



Our Adopt-A-Spot in full bloom

By Dot Berning

Entering the second half of summer 2010, let's look at our Adopt-A-Spot at Maryland and St. Joe.

The new, bright yellow areas on each side of the garden are the result of the success we had with the brown-eyed susan plants donated by WSI members Orvil and Betty Hahn.

These blooms brought out the yellow center of the Becky shasta daisies. The Stella del Oro day lilies blooming just under the daisies, like a collar, make a lovely grouping when planted close to the lavender-blue agastache.



Dot

The red salvia on each end of the front gardens have been a true bright spot with their strong straight stems.

We have again this year sprinkled the white tiny blooms of the zinnia, Crystal White, all through the other annuals that outline the front and back areas of our spot.

The sunflowers are so tall they peek over the stone gates from the backside gardens. The lush sunflower plants on the westside of the backside garden are self-seeded from last year. The larger

group on the eastside of the backside bed is a result of a \$1.98 pack of seeds. The above descriptions are readily seen by those using the path, but we describe the individual plants for those passing in cars.

Repeating numerous plants used last year that we were pleased with, plus the added new colors and textures, we are again pleased with the results. With the many positive comments we hear while working there, the individuals using the path appreciate our efforts. We invite everyone enjoying the gardens – walkers, bikers as well as passing motorists – to join WSI in our efforts to enhance this busy prime spot of the West Side.

Join Us

We are on Facebook. Come and join us. Go to our web site at <http://westsideimprovement.org> and click on the link at the top of our home page.

Is our community walkable?

Take a walk and decide for yourself.

Everyone benefits from walking. But walking needs to be safe and easy. Take a walk with a child and use the checklist at www.walkableamerica.org/checklist-walkability.pdf and decide for yourself.

Read over the checklist and keep it in mind as you walk. At the end of your walk give each question a rating. Then add up the numbers to see how you rated your walk overall.

After you've rated your walk and identified problem areas, the next step is to figure out what you can do to improve the score. You will find immediate and long-term solutions under the "Improving Your Community's Score" on the third page of the web site.

WESTSIDE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Wes Says:
*"Take Pride
in the Westside"*

DON'T LITTER



Fred Padget on Land Use Planning, Part XVII

Last month we wrote about green space, landscape buffers, setbacks and other similar things the Comp Plan feels should be included in our land use decisions and required in some cases. Today, we are going to continue within that same line of thinking.

The Comp Plan refers to the 2004-2025 Comprehensive Plan for Evansville and Vanderburgh County which is being revised. It is the guide for land use decisions and the framework for the ongoing land use planning process. The intent of the plan is to guide growth in a manner that supports and reinforces the community qualities important to its residents. It can be viewed at www.evansvilleapc.com/compplan.htm and is available at most libraries.



Fred

One suggestion in the Comp Plan being worked on by the Smart Growth Group is to “Encourage natural resource corridor protection to improve and preserve water quality of streams, wildlife habitat and rural character.” The group is trying to draft an ordinance to provide sufficient protection for riparian ways and be acceptable by several diverse groups. This is difficult but none-the-less an important project. Riparian ways have been defined in various ways, but essentially they consist of fairly narrow strips of land bordering creeks, rivers, lakes or other bodies of water. Riparian ways are crucial components of the ecosystem. A healthy riparian way provides excellent fish and wildlife habitat while providing a pathway for wildlife to other geographic areas. They also help to improve groundwater, reduce damage from flooding and often increase the overall quality of the adjacent waterway. This type of ordinance is not unusual in many parts of the country but it is difficult to develop language acceptable to the diverse groups involved and still be effective. There are many good sources of information concerning riparian buffers and one is at <http://www.crjc.org/buffers/Introduction.pdf>.

Another method to protect natural and man-made environmental resources suggested by the Comp Plan is to acquire scenic or conservation easements. This is a method that could protect many of our environmental resources and has been used extensively by other organizations. The number of scenic or conservation easements in the county has grown rapidly. Conservation easements have grown from

about 128 in 1980 to 6,246 by 2005 and I’m sure are still increasing. In 2005, most of the controlled land was managed by large, national environmental organizations, such as The Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, Ducks Unlimited, American Farmland Trust and The Conservation Fund. Together, they hold about 25 million acres of land. Based on this and other complexities, I’m not sure how feasible that process is for a city or county. And, although I am a strong advocate of our current Comp Plan, this process could work to the detriment of a community in the long term. As contained in a National Policy Analysis of May 2008, “conservation easements that bind landowners and their descendants in perpetuity ultimately become antiquated and, therefore, useless or even harmful. The rule fails to recognize that conservation needs - as well as definitions of scenic, aesthetic and cultural - change over time, and that the easement may eventually lose any ecological benefit or even become a detriment.” You can view a lengthy analysis of the pros and cons of easements at <http://www.nationalcenter.org/NPA569.html>.

Another great way to preserve our green space and other environmental resources recommended by our Comp Plan is to minimize unplanned or leapfrog growth in the transitional and rural areas. Growth should occur as infill development or be contiguous to existing built up areas. Leapfrog development is the bane of good, responsible development. It uses up vacant land, fields and green space while leaving empty buildings and paved parking lots to set empty, non-productive and deteriorate. Additionally, when leapfrog development takes place, needed infrastructure such as roads, sidewalks, traffic signals, etc., is often not in place and causes taxpayers to foot the bill for the additional infrastructure that could be avoided. I did find what I thought was a good definition of leapfrog development.

Least Expensive Available Property Forces Reckless Objectionable Growth

If you have comments, we’ll include them in upcoming articles if you would like. If you have any questions feel free to contact me at fcpadget@aol.com or 428-2529. This series as well as previous land use articles dealing with a variety of issues can be found on our web site at www.westsideimprovement.org. Next month we’ll continue to look at additional changes to the zoning code recommended in the Comp Plan as well as some other thoughts about improving the code from others and myself.

Land use update *by Fred Padget*

There were no rezonings within the Westside Improvement boundaries again during July and there are none on the APC agenda for August.

During July the BZA did hear two Zoning Variance requests within WIA boundaries. One request was for relaxation of the setback requirements for construction of a new medical office and parking lot at 2419 West Franklin St. The second was at 623 North Red Bank Rd. requesting relaxation of access drive limitations to allow construction of a second driveway. Both variance requests were approved.

Although the August BZA agenda is not available at the time of this writing, we are aware of a request for a Private Recreational Use for construction of a community center at 814 Schutte Rd. This is Eagle Village which is still under the ownership/receivership of Fifth-Third Bank. As you may remember in late 2009 there were two Special Use requests by Eagle Village. One was for a parking lot and one was a special Private Recreational Use for construction of a basketball and volleyball court. Since Private Recreational Use is not well-defined, a condition was put on the approval that use be limited to only the basketball and volleyball court as presented in the request. A condition for approval of the parking lot was that a sidewalk would be constructed to provide a safe walkway for USI students. This was a request from USI to prevent further car/pedestrian accidents as happened earlier that year. This requirement for a sidewalk has not been complied with at the time of this writing. At this point we plan to talk to near-by neighbors to get their thoughts and try to get a better feel of what kind of activities are planned for the community center since "Private Recreational Use" is not well-defined.

We've had several questions as to what might be happening at 3101 Mt. Vernon Ave. That is the northwest corner of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Harmony Way where a gas station was recently razed. We've not heard anything nor could we find out anything at this time. We do know it is currently zoned Commercial, C-4, which would allow any of 183 different types of business. If or when we hear anything, we'll let you know.

Remember Majestic Place? As it wound down last year a committee was formed to study land use, traffic and other concerns along the University Parkway. The proposed study was extensive and the committee will be meeting later this month to resurrect it. One of the first orders of business will likely be to review and narrow the scope of work to something workable and financially doable. This is an important area for proper growth and development but it must have appropriate infrastructure. We'll be involved and keep you informed.

You've probably been reading about the Evansville Arts Redevelopment Area. Although not within the WIA boundaries, we have been following it with great interest because it's complex and important to the residents, the city and the entire area. It can have a major impact on the area. It involves redevelopment, property acquisition, a TIF (Tax Increment Financing), overlay zoning, perhaps design criteria and other issues affecting many levels of the community. The overlay zoning is of particular interest because it's a relative new concept for this area although not uncommon elsewhere. The overlay zoning concept would allow multiple uses to take place such as residential and commercial without going through the zoning process for each individual property as is now required if not zoned for the intended use. The area would be defined by boundaries and have a list of approved uses. If a property owner wanted to do something on the approved list, no rezoning would be required, regardless of the property's zoning. Obviously the defined area and listed uses become very important since the rezoning process with the possibility of remonstrance is no longer available. However it does make it much easier to create an area of "mixed use." This is a concept whose benefits can be argued from either side at many levels. We'll leave it for today but keep you informed as the process proceeds.

Agendas and minutes for both the APC and BZA including Staff Reports can be viewed at www.evansvilleapc.com.

As always, be involved.

Quiz on Driving Economy

By Dave Rockwood, Environmental Committee Chair

To help prevent disasters like the Gulf spill, we need to reduce our reliance on oil. Driving smarter is one of the quickest ways to trim oil consumption. Take this quiz to test your fuel-economy know-how. (Credit: Natural Resources Defense Council; <http://www.simplesteps.org/quizzes/what-do-you-know-about-improving-your-car#content>)

1. The most important first step you should take if you want to improve your car's mileage is...

A— Buy new car, B— Buy a pen and a notebook, C—Switch to high-octane gasoline.

2. What's the best way to improve your gas mileage?

A—Properly inflate your tires, B—Change your air filters, C—Let up on the lead foot.

3. What is hyper-miling?

A—Driving after getting hyped-up on coffee, B—Form of driving designed to get the most out of each tank of gas, C—Using Google maps to find the shortest distance from point A to point B.

4. Which of the following is a common hyper-miling trick?

A—Using a smart phone to download driving directions, B—Running or "floating" stop signs, C—Using cruise control.

5. True or false:

Warming up your car in the winter allows your engine to run more efficiently.

6. True or false:

It's always better to buy a hybrid.

7. To really improve your gas mileage, you should...

A—Walk and/or bike more often, B—Use public transit more often, C—Both A and B.

The Answers:

1. Before you can start improving your car's gas mileage, you have to know what kind of mileage



Dave

you're getting with your existing driving habits—which is why a pen and notebook are so important. Each time you fill up, jot down the miles you got on that tank, the number of gallons it took to fill up your car and calculate your gas mileage. Keep doing that each time you fill up so you get an idea of how good

(or bad) your mileage is. It also helps to note whether you spent more time driving in the city or on the highway, so you know if you need to let up on aggressive city driving or drive slower on the highway.

2. All the choices listed will provide improvements in your vehicle's gas mileage, but eliminating jackrabbit starts and not slamming on the brakes has the biggest impact. Tests from the auto website Edmunds.com revealed that easing off the gas, for instance taking 15 seconds (rather than 10) to get from 0 mph to 60 mph, improved mileage by 31 percent. Wow!

3. In a nutshell, hyper-miling means that you use different techniques to get the best possible gas mileage, for instance, taking your foot off the gas and coasting down hills, taking your foot off the accelerator as soon as you see brake lights or a red light in front of you (essentially coasting to a stop), and driving a constant (if slow) speed in traffic jams so you spend as little time stopped as possible. Some hyper-milers drive in socks or their bare feet because they feel it gives them better feedback from the vehicle.

4. Cruise control can be your best friend when it comes to hyper-miling or driving efficiently. Even in cities, employing the cruise control keeps you from speeding up unnecessarily, and on highways it prevents "speed creep." You may want to avoid using cruise control, however, if you live in a hilly

(Continued on page 5)

(Driving . . . Continued for page 4)

area. In hilly terrain, the preferred hyper-miling tactic is to ease off the accelerator as you go uphill and then regain your speed as you go down, rather than wasting gas trying to maintain a constant speed as you go uphill.

5. Warming up your car gets you zero miles to the gallon, actually pollutes more than if you were driving and can be hard on your engine (the mixture of fuel and air in an idling engine causes it to wear down faster). In fact, your engine warms up much faster if you're driving it than if it's idling in your garage, as do the other systems in your car, like the heater. So if you're accustomed to starting your car for 5 to 10 minutes before you leave in the morning, don't. You're doing more harm than good, both for your car and for the planet. If your windshield is so frosted over that it's

unsafe to operate, you may want to start the car to run your defroster while you use a scraper to clear the frost.

6. Sure, a hybrid vehicle gets better gas mileage than its same-model gas-powered counterpart, but don't fret if you can't shell out for a hybrid car if you can't afford it. Hybrid SUVs get the same or worse gas mileage than smaller gas-powered cars like the Honda Fit, Chevy Aveo, and Toyota Yaris.

7. This one was probably a given. Your car uses the least amount of fuel when it's parked in your garage. So lace up your walking shoes, pump up your bike tires, or buy a bus pass—the cheapest ways to travel are also the cleanest.

Congratulations. You probably aced the quiz. If not, you now know how to be a fuel-miser. Now pass it on.

Calendar for 2010

- Aug 7 *Recycle Days – old Walmart West
- Aug 25 WIA Board Meeting 4 pm – 5:30 pm
 Red Bank Branch Library
- Sept 11 *Recycle Days – old Walmart West
- Sept 18 WIA Membership Picnic - Noon
 Burdette Park
- Sept 22 WIA Board Meeting 4 pm – 5:30 pm
 Red Bank Branch Library
- Oct 2 *Recycle Days – old Walmart West
- Oct 4-9 Westside Nutclub Fall Festival
- Oct 27 WIA Board Meeting 4 pm – 5:30 pm
 Red Bank Branch Library
- Nov 6 *Recycle Days – old Walmart West
- Nov WIA Banquet
- Dec 4 *Recycle Days – old Walmart West

*Recycle Days 8 am – 12 noon. Items to Bring: Auminum Cans, Metal food cans, Glass containers, Cardboard, Catalogs/magazines, Newspaper, Mixed paper, #1 & #2 plastic bottles. Vanderburgh County Residents Only. For information call the Solid Waste District (812) 436-

I WANT TO HELP WIA

- General** - Apply my donation where it's most needed.
- Adopt-A-Spot** - Apply my donation toward flowers, plants, and mulch.
- Fall Festival Booth** - Apply my donation to help maintain our booth.
- Memorial for Shirley James** - Apply my donation to this project.
- Scholarship** - Apply my donation to the scholarship fund.

Please send your donation to:

Membership Application

Individual—\$10/year Full-time Student—\$5/year Corporate/Organization—\$25/year
 Household—\$15/year Century—\$100/year

Your yearly dues includes all issues of our newsletter and a voice in what happens to the West Side. Mail checks to: Westside Improvement Association Inc., P.O. Box 6172, W. Wabash Station, Evansville, IN 47719-0172

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Exerting influence upon public and private sectors to accomplish those objectives which will enhance the natural environment of the west side of Vanderburgh County and serve the common good of the residents.

Westside Improvement Association officers

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Bill Jeffers	Mel Runge
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