

The Greater Allisonville Community Council Newsletter

Your voice in Your community!

Volume No. 2

August, 2009

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Riverwood Park Dedication September 22, 2009 6pm.

Susie Stamm says a shuttered Ravenswood grade school created as much traffic closed as it did when it was open.

"It was an abandoned building for a long time with the windows broken and graffiti and people in there having parties and doing drugs," the Northside resident said.

The 1995 closure of White River Elementary at 7201 Crittenden Ave. had a desultory influence on the rest of the neighborhood, as well. A portion of the river near the school's property line became a burial ground for stolen and abandoned autos and a swimming spot for children.

Through it all, Stamm and other neighborhood leaders kept after township and city officials to make the site a park. This year, their persistence paid off when Indy Parks announced it would build a park with a playground, splash pad,

basketball court, soccer field, volleyball court and a picnic gazebo.

"This is sorely needed, especially after so many years of neglect here," said **Stamm, president of the White River/Ravenswood Neighborhood Association.**

Washington Township Schools rented the land to Indy Parks in 2005, and the Parks Department tore down the school for \$300,000.

The park might include a community center, but at a cost of \$2 million, it would almost certainly have to be funded with private donations.

"The community center is in the master plan, but realistically that's a dream right now, given the Parks Department's annual budget," Smith said. "Some private groups might want to tackle that."

Indy Parks already has bought a children's playground for \$132,740.

Stamm said she has had to fend off some "bad ideas" over the years while advocating for her park.

"They wanted to build a high school football stadium where two of the Catholic teams could play," Stamm said. "There was no way that a stadium is a fit for this neighborhood. That was the plan that got me involved in this in the first place."

She said the splash pad is probably needed the most because the small children in the neighborhood have

nowhere to cool off. As a result, the children started swimming in the White River.

"It's not very healthy, and they were jumping in right at the beach where cars have been dumped over the years," Stamm said.

The situation got so bad that Stamm successfully lobbied the city's Department of Public Works to erect guard rails to stop the cars and put "No Swimming" signs up.

"Now the small children around here have somewhere to go without putting their health at risk," Stamm said.

POTHoles:

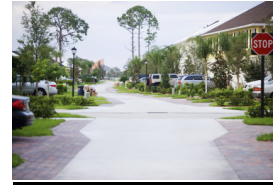
"A year ago, we made a commitment to city residents to better address the mounting pothole problem here in Indianapolis," said Mayor Greg Ballard during an announcement to the public on July 16. "I am happy to now be able to announce a dramatic improvement in pothole repair cycle times."

During the first half of 2009, the Average Cycle Time (ACT) for all districts was 10 - 12 days, a major improvement from the previous 19-day turnaround customers have experienced in the past.

Entering the second half of 2009, ACTs continue to dramatically improve. The period of July 1 - July 9 produced notable cycle times for all districts with an average of 2.45 days. In addition, pothole requests have decreased more than 25 percent with more than 3,500 fewer pothole requests than at this time last year.

Purposed to save and better manage taxpayer dollars, the new plan focuses on better planning, scheduling and routing resulting in better, faster and less expensive service. The city budgeted \$1.4 million in crack-sealing work, which had not been done in the last five years and purchased four new crack-sealing machines to better address road surface cracks throughout the City/County area. In addition, DPW has

begun using better patching materials – hot mix rather than cold mix when available – to allow better, more permanent repairs. "We've come a long way, but we're not done yet," said DPW Director David Sherman. "A 48-hour cycle time is our goal and we're committed to reaching it."



CODE ENFORCEMENT

On June 29, the City-County Council approved the city's first Department of Code Enforcement.

The current acting Office of Code Enforcement, created by Executive Order in February 2009 to streamline the city's licensing, permitting, inspection and abatement functions, will become a permanent city department effective January 1, 2010. "This new agency has answered the call to step up enforcement actions and tackle issues that threaten public safety and the overall health of our neighborhoods," said Mayor Greg Ballard. "Overgrown weeds, abandoned cars, abandoned properties, unsafe buildings and other property maintenance conditions attract crime, reduce property values and make communities less desirable. Focusing new resources on these issues will better equip us to keep our city clean, safe and vibrant and will do so using a self-funding model that will not burden taxpayers."

The Council's approval transfers the following code enforcement functions to the new department:

- Licenses and permits
- Building, infrastructure and zoning inspections
- Property maintenance
- Unsafe buildings
- High weeds and grass
- Illegal dumping
- Forestry
- Towing
- Weights & Measures

"We have worked diligently over the past few months to streamline code enforcement processes that have been unnecessarily complicated and

often outdated,” said Rick Powers, Director of the Office of Code Enforcement. “By consolidating code enforcement functions into one department and providing a one-stop shop, we are more accessible and able to provide better service to the public.”

With this new charge, the Office of Code Enforcement has been overhauling city enforcement initiatives through new, refocused measures, including:

- Cracking down on unlicensed and non-compliant businesses
- Combating high weeds and grass by cutting the abatement process time in half
- Intensifying the focus on nuisance abatement and property maintenance
- Addressing habitual violators through a new case management system and a partnership with city prosecutors to expedite priority cases
- Joining the Mayors’ vacant and abandoned properties initiatives
- Preparing the launch of mobile inspector offices to increase productivity

All citizen reports should be directed to the Mayor’s Action Center at 327-4MAC (327-4622). To learn more about the Office of Code Enforcement, visit www.indy.gov/oce.

To report high weeds and grass, contact the Mayor’s Action Center at 327-4MAC (327-4622) and provide the street address of the property in violation.

Office of Code Enforcement
1200 Madison Ave., Ste. 100
Indianapolis, IN 46225
(317) 327-8700

GACC meets the second Tuesday of each month:

September 8, October 13, November 10, and December 8.

Epworth United Methodist Church.
6450 Allisonville Road. 7 pm.

All are welcome! And, as always:

Thank you to Epworth!!!

Tree Trimming Practices

The Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) has announced a statewide investigation into utility tree trimming practices and tariffs. This is a critical development in the effort to pass effective legislation towards curbing abusive tree trimming violations of property rights by electric utilities.

The IURC investigation is the direct result of a petition filed by Charles Goodman, a volunteer citizen lobbyist, representing hundreds of property owners, and Sen. Jim Merritt, Jr., chairman of the Senate Utility Committee, who has decided to delay legislation while the IURC gathers information statewide. A report by the IURC to the Legislature is due in late November, 2009. This investigation is the key to forge real change.

The time frame for written submission of grievances has passed by you can appear in person in Indianapolis on September 2. The time and location are not yet available but you can check this website for more information: www.IN.gov/oucc.

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