



Upcoming Bates-Hendricks Meetings

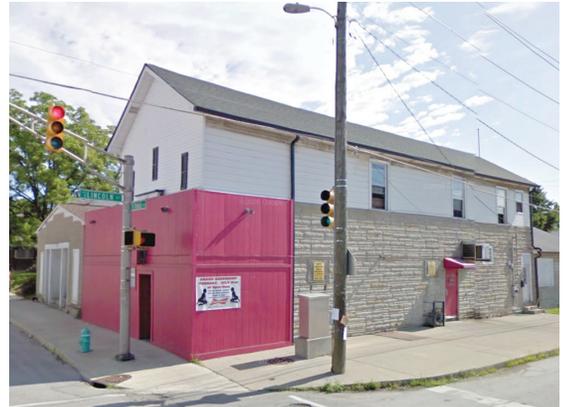


The December Bates-Hendricks neighborhood association meeting will be Monday, December 5 at 6:30pm. There will be a pitch-in meal, so bring a side dish or a dessert if you can!

The January association meeting will be January 9, which is the second Monday of the month.

Sassy Kats Showclub Has Shut Down

For several years now, the neighborhood has attempted to rid the corner of East and Lincoln Streets of a “gentlemen’s” club. Frankly, it is just very difficult to mount a strong enough case against such an establishment to close it down. However, relentless efforts by neighborhood leaders, compelling support from IMPD officers and detectives, and the club’s own wrongdoing finally brought an end to their operations in our neighborhood.



It started with presenting a case to the county alcoholic beverage commission when Sassy Kats’ alcoholic beverage permit was up for renewal. After much information collection, several hearings, and successful neighborhood remonstrations, the county board voted to “strip” the showclub’s alcoholic beverage permit. Without their alcoholic beverage permit, the establishment just doesn’t seem as inviting to its patrons. Sassy Kats representatives elected to appeal this ruling with the state Alcohol and Tobacco Commission (ATC). Once again, the neighborhood and IMPD stepped up.

Eventually, it looked like the showclub was out of luck and needed to look at other options. The current ownership of the showclub had put money into the business that they wanted to recuperate. The showclub’s ownership was presented with the option to sell their liquor license to a new restaurant outside of the neighborhood. As long as the neighborhood and IMPD agreed to this license transfer, the state would not revoke their license, but rather allow them to transfer (sell) it to this new restaurant. Selling their alcoholic beverage permit to someone else would also allow the ownership to recuperate some of the money they put into renovations. After working out a legal agreement with council for the showclub owners, the transfer was approved by the ATC. The agreement stated that upon transfer of the liquor license, Sassy Kats would immediately close down and, regardless of the timing of the transfer, that it had to close down no later than January 1, 2012. Well, a license transfer hearing was held on November 21, 2011 and the showclub closed its doors for good on November 23.

There are already some entities interested in purchasing the facility and turning it into something more neighborhood-friendly.

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It's Time to Put Fall to Bed and Decorate for the Holidays

If you are a gardener or want to be one, now is the time to plant your spring bulbs. The best deals on bulbs are right now. You can plant hundreds of bulbs in one day if you use a bulb planter bit for your cordless screw driver. Sam's Club is a great source for these. How deep you plant them varies according to the bulb, but planting depth is always on the package. If you want to save tender tropical bulbs (elephant ears, canna lilies, dahlias, etc.) now is the time to dig them up and put them in the basement without dirt. In the spring you can divide the ones that have developed multiple tubers and have 10 times as many. Don't throw them out if they shrivel up – that is normal. In most cases they will still grow. Ferns will winter inside in a dark spot. Just don't let them dry out. Geraniums love a sunny window, and orange and lemon trees in pots will bloom and put on fruit indoors. Also, be sure to get the leaves out of your gutters now.

If you have lawn mowers or other gasoline equipment, now is the time to add gasoline stabilizer to the tank or to start them and let them run out of gasoline. Never let them run without oil. Nelson's Marathon sells stabilizer and windshield wipers for your car for the winter. If you have a snow blower, now is the time to check it out. Put some stabilizer in the gas tank, start it up, and let it run a while.

Now that Thanksgiving is a wonderful memory and our days are at their shortest, put up some lights for the holidays. Remember the new "LED" lights cost much less to operate. Just be careful you don't cause a fire. Let's make Bates-Hendricks a neighborhood that is known for its joyous seasonal light show. Wouldn't it be great if people came from all over the city to see our wonderful lights? Remember, you don't have to be Clark Griswold (unless you want to). Have a wonderful season!



By Greg Allen

Winter Festival at School 31

James Garfield School 31 is holding its annual Winter Festival on Tuesday, December 6 from 5:00pm to 6:30pm at the school building at 307 Lincoln Street. The festival is for the entire community and not simply for parents of School #31 students. This is an excellent time to visit the school, meet teachers and students, and see what is happening in our neighborhood school.

There will be a community expo with booths of information from community partners. There will be lots of activities and games for children, including a Santa Storyteller and Bingo-for-Books. There will also be a uniform and coat exchange where parents can exchange clothing and coats their children have outgrown for larger sizes. As always, there will be lots of snacks and drinks.

Additionally, there will be a community Blood Drive from 2:00pm to 6:00pm at the school, sponsored by the Blood Bank. Individuals can sign up for time slots at donorpoint.org or walk in during the blood drive.

For more information, contact Janda Fiscus at fiscusja@ips.k12.in.us or at 226-4231.

Many Demolitions Coming to Bates-Hendricks

In the next few months, thanks to a City of Indianapolis blitz aimed at demolishing 2,000 abandoned properties, Bates-Hendricks will see many of our abandoned homes demolished. As of December 1, we have 21 Bates-Hendricks houses slated for demolition. Many of these are in serious disrepair and neighbors will applaud their destruction. Some of these houses would seem better suited to repair than demolition. Within our neighborhood, there has been a healthy debate over whether demolition or preservation is the best option for these homes.

While discussing which houses to demolish and which to preserve is important, no one is discussing the deeper issue: why are there so many abandoned houses in our neighborhoods? How do we cure this problem that plagues our city neighborhoods?

In Southeast Indianapolis, neighbors and stakeholders have been working on this issue for several years. In 2010, volunteers inventoried our abandoned and vacant properties and identified 1,254 vacant properties – about 14% of our housing stock. 633 of those houses were considered abandoned. 117 were identified as demolition worthy. We also cross-referenced the worst properties with ownership records, tax roles, code violations, and crime statistics. In the process, we discovered two primary causes for abandoned housing.

The primary creators of abandoned properties in Indiana are banks. Indiana law presently allows banks to foreclose on homeowners without having to record the transfer of the deed. This loophole allows banks to escape responsibility for millions of dollars of property taxes and maintenance costs. These bank-owned homes are allowed to languish in legal limbo as they deteriorate past the point of reasonable rehabilitation. We discovered over 50% of our abandoned houses were bank-owned.

This would seem to be an easy fix. Many states and municipalities require the transfer of the deed within 60 to 90 days. Requiring banks to take responsibility for these properties would increase property tax revenues, eliminate much of our neighborhood blight, and decrease the city's costs in inspecting, maintaining, and eventually seizing these properties. Indeed, in 2011, John Day (D) and Phil Hinkle (R) proposed just such a law – House Bill 1066. Unfortunately, even with bipartisan sponsorship, the banking lobby saw that this bill wasn't even heard in committee.

Another significant source of abandoned properties is slum landlords. Sadly, many individuals have learned how to milk properties of all their value and then abandon them. Many of our abandoned properties were purchased most recently by unscrupulous individuals at tax sale or through the county surplus. Once purchased, these slum landlords invest nothing in improvements or maintenance, rent these homes for two or three years, intentionally ignore the property taxes, and abandon the homes when they are finally uninhabitable. Since all overdue property taxes, liens, and penalties remain with the property, they can walk away from these properties with no liability.

Again, this would seem an easy fix. In 2009, laws were passed that exclude persons with overdue taxes or liens from purchasing homes through tax sale. Unfortunately, many slumlords have either signed fraudulent affidavits or simply created multiple LLC's in order to perpetuate this ugly business model. That one of these LLC's used the name BYTE ME reveals the arrogance of these individuals.

While the demolition of 2,000 abandoned properties in Marion County seems significant, by the city's own count, 8,000 will remain. We predict, unless there is systemic change, these 2,000 will be quickly replaced with 2,000 more. No one is acknowledging an awful truth – our present banking and real estate system is designed to create abandoned property.

Bates-Hendricks Neighborhood Association

The Bates-Hendricks Neighborhood Association strives to improve the quality of life of those living in the neighborhood through efforts to assure safety, to maintain or improve the living environment, and to enhance the spirit of cooperation and neighborliness among all residents. We meet monthly on the first Monday of the month at the Immanuel United Church of Christ at the corner of East and Prospect at 6:30pm. Annual dues are \$3 for individuals, \$5 for families, and \$25 for businesses. Please mail dues to Craig Dukate, 1435 S. New Jersey Street, Indianapolis, IN 46225. More information about the neighborhood can be found online at bateshendricks.org.

Monthly Calendar



- Dec 5** Bates-Hendricks Neighborhood Association Meeting, 6:30pm, Immanuel United Church of Christ.
- Dec 6** James Garfield School 31 Winter Festival, 307 Lincoln Street, 5:00pm to 6:30pm.
- Dec 6** Getting Coupon Crazy, Fountain Square Library, 6:00pm. Adults are invited to learn how to shop like a pro. Indianapolis mom Beth Hines will share her coupon tips and tricks, like where to find coupons, how to organize them, and the best times to use them so you can start saving nearly 70% at the store each month. Registration required.
- Dec 10** Christmas at Garfield, Garfield Park, 10:00am to 1:00pm, FREE. Oh what fun it is to visit the Conservatory to meet Santa and see Conservatory Crossing, the holiday train and poinsettia show! Jingle all the way to the Arts Center to make toys with Santa's elves. You can also dash through the snow to the Burrello Family Center where Mrs. Claus will have some tasty treats. Photos with Santa are \$3.
- Dec 16** Candlelight Crossing, Garfield Park, 6:30pm to 8:30pm, \$5. Enjoy the holiday train and poinsettia show during an evening reception with holiday treats. Take time from the hustle and bustle to relax with a cup of cocoa and enjoy the warmth and beauty of the tropical Conservatory alive with the twinkle of lights!
- Dec 16** Friday Night Swing Dance, Fountain Square Theatre, 7:30pm to 11:30pm.
- Dec 17** Workshops for Writers: Wanna Blog?, Fountain Square Library, 2:00pm. Adults and teens are invited to a two-hour crash course presented by the Writers' Center of Indiana during which they'll receive instruction on how to set up and promote their own blog. Registration required.
- Dec 20** Family Game Night at Fountain Square, Fountain Square Library, 6:00pm to 7:30pm. Families are invited to play a variety of fun and educational board games with their children.
- Dec 25** Merry Christmas!
- Jan 9** Bates-Hendricks Neighborhood Association Meeting, 6:30pm, Immanuel United Church of Christ.

