MERIDIAN STREET FOUNDATION

NEWSLETTER

meridianstreetfoundation.net

"I think old homes pick up the energy of the people who've spent time there."

SPRING '08

Used with kind permission of Susan Vaughn & Ann Ryder.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

By John Peoni

Greetings to all of our neighbors from your Meridian Street Foundation Board!

With Easter having been as early as it could possibly be – a whole month earlier than some years, it seems that winter, however stubbornly, is finally yielding to spring. I am always grateful for the transition from gray and dormant days to sunny skies and budding trees, with everything turning lush and green. Spring break tans are but a faded memory, a reminder that the school year is nearly over. Sure, there will be mowing and pruning to do – but also golf and tennis, and all the activities that warm weather brings. Gentlemen: start your weed whips!

Our social chairs, Meredith Mitchell and Ryan Fisher, have been busy – already this year they've organized two successful events. We enjoyed a lovely Sunday evening at The Meridian Grill with a bountiful appetizer buffet and cocktails, plus the opportunity to visit with old neighbors and meet new ones. The annual Easter Egg Hunt was held once again, despite chilly weather, at 4343 N. Meridian – a big thanks to Elaine and John Klein for providing their beautiful yard for this traditional event. Plans are in the making for a summer picnic at our Governor's residence. You will be hearing more about this soon.

Former MSF presidents Kathy Shorter and Cindy Zweber-Free, are spearheading a MSF off-shoot, called HARMONI (Historic Midtown Neighborhoods Initiative). Formerly limited to revitalizing Alice Carter Park, HARMONI now encompasses the Meridian-Kessler, Butler Tarkington and Broad Ripple neighborhoods. Its boundaries run from 38th Street to the Central Canal, and from Michigan Road to the Monon Trail. Kathy and Cindy have worked tirelessly toward developing this initiative, creating enormous energy, wide-spread acceptance and support from the general public, city officials, local foundations, and benevolent patrons. They are realizing the fruits of their efforts – contributions are accumulating, plans are developing, a board has been created, and HARMONI is well underway. These visionaries need your support – call them today with whatever encouragement you can offer.

While we remain hopeful that the property tax issue is getting resolved, it is apparent that the outcome is unclear to many. We are organizing an event that may help clarify where we are in the process. Our intention is to invite a few key people, such as Jolene Ohmart, the Washington Township Assessor, to be part of a panel to explain and answer questions. This would allow a public forum, creating an opportunity for productive discussion. We will notify you soon of a time and place.

Nancy Whitaker joined our board this past Fall as chair of the Land Use Committee. She is doing a fine job. Nancy's husband Gary is quite proficient in developing websites; he has spent a great deal of time redesigning the MSF website – I encourage you to visit (HTTP://www.meridianstreetfoundation.net). One feature of the site is access to the content of The Main Stem, a book published several years ago about Meridian Street.

Finally, be good citizens and exercise your right to vote, both in our May primary and also in November. Your voice can be heard louder at the ballot box than anywhere else. Get informed, know whom and what you are voting for – it matters.

Have a safe and fun summer.

Peace,
John Peoni
President

IT'S MORE THAN A PLACE---IT'S OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

I was struck a couple of years ago at a comment given by a young soldier while in a combat zone. Amidst all the urgency of the day, a reporter asked the young man: "How do you feel about the war?" The response was one I'll never forget: "I just want to do my job and go home."

"Home." Home is probably why we make the sacrifices we do to protect our way of life. "Go home." Sure he meant his own house, where he kept his belongings, learned basic life lessons and shared his most meaningful relationships. But he also meant that space beyond his house.

Beyond our house is the home of a gathered community. Here, in our Meridian–Kessler neighborhood, we share daily joys and sorrows. Babies are born….grandparents die. Kids have their first exposure to people who might act or look different than their mother or father.

In our neighborhood the realities of life play out in everyday experiences of shopping, going to school or seeing the doctor. Values are formed and shared experiences create friendships and understanding. We feel comfortable here. We know the lay of the land; the ground rules are open for public discussion. We have a sense of what to expect in the future. It is this security that gives us the confidence and freedom to reach out and explore ideas and places that are new. It is the sense of belonging that helps us build up the world around us and not tear it down.

The Meridian-Kessler neighborhood even now helps shape our thoughts and behavior. As such, it indeed calls us to pay attention and address its nature today and its vision for the future.

Judy O'Bannon

Please watch our website **www.meridianstreetfoundation.net** for information on upcoming social events like the summer picnic as well as other neighborhood asctivities. Also please make sure we have your emails and phone contacts so you won't miss any news. Thanks - The Social Committee. Contact info on Handy Reference Guide.

MERIDIAN STREET FOUNDATION

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NEIGHBOR NOTES

By Peggy Sabens

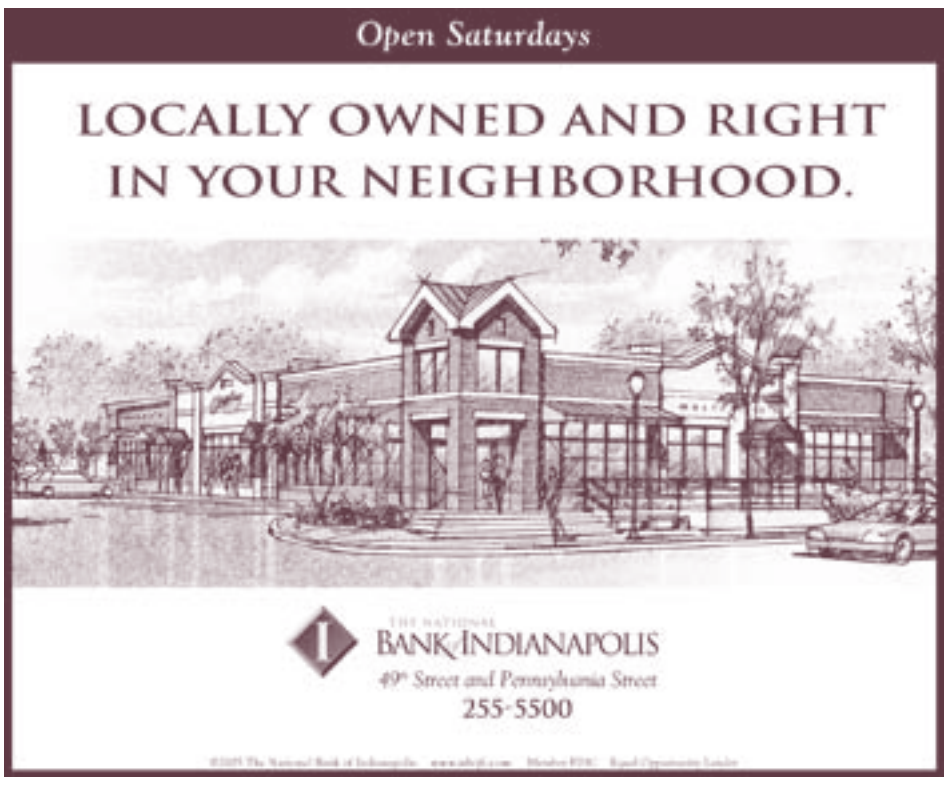
Well, most of our neighbors are waiting for their tax bills to arrive. It seems real estate is beginning to move since there is a promise(?) that a 1% cap will be in place in a few years. By the time you read this, there will have been a memorial service for our friend and neighbor Virginia Handley the first of May. We also will lose another friend and neighbor Alice Berger who with her husband David is embarking on another major project, restoring her "dream home" to its former splendor. If anyone can do it, Alice can. Unfortunately her "dream home" is not in our neighborhood, but the good news is that it is nearby. There are some inklings of the patter of little feet in our neighborhood—more later. The Decorators' Show House is in our neighborhood at the Heslins, 43rd & Pennsylvania, as I am writing this. HARMONI is becoming increasingly a reality. Just go to www.indyharmoni.org for further details.. Be sure to visit the MSF website at www.meridianstreetfoundation.net for our neighborhood activities. The Whittakers have done a great job updating the website and we are very proud of it. Also look for info on upcoming activities like the summer picnic, etc and our annual meeting in the fall.. Our neighbors are enjoying the Meridian Restaurant and are awaiting the opening of the Fresh Market at Atlas' former site. There is still a lot of sensitive restoration activity along the street. Our Meridian "mistresses" still captivate as they approach their 80's or more. Lots of campaign signs in the neighborhood. Lots of interest in not only our local elections but national ones as well. Please let us know about new neighbors and activities of interest to our neighbors. Also if you have ideas for articles, please let the newsletter committee know. We welcome neighbors' input. After all it is your newsletter and your neighborhood.

EASTER EGG HUNT

By Ryan Fisher

The eighth annual Easter Egg Hunt was a great success despite the miserable weather conditions. The annual hunt is located at the Klein's house which has been a home to seven governors and is considered one of Meridian Street Foundation's local treasures. It is especially well suited for a youth activity because it is walled and gated making it a safe place for the many roaming children. The Easter Bunny made a special visit to see the eighty five children that participated in searching for over 1200 Easter Eggs. Everyone enjoyed themselves as they nibbled on donated goodies. A special thanks to some of our favorite local neighborhood vendors that donated to make this a great event; Hubbard and Cravens, Flying Cupcake, Café Patachou, and Kids Ink. Hopefully, next year's hunt will be warmer!

Thanks to Meridian Street United Methodist Church for their Breakfast with the Bunny and Easter Egg Hunt earlier in the day



LETTER FROM MAYOR

Dear Neighbors,

As I said recently during my State of the City Address, Indianapolis is a strong city and we are getting stronger. We are not strong because of our government, but because of people like you, who take great pride in what we are trying to accomplish and work hard to make sure we reach our greatest potential.

As your Mayor, I have been working hard for the past five months to get out into our communities and talk to the citizens of Indianapolis. I am a true believer that the work of the Mayor should be on for the well being of the citizens. I have found no better way of learning the greatest concerns of the people of Indianapolis, than to talk with you on a personal basis.

During our monthly Mayor's Night Out events, I, along with my staff and other department heads, have the opportunity to hear questions and concerns from constituents from across Marion County on a wide variety of issues. Resoundingly, the issue of main concern to our citizens from all corners of the county is public safety. That is why my administration has made public safety job number one.

For too many years, Indianapolis has seen increasing numbers in our crime rate. High crime rates often result in decaying neighborhoods, decreasing population and slower economic development. We are here to change that trend and in an effort to do so, we recently kicked off our "Peace in the Streets" initiative, a city-wide effort to let criminals know that we have had enough.

The city of Indianapolis is taking a new route in our public safety efforts by rededicating ourselves to community policing. We are going to put more officers in our neighborhoods and on our streets because we believe that a greater, more visible police presence in our communities will lead to less crime. We are letting everyone know that we do not accept crime: not in our streets, not in our neighborhoods, not in our schools and not in our city.

Community policing throughout Indianapolis will allow our officers to collaborate with the community and other government agencies to provide the best quality of public safety we have to offer. You deserve nothing less.

We recognize the efforts of organizations such as yours, which have crime watch and public safety

entities, and are excited about the opportunity to partner together to keep our city safe. No doubt, this effort will lead to safer, cleaner streets, a boom in economic development and a brighter future for generations to come.

In addition, I encourage you all to work with us through our Mayor's Action Center, Mayor's Night Out and through our website. Open lines of communication can make the difference in improving our city and together we can all make a difference.

Sincerely,

Gregory A. Ballard
Mayor

IMPD STREAMLINES OPERATIONS, STRESSES COMMUNITY-BASED POLICING

Mayor Greg Ballard recently announced a restructuring of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD) that took effect on February 29. The changes include a streamlined command structure that eliminated two layers of management. The savings from these changes will help increase the number of officers on the street. The streamlining efforts also support IMPD's commitment to community-based policing that stresses communications and cooperation with citizens and increases officers' presence in neighborhoods.

Chief of Police Michael Spears heads the new command staff. Spears' team includes Deputy Chief of Investigations William Benjamin, Deputy Chief of Operations John Conley, Deputy Chief of Administration Bryan Roach, and Deputy Chief and Director of Emergency Management John Ball, and Investigations Assistant Commander Lincoln Plowman. Lieutenant Marshall DePew is serving in a new role, special assistant to the chief for community crime reduction strategies.

The IMPD's North District, which includes the northside neighborhoods served by the Meridian Street Foundation, is headed Major David Allender. Other IMPD officers with field responsibilities include Northeast District Major Becky Lake, Northwest District Major Paul Ciesielski, Southwest District Major Brian Mahone, Southeast District Major Clifford Myers, Downtown District Major Darryl Pierce, and Tactical Operations Major Chad Knecht.

Key officers associated with the North District have important roles in the new IMPD organization. As noted above, John Conley was promoted to deputy chief of operations and reports directly to Chief Spears. And Catherine Moore, the North District community liaison, has taken on additional responsibilities on the north side of the city. Meanwhile, Ed Potts – co-chair of the Mid-North public safety committee – has become a new member of the Law Enforcement Council.

"Congratulations to the terrific people in the North District public safety group who have worked so effectively with the Meridian Street Foundation, the Meridian Kessler Neighborhood Association, the Butler Tarkington Neighborhood Association, and other community groups to improve the quality of life in our part of the city," said Sheila Little, Ph.D., who chairs the Meridian Street Foundation's public safety and traffic Committee. "We're really pleased that their good work is being recognized."

EDITOR'S NOTE

Meridian Street Foundation News & Views published three times a year is the communication arm of the Meridian Street Foundation, a 501c3 not for profit neighborhood association. We welcome comments and ideas from our neighbors. Our main thrust is to reinforce the idea that while a certain degree of discipline and commitment is necessary to live in a unique and significant neighborhood, the rewards far outweigh any disadvantages.
Peggy Sabens ph. 257-3741, fax 475-0224, email jmsabens@indy.net
John Peoni, Raul Burciaga, Phil Cox, Kathy Shorter, Vaughn Hickman, We will gladly accept letters or comments for inclusion in upcoming issues.

TAKING ON TAXES

Looking up the term 'taxes' as a verb reveals various definitions including "to burden", "to put a heavy demand on", and "to strain". As a noun, "for the government to take", "a percentage of income taken to pay for universal services", and most interestingly "to accuse" are all appropriate definitions according to Mr. Webster. Noun or verb, the burden of paying for universal services was very apparent in our first installment of The Open Door Series; Taking on Taxes.

Senator Teresa Lubbers, and Representatives Cindy Noe and David Orentlicher were on hand Sunday March 2nd to discuss the sizzling topic of taxes, and share where the state legislators are in the process of discovering a solution. Morning talk show host, attorney, and sit-and-stand-up comedian Abdul Hakim-Shabazz moderated the event with his unique brand of humor and wit, and Senior Pastor Anne Rosebrock eloquently set the tone for the evening. She confidently welcomed everyone, and reminded us to be respectful of each other, while putting the serious issue of taxes into perspective by sharing the comments of a child.

The oversimplification of the problem is that taxes are too high and inconsistent, especially in the diverse Washington Township neighborhoods. The solution as to how to handle the tax variations is the increasingly convoluted topic that has our leaders losing sleep, and no doubt hair, until the session is over. Of the more than 100 questions submitted to the panel, those asked repeatedly included: How do we handle our assessors? Should we have assessors? Should we have taxes based on income? How do we adjust for fixed-income families? Why are home additions not included in some assessments? Are property taxes legal under the Indiana constitution? Can we survive without property taxes? Is there really a 4 billion (yes, with a "b") dollar underassessment in our township? What about fair market value of homes?

Do you have a headache?

I do.

The answers are not simple. Neither are the questions, mainly because there are so many of them to ask. Finger pointing doesn't work. Neither does ignoring the issues. So what do we do?

We invite in the leaders, the residents, the lawmakers, and our neighbors. We thoughtfully take pen to paper with our questions, and respectfully listen to the array of answers provided. We go home and reflect on our options, and maybe come up with some possible solutions of our own. And we talk. To our families, our co-workers, and ourselves about what is to be done. The truth is that there is no magic answer, and certainly no quick fix for the property tax debacle.

But we have taken the first, and most important step in coming up with a better scenario than the one we are experiencing: gathering together to talk and share ideas. And eventually, like clay on a pottery wheel, we move and mold and shape until we have a non-perfect piece that we can all live with for now in the time given.

And finally…

We vote.

And remember to be thankful for living in a place that values our opinions, and allows us to voice them in public.

MSF LAND USE COMMITTEE

By Nancy Whitaker, Chair

As Chair of the MSF Land Use Committee, one of the most common questions I receive from neighbors within the MSF, MKNA and BTNA areas is whether they need to get approval from the Meridian Street Preservation Commission (MSPC) for their future changes to their home or property. With Springtime now upon us and the prospect of exterior home improvements looming, I felt it might be helpful to readers to insert a map of the Meridian Street Preservation Area governed by MSPC within this Newsletter. [A larger and more detailed version of this map can also be found at the MSF website (www.meridianstreetfoundation.net/districtmap.html)]. .

Please note that all owners of property in the Preservation Area (Meridian Street Properties and Bordering Properties) must obtain approval from MSPC for petitions of prior of approval of variances in development standards (e.g., new building project does not meet applicable standards of the zoning ordinance for setback, fence height, open space, etc.), changes in land use, and rezoning. Meridian Street property owners in the Preservation Area must also file applications for Certificates of Appropriateness for most other proposed exterior changes and additions to their property. Approval must be granted before the changes can begin to be made. The Design Guidelines that have been adopted by the Commission to help in administering the design review process are available at the MSF website.

I also frequently entertain the question, "When and how do I get started to obtain approval by MSPC for my project?" To help answer this question, the Chair of MSPC, Mr. Bob Wilch, recently developed the enclosed Approval Process Chart (see back of the enclosed map of the Preservation Area). Along with detailed written instructions found in the Application Packet, it is hoped that this Chart will help those living in the Preservation Area to better grasp the steps involved. (Both the Chart and the Application Packet are found on the MSF website at the MSPC home page.)

Please note that the Chart emphasizes the involvement of the MSF Land Use Committee (contact Nancy Whitaker, Chair, 259-0978, whitakerng@yahoo.com) and the MSPC Staff (contact Connie Zeigler, 955-0377, conniezeigler@sbcglobal.net) early on in the development and review of your proposed project. We look forward to working with you.

NOTES FROM YOUR COUNCILLOR – RYAN VAUGHN

No, you're not reading that wrong. That is actually the correct spelling of Councillor when referring to the office of Indianapolis City-County Councillor. An ordinance was passed several years ago setting the spelling of Councilor in the Old English spelling, Councillor. This is just one of the many things I have learned in the past year and a half as your City-County Councillor. You might be thinking to yourself, "a year and a half? I thought we just elected this new group." You are correct, but my situation is a little unique.

I was elected to the City-County Council in a special caucus by the Republican Party Precinct Committeemen in February of 2007. After the election I fulfilled the remaining year of a four year term of your previous Councillor, Jim Bradford. I also began to run for election or "re"-election, whichever you prefer. Last January I along with 15 other Republicans and 13 Democrats were sworn in as your new City-County Council.

By way of background, I was born in Muncie and moved with my family to the Westside of Indianapolis when I was three years old. I grew up on the Westside of town and graduated from Ben Davis High School. From Ben Davis, I attended Wabash College where I graduated in 2000. I went straight from Wabash to the Indiana University School of Law – Indianapolis. After my first year of law school I was married to my high school sweetheart, Heather. During my last year of law school I was a certified intern with the Marion County Prosecutor's Office. I stayed with the Prosecutor's Office after graduation and passing the bar and continued to work there for three more years. During my time there I prosecuted all types of crimes, from drunks to murderers. I left the Prosecutor's Office after four years of service and I have been in private civil practice every since. I am currently working with Barnes and Thornburg, LLC as a member of the Government Services and Finance Team as well as serving as your City-County Councillor.

As your Councillor, I am a member of the Administrative and Finance Committee and the Chairman of the Public Safety and Criminal Justice Committee. The Public Safety and Criminal Justice Committee deals with a variety of policy and funding issues. We began this year focusing on the newly-elected Mayor Ballard's campaign promises to bring control of the police department, IMPD, back under the Mayor's office. When the two police forces, the Sheriff's Department and the Indianapolis Police Department, were consolidated to form the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department, control of the department was given to the head of the smaller of the two forces, the Sheriff. Thanks to the efforts of the Mayor, the Sheriff, and the Public Safety Director, an agreement was reached to transfer the operational control of IMPD back to the Mayor's office. The Public Safety and Criminal Justice Committee held hearings on the transfer, entertained public comment and approved the language authorizing the transfer.

Having cleared that initial hurdle, the Public Safety and Criminal Justice Committee is now focusing on a number of other issues in different areas. Last week the Committee considered language allowing for an expanded search for a new Chief of the Indianapolis Fire Department. The Committee has recently made a number of new appointments to a variety of boards such as the Animal Care and Control Board, the Community Corrections Advisory Board, the Law Enforcement Advisory Council and Crime Prevention and Advisory Board. Each of these boards plays a very important role in how we address the issues of public safety in our community. The Committee has also recently focused on evaluating and funding offender re-entry programs, substance abuse and treatment programs, and the growing problem of stray and abandoned animals in our community.

It continues to be a pleasure to serve as your City-County Councillor. Should you have any questions or comments about issues in your neighborhood please don't hesitate to contact me at vaughnforcouncil@gmail.com or on my cell phone at (317) 437-7701.

FISHER FAMILY BIO

Scott, Ryan and Lizzie Grace Fisher were a new addition to the neighborhood last spring. They moved into the Watson home located at 52nd and Illinois. Both Scott and Ryan have Indiana roots. Scott is from Evansville and was a Sigma Chi at Purdue University. Ryan is from Noblesville and went to college down south in Monroe, Louisiana. Since their marriage they have lived primarily in the Indianapolis area with a venture to California; first Broad Ripple, then in Southern California where Scott started law school. Returning to Indiana, they settled in a small English Tudor in Forest Hills. Their daughter, Lizzie Grace, was born in May of 2006. With a child and two English mastiffs, they decided a bigger house was in order. Because of their love for old houses and the quaint charm of Meridian Kessler area, they hunted until they found just what they wanted in their house on Illinois. The large back yard was perfect for the dogs, and the pool keeps them all busy in the summer. Scott is on the Butler Tarkington board and Ryan is the social chair for Meridian Street Foundation. They are very excited to be in the neighborhood and look forward to many years in their colonial home.

"Spring has sprung,
The grass has riz
Where last year's
Careless drivers is."
— Burma-Shave

ALICE IN MERIDIAN LAND

By Alice Berger

This is my last "Alice In Meridian Land" article. I'm filled with excitement for the future and sadness this chapter of my life is coming to an end. I have loved the stewardship of my Meridian house and my life in this amazing historic district. I have loved that all of you feel like you know me and feel comfortable enough to stop by and visit when you see me in the garden. I have loved sharing my passion for historic preservation with my readers, my community and my friends. I have enjoyed the hard work and hours spent volunteering and cherish the knowledge that I have truly made a difference.

I wish I could leave you with words of wisdom, words that imprint my passion of preservation into your very souls, but I'm not that wise. I implore you to never forget how special this community is; never forget that it is your duty to preserve the history of this district and Meridian Street for all the future generations to come. Embrace the idea that every change you make to your historic home respects its history. I encourage you never to take short cuts when making changes to your home or to this neighborhood. If you can't afford slate on the roof or leaded glass on your new addition, wait until you can. Try to add on to your historic home in a manner that respects the past while creating living space for the future. I promise you, if you do this, you will be so very glad you did. You will feel such pride in the uniqueness of your "old" house, a house like no other, a neighborhood like no other.

As I move on to another beautiful and historic house, another adventure in preservation, another neighborhood, I will take with me all I have learned from my years at 4833 N. Meridian and I will have a smile in my heart whenever I think of you and my beloved historic district.

Alice

HARMONI BREAKFAST

By Kathy Shorter

Gary Thrapp initiated and hosted an outstanding Midtown business owners breakfast event on Wednesday morning, April 16 at G. Thrapp. Gary's purpose was to provide an opportunity for the HARMONI team to communicate Phase I progress and to share future plans that will help revitalize Midtown Indy. In planning the event, Gary shared his conviction that the HARMONI mission is extremely vital to all business owners in this district. The breakfast was well attended by over 40 area business owners, neighborhood leaders, and by key city officials including Deputy Mayor Nick Weber and Mayor Ballard's chief of staff, Paul Okeson.

Mark Miles, President of Central Indiana Corporate Partnership, introduced HARMONI and spoke of the importance of Midtown Indy to our regional area. He shared that he grew up in this area and has great memories of being able to get everywhere he needed to go by walking or on a bicycle. He spoke of the excellent quality of life that traditional neighborhoods like this one can provide. Commenting on the Phase I plans at Meridian and Westfield, he stated that when he first learned of our efforts to slow traffic on Meridian, he thought we were "out of our minds", but he has since become convinced that that this truly needs to happen for livability in the area and for the well being of the city.

Kathy Shorter, Co-chair and President of HARMONI, Inc. (newly incorporated) presented a power point overview of the mission, goals, and strategies of the initiative. She communicated about the current scope of effort/traffic study for Phase I that will be ready for review in mid May. She also shared information about the research that is being done to determine how the achievement of HARMONI's goals will be ultimately paid for. The new board of directors and HARMONI committee structure (chairs indicated below) was announced as follows:

John Peoni, MSF President, John Barth, BTNA President, Caroline Farrar, MKNA Executive Director, and Sharon Freeland, BRVA Executive Director attend the G.Thrapp Midtown Business Owner's Breakfast that Gary Thrapp organized in support of HARMONI.

Forty Midtown business owners participated in a breakfast to learn more about HARMONI on April 16, hosted by G. Thrapp.

Chuck Cagann (Community/Economic Development)

Don Altemeyer (District Identification and Design)

Wendy Ponader, Secretary and Attorney (Operations and Governance)

Cindy Zweber-Free, Vice President (Public/Private Financing Co-chair)

Lisa Haynes, Treasurer (Public/Private Financing Co-chair)

Don Arbogast (Public Relations/Communications/Marketing)

Kathy Shorter, President (Connectivity and Pedestrian Safety)

Brian Payne, President of the Central Indiana Community Foundation (CICF), followed Kathy's remarks by speaking of CICF's commitment to the HARMONI mission. He stated that he has been inspired by his work so far with the HARMONI team and Phase I and he looks forward to a continuing synergistic relationship with the "Inspiring Places" initiative. He made the statement that he absolutely believes Indianapolis can and should be a "top 10" city, and that a thriving Midtown is key to achieving that. He spoke of "place-making" and he spoke about this Midtown districtarea as a "destination neighborhood", which is critical to a vital metropolitan area and its "sense of place."

Gary Thrapp closed the event with a review of how far his block at 56th and Illinois had come and how committed he is to this area, even with all the economic obstacles. We were reminded in eloquent fashion how difficult this has been for business owners at times. We were also reminded that many of them have given up or moved to areas that have less challenging economic conditions.

HARMONI

By Kathryn Shorter

HARMONI (Historic Midtown Neighborhoods Initiative) was incorporated on February 29, 2008 and is in the process of 501c(3)application.

The HARMONI, Inc. organization includes the following:

Directors/Committee Chairs

Kathy Shorter, President
(Chair, Connectivity/Pedestrian Safety)

Cindy Zweber-Free, Vice President
(Co-chair, Public/Private Financing)

Wendy Ponader, Secretary and Attorney (Chair, Operations and Governance)

Lisa Haynes, Treasurer
(Co-Chair, Public/Private Financing)

Don Altemeyer
(Chair, District Identification and Design)

Don Arbogast
(Chair, PR, Communications, Marketing)

Chuck Cagann
(Chair, Community/Economic Development)

The Neighborhood Advisory Board (ex-officio, non-voting) includes:

Carl Pebworth, President, MKNA

Caroline Farrar, Executive Director, MKNA

John Barth, President, BTNA

John Peoni, President, MSF

Tom Healy, BRVA, President designee

Sharon Freeland, BRVA Executive Director

Left to right in photo: Don Arbogast, Don Altemeyer, Lisa Haynes, Chuck Cagann, Cindy Zweber-Free, Caroline Farrar, Carl Pebworth, Wendy Ponader, John Barth, Kathy Shorter, Tom Healy, Sharon Butsch Freeland, John Peoni

The HARMONI, Inc. board is pictured above at their quarterly meeting, April 21, 2008.

HARMONI is an all-volunteer economic development/ quality of life initiative focused on the rejuvenation of Midtown Indy, which will result in thorough infrastructure improvements, thriving business corners, improved tourism, traffic calming, inspiring parks, and overall Midtown District identification.

If you would like to volunteer to serve on one of the committees listed above, please email or phone:

Cindy Zweber-Free, czwebfree@aol.com, 921-9571

Or

Kathy Shorter, kathyshorter@gmail.com, 931-1935

HARMONI's website is www.indyharmoni.org

MSF MERIDIAN WRAP UP

By Meredith Mitchell

Meridian
Restaurant & Bar

On Friday 24, 2008, the Meridian Street Foundation and HARMONI hosted guests at the newest addition to the neighborhood, Meridian Restaurant. Guests enjoyed cocktails and delicious food put together by Dan Dunville and his helpful staff. The theme "Share the Love" celebrated the connection between neighbors, the MSF, and HARMONI. Kathy Shorter and Cindy Zweber-Free both shared exciting updates with regard to Harmoni's progress.

TOM WEEDE BIO

My name is Tom Weede. My wife Julia and I recently moved into a house at 50 W. Hampton Drive. This is my second time living in Indianapolis. I first moved to here in 1980 for my first "real" job out of college. My job was working for an international youth exchange named Youth for Understanding, and our office was in the office tower at Indianapolis International Airport. I was so excited to be in the big city! After growing up in a town of 900 people in northern Michigan, Indianapolis was definitely the big city.

Over time, I found that I was spending much of my spare time downtown and in Broad Ripple. After a year in Indianapolis, I moved into a great basement apartment in at First-Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church at 47th and Central Avenue. While there are many interesting stories that go along with living in a church, it got me into a great part of town.

Even then, I loved the Meridian-Kessler and Butler-Tarkington neighborhoods. I loved the mix of people, the age, beauty and variety of homes, and lovely tree-lined streets. I loved the proximity to Atlas, the best grocery store in town. Whenever I had time, I would walk and explore the neighborhood. (My unreliable '72 Volkswagen Beetle also gave me other, unplanned opportunities to walk and explore…)

I spent almost four years in Indianapolis during that first tour of duty and I loved the whole time. Eventually, job opportunities moved me to Milwaukee, (where I met Julia) Asheville, NC and Bronxville, NY, a close-in suburb of New York City.

I have spent all of the last twenty-five years working at colleges and universities in fields related to admissions and financial aid. In the fall of 2006, I received a call asking me to consider a job as Vice President for Enrollment at Butler University. Because of Butler's great reputation, I was interested, and was eventually offered the job. Julia and I came to Indianapolis to look for a home, and my old neighborhood was among the first places we looked.

On our first day of visiting homes, we found our dream home at the corner of Hampton and Illinois. From the moment we saw it on the internet, we loved it and when we first toured the home on a sleety day in late February of 2007, we knew it was the right place. Most of all, we loved the space, the light and the great kitchen that the previous owners had put in.

The home is based on designs common to northern Germany, with banks of windows and a large, peaked roof. The home was in pretty good shape for one built in 1922. While we have had the honor of buying a new sewer line, most of the inside was in move-in condition, and most of our efforts have focused on the outside. The yard had a beautiful landscape plan, but some of the shrubs had grown well beyond their prime, and some of the trees had become diseased. The house was largely hidden from the street. We have removed many of overgrown shrubs and the sick trees, and we have begun to replace them with a new landscape plan that reflects the home's provenance and history. We are enjoying the project!

While we love our home, the neighborhood is perhaps even more special. We have had the chance to meet many of our neighbors at block parties and rummage sales. We even had the chance to meet a wider range of neighbors at special community events where people talked about their tax bills! But most of all, we have enjoyed talking to all the people who stopped by to say hello while we were working in the yard.

Yes, the tax bill six weeks after we moved in was a surprise. But the welcome we have felt from our block and the whole neighborhood have more than made up for it. We love living in one of the most beautiful, friendly, diverse neighborhoods in the city. We love the access to my work, to downtown and to easy shopping. In less than a year, we've met far more of our neighbors than we met in twelve years in our home in suburban New York City. Thank you for making us feel so welcome. We look forward to meeting more neighbors at MK-BT events.

HAMAKERS PHARMACY

By Evan Finch *(Reprinted by kind permission of Indiana Observer & the author—February 2008)*

The Hamaker Pharmacy, on the corner of 49th & Pennsylvania in Indianapolis is one of my life's landmarks. Week after month after year, I've come to depend on its consistency, charting the turn of seasons by its changing window displays. And now, it's closing.

I first encountered the pharmacy in 1990, when I moved into the north half of a double a few blocks east. Exploring the neighborhood that first weekend, I was struck by Hamaker's timelessness, and delighted by the sense of peace I received while walking its aisles.

I've been up and down those aisles countless times since. Jingling through the door, passing through the greeting cards. Rounding the revolving comic racks, sipping from the drinking fountain. Continuing by the work gloves and extension cords, past the scale that (still!) offers your correct weight for one penny. Leafing through the magazines before taking a quick right, past the model kits and rubber-band-powered wind-up gliders. One more left past the rain bonnets and hot nuts, and I'm at the counter, paying. Then I'm back outside, squinting in the sunlight. Comforted by my ritual, and smiling familiarly at the ancient LA Rams sticker plastered on the store exterior.

Since the day I learned Hamaker was shutting down my pilgrimages to the pharmacy have become bittersweet. I've begun picking items off the shelves not because I need them, but simply because I crave souvenirs.

None of us wants to see our life's landmarks crumble. But crumble they inevitably do. Friends change. Relations pass on. And the Hamaker Pharmacy closes. But the end of one landmark can serve as a reminder to us, to seek out and visit those that remain in our lives—to make the most of the time we have left before their store lights, too, grow dim.

Written and photographed by Evan Finch, Indianapolis 259-4463

Editor's Note-Please watch for an article on the 49th & Pennsylvania "shopping node" (the contemporary jargon for stores), in the next issue of the MSF News & Views. However we want to congratulate **Meridian Heights Cleaners** (283-1361) who again for the year 2007 was named "Best Dry Cleaner in Indianapolis" by the Indianapolis Monthly Magazine. Also **Emmett's Limited** (475-0777) has moved from 56th & Illinois to 49th & Pennsylvania and continues to be the place to be coiffed. Their patrons come from far and wide. They are a fine addition to a most vital area with many unique and popular places to spend time in our neighborhood.

BEAUTIFICATION

By Stacey McCarthy

Happy Spring ! As I write, flowers are finally starting to bloom & people seem to be waking from their long winter slumbers. Seeing people walking, jogging, strolling, and working outdoors is such a breath of fresh air. To follow are a few updates on what's been happening with our committee.

Lawn of the Season

While we didn't actually "award" any lawns this winter, your efforts did not go unnoticed. The neighborhood and city certainly benefits from our holiday décor, especially during such a 'drab' time of year. 'Tasteful' & 'spirited' comes to mind when I think of how the neighborhood looked this past year. One particular night after a snow, my husband & I actually saw people slowing in front of houses and looking at their décor. So, embrace the season ! For Spring, three "lawns of the season" will be awarded after mother's day. Remember April Showers bring may Flowers! Send nominations to Stacey@kpmac.com

River of Flowers

The River of beautiful blue flowers, Glory-of-the-Snow or Chionodoxa forbesii along Meridian Street, has been breathtaking and indeed a welcome sign of spring. This project was started in 2002 by Melissa Oesterle and for the next three years more bulbs were added each year by many Meridian Street Foundation members and friends for four weekends each year in October. Since then interested homeowners have purchased the bulbs and planted them in the fall to increase the brilliant blue in the spring.

To encourage these bulbs to multiply, the homeowners need to annually warn their lawn care company to NOT apply weed killer until mid summer after the green leaves of the bulb are totally gone. Also because the energy from the green leaves need to return to the bulb for next year's display of color, it is imperative to NOT mow the lawn as long as there are still green leaves of the flower...this could be the last week of May.

*Also, if you would like to add these flower bulbs to your yard this fall please send me $40 for 500 bulbs or $75 for 1000. They will be delivered to you by September for fall planting. Beautification Chair 5655 N. Meridian Indianapolis, IN 46208 with your Name, address & full amount requested.

Keep Indianapolis Beautiful

As reported last quarter, the tree planting project was a great success (so far). NOW is the TIME to WATER WATER WATER WATER….WATER !!

Remember, if you received &/planted a tree be sure to water your tree for the next two growing seasons (Spring/Summer/Fall). Each tree needs at least 15 gallons of water every 5-7 days between April-October. The slow trickle of a hose, 30 minutes at a time is best. If we are in a drought, the trees may need watering twice/week. If we've had lots of rain, you shouldn't have to water. May sure your tree is mulched, but that the mulch stays at least 4 inches from the trunk of the tree. This will ensure that the trees thrive.

*Meridian Street Foundation as a 501 (c) 3 is donating money towards Keep Indianapolis Beautiful. If you like this project & would like to see more like it in our neighborhood, please send donations to Keep Indianapolis Beautiful @ 445 N. Pennsylvania St., Suite 910 Indianapolis, IN 46204 & note the donation is on behalf of Meridian Street Foundation. KIB is a privately funded, non for profit organization. Donations solely provide for projects like ours. MSF is applying for another grant from Keep Indianapolis Beautiful with hopes for a fall planting of trees. If you live in the neighborhood & are willing to assist on planting day, &/or would like to plant a tree in your city right of way, please email Stacey@kpmac.com.

THE FRESH MARKET

The Fresh Market® is pleased to bring a unique grocery shopping experience to the residents of the Meridian-Kessler area of Indianapolis. The specialty grocer's full-service philosophy incorporates unparalleled product selection and expert customer service in an inviting atmosphere.

Designed to evoke old-world European charm, The Fresh Market's open-air design and artful sophistication invite customers into its warm and friendly atmosphere. The setting is enhanced by antique displays, incandescent lighting and classical music, which add to the feel of strolling through several "fresh" European markets – all under one roof.

The Fresh Market looks forward to becoming a member of the Meridian-Kessler community. Be on the lookout for more information about the store's grand opening events this summer!

THE FRESH MARKET

We welcome Fresh Market
to our neighborhood-
They will join our
wonderful neighborhood
markets,
Safeway and Kincaids at
56th & Illinois.
Please patronize
our area merchants.

Tour an Outstanding Meridian-Kessler Neighborhood School

Recognized by the United States Department of Education as a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence in 2005, Immaculate Heart of Mary School is located in the Meridian-Kessler neighborhood at 57th Street and Washington Boulevard. Our school community is committed to the spiritual, academic, social, and emotional growth of each student. We provide a caring atmosphere where outstanding faculty members and supportive parents ensure that each student has the opportunity to reach his or her academic potential. Other school highlights include:

- Fully Accredited by the State of Indiana
- North Central Association Accreditation
- Consistent and exceptional performance on standardized tests
- Weekly Mass with a student-led liturgy
- Daily Catholic religion classes
- Service opportunities
- Strong student code of conduct
- School uniforms
- AM and Full-day kindergarten programs
- Spanish instruction (Kindergarten-Grade 8)
- French club (Grade 7)
- Art, computer, library, music, and physical education classes
- Academic enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities offered after school
- Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) sanctioned sports programs
- After Care program offered until 6:00PM

We invite you to take a personal tour and learn more about our fabulous school! Please contact the school secretary, Barb Horton, or Annette Jones, principal, for more information (255-5468). We look forward to meeting you!

DID YOU KNOW?

We the property owners on Meridian Street are required to abide by the Meridian Street Preservation Commission (MSPC) state statute. Yes, we have a state law governing this street but before you become too concerned remember that most "upscale" communities have laws or covenants governing them. Some of the "laws" are extremely strict compared to our law. In some communities you are not allowed to leave your garage door open or have swing sets. Some even tell you what your mail box should look like and require that all windows have white coverings. Our law simply applies to historic preservation and commercial encroachment. The MSPC law is the reason your homes are so valuable and continue to look as they did back in the 1920's. Below I have listed what you are required to bring, when you apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness, before you make changes to the exterior of your home or property.

The MSPC administrative code (925 IAC 2-4-2) requires an application for a Certificate shall be filed in triplicate with all exhibits (together with eight additional copies thereof without exhibits) with the Commission and shall:

(a) State the name of the Owners and street address of the property on which the work for which the Certificate is sought is to occur, and the reason for the work

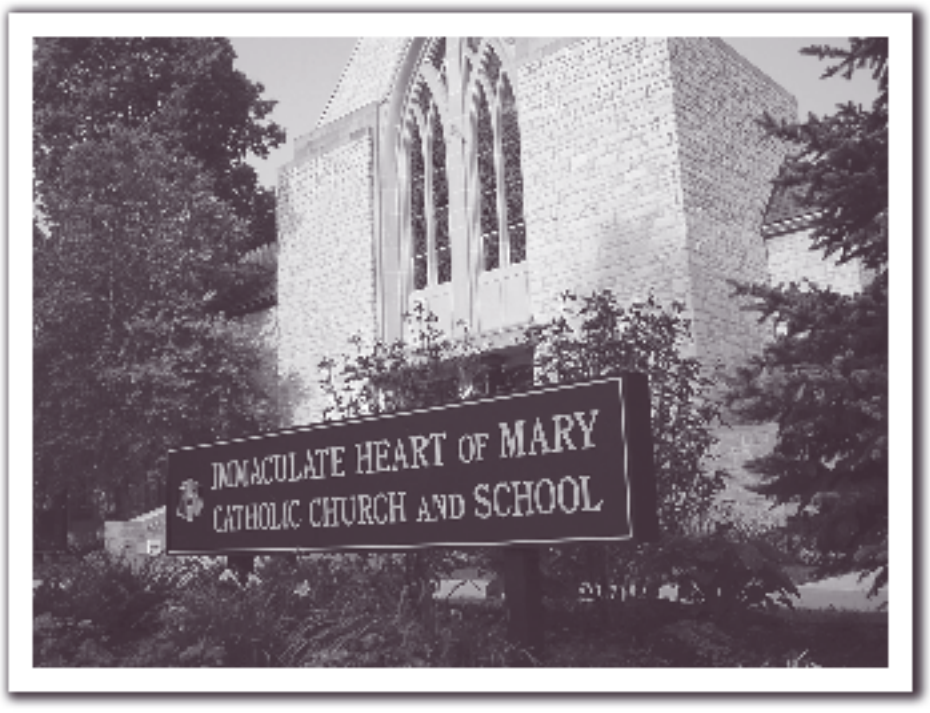
(b) Describe in detail (1) the work to be done, (2) the change resulting from such work, if any, in architectural features of the structure upon which such work is to be done, (3) the nature and type of materials to be employed, specifying which such materials will be external and visible upon completion of the work, (4) the name of the person who prepared the plans

(c) The application shall be accompanied by (1) a current photograph of the property taken from Meridian Street, if the work will be visible from Meridian Street (2) a photograph depicting the location of the work to be done and clearly showing all features to be altered or affected (3) a site plan indicating the accurate distance between the proposed construction and all property lines if new construction is proposed (4) if appropriate to the type of work being proposed, accurate drawings, with dimensions, showing the property or structure before and after the work for which the certificate is sought (5) samples, pamphlets, or other information explaining the materials to be used

The Commission may, before a hearing on a petition, require:

(1) Maps, plot plans, structural drawings and specifications, landscaping plans, floor plans, elevations, cross-sectional plans, architectural renderings, diagrams, or any other technical or graphic materials. (State Statute 36-7-11.2-34)

Alice Berger, Commissioner
Meridian Street Preservation Commission
The entire law can be found on our web site: meridianstreetfoundation.net



Central Indiana Community Foundation believes the HARMONI Initiative and the four neighborhoods involved are incredibly important to the future of Indianapolis. We are excited to partner with the dynamic leaders of these neighborhoods as part of our Inspiring Places Initiative.

go to
www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/indianapolis/
to see some national coverage of our city.

1. Project Idea

Petitioner has idea for a project

Online Resources-

Go to the web site www.meridianstreetfoundation.net to find the following:

- MSPC Application Packet with information regarding how to file a case.
- Title 925 of the Indiana Administrative Code
- Indiana Code 36-7-11.2
- North Meridian St. Preservation Area Design Guidelines
- Meridian St. Preservation Area Plan
- MSPC Meeting Schedule
- Boundary map of area governed by MSPC

Contacting the Chair of the Meridian Street Foundation Land Use Committee and the MSPC Staff person to discuss the project concept as soon as possible is highly recommended.

Petitioner describes project in draft form

2. Refine Project

Suggested Review Meetings

- Meet with MSPC staff
- Meet with Meridian Street Foundation Land Use Committee
- Meet with neighborhoods and/or interested parties
- Discuss with surrounding neighbors

Refine project based on comments

- If significant changes are made to project, go back to MSPC staff, MSF Land Use Committee, neighborhoods, interested parties and surrounding neighbors with changes.
- Finalize plans & documentation & complete application forms

3. File Application

File Application with MSPC

- File and pay fee in room 1821 of the City/ County Building no later than 30 days prior to public hearing

4. Legal Notice

Obtain surrounding property owner names and addresses from Assessor

Review legal notice prepared by MSPC

Serve legal notice

- Serve personally or mail legal notice to surrounding property owners & interested parties no later than 20 days prior to public hearing

Complete Affidavit of Notice of Public Hearing & submit to MSPC Chair no later than 7 days prior to public hearing

5. Meridian Street Preservation Commission Public Hearing

Public Hearing

- Petitioner seeks approval of project by demonstrating how application meets the statutory tests for approval
- Attendance at public hearing required

Continued to 2nd public hearing 30 days later if necessary

Public Hearing Results

- Certificate of Appropriateness[1]
- Prior Approval of a Variance[1]
- Prior Approval of a Rezoning[1]
- Denial (Can be re-filed in 6 months)
- Dismissal

6. City Permits/ Approval

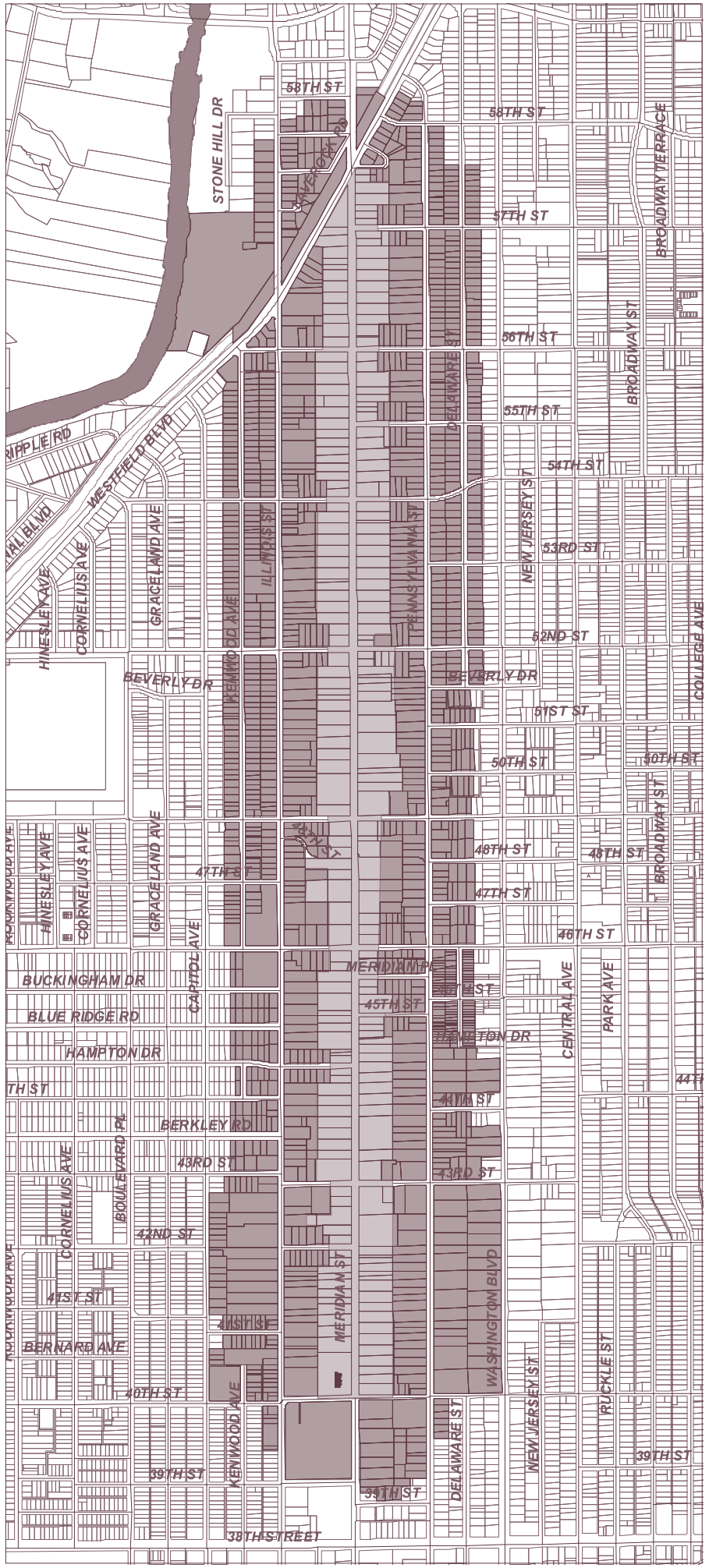
Seek necessary permits/ approval from City of Indianapolis

[1]**Note**-Orders issued by the MSPC contain a provision that the work shall be commenced within 18 months of the date of the issuance of the Order. If work is not commenced within such time period, the order shall expire, and the petitioner will need to file a new petition to pursue the work. Prior to the expiration of an order, one extension of time, not to exceed six months, may be sought from the MSPC Chair.

MERIDIAN STREET PRESERVATION COMMISSION MS PC 1972

Meridian Street Preservation Commission Approval Process

3-4-08



MERIDIAN STREET PRESERVATION AREA

Meridian Street Preservation Area

- Meridian Street Properties
- Bordering Properties

N W E S

0 450 900 1,800 2,700 3,600 Feet

April 15, 2008

City of Indianapolis
Department of Metropolitan Development
Division of Planning

REAL ESTATE ROUNDUP

By G.B. Landrigan, Realtor

The much-anticipated spring market has finally arrived. In addition to the usual "anticipators" such as buyers, sellers, and their agents, we now have economists, politicians, and the media waiting to see what the results will be of last year's elections and this winter's legislative session. Most of the area Realtors agree that the not-unreasonable fear of bizarre property tax hikes kept the Meridian Street Foundation market from having a better year.

Most agents are quite optimistic about the coming season. While it is true that the 1.5% and 1% caps will not take effect immediately, most buyers will now be able to plan on lower property taxes -- perhaps not this year, but over the next couple of years. In addition, the third "reconciliation" bill from last year will also be making its appearance sometime this spring or summer and will undoubtedly cause confusion for all concerned. For further information about how this will affect you, you should contact your Realtor. Although much has still not been finalized by the various taxing districts, he or she will be able to show you what is expected to occur from now until 2011.

The following statistics reflect the activity from 4/15/2007-4/15/2008. All data is from the Metropolitan Indianapolis Board of Realtors.

North Meridian Street
Number of Homes For Sale: 15
Number of Homes Pending: 1
Number of Homes Sold: 12
Average Sales Price: $597,279
Highest Sale: $885,000

North Pennsylvania Street
Number of Homes For Sale: 12
Number of Homes Pending:2
Number of Homes Sold: 8
Average Sales Price: $480,150
Highest Sale: $814,700

North Illinois Street
Number of Homes For Sale: 4
Number of Homes Pending: 1
Number of Homes Sold: 14
Average Sales Price: $294,486
Highest Sale: $725,000

Cross-Streets
Number of Homes For Sale: 7
Number of Homes Pending: 0
Number of Homes Sold: 9
Average Sales Price: $323,089
Highest Sale: $445,000

MEMBERSHIP

By Alice Berger

Do you ever wonder why you should donate membership dues to Meridian Street Foundation? I've had people ask me just what "does" MSF do for them. I love it when that happens. It gives me an opportunity to tell them about the MSF board and all the things these wonderful volunteers do for this district.

We are so lucky to have volunteers who devote hours and hours every week to the MSF historic district. People who work on the communication committee, the newsletter and the website; people who spend hours planning parties and gatherings to help create that spirit of community; a committee who attends safety meetings to discuss crime, traffic and other issues this community faces; we have people who attend public hearings, tax meetings and political functions just so you and this district are represented. Most importantly, we have people who spend hours protecting and encouraging the preservation of these historic homes and this preservation area. All of this is done by volunteers. But it takes money - money to pay for the newsletter, money to help HARMONI (the effort to create a true gateway to the city while improving traffic, roads, sidewalks and schools), money to create flyers, invitations and a thousand other things. We are lucky, lucky because we also have you, the people of this community who willingly help support the MSF with their yearly dues.

Please be a member of MSF. Send in your tax deductible dues. Be generous. Help us in our continued effort to make this the greatest historic district in America.

Alice Berger

Membership Chair

The following families are benefactors (Membership dues of $100 or more) to MSF for 2008:

Alice & David Berger
Ted Planje
Richard & Ann Rich
Alan & Marsha Langdon
John Walsh
Chris & Barbara Velonis
Edward & Amy Prein
John & Sue Peoni
Jane and Andrew Paine
Raul Burciaga
Nancy and Gary Whitaker
Cindy and Ed Free
Monroe and Sheila Little
Kelley and Scott Fisher
Dan And Ruthann Bunting
Neil Handley
Jeff and Lisa Whorley
Kevin and Stacey McCarthy
Debbie and Daniel Marr
Michael Schmidt
Thomas and Julia Weede
Patricia and William Hirsch
Marion Stuart
Alan and Ann Kimbell
Denise and Bruce Cordingley
Constance and Douglas Brown
Elaine and Christian Wolf
Christi and Thomas Malasto
Gary and Kristy Sherman
Greg and Emily Bauwens
Martin and Nancy Logan
Joe and Joyce Butterworth
Patsy Solinger
Ella Tunnell
Mary Jo and William Campbell
James and Diane Johnson
Lance and Meredith Mitchell
Dr. John & Elaine Klein
Dr. Greg and Pam Dedinsky
Natalie and Russell Best
Thomas and Mary Grein
Charles Otto
James Spain
Dr. J. Elbrecht
Emily and Jason Burk
Fred and Kathy Shorter
Charles Johnson
Kim Baxter
Stephen and Phyllis West
Paul and Lanya Warrenfelt

Thank you BENEFACTORS!!!!!

"BTW"

if anyone is interested in a book club, garden club, gourmet club or other type of get-together idea in the neighborhood? If so contact Peggy Sabens at 903-8839 or email to jmsabens@indy.net.

OUR MISSION

MERIDIAN STREET FOUNDATION

The Meridian Street Foundation is a charitable (501c3) foundation originally organized in 1960. The Foundation's chief purposes are the maintenance and improvement of existing health, safety and ecological standards, and the preservation of the architectural, historic and aesthetic significance of residential North Meridian Street and the neighborhood in which it lies.

Please Note: We live in the North Meridian Street Historic District, governed by the Meridian Street Preservation Act of 1971, administered by the Meridian Street Preservation Commission. Before undertaking any changes in structure or usage of your property, please check with either the MSPC or the Land Use Committee of the Meridian Street Foundation.