

Westside Improvement Association Inc.

"Pointing Westward"



**Outlaw
Westside
Litter**

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www.westsideimprovement.org

October, 2010

Sparkplug Banquet Set for Oct. 22

By Carolyn Stagg

UNOE Regional VP West Sector

The United Neighborhoods of Evansville (UNOE) will host its 15th annual Sparkplug Banquet on Friday, Oct. 22, at 6 p.m. at the Casino Aztar in the Walnut Room. There is plenty of free parking.

The Sparkplug Banquet will provide a great meal, dinner music by Matt Kincaid, guitarist. The featured speaker will be Jay Zimmer, humorist, writer and former radio personality

After the meal, the program will provide neighborhood associations a chance to win cash awards from funds from the sale of ads in the event's program. The business card size ads cost \$20, half page \$75, whole page \$175. This is a great way to support your neighborhood associations and get your name in print to approximately 250 people that night. Deadline for ads is Oct. 15. Call 428-4243.

The Sparkplug Banquet is all about recognizing and honoring a person who has been the Sparkplug for his or her neighborhood association. This is quite an honor for the person receiving award.

Call the president of your neighborhood association for reservations for this great banquet. Deadline is Oct 15. Cost will be \$12 for members, \$26 non-members. UNOE picks up the cost difference for members. If you have any questions, call UNOE 428-4243 or Carolyn 491-3627. Looking forward to seeing YOU there.....



Joyce Moers, above, sets out lunch. Deanna Outlaw and Fred Padget, right, display knitted owl, which to WIA members means "Outlaw Westside Litter."



WIA hosts annual membership picnic

By Brenda Jeffers

WIA hosted its annual membership picnic on Sept. 18, at Burdette Park. Over 30 members and several guests attended the event. Lunch consisted of fried chicken, veggies, and dessert. Soft drinks were served compliments of Royal Crown Bottling.

John Bittner, Vanderburgh County Reorganization Committee member, led discussion about the committee's research, findings, and progress thus far. John also serves on the Governance Subcommittee, which proposes the new government structure under the reorganization. Currently, the structure being proposed is: mayor,



Brenda

assistant to the mayor, and a common council.

The WIA members and guests engaged the conversation by proposing other methods of reorganization and structure. A business meeting followed with the proposed 2011 WIA slate of officers and board members being accepted by the membership. The officers and board will be inducted at the Annual Awards Banquet scheduled for Friday, Nov. 19, at USI Carter Hall.

Join us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Westside-Improvement-Association/141710375839566> or go to our web site at <http://westsideimprovement.org> and click on the Facebook link in the contacts and links page.

Fred Padget on Land Use Planning, Part XIX

Today we'll look at a concept contained in the Evansville/Vanderburgh County Comprehensive Plan that might not be as well recognized as the previous items discussed in this series. That concept is "Dark Sky" regulations.



Fred

The Comp Plan very specifically says we should amend the Zoning Ordinance to incorporate and implement "Dark Sky" regulations in order to protect and preserve the quality of the nighttime environment. The International Dark-Sky Association says that a growing body of evidence links the brightening night sky directly to measurable negative impacts on human health and immune function, adverse behavioral changes in insect and animal populations, and a decrease of both ambient quality and safety in our nighttime environment. The association goes on to say that light pollution is excessive and inappropriate artificial light, and includes four major components:

- ◇ **Urban sky glow**—the brightening of the night sky over inhabited areas.
- ◇ **Light trespass**—light falling where it is not intended, wanted, or needed.
- ◇ **Glare**—excessive brightness which causes visual discomfort. High levels of glare can decrease visibility.
- ◇ **Clutter**—bright, confusing, and excessive groupings of light sources, commonly found in over-lit urban areas. The proliferation of clutter contributes to urban sky glow, trespass, and glare.

The main goals for good nighttime lighting should be safety and security at home and away from home. It should help make us safe not just feel safe. Light for the sake of light does not equal safety. The International Dark-Sky Association says that bright, glaring lights that illuminate some nighttime events and locations can diminish ambiance but can also decrease security as well. In fact bright, undirected light can create shadows where a potential criminal could be shielded from sight. Further, lighting may help a criminal by showing him where he is, where he's protected from

view and where he needs to go to accomplish his crime. The association suggests these actions:

- ◇ **Put light** where it is needed, during the time period it will be used, and at the levels that enhance visibility.
- ◇ **Shield lights** to reduce glare and harsh shadows. Motion sensors "alert" us to activity after hours.
- ◇ **Dimmers** provide the light needed to accomplish nighttime work without the extra expense.
- ◇ **Turn off** lights when not needed. Low light to no light can help reduce nighttime property damage.

Several areas have recently enacted regulations supporting dark sky philosophy including New Hampshire where a dark skies policy was established in July 2009 and Lloyd Harbor, a small village in New York, where an ordinance was passed as recently as May 2010.

The Comp Plan suggests that since requiring the replacement of existing lighting may be financially burdensome, dark sky requirements could be incorporated into the Zoning Code and applied immediately to new and replacement lighting, but be phased in over time for existing light fixtures.

There are a couple of web sites that you may want to look at concerning dark sky philosophy: www.darksky.org contains much information including a model ordinance and www.darkskysociety.org also with much information and a page of "good lights for good nights" showing acceptable lighting fixtures and discouraged lighting fixtures.

If you have comments, we'll include them in upcoming articles if you would like and if you have any questions feel free to contact me at fcpadget@aol.com or 428-2529 anytime. This series of articles 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 look at complete streets programs and a couple of other items.

Land use update *by Fred Padget*

The September agenda for the APC contained no rezoning requests within the WIA boundaries. However it did again hear the resolution concerning the Evansville Arts Redevelopment Area Project and Allocation Area which had been continued from the August meeting. Although not in our area, we have been following it with interest. It involves redevelopment, property acquisition, a TIF (Tax Increment Financing) district, overlay zoning, design criteria and other issues affecting many levels of the community. Specifically there are four distinct pieces to the plan; creation of a redevelopment area defined by legal description, a 25-year TIF district with the same boundaries as the redevelopment area, a zoning overlay district to establish “creative, flexible zoning” within the arts redevelopment area and design guidelines along with a design review committee to interpret and enforce the guidelines. The only portions presented for approval at both the August and September meeting were the arts redevelopment area and the 25-year TIF district. The redevelopment area includes 136 properties planned to be acquired and renovated or razed. It needs to be pointed out that many residences and structures within the redevelopment area are in excellent condition and a significant asset to the city. In fact, the museum is included as I understand it. The TIF would collect incremental property taxes from the improvements on commercial property and provide funds primarily for public infrastructure improvements. Although the TIF might be used for some redevelopment acquisition, it cannot be used for private improvements.

During the August meeting there was much concern as to why only two elements of the plan were being presented for approval as opposed to the complete project as well as much discussion about the potential financial value of the TIF. Additionally, much concern from remonstrators was expressed concerning whether or not state statutes were being followed in regard to the TIF as well as whether or not state statutes were followed in regard to the redevelopment aspect of the plan. It should be pointed out that most everyone feels the need for redevelopment for some of this area.

At the September meeting, an attorney representing the redevelopment project spent a great deal of time going through the legalities of the process assuring the commission that state statutes were being followed. Again, some discussion took place concerning the partial project being proposed as to the complete package. In the end, the APC approved the portion of the redevelopment plan being proposed with a vote of nine, one no and one abstention. It is

planned to go to the City Council on Oct. 11 for its approval and then back to the Redevelopment Commission for final approval. The remainder of the project will be addressed later when details are finalized.

Since there is no way, I can report on all the detail of these meetings, you may want to view the August and September meeting minutes which can be accessed at www.evansvilleapc.com.

The October APC agenda includes two requests for rezoning within our boundaries. The first is at 3041 Claremont Ave. where the petitioner is requesting to rezone from a Commercial, C-4 to a Manufacturing, M-1 zone. This is also within the Poplar Grove Neighborhood area. The second rezoning petition in our area is a request to rezone 1501 Keller St. from Manufacturing, M-3 to Commercial, C-2. It is in the CHAIN Neighborhood area. As we always do when a rezoning petition or other matters involving a neighborhood association within our boundaries arise, we coordinate with it and generally support whatever position it feels is best.

The September Board of Zoning Appeals did hear a request for 9310 Schissler Rd. to allow an accessory structure larger than the residence for construction of a new pole barn. This is within our boundaries and was approved. The October agenda for the BZA was not available at the time of this writing.

Another issue came up a few days ago within the Western Terrace Neighborhood and it is a conundrum of two ordinances. The background is that a person recently moved into Western Terrace and has some pet dogs, 21 dogs from what we've heard. Some feel that might be excessive within a residential area within city limits and there is the question as to whether they are breeding, being sold or simply pets. The Evansville Zoning Code is quite clear. “Premises on which four or more small animals at least four months old are kept” is considered a boarding/ breeding kennel and would require a Special Use #25 approved by the BZA. This use, a boarding/breeding kennel, is allowed in Use Group #19 with the Special Use #25 approval if zoned Agricultural, Commercial, C-4 or some other higher zoning categories. Use Group 19 is not allowed in residentially zoned areas. The premise in question is zoned Residential, R-1 and would require a rezoning to

Landuse . . . *continued on page 5*

Lessons from Venus – Carbon Dioxide Gone Wild

By Dave Rockwood, Environmental Committee Chair

This year is the hottest on record so far, and has seemingly trumped all previous years for weird and woeful weather events. The buildup of greenhouse gases in the lower atmosphere is affecting Earth's climate in several disturbing ways. But Earth may not be the first planet to have experienced a greenhouse gas catastrophe. Last month I heard Bill Nye, the "Science Guy" and Executive Director of the Planetary Society, talk about the real possibility of Earth suffering a similar global warming fate as Venus. It's worth considering, unless we're ready to give up on Earth, and I certainly am not.

Venus is the second planet from our sun, and is sometimes called Earth's "sister planet" due to the similar size, gravity, and bulk composition. Venus has an extremely dense atmosphere, which consists mainly of carbon dioxide and a small amount of nitrogen. The atmospheric mass is 93 times that of Earth's atmosphere while the pressure at the planet's surface is about 92 times that at Earth's surface—a pressure equivalent to that at a depth of a half-mile under Earth's oceans.

The CO₂-rich atmosphere, along with thick clouds of sulfur dioxide, generates the strongest greenhouse effect in the Solar System, creating surface temperatures of over 860 °F. This makes the Venusian surface hotter than Mercury's (which has a minimum surface temperature of -364 °F and maximum surface temperature of 788 °F), even though Venus is nearly twice Mercury's distance from the Sun and thus receives only 25% of Mercury's solar irradiance.

Okay, here's the kicker. Studies have suggested that several billion years ago the Venusian atmosphere was much more like Earth's than it is now, and that there were probably substantial quantities of liquid water on the surface, but a runaway green-



Dave

house effect was *caused* by the evaporation of that original water, which generated a critical level of greenhouse gases in its atmosphere (Icarus, Volume 74, Issue 3, June 1988, Pages 472-49). Water vapor is also a major component of atmospheric warming on our planet, and it is awfully muggy here in the summers, but I can't quite imagine a steam atmosphere such as that which existed on Venus as its oceans evaporated.

Bill Nye recommends that we act diligently to address the greenhouse gas load being placed on Earth's thin lower atmosphere. We don't know at what point the Earth's ocean-atmosphere heat-balancing mechanisms might tip completely out of balance, but we have only to look to our sister planet to see that a planet endowed with oceans can lose them to the vagaries of universal physical laws.

Earth has no exemption from those natural laws; if it did there would be no asteroid impacts, no seasons, and no severe weather. The people who have been creating confusion around climate change for the past two decades might believe we have some kind of divine pass on extinction, or that we will wiggle our way out of chaos through technological fixes, or they are merely happy to get well paid and let the chips fall where they may. But since climate change is irreversible and may be catastrophic it would be wise to "buy some insurance" by investing in energy efficiency, renewable energy, and mass transit. We can simultaneously import less oil while exporting clean energy technology (the next great global industry?). And we will be more secure by cutting our spending on imported oil which supports dictatorships that fund terrorism against us.

If you didn't figure out your carbon footprint as I suggested last month, maybe you could put that on your to-do list now?

Landuse.. . .continued from page 3

Commercial, C-4 or some other level of zoning which is not likely.

The other part of the conundrum is that Evansville Animal Control Ordinance provides/requires various type permits. In this case the dogs have been represented as pets and would likely fall under an Animal Assemblage Permit. The Animal Assemblage Permit “means the gathering on one lot of seven or more altered dogs and/or altered cats over the age of six months.” The question, does the Evansville Zoning Code or the Evansville Animal Control Code take precedence? I’m an animal lover and have pets and there has to be a humane concern for the animals. At the same time, people live in neighborhoods like Western Terrace with certain expectations. The bottom line is that our city officials need to reconcile the ordinances otherwise the residents find themselves in a catch-22 with no clear understanding of the standards, especially for a residentially zoned area and people newly moving in from outside the area.

As always, be involved

Live debates on WNIN

The next candidate debates hosted by the League of Women Voters and WNIN will be at 7 p.m. on Oct. 14 when those running for County Council Districts 2, 3 and 4 will face-off. That will be followed at 8 p.m. by a debate between County Commission District 2 candidates.

At 7 p.m. on Oct. 21 the candidates for prosecutor, assessor and auditor are set to appear. Then at 7 p.m. on Oct. 28 a debate between candidates for the Eighth Congressional District seat will be presented.

The debates are aired live on WNIN television and radio.

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:
P.O. Box 6172, West Wabash Station,
Evansville, IN 47719-0172

Calendar for 2010

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

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.
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See you at Fall Festival, Booth 80

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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

President	DeAnna Outlaw	589-1657 or dpoutlaw@aol.com
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Newsletter	Mel Runge	425-4633 or mrunge@wowway.com

At-large Board of Directors

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Aphrodite Hudson	Dave Rockwood
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Bonnie Kolb	Sam Wentzel