

IPNA Business Meeting Minutes - February 15, 2017  
By Beverly Miller, Secretary - [secretary@inmanpark.org](mailto:secretary@inmanpark.org)

**President Neil Kinkopf** called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.

Newcomers: Neil welcomed all newcomers.

Police Officers' Reports: **Officer Jared Watkins** said there are no new updates on the recent robberies. He advised cooperation and not resistance for people who are accosted. There have been no further incidences.

Minutes: It was moved, seconded, and approved to accept the January, 2017, IPNA Minutes.

Announcements: **Karin Mebius** announced the 46th Annual Inman Park Festival and Tour of Homes. She asked that residents volunteer to help. **Regina Brewer** asked that residents sign up to house-sit during Tour of Homes. It was motioned, seconded, and approved to hold Festival 2017. **Oreon Mann** announced book club will meet Feb. 28 at the home of **Diana Glad**, 960 Edgewood Ave., to discuss *My Beloved World* by Sonia Sotomayor. Attendees should bring a dish to share and a beverage of choice. **Pat Westrick** announced the next Porch Party on Feb. 24 at 7:30 p.m. at 211 Hurt. St., the home of **Melissa Miller** and **Thom Abelew**. Attendees should bring a dish to share and a beverage of choice. **Sandi Parker** and **Kristy Lenz** announced that they were inspired by the Road Fight to put together an exhibit to be held in the gallery above King of Pops, 337 Elizabeth St. 2nd floor, Friday, Feb. 24 and Sat., Feb. 25. They invited everyone to attend. **Steve Hays** announced the March Porch Party will be held on March 24 at the Trolley Barn to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Atlanta & Edgewood Street Railway Company. **Andrew Stein** announced all IP parents should join the Inman Park Parents' Facebook group.

Elected Officials' Reports: **Jay Tribby** announced that the Lifelong Inman Park initiative and the Renew Atlanta bond project on Dekalb Ave. are big ongoing issues. His cell phone is 404-406-5296 for those who have questions.

IPNA Officers' Reports:

**President Neil Kinkopf** reported that 1) the By-laws Committee, chaired by **Beverly Miller** with members **Pat Westrick**, **Diane Floyd**, and Neil, has begun meeting and has formed an agenda for the scope of work to be undertaken; 2) residents who want to make nominations for the upcoming IPNA Board should contact Neil or **Andy Kaufman**, Chair of the Nominations Committee; 3) Neil has also formed a working group on filming in our community, chaired by **Karen Goekel**. Those interested in serving should contact Karen.

Dekalb Avenue Complete Streets Presentation:

Renew Atlanta's **Faye DiMassimo**, **Michelle Wynn**, and **Janeka Singleton** announced the upcoming public meeting on March 30, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., at Liberty Baptist Church. Janeka reported that Renew Atlanta received 245 comments from 220 people at the November 2016 meeting. Those comments are summarized on their web site and are conflictual in nature as to how to improve Dekalb Ave. Residents do not want traffic forced into the neighborhoods but prefer calming devices. Some prefer extending left turn lanes, getting rid of the suicide lane and making it a turn lane, designing a corridor safe for walkers and bikers, adding better lighting, using McClendon and Edgewood as the biking corridors, thinking of the future of transportation, and providing better timing of signals. Some want to keep the reversible lanes and add resurfacing and better sidewalks. Renew Atlanta is developing displays of all the feedback to present in March and will make a recommendation to the City Council, who will make the final decision. Neil added that **Danny Feig-Sandoval** and **Janice Darling** of the Transportation Committee have met numerous times with the City about Dekalb Ave.

**Brian Roof, V.P. Historic Preservation**, announced plans for improvements at 80 Spruce St. **Adam Stillman** introduced additions and renovations, mostly on the back side of the house. The house will be restored to more of its original configuration. Non-historic features will be removed. The owners seek a Type III

Certificate of Approval. Immediate neighbors voted 8-0 to support the plans. It was moved, seconded, and approved to support the immediate neighbors.

**Chuck Clarke, VP Zoning**, presented an application for a special use permit at 502 Seminole for Druid Hills Preschool. The site is currently St. Joseph's Maronite Church. Neil outlined the format for discussion: 1) a 10-minute presentation from the school leadership; 2) a 5-minute presentation by neighbors opposed to approving the permit; 3) a 25-minute discussion without advocacy; 4) a 20-minute time period for advocacy during which residents should form two lines, one in favor of approving the permit and one against, with each line given a total of 10 minutes, and no speaker speaking for more than one minute.

Druid Hills Preschool Presentation:

The school wants the large green space at 502 Seminole to remain a play space for neighbors and for students. They propose staggering pick-up times to alleviate traffic problems. They want neighbors to have a voice and would like a non-parent neighbor to have a seat on their board. They are excited about a walkable pre-school and will give priority to IP residents. They have hired a traffic engineer. They assert that the property will change since the church is moving. Nothing will have a zero impact. **Alison Gordon**, traffic engineer, has a plan that avoids adding traffic to many of the residential streets. Currently, staff members park onsite, but the plan for the new location is to have them park offsite. Their proposed route for parents transporting children is from Moreland, to Mansfield, to Rugby, then onto N. Highland. There will be a traffic control officer on N. Highland and staff members will be located at Mansfield and at Seminole to direct traffic.

Opposing Neighbors' Presentation:

**Simona de Graf** spoke for the neighbors opposed. They believe this is not the right location for the school. It is a business that attracts traffic. Kids are noisy. Neighbors fear that the school will expand. Immediate neighbors voted 44-6 against the permit. They ask that neighbors trust their analysis. They distributed a handout outlining their grievances, mainly traffic and parking. They allege there is no plan for staff and after-hours parking. The school also proposes re-opening a decommissioned road going behind 17 houses, which the opposed neighbors allege cuts off access to two houses. They claim that their property values will be decreased 15-25 percent.

Q and A:

What is the status of using Rugby St? *Using Rugby St. is the plan submitted to the City to be considered along with the application. The church was also planning to reopen Rugby before they decided to sell instead. School officials have met with IPNA and L5P traffic committees, who suggest using Rugby St.*

The plan to come down Mansfield assumes everyone will come from Moreland. Cleburne and N. Highland back up every morning. How will emergency vehicles get in? *These issues are partly due to the signal at Freedom Pkwy.*

Will the officer directing traffic be blocking people's driveways across from Rugby St? *The traffic monitor will facilitate access for residents, not impede it.*

Where will the staff park? *A board member with property in IP has offered his parking lot by Rathbun's Steak House, and a shuttle will drive staff to and from the lot.*

How can they mandate a specific route when people can take other routes? *They will instruct their parents about ingress and egress. They will staff the route to monitor compliance. They are experienced in helping parents get into and out of their property.*

What about the days when all students are driven twice per day and the parking lot fills up? *There will be a reduction in traffic due to siblings and carpoolers. There is no amount of traffic and city planning that can change the weather's effects. Nine overflow parking spaces could be added on the driveway. Maximum would be 111 cars per trip, not taking into account those who walk, bike, carpool, and have siblings in the same car.*

Is the original application being amended? *Yes, an updated application was filed today.*

Why are 90 cars parked at their current parking lot at one time? *There are 119 spaces currently, but the school will implement a new policy with staggered pick-ups and drop-offs at the new property. They also have 188 students currently, which they will reduce to 115, plus all staff members are now parking on site but will park offsite as part of the new plan.*

How will traffic be impacted if a developer purchases the property and develops it? *It would depend on the land use. Based on the site, it's approximated that 28 condos would be reasonable, equivalent to the same traffic volume that would come with the school.*

How many children go 5 days per week and how many live-in IP? *There are 20 IP families. All 4- and 5-year-olds go 5 days per week; 2- and 3-year-olds choose 2, 3, or 5 days per week. Out of 13 classes of 10-14 children, 4 classes go 5 days per week.*

What were the church's plans if the congregation had stayed? *They would have opened Rugby St. and paved the back garden for a parking lot, but then they found a new church and decided to sell.*

Neil extended Q and A for 10 minutes.

Do you plan to open Rugby as a two-way street? *No*

What are the facts on the number of walkers and bikers who do not come to school by car? *The school surveyed their parents and found that half of their families walk and bike regularly. The school does not intend to be car-dependent. Their site is walkable from the locations where their families live.*

What is the width of Mansfield? *The width is 18 ft.*

Are there alternative locations? *The school looked for seven months to find locations that could accommodate their students. They approached churches in all those places. There is nothing out there. They have only a back-up plan with a church offering them a 1-2-year lease.*

How is the staggering in pick-up and drop-off planned? *It is planned in accordance with the age of the students.*

Will Rugby St. be improved? How will access be controlled after hours? *The street may be used unpaved. The ultimate intent is to pave it. It will not be a through street. It will be blocked by a gate.*

What are we voting on? *We are voting to approve or disapprove a special use permit to allow the preschool to operate. The current zoning allows single family or duplexes.*

Do you have to open Rugby St? *The school has to submit a transportation model for the special use permit. Their plan shows a car-dependent design would work, but that is not the kind of institution they want to be. Opening Rugby allows emergency vehicles to access the property.*

Advocacy portion: (reduced to 5 minutes per side)

Con: Not the right place

Pro: IP is about community; Druid Hills Preschool is about community, and it will be a pillar of the Inman Park community

Con: Immediate neighbors voted 44-6 against and IPNA should support them

Pro: On the streets in question, between 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m., the pick-up and drop-off hours for the school, at all access points, there is no traffic

Con: The school is asking residents to extend their traffic time to 10:30 a.m.

Pro: A resident who is also a traffic planner said she wants and supports the school's move to this location because people can walk their kids there and they have a good, workable traffic plan

Con: It is bad to run traffic behind people's homes

Pro: A school is a good use for the building. They will preserve the green space.

Con: There needs to be a better considered set of issues regarding what to do in an emergency

Pro: The Inman Park Preschool is already a great neighbor. Amenities such as schools improve the neighborhood.

Con: Rugby St. is too small to be running cars down

Vote:

Neil thanked everyone for the constructive engagement. He explained voting procedures. Discretion for voting procedures resides with the board. The neighborhood has faced many issues that have also been important and have generated interest as well as controversy and acrimony and has always discussed in the open, had an open vote, and gone back to being neighbors. Neil has found himself in the minority and has never felt ill will or received retribution. He hates to give up the norm but has been asked to supply secret ballots. The board feels it is not how we would prefer it but would like to get a sense from the room. The board will then exercise its discretion in accordance with that if it's the overwhelming preference of everyone in the room. Secret ballots will also add time to the meeting. Only two people indicated during the poll that they favored secret ballots. It was decided to hold an open vote.

Chuck Clarke reported that the vote is on whether to support or not to support the immediate neighbors, who voted 44-6 to oppose the application for a special use permit to allow the school to operate at the property. A motion was made and seconded to support the immediate neighbors. Neil first made clear that our vote is to support or oppose the immediate neighbors. There is no legally binding consequence one way or another. The NPU will vote next week, taking into account our vote. NPU will make a recommendation to the city. The city will then take into account both those votes and make a legally binding decision.

Upon entering the meeting, residents had signed in with their names and addresses and were issued paint sticks. They held up their paint sticks to vote.

Outcome:

In favor of the motion to support the immediate neighbors - 110

Opposed to the motion to support the immediate neighbors - 82

Motion carried.

**James McManus** invited everyone to join IPNA. A neighbor invited everyone to Hampton and Hudson for a free beer.

Old business: none

New business: none

It was motioned and seconded to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:37 p.m.

Committee Reports: none

Old Business: none

New Business: none

It was moved, seconded, and approved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 p.m.