or anyone who would preserve the land.
- Last year, near unanimous vote by City-County Council to appropriate money for this purchase, but now the barrier has been at the Mayor's Office.
- **Question about a conservation easement:** seller places restrictions on the land to only use it for specific purposes. Indiana Forestry Alliance has done this in the past to prevent future tree cutting.
- Friends for Indy Forestry has some volunteers but the group is small and only has capacity to work on one property at a time.
- Best ask right now: emails and contacts to the city for \$4.5 million to acquire the land, put up signage around Irvington naming and supporting preservation of the forest
- Saturday, February 8 from 11am to 1pm, meeting at the Irvington Public Library

### Luminaria Committee Updates

- New pop-up sale before the day of Lumanaria made a big difference! Thank you Lesli!
- Having sand donated was also a big help. Thank you John!
- The businesses selling the supplies have always been a huge help.
- Significant profit this year!

### Beastside Brewfest Updates

- Kyla and Francine will be chairing Brewfest this year
- Saturday, April 26 at Our Lady of Lourdes gymnasium
- VIP early entry is coming back this year, starting at 6:00pm. General admission is 7:00pm. Ends at 10!
- Roughouse will be the band this year.
- 7 breweries are confirmed! Big Lug will be involved with Sahn's Tavern established in Irvington.
- Volunteers are always needed!

### Open Forum

- Jason Bletzinger: new principal at Howe Middle School after a transition over winter break.
  - Wants to be able to bring events and activities into the auditorium and the school. Construction and renovations are still ongoing but will be wrapped soon. The venue can be used for opera, band, theatre, and other things that the community might need.
  - Current enrollment is 440 students, anticipating 500 at the start of next year.
  - Band and orchestra are offered, but would like to add dance as well.
  - Seventeen sports are offered, including golf, tennis, tackle football, basketball, futsal, and soccer.
  - Visual art, STEM Design, and Theatre are also offered as electives.
  - Cafeteria, gymnasium, and auditorium are available for rental, as well as outside spaces.
- Michelle Pleasant: George Julian 57 has community meetings each Friday at 9:30am.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:57pm. Respectfully submitted by Ronak Shah.