



VIEW FROM the hill

Neighbors in harmony improving, preserving & protecting - www.vhna.net

Volume 10, Issue 6

June, 2007

The PURPOSE of VHNA is to improve the quality of life of residents & preserve property value. Our goals include encouraging improvement of properties, protecting the health and welfare of residents, promoting interaction among neighbors, encouraging participation in government and fostering pride in our homes and neighborhoods.

Our TERRITORY extends from the south side of Jefferson St to the north side of So. Grand Av, and from the east side of Walnut St up to but excluding Second St. Membership is not limited to residents or property owners in that area.

MEMBERSHIP is open to all who support our purpose and goals. Dues are \$10 per year. You may join via US mail, at a membership meeting or online at: www.vhna.net.

Our MEETINGS are held on the second Monday of each month from 7 to 9 pm in room 201, at Laurel United Methodist Church located at Walnut and South Grand.

June Meeting to Focus on Nuisance Ordinance Enforcement

Please plan to attend our VHNA Membership Meeting, to be held June 11, at 7:00 p.m. at Laurel United Methodist Church, located on the corner of Walnut and South Grand.

In May concerns were voiced regarding a dramatic increase in anti-social behavior in our neighborhoods, including loud car stereos, speeding through the neighborhoods, disregarding traffic signs, public smoking of drugs, loud arguments, throwing trash from cars, walking in the middle of the street, loud honking late at



night and early in the morning, neighbors being intimidated and property being vandalized with gang graffiti.

These concerns were communicated to our Aldermen and we plan to talk to them and our NPO about what can be done to facilitate enforcement of existing nuisance ordinances, or in the alternative, what ordinance changes are needed to allow for effective enforcement.

Our intention is not to complain, but to try to work together with our aldermen and the police to resolve these problems before they get out of control.



Reminder—Please save the date...

July 14, 2007 — 8:00 am 'til Noon

Vinegar Hill Neighborhood Association

Neighborhood Clean-Up Day



On the Law

By: Sam Cahnman, Attorney at Law

Q. Does the City of Springfield have to hire private attorneys for the three police officers who were sued; If not, why did the city hire them?

A. The city is not legally required to hire private attorneys to represent the 3 police officers. You are talking about the lawsuit Larry Washington and Jennifer Jenkins filed against the City of Springfield and 6 city police officers over an alleged illegal search of their residence. Two of the officers have legal conflicts with the city because the city is in the process of firing them and they are contesting this. A third officer has a conflict because he is suing the city himself.

The Corporation Counsel's office, which is the city's lawyer, usually represents police officers who are sued for something they did on the job. However, because of the legal conflicts, the Corporation Counsel's office could not represent these three officers.

That is why the issue came up as to whether the city should

pay for private attorneys to represent the three officers. The Local Government Tort Immunity Act makes it clear that the city does not have to provide legal representation if one of its employees is sued for an act occurring within the scope of their employment, but the city may do so.

The reason the Council decided to pay for the private attorneys stems from a provision in the Illinois Municipal Code. The provision says that if a judgment is rendered against a police officer for an injury caused by the officer while engaged in performing his police duties, the city must indemnify the officer up to \$1 million, unless the injury resulted from the officer's willful misconduct. Indemnify means that if the judgment is rendered against the police officer, the city must pay it.

Thus, the Council voted to hire attorneys to represent the three police officers because we thought it was wise to spend \$75,000 now to help insure the city against having to spend up the \$3 million later in the event that judgments of \$1 million or more were entered against each of the three officers.

Send your questions on the law to 915 S. 2nd, Springfield, IL 62704; fax: 528-0311; or samcahnman@yahoo.com

Zoning Report: 518 W. Edwards

By: Bob Croteau

A zoning change request to reclassify this two-story brick residential property to Office was brought before the Regional Zoning and Planning Committee Wednesday May 16th. The petition was given a rejection recommendation by the Planning Commission staff and by the City zoning department. The VHNA membership voted overwhelmingly to reject this reclassification at its monthly meeting on May 14th, upholding its position that there should be no commercial development West of Pasfield St. and although there was already some commercial properties on the north side at the east end of Edwards, a "don't cross line" had been drawn for the south side of Edwards.

The petitioner, Charles Foley, had addressed the membership at the monthly meeting with the intent of requesting Office with an allowance to use the upstairs for an apartment. I had suggested he consider rather leaving it residential and seek a use variance to allow for an office on first floor, which would essentially leave it "residential" on the books rather than crossing the line to "commercial" which I felt was an important psychological distinction. He rejected this idea saying he wanted the opportunity to expand into the upstairs later if needed.

After hearing the rest of the membership's opinion on his zoning request he approached me before the zoning meeting at the last minute and was prepared to go with our

original suggestion. Tony Leone also was there to lobby passionately for him.

After Mr. Foley presented his case for reclassification, the objectors were allowed to speak. VHNA President, Mario Ingoglia, spoke first on behalf of the membership to reject the petition. I spoke next and said I strongly felt the way of the rest of the Assoc, but if there was to be any blood spent I would rather see the property stay residential with a Use Variance to allow for a professional office on the first floor, rather than Office. Vince Duiker spoke in favor of the compromise and Tony spoke last in support of it.

A motion was made to reject the petition but to rather allow for a Use Variance to allow for an office on the first floor. The Chair asked if I was sure since there was significant history here and this was a change from that, and he voted no. The motion passed and the recommendation now goes to city council action 6 PM Tuesday June 19th.

It seems this arrangement that preserves the residential zoning and architecture, could be a benefit by having the property well cared for with eyes available in the daytime to watch out for the rest of the neighborhood, and in the evening we are there to take over the watch. This issue has been so tough for so long. I'm trying to think outside the box, but don't want to loose the war on our homes. It isn't a done deal until the City Council votes on it.

Please voice your opinion at our next meeting.

**Better to do something imperfectly
than to do nothing flawlessly.
-Robert H. Schuller**

**Vinegar Hill Neighborhood Assn
Membership Meeting Minutes
May 14, 2007**

The meeting was brought to order at 7:04 p.m. by President Mario Ingoglia with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The guest speakers were the Leadership Springfield Team 7: Jeff Ambrose, Tonya DeSanto, Matt Heyen and Evelyn Ivy who made the final presentation of the Team 7 Service Project entitled **Vinegar Hill: Problems and Opportunities**. The goals of the project were:

- To improve the economic integrity of our neighborhoods by encouraging & facilitating improvement of property;
- To protect the health and welfare of residents;
- To promote social interaction among neighbors;
- To encourage and facilitate participation in local government and
- To foster pride in our homes and neighborhoods.

Presentations made by:

- Jeff Ambrose – Existing Land Use and Future Land Use Plan;
- Tanya DeSanto – Historic Locations;
- Matt Heyen – Property Standards and Ordinances; and
- Evelyn Ivy – Funding Programs.

Three complete copies of the project were presented to the association by Team 7. A misspelling in April minutes, of Judy Ingham's name, was noted. **A motion was passed to accept the minutes as corrected.**

The Treasurer's report indicated a bal-

ance of \$1,347.51. A suggestion to bill non-renewing members was made. No action was taken.

Street Report: Art Lawson reported a new sewer on West Edwards is completed and the street will be cleaned soon. Charles Foley presented his case on the **upcoming rezoning** of 518 West Edwards from R-3 to "office with conditional permitted use", with the request for VHNA's recommendation to the Zoning Commission. Bob Croteau moved that VHNA appose the request for the zoning change; Matt MacDonald seconded, motion carried. VHNA members were asked to attend the zoning meeting.

Bob Croteau spoke on **energy saving strategies of older homes** and introduced CWL&P's publication, "Home Efficiency Hand Book" which is available to homeowners at no cost. Inquiries can be made at CWL&P's Energy Services Office, 787-2070.

President Ingoglia announced the **VHNA cleanup date** as being July 14, 2007 from 8 a.m. to noon. Announcements will be made in the June and July newsletters.

Matt MacDonald and Louis Perez spoke about various **neighborhood problems** they have been experiencing. The discussion concluded with the formation of a Safety Committee comprised of George Tinkham, chairman, Bob Croteau and Matt MacDonald. They will meet "after work" Tuesday, May 22, 2007 at Bernie & Betty's.

Thank you to Larry Beckham for providing **Refreshments**.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

VHNA VOLUNTEERS

Greeting / Condolence Cards
Betty Green 522-9768

Newsletter Editor:

Bill Castor 416-1212
wm.castor@yahoo.com

Block Stewards:

500 block Allen Street
Louise Hodge 528-9768

400 block Allen Street
Mona Colburn 522-1702

Canedy & Chenery Sts.
Ted Keylon 528-8466

College Street
George Tinkham 753-2737

Cook & Edwards Sts.
Bob Croteau 753-3449

Fayette Avenue
Bill Vickers 789-1732

First Street
Cathy Twyman 528-1918

Henrietta Street
Dee Nelson 528-7702

Jackson Parkway
Tom Cullen 744-2511

Pasfield Street
Ron Kuethe 744-0118

Spring Street
John / Sherry McBride 971-3313

Vine Street
George Bastin 971-5760

Walnut Street
Dennis / Emilia Rogers 522-4279

Williams Street
Charles Hudson 747-0338

THANK YOU ALL !

Neighborhood Police Officer

Dave Barringer — Cell: 652-2255 — Emergency: 911

Aldermen

Ward 5: Sam Cahnman - 528-0311

Ward 6: Mark Mahoney - 544-7944

City Council Report

By: Ward 5 Alderman, Sam Cahnman

You have my gratitude for having the confidence in me to elect me as your representative on the City Council.

Although my new job as Alderman is primarily to be your voice on the Council, another important aspect of my job is to keep you informed on what is going on at the Council. Hence this column! Although I served on the County Board, the Council and the Board are almost as different at night and day. As I walked into the Council chambers for my first meeting May 15th, I was overwhelmed by the number of people and the amount of news media. The County Board by contrast operates almost beneath the radar. The news media pays little attention to it and few people came to the Board meetings unless they were being honored with a Proclamation.

Not only do representatives of every news operation, radio, TV, and newspapers, come to Council meetings, reporters also cover City Council committees. At the County Board it was rare when a reporter covered a Committee meeting. In addition to all this, the City Council meetings are telecast live on the City's cable channel 18.

I serve on two committees, Utilities and Public Works. Both are important. Utilities will oversee the construction of the new power plant and consider whether we need to build a second lake to meet our water needs. Public Works is important because it

deals with infrastructure projects--sidewalks, streets, curbs and gutters--which are badly needed in our aging ward.

The City Council has an electronic voting system, which I am told may be unique for cities in Illinois other than Chicago. To vote we press a button for Yes or No and our votes light up on a score board. This system was obtained from the Illinois legislature when it installed a new electronic voting system. At the County Board we did roll call votes the old fashioned way. The clerk called out each member's name to get their vote.

Our first meeting was not without controversy. We had to go into a closed meeting to discuss the lawsuit filed against the city and six police officers by Larry Washington and Jennifer Jenkins. The question before the Council was whether the city should pay for private attorneys to represent the three police officers who had legal conflicts with the city such that the Corporation Counsel's office could not represent them. As the only lawyer on the Council, my colleagues seemed quite interested in what I had to say on this. They agreed to my suggestion to cut in half the amount we appropriated to hire the private attorneys, saving the city \$75,000. More on this in my On The Law column.

We also had a controversial zoning case and voted to appropriate a small portion of a federal grant to buy decorative planters for the downtown area. The grant was in conjunction with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

County Board Update

By: Tim Moore, District 22



Rates on your June Tax Bill Goes Down?

Yes — your recent tax bill from the County shows a 12% decrease in the tax rate levied by the county from last year's rate! This is due to the retiring of the mortgage on the County Building.

New Health Department Building?

Maybe — The New Health Department Building Committee is currently reviewing proposals for construction of a building that will consolidate the Health Department locations in the "medically underserved area" of the County. We expect a decision any day.

When's the next county board meeting?

The County Board meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm in Board Chambers on the second floor of the County Building. The meetings are open to the public.

Waste Management Issues

By: Ward 6 Alderman, Mark Mahoney

The problem of poor waste management needs to be addressed if we truly want better maintained neighborhoods and a cleaner city in which to live and work. We are all tired of seeing yard waste bags piled up all summer long and overflowing trash or the random piece of furniture that sits on the curb for days or weeks. As good neighbors we are all bothered by fly dumping in our alleys and know how that can detract from the appearance of our neighborhoods. It's time for Springfield to clean up our city and in order to do that we must improve our waste management practices.



That is why I have asked the Public Affairs Committee of the Springfield City Council to create a Waste Management Subcommittee and have scheduled hearings to examine the problems with gar-

bage collection in Springfield. We will be having two hearings immediately following the Public Affairs Committee meetings on Monday, June 18th and another on Monday, July 16th.

The goal of each meeting is to hear testimony regarding current practices for collecting waste materials in Springfield and the inadequacies of those practices. The committee will also listen to recommendations for improvements that will ultimately provide us with cleaner neighborhoods and a more attractive city. At the end of these hearing in July the council will be making recommendations for changes and voting on them.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to attend or watch the hearings on cable television. We know as a neighborhood association you are committed to making our city a cleaner place to live and work and we greatly value your input. Your participation in this process will assist in cleaning up Springfield.



Officers

- Mario Ingoglia, President — 744 - 6969
- Bob Croteau, Vice-president — 753 - 3449
- Judy Ingham, Treasurer — 544 - 5642
- Bill Castor, Secretary — 416 - 1212

Please join today! You need not be a resident or property owner in our association area to join, as long as you support our mission. You can join online at: www.vhna.net, but must mail a check or attend a meeting to pay dues. You can also fill out the form at right to join and mail it with your \$10 dues payment check to:

VHNA
P.O. Box 1026
Springfield, IL 62705

Membership Form

Name *

Street address *

City * State * Zip *

email address (if you wish to receive more timely information)

Phone *

Cell phone (* denotes required item)

May we list your contact information in the VHNA directory to be distributed only to members? (circle one) YES / NO

Please suggest issues VHNA should address or activities you think will help better our association: (attach sheet if needed)

VINEGAR HILL
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSN.
POST OFFICE BOX 1026
SPRINGFIELD, IL 62705

www.vhna.net



June 2007 VHNA Point O' Pride



614 W. Edwards St.

It's no coincidence this amazing historic home owned by Evans and Marilyn Brittin was selected as this month's

point of pride. It's just a block away from the property which is currently the subject of a rezoning petition requesting commercial zoning. We feel well preserved, historic residential property like this underscores the need for us to insist on maintaining the residential character of our neighborhoods.

The Brittin's home has been nominated several times and is well deserving of this honor. For over a hundred fifty years (circa 1856) this home has been a part of our Vinegar Hill Neighborhood's heritage, displaying some of the same architectural features as the Lincoln home. The Brittins, and others in the neighborhood, clearly take pride in their property, as they are well maintained and tastefully landscaped.

The Brittin family are a musical bunch playing, and teaching music and tuning many of the finer pianos in the area for generations. They've been VHNA members from the start and it's music to our ears to hear they still support the work we do as an association.

Please let us know if you have a property you would like to nominate as a VHNA Point O' Pride. Send nominations to wm.castor@yahoo.com. Pictures are appreciated, but not required.