

## IRVINGTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL MINUTES

January 18, 2022

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Robert Uhlenhake, Lys Lauer, Jacob Lauer, Larry Messing, Charles Miller, Lesli Gibson, Chad Cerda, Roxanne Hilton, Caitlin Luebcke, Kyla Thompson, Jake Walker, Francine Calvert Lee, Matt Pleasant, Kami Spicklemire Nielson, Andrea De Mink, Dawn Briggs, Carrie Yazell, Sue Beecher

**GUESTS PRESENT:** State Representative Blake Johnson; Phyllis Boyd, Director of Indy Parks and Don Colvin, Deputy Director of Indy Parks; Allison Mundell, Mayor's Neighborhood Advocate

The meeting was held in person at the Irvington Presbyterian Church, open to the public, and called to order by Lesli Gibson at 7:02 pm. She opened the meeting by welcoming Council members, guests, and public attendees.

**Blake Johnson, State Representative for District 100:** Blake provided an update on the current legislative session. He has authored HB 1150 in response to the 31% increase in traffic fatalities in Marion County in 2021. HB 1150 includes the following: Automated traffic enforcement in school zones. Authorizes a county, city, or town to adopt and enforce an ordinance that regulates the placement and use of automated traffic enforcement safety devices (devices) to detect certain traffic offenses (offenses) in school zones. Provides civil penalties for offenses and violations. Specifies that the civil penalty must be applied first to defray the cost of the installation, operation, and maintenance of the devices, and specifies the manner in which the remaining funds are distributed. Prohibits the: (1) reporting of offenses and violations on a driving record; (2) use of offenses and violations to determine rates for motor vehicle insurance; and (3) assessment of points under the point system by the bureau of motor vehicles (bureau) for offenses and violations. Requires notification to the bureau if offenses and violations have not been paid timely. Requires the bureau to suspend the registration of a vehicle when the offenses and violations have not been paid. He provided additional updates on HB1077 which would result in removal of the requirement for handgun permits and HB 1001 which proposes no employer vaccine requirements. The bill aimed at shutting down the Blue Line appears to be a non-issue at this time. He announced that applications for the 2022 Mary Moriarty Adams Scholarship Fund are available. This provides \$5000 in scholarship dollars for a senior who resides in District 100 and is committed to public service.

**Allison Mundell, Mayor's Neighborhood Advocate:** Allison spoke to the efforts of the Office of Public Health and Safety in working to ensure equitable food distribution. There will be an Indianapolis Recycling Event at Garfield Park on January 21, 2022 from 9 am to 2 pm.

**Jason Larrison, City County Council Representative:** Lesli read a written update provided by Jason Larrison, District 12 Indianapolis City-County Councilor: Good evening, Irvington neighbors and friends, Because of a scheduling conflict, I will not be at the start of the Council meeting; hopefully, I will be in attendance late. I do want to share a written update and I welcome any feedback at [jason.larrison2@indy.gov](mailto:jason.larrison2@indy.gov). The Indianapolis City-County Council has released the full schedule of upcoming public forums designed to solicit residents' input on the 2022 redistricting process, which state statute dictates the Council must complete this year. The public forums, free and open to any resident of Marion County, are being planned, hosted, and facilitated by Engaging Solutions LLC, a locally owned, independent consulting firm with whom the Council contracted to engage Indianapolis residents in the redistricting conversation. Dubbed "Your Voice 2022", the initiative is a public education and

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engagement campaign about the redistricting process and includes one public forum in each of Marion County's nine townships. The effort marks the first time in Indianapolis history that the Council is beginning the redistricting process with a public information and engagement campaign. Community forums will be held on:

Saturday, January 22, 2022, 11:00AM-1:00PM, Perry Meridian High School; Tuesday, January 25, 2022, 5:30-7:30PM, CAFÉ, 8902 East 38th Street; Friday, January 28, 2022, 5:30PM- 7:30PM, Franklin Township Civic League; Monday, January 31, 2022, 5:30-7:30PM; Washington Township Community & Education Center; Tuesday, February 1, 2022, 5:30-7:30PM, Decatur Township School for Excellence Community Room; Wednesday, February 2, 2022, 5:30-7:30 PM, Northwest Middle School; Thursday, February 3, 2022, 5:30PM-7:30PM, Fay Biccard Glick Neighborhood Center Gymnasium; Monday, February 7, 2022, 5:30-7:30PM, Moorhead Community Resource Center, 8400 E 10th Street; Tuesday, February 8, 5:30-7:30 PM, Crispus Attucks High School.

DPW has altered the crosswalk timing at Washington and Ritter. Pedestrians now receive a head start before automobiles receive a greenlight. I have noticed a positive impact; I hope you have too.

Proposal 17 was introduced at the last City-County Council meeting. It would allow for No Turn on Red restrictions in each direction at Washington and Ritter. The proposal will be heard by the Public Works committee on 1/27 at 5:30. If the Council is willing to provide a letter of support, I would like to forward it to the committee members.

DPW is still developing a Tactical Urbanism policy. This is a policy that I have been seeking for over a year. The draft policy is still under review by legal. They are hoping to give the Public Works Board a policy proposal in the next couple of months.

I have submitted requests to DPW for speed limit reductions in Irvington. On neighborhood streets, the request is for 25 mph. They stated that they are supportive and will work on the ordinance language to move it forward. The reductions will be phased in to allow for ordering and installation of signage.

As I understand, Indy Parks and Rec Director Phyllis Boyd is attending the Council meeting this evening to discuss Ellenberger Park. I've had the opportunity to meet with her. And she introduced to the Park Committee last Thursday night. The committee unanimously recommended her appointment. I believe the Council will appreciate her experience and enjoy working with her.

I want to also thank the Friends of Ellenberger Park for working with Indy Parks on a survey that will help guide the future of Ellenberger Park.

Thank you for this opportunity to share and to serve. Feel free to contact me with any questions and concerns.

**Phyllis Boyd, Director of Indy Parks and Don Colvin, Deputy Director of Indy Parks:** Phyllis and Don spoke to Indy Parks' intent to place artificial turf in Ellenberger Park. Phyllis stated that the goal is to

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“leave an amenity in the neighborhood” upon completion of the “big dig” project. Our improvement would be the installation of artificial turf and a bathroom building near the turfed field. Review of the Ellenberger Parks Master Plan revealed that this amenity was not listed in that 2000 document. Further neither Council nor public input was sought prior to the 2021 survey completed by the Friends of Ellenberger Park with the results showing overwhelming support against the installation of artificial turf. Indy Parks was provided with a list of questions from Irvington Community:

**PUBLIC INPUT 1.** Indy Parks is an accredited National Recreation and Parks Association member. They mentioned their membership in this org and being in line with national standards in everything they have done on this matter. [According to CAPRA, which is the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies] quote "Public feedback is encouraged and expected in our standards. CAPRA requires a Public Information Policy and Procedure and a Community Relations Plan as standards." end quote. Please explain if you believe Parks complied with these standards and how. **2.** Furthermore, from previous question: How, when, and where was the input solicited? Who provided the input? Why was the Council not included in the public input if it was actually sought? Where is the written documentation on any of this? **3.** If the initial public survey was against AstroTurf why is it still even being discussed? **4.** Have you informed the mayor of this issue and this controversy?

**MAINTENANCE 1.** Who do they contract with for maintenance or is this an internal program? If so, how many individuals are assigned to Ellenberger, what are their shifts? **2.** What is the cost to maintain and reinstall this AstroTurf in the future? **3.** Won't that be a financial strain on the parks department budget, eclipsing any possibility for other improvements to our park? **4.** Will you commit in writing to regular replacement of the artificial turf with a financial penalty for non-compliance?

**LOGISTICS 1.** This is a community park and does not have the acreage your own standards state for a sports complex? Why did you ignore your own guidelines for us? **2.** Why did the 2017 Parks Assessment plan mention nothing of this? **3.** Why is a sports field being built in a floodplain?

**FINANCIALS 1.** How much money did Citizens appropriate to Ellenberger for park improvements as a result of the Dig Indy Project? **2.** How much were other parks allocated? **3.** From a resident: My understanding is that once the construction is done a full acre of the park will be inaccessible. Put another way, we are permanently losing: (1) 2.5% of Ellenberger; and (2) more than a quarter of the largest open park space on the east side. Obviously, parkland is very difficult to come by. While I am disappointed that non-park alternatives weren't identified, the City has indicated that the project is more than \$70m under budget. Presumably, some of those savings are realized by using parkland (such as Ellenberger), rather than acquiring private property. As such, is there a plan to use any of the cost savings to replace the lost parkland elsewhere on the east-side? **4.** How much will teams be charged to use the field? **5.** I also would like to know if teams are being charged for rental of the astroTurf, how is that money then used? Will it go to Ellenberger or to Indy parks? Also where are our bathrooms and pool?

**PUBLIC HEALTH 1.** From a resident: What are the health and environmental impacts of astroTurf? a. With its potential offgassing and runoff, won't it affect our air quality and water quality negatively? b. Above all, why put an unnatural surface in a park that is a natural area, in the midst of a neighborhood that prizes Greenspace?

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**OTHER 1.** The contractors that did the work along the pleasant run greenway (which I understand is IndyPark property) damaged the grade and left tire tracks throughout, washing out the small paths that ran through the greenway. They left without restoring any of it. Is there any plan to repair that area?

While some questions were answered, others did not receive responses or received conflicting responses from Indy Parks. The Council and most Irvington residents who have provided input to the Council and via the previously referenced survey remain greatly concerned about the lack of public input and the intent to place a synthetically covered field in a flood plain. Council member Caitlin Luebcke read a carefully researched statement specific to the health and safety dangers of artificial turf. Indy Parks Director Boyd indicated that the previously completed survey is not considered a survey as it was completed in a deidentified manner without recording the identification of the respondents. She stated that this is not allowable although she did not supply the citation for this requirement when queried by the Council. The “new” survey would contain only three options of artificial turf, natural turf, or regular grass.

Charles Miller made three motions:

- 1) That this Council reaffirm its opposition to the artificial turf as outline in our letter this summer to Indy Parks.
- 2) That the Council inform the City County Council park Committee of this community’s opposition and ask them to conduct an investigation into why no public feedback was held.
- 3) That we ask the City Council Parks committee to codify a city ordinance that states the specific steps and amount of feedback Indy parks must engage in before making a change to any neighborhood park.

The motions passed with fifteen Council members voting “yes” and three Council members abstaining.

The meeting adjourned at 9:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Sue Beecher

