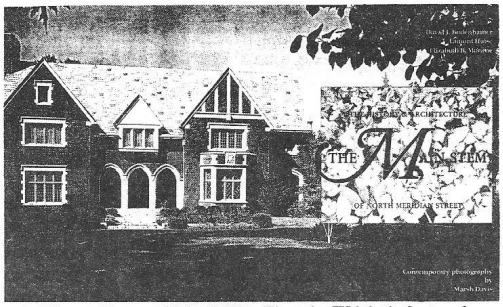
11/23/92

MERIDIAN STREET FOUNDATION

News & Views

NOVEMBER 1992 VOLUME 5, NUMBER 5



The residence of Mr. & Mrs. Timothy Wright is featured as the cover of the new book, **The Main Stem**

MERIDIAN BOOK DUE SOON

By Alice Ross

The long anticipated book about our Indianapolis' pride and one of America's premier urban thoroughfares, our North Meridian Street, is now due out the day after Thanksgiving! As you know, this is the culmination of a project started by the Historic Landmarks Foundation and North Meridian residents about 10 years ago with first research and survey work leading to our being placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986 and the seven tours of our Meridian Street homes between 1986 and this July to spotlight our area as well as to raise funds for the book's publication.

"THE MAIN STEM: The History and Architecture of North Meridian Street" will be a 160 page handsome "coffee-table" book with 32 pages of contemporary photographs and over a hundred historic images. Although it concentrates on our Meridian Street Historic District area from 40th Street to the canal, the text broadens the book's scope by showing leadership of the residents in the development of the city's commercial, political, and social structure.

An Alonzo P. Henderson was the first man to think the Meridian Street area north of 38th Street could be special and in 1898 he bought a 100 acre plat and attempted a development, calling it Meridian Heights. His plan included curving drives, large irregular lots and small parks in the middle of intersections. Two ornate stone castles spanned Meridian at 46th Street, where the

(Ccontinued on page 4)

NEW STREET LIGHTING ON MERIDIAN STREET

By Larry Dorfman

The existing cobra head lights have been found to be inadequate by the City of Indianapolis and must be removed and replaced by Spring 1993. We have two options: 1) we can allow Indianapolis Power and Light (IPL) to install safer Cobra Head lights; or 2) we can work with IPL to install historic type light fixtures on poles. The historic lighting is very attractive and has been installed in a number of historic neighborhoods throughout Indianapolis. There is a cost to the neighborhood if we choose historic lighting.

A number of funding opportunities may be explored. For example, businesses and organizations, especially those who do a good deal of business on Meridian Street, could be asked to participate in an "adopt a light" fund drive. A number of businesses have already expressed support for such a solicitation. In addition, we could seek grant money from local philanthropic organizations and solicit donations from residents of the city and state, since Meridian Street is a historic district enjoyed by all who share an interest in historic preservation. Finally, we, as a neighborhood resident could participate in a fund drive.

As a neighborhood we must act quickly. Once the lighting decision is made, it can not be re-examined for 25 years since that is the life span of the lights. We must determine if a majority of households in the neighborhood support the effort to seek historic lighting so that we can begin the task of fund raising.

WE NEED YOUR ATTENDANCE AT THE NOVEMBER MEETING!!! If you can not attend, please contact Larry Dorfman (HO 251-8897 or WK 639-4396) regarding your views at your earliest convenience. Given the time limitations and the importance of this issue to the neighborhood, we will assume that a NO RESPONSE, is an affirmation to go forward with fund raising for historic lighting.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE OCTOBER FOUNDATION MEETING

Street Lights - Meridian Street Preservation Committee approved the new lighting system but is not involved in the financial support of this. Larry Dorfman, Mary Walker, and Helga Behroozi have been the representatives from the area who are working with DOT, IPL, etc.

Larry Dorfman presented pictures of the historic look globe lights which will have 150 watt high pressure sodium orange light given off. Forest Hills has the same color lights, though they are about 1 1/2 feet taller than we will have (14 ft. high on Meridian Street). Mercury vapor is not approved in some states from an efficiency standpoint. Our lights will have Victoria V735 globes and Hagerstown light poles VO3. Total cost per historic replica fixture would be $1,194 including installation. Meridian Street will need 149 down both sides of the street. The cost to the residents of Meridian Street would be only $112,572 since the cost of 80 cobra head light fixtures and installation, which IPL would have paid for, is subtracted from the total cost, for IPL will still pay that amount.

Summary of cost:

1. City funds total cost of Cobra fixtures.
2. If choose historic replica fixtures we need to pay since there will be an additional charge.
3. Larry Dorfman presented his ideas about how to finance them, including grant money, "adopt a light", solicitations from companies and individuals since Meridian Street is everybody's street.

Need to elicit comments from and support of residents of Meridian Street since it will be 25 years before another choice on fixtures can be made. Motion was made and passed for Meridian Street Foundation to endorse the concept of historic lighting in lieu of the cobra lights originally proposed by IPL.

Motion made and passed for Larry Dorfman to head up the committee to pursue funding options and simultaneously to notify the Meridian Street residents of MSF's proposal.

The earliest date the lights could be installed is March or April 1993. February 1993 is probably the goal to raise $$. Final approval is by the Commission before implementation.

Traffic Signals - September 9 the Presidents of BTNA, and MSF sent a letter to Mayor Goldsmith. No response has been received except two articles in the newspaper about an accident and better police enforcement of speed limits. The attorney for the state DOT says safety is the most important consideration, but every decision for not adding stop lights at 40th and 46th streets is based on the amount of cross traffic flow. Next step is to seek the opinion of an attorney about any legal action MSF has. Evans Woollen and Helga Behroozi will pursue this.

Monon Railroad Right of Way - The meetings for the potential use of the right of way presented a concept of public transportation which was not favorably received by the public. Final decision needs to be made soon. Several residents will attend the next meeting.

Spring Social Dinner - Bertie Lamberson suggested combining events, such as a town meeting and a social dinner, but concern was expressed about MSF ability to juggle two issues. Bertie will look into the possible combinations of events...perhaps around a Crime Watch meeting or New Neighbor Coffee.

New Members - Gene reported that from 10/1/91 to 10/1/92, 108 residents paid dues to the MSF. The next newsletter and membership dues request will go to residents the week of November 23, 1992. Please get articles for the newsletter to G. B. Landrigan 3 weeks prior to that (November 2).

The next hearing of the Meridian Street Preservation Commission will be November 24 at 4:00 p.m. North United Methodist Church

Monday, October 12, 1992 THE INDIANAPOLIS NEWS D-3

Inside Marion County

■ PIKE TOWNSHIP
■ WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP
■ LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP
Paul Bird, 633-9225

■ WAYNE TOWNSHIP
■ CENTER TOWNSHIP
■ DECATUR TOWNSHIP
Derrick Stokes, 633-9086

■ WARREN TOWNSHIP
■ PERRY TOWNSHIP
■ FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
Skip Hess, 633-9464

Fatality rekindles traffic controversy

North Meridian Street is focus of complaints

By PAUL BIRD
The Indianapolis News

While three neighborhood organizations waited for responses from Gov. Evan Bayh and Mayor Stephen Goldsmith concerning North Meridian Street traffic, another motorist has been killed on the street.

The mayor and governor were asked to help in obtaining traffic signals and reduced speeds for the street north of 38th Street.

"It is an absolute race track between the (Indianapolis Water Co.) canal (6000 north) and 38th Street," said Stan Markuson, president of North Meridian Street Foundation.

On Sept. 9, Markuson; Alicia Byers, president of Meridian-Kessler Neighborhood Association, and Tim Oakes, president of Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood Association, wrote to Goldsmith and Bayh asking for traffic lights at 43rd and 40th streets and a reduction of speed.

On Sept. 22, a man was killed in a crash at 40th and Meridian streets.

Meridian Street is a state highway, and speed limits and traffic controls are the responsibility of the state.

Neighborhood leaders assert that public officials have been insensitive.

In fact, said Markuson, state highway officials have refused neighborhood organizations' pleas for more than two years.

During that time, Markuson said, at least three people have been killed in traffic accidents; scores have been injured, and thousands of dollars in property damage have been incurred.

Despite the deaths, injuries and property loss, highway engineers have repeatedly told the neighborhood groups that their traffic surveys do not justify reducing speed limits or installing the traffic signals, Markuson said.

"State highway traffic engineers say their primary concern and responsibility is traffic flow," Markuson said. "They say traffic safety is the responsibility of police."

Larry Reuben, an attorney with the Indiana Department of Transportation, denied this.

"I think it is an error for anyone to believe we are not concerned about traffic safety," he said.

He attended a meeting last summer with neighborhood leaders and City Councilman Stephen West.

Reuben said the department promised the neighborhood a study and did just that.

'I think it is an error for anyone to believe we are not concerned about traffic safety.'

— Larry Reuben
Indiana Department of Transportation

The study concluded that signals weren't warranted at either 40th or 43rd.

He said he didn't know the factors the engineers used to reach that conclusion.

Markuson was selected to speak for the three largest neighborhood groups on the city's Northside.

He said the Indianapolis Police North District commander, Deputy Chief John Bent, and his officers have responded to residents' concerns.

"We see them writing tickets there all the time," Markuson said, "but they'd have to write tickets to three out of four cars to be effective."

Bent agrees.

However, Bent said IPD has not conducted an official study of traffic there.

"I can tell you that we write a lot of tickets in the stretch," Bent said.

Meridian Street north of 38th Street is residential.

Markuson is quick to point out that Bayh lives at 46th and Meridian and if the governor wanted to see how fast traffic moves past his home he could look out the window.

In addition to the speed, the neighborhood groups also cite Meridian Street's narrow width and low curbs as additional justification for traffic signals.

Bayh spokesperson Davd Dawson said the governor forwarded the neighborhood leader's letter to the transportation department.

"He travels Meridian Street and is sympathetic," Dawson said, "but the DOT acts for him."

Neighborhood leaders say they have already been waiting two years for the highway engineers to do something.

"We think traffic signals will allow people to use cross streets safer and, secondly, that signals will slow down the traffic," Markuson said.

Observation by The News for three months confirmed that cars traveling at the posted 35 mile-an-hour rate often are quickly passed by other vehicles.

"The highway department is interested in flow — moving traffic — and the people who live in the suburbs want to get to work and go home as quickly as possible and that transfers to a problem for residents," Markuson said.

"We wonder how many more people will be killed or injured before officials listen to us."

Membership Update

Gene A. Scott, Membership Chairman

We have received the following new member contributions (N) and renewals (R) since our last newsletter listed the roster for this 1992 membership year:

Single Membership - $10.00
Penelope Stilwell - 4519 N. Meridian (N)
G.B. Landrigan - 34 W. 49th St. (R)

Family Membership - $15.00
Edward & Cynthia Cheikh - 5556 N. Pennsylvania (N)
Dr. & Mrs. James Norton - 4138 N. Pennsylvania (R)
Dr. Samuel S. Patterson - 4536 N. Meridian (R)
Elaine L. Shaffer - 4717 N. Illinois (N)
Dr. Thomas Southern Family - 5060 N. Meridian (R)

Contributing Membership - $25.00
Thomas & Elaine Howard - 4142 N. Meridian (N)
Martha A. Nester* - 5324 N. Pennsylvania (R)

Sustaining Membership - $50.00
Ben & Abby Kuzma - 5639 N. Meridian (N)
Christina L. Morris - 33 East 55th St. (R)

Patron Membership - $100.00 or more
James F. Maguire* - 4411 N. Meridian (N)
James R. Sparks - 5640 N. Pennsylvania (R)
Dr. Charles E. Test - 4430 N. Meridian (R)

* Two members, James F. Maguire and Martha A. Nester, had contributed earlier in the year, but their names were not listed in the previous issue.

It is time to send in your 1993 dues contribution. We attempt to keep the dues on a calendar (Jan - Dec) basis. Please use the enclosed form to start your new membership, or for any changes you want to make on your renewal membership. Please indicate how you wish to have your name(s) shown on our records as well. If you are merely renewing and don't need to make any changes, it is not necessary to send the form with your check.

About 110 of your neighbors (out of about 580 households in our district) sustain the Foundation. Please be a good neighbor and help us keep our beautiful area unique.

Remember to participate in the special "all neighborhood" meeting at Meridian Street Methodist Church on Wednesday, November 18. Come and give us your opinion on the proposed new lighting for Meridian Street!

FOUNDATION MEMBERSHIP FORM

Renewal_____ New_____

Patron - $100+
Sustaining Member - $50
Contributing Member - $25
Family Member - $15
Single - $10

All contributions are appreciated. All members will be acknowledged in the News & Views. All contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

Name:_____

Address:_____

Telephone:_____

Children and ages:_____

Occupation:_____

Would you care to participate on a committee?

If so, what area?_____

Please return to Gene Scott, with check payable to the Meridian Street Foundation, 4030 N. Pennsylvania St., 46205.

(Meridian, continued from page 1)
Governor's residence stands today. But it was too early and few lots sold. Cars and paved roads were not available and too many people worked too far away in the city.

But Indianapolis grew and transportation improved and developers again turned to North Meridian Street and nearly 120 houses were built in the 20's and 30's. These houses displayed varied architecture, all the way from Tudor manors to French chateaux and English cottages and Colonial revival styles. Nearly all had spacious lots with deep setbacks and large front lawns and the city's first zoning code, introduced in 1922, protected that look, requiring lots on Meridian to have a minimum of 7500 square feet, compared to a minimum of 4800 square feet elsewhere in the city.

In the years since North Meridian Street has remained a gracious street as the early houses have been renovated to their original splendor and new unusual homes have been added.

All of this history is pictured and told in **"THE MAIN STEM: The History and Architecture of North Meridian Street"** with its color section of contemporary photographs and discussion of architectural styles. There is also included a catalog of black and white photographs of each house between 40th Street and the canal, ownership history, architect (if known), and year it was built. The book will sell for $37.95 and will be available after Thanksgiving at Historic Landmarks Foundation headquarters, 340 West Michigan Street and the Indianapolis office at 1028 North Delaware. Select local bookstores will also carry the book. Call 639-4534 for information and to receive a mail order form.

Saturday, October 17, 1992 THE INDIANAPOLIS NEWS

Goldsmith takes aim at speeders

By PAUL BIRD
The Indianapolis News

Mayor Stephen Goldsmith has ordered a crackdown on North Meridian Street speeders,

Goldsmith agrees with neighborhood leaders that too many vehicles are speeding on Meridian between 46th and 38th streets.

The mayor has told police to strictly enforce speed laws in the area.

Of particular concern to Goldsmith is the intersection at 40th and Meridian streets. Three people have been killed there.

"Speed is a serious problem there," Goldsmith said. "The intersection at 40th is dangerous, but this entire problem is difficult to assess."

Meridian is a state highway, and speed limits and traffic signals are the responsibility of the state.

On Sept. 9, Stan Markuson, president of Meridian Street Foundation; Alicia Byers, president of Meridian-Kessler Neighborhood Association, and Tim Oakes, president of Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood Association, sent a letter to Goldsmith and Gov. Evan Bayh asking for traffic lights at 43rd and 40th streets and a reduction of speed.

On Sept. 22, a man was killed in a crash at 40th and Meridian streets.

Markuson said state high way officials have refused neighborhood organization's pleas for more than two years.

"I drive on Meridian there, and speeds are well in excess of what is posted," Goldsmith said.

Meridian Street Foundation
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