

WHAT FUTURE DO YOU SEE FOR CONA?

By Cynthia Bretheim

The Council of Neighborhood Associations (CoNA) would like to know your neighborhood's most important concerns. *CoNA supports the formation of neighborhood associations, provides advocacy for neighborhood issues and concerns, and aspires to make neighborhood in Monroe County safe, welcoming and desirable places in which to live.* In fulfilling that mission, CoNA can help implement your neighborhood's initiatives and projects

- by connecting your association's volunteers with expertise, City agencies and funding.
- CoNA helps by adding its seal of approval to your initiatives.

- CoNA is a 501.c.3, and member associations benefit by affiliation.

CoNA connects your association with other neighborhood associations, their expertise, concern, and inspiration.

CoNA is looking at its service to neighborhood associations in terms of:

- advocacy (position papers and planning),
- initiatives (e.g., Quiet Nights), and
- info sharing (Zoning Ordinance Committee that provides input to City's zoning, and round tables such as the City Repair meeting).

Please think of three concerns or issues from your neighborhood and pass them on to CoNA through your neighborhood's representative. Find out who represents your neighborhood on the CoNA Board. Help that representative get your ideas across. CoNA may be able to help your neighborhood association get something done. In the next month or so, CoNA representatives will come to your Association's meeting. Please be ready with your input. *CoNA aspires to make neighborhood in Monroe County safe, welcoming and desirable places in which to live.* Please help us make Bloomington's communities even more viable, well-informed, and intentional. Thank for your input.

Inside this issue:

Getting to work.	2
Oil from Garbage	2
Do you Telecommute	2
Enforcement Concerns	3
Planning Alerts	4

Special points of interest:

A PRIMER ON TAXES

Taxes are a part of life of course but understanding how you pay taxes can be an incredibly daunting process. This series of articles will provide a detailed look at this process so that when you see the news you will be able to piece together the relevant details.

The first thing to understand about taxes is that there is only one agency in the state that determines what taxes you pay; the state of Indiana. The Indiana General Assembly (IGA) determines state taxes and local taxes rates. Now for a bit of the detail.

Several years ago, the IGA asked the various tax districts

to provide an estimate of how much money they required to conduct their business. The IGA then used those figures to create the Levy. Thereafter the tax district was allowed to raise that amount of money. The same law stated that the district could raise their Levy by 5% a year and an additional 5% if the district could show that sufficient need was evident.

GETTING TO WORK: OIL FROM GARBAGE

Getting Oil is Going to be more difficult as the years advance. The world is probably heading for an irrevocable change driven by the growing affluence of the populations of the current world manufacturers China and India. Demand for oil will reduce the amount that comes to the US and will cause the cost to increase because of increased demand. That's the bad news, there is good news though but you may have to work to find it. I've got some to relay to you here.

Science and technology advances have made it possible to extract oil from everyday trash. Oil that can be refined into diesel or gasoline or any of the other myriad uses that our modern society requests. The specific process I am referring to is called Thermal Depolymerization. This process breaks up long chains of hydrogen atoms reforming them into oil molecules.

The first commercial-scale thermal depolymerization plant, currently operating in Cartage, Mo., is expected to di-



Open Pit mining of tar sands

gest more than 200 tons of turkey-processing waste every 24 hours." This refined oil will sell for \$80/barrel (\$ 1.90/gal), making it uneconomic compared to the net wholesale price of conventional diesel of about \$72/barrel (\$ 1.73/gal) (as of April 2005). The problem with turkey waste oil is that some of the turkey waste is used for cattle feed so this has added an additional \$15/bbl to the final product. This same kind of facility can process pig manure as well. Something that Gov. Daniels

should take note of, considering his plans to increase hog production.

Note that this process has also been tested on tar sands and oil shale. Oil Shale is a rock that when processed will yield oil. The US has 60 to 70% of the total Oil Shale reserves of 1.6 Trillion bbls, making the US share about 960 Billion bbls. The largest existing deposit

of light crude in the world today is in Saudi Arabia, estimated to be 200+ B bbls. Worldwide Tar Sand reserves are about double those of Oil Shale. Still don't go burning the midnight oil in relief because there is a fly I this ointment. Making a plant big enough to provide for even a small portion of the US demand is currently not likely. It's something that may come in the future though.

A measure of the energy efficiency of this process is 560% by comparing this to that of making ethanol at 320% helps illuminate the efficiency of this process. The US EPA estimates that there is 229 Million tons of municipal solid waste in the US in 2001. If all of this could be converted to oil using this process it would make enough gas to supply demand in the US for about 19 days. Maybe not the next source of energy we as a society are looking for but what it will also do is turn stuff like plastic bottles, sewage, leaves and grass clippings and such into oil and minerals. Which is a whole lot better than just burying it in the ground, IMHO.

DO YOU TELECOMMUTE?

Have you ever had the option presented to you? Getting to work via telecommute means that you don't leave home to do your work.

If you have ever had a problem with some new gadget and called for help on the tech support number, chances are you talked to someone from a foreign country. Well, while not strictly speaking a telecommute, you are participating in something very much like it.

More exactly a Telecommute means that you have an image of your workplace desktop available on your home computer. You can work on it exactly as if you were at the office. You could edit documents, print to office (or home) printers, run programs, etc. Almost anything, you could do at the office on your computer you could do from home and skip the commute. You can probably even change floppies, CD-ROMs, or other media; although you would need to have a changer installed, if one is available. You could even attend meetings at your office or at others offices by using a video conferencing package. Many of the conferencing

packages provide the opportunity to present all of the same kinds of tasks and exercises you would expect to participate in as if you are there in person.

In the meantime, you will be able to avoid the drive into work. For those who commute a long distance; this would save hours of your personal time, money on vehicle repairs, fuel and insurance. Avoiding the stress of the drive would also help you get through the day happier.

Enforcement Concerns

Do you know how to get your neighborhood problem spots cleaned up. If so, you are among the few or maybe just lucky. Many neighborhoods have tried to deal with problems for a number of different issues and have met with mixed results.

Many of the problems currently being dealt with by neighborhoods are already code violations but because the city hasn't enough funding for an adequate enforcement staff there will be problems getting satisfaction on these complaints. Sometimes the violation will be subject to the Housing code, sometimes it will be subject to the zoning code, maybe other sections of the municipal ordinances would be the source.

There are things you (or your organization) should do to help grease the wheels. The first

The Neighborhood Compliance officer is the first person to contact

item on that lists is to learn who your Neighborhood Compliance officer is and get to know her or him. All of these officers can be contacted by calling 349-3420. I've listed all of the officers names below and provided an email address. The Neighborhood Compliance officer is your first point of contact when you suspect a violation of a city code. They can come out to look at the problem and begin the process of correcting any observed violation.

Sometimes the violation isn't under their

Cont from pg1 I hope you followed this so far but I'll warn you that this article will provide more twists and turns than a rabbit warren, so hold on for the ride.

You might think that all local taxes go to a few bodies and those bodies determines how that money is dived up. You would be wrong though. There are many tax districts in Monroe County (and every other Indiana County). The School boards are separate,

jurisdiction though. For instance, a problem I experienced in my neighborhood was with cars in the yard. The compliance officer came and determined it was a zoning ordinance violation then turned it over to the planning office. From then on the point

- Neighborhood Compliance Officer 349-3420
- Arnold, Mike: arnoldm@bloomington.in.gov
- Bowlen, Kevin: bowlenk@bloomington.in.gov
- Hewett, John: hewettj@bloomington.in.gov
- Hoole, Robert: hooler@bloomington.in.gov
- Jack, Carol: jackc@bloomington.in.gov

of contact for resolving my problem was the zoning compliance office of the planning department.

In order to make your case more easy to understand gather some evidence. One instance

I recall was with the East-side NA. The problem was on street parking.

One of the residents measured the distance of unobscured road between the rows of parked cars and determined that garbage trucks, fire trucks and other municipal vehicles could not traverse the street. This made it fairly easy to convince the city that a change needed to be made. As the old saw goes, a picture is worth a thousand words, so snap away. Using pictures to show what you believe to be a violation is going to be very helpful. Don't get carried away though, you can't trespass or violate someone privacy.

You may have to do your own detective work. You may not get the answer that you think you should. If so you have the option of reading the city codes or asking for help from others who have a better understanding of

the county and any cities or towns are separate, the library, the Solid Waste District, the airport, well I hope you get the idea. One thing about these districts that is uniform is that they all have a levy and the amount of that levy is strictly regulated by the IGA. A locality (tax district) can appeal the amount set and if it does, the office of Local Government decides those appeals.

those codes in order to get the answer you want. A resource you could look into for help is the CONA ordinance of the month or the CONA planning meeting. Members of CONA can request help from these CONA services. Members of CONA can also bring these problems to the board and ask that CONA help to resolve the problem.

Finally, be patient but also be insistent. Sometimes a resolution is not going to be as simple as you might hope, often the final resolution will take months.

Be persistent but patient if you hope to see results.

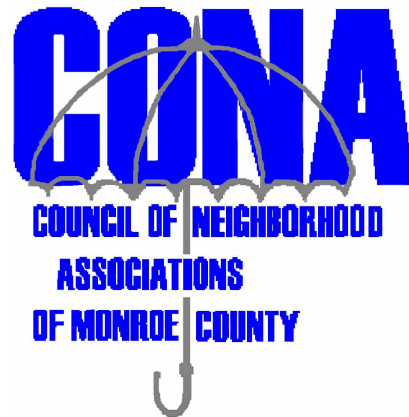
The majority of taxes that a tax district raises come from property taxes.

331-3979
infoCona@conaonline.org

BUILDING COMMUNITY
NEIGHBORHOOD BY NEIGHBORHOOD

We're on the Web!
Conaonline.org

CONA is an organization made up of neighborhood associations in the City of Bloomington/Monroe County, Indiana. The neighborhood is the chosen geographic environment for most of us. As such, we want to preserve the quality and safety that our residents desire. Each neighborhood has unique features that the residents want to ensure for themselves and others. This is the work of CONA, the Council of Neighborhood Associations.



PLANNING BRIEFS

HAND Development at Rockport Road moves forward. What do you think? Is this a project that CONA members support? I know I have many unanswered questions.

Re letter to editor some don't like traffic islands like 6th street or (small) roundabout size at Renwick. Education how to use a roundabout seems necessary. My take is that the roundabout designers need to be educated. I don't object to a well designed roundabout but this isn't one IMHO.

Neighborhoods near the proposed University Parking Garage near Atwater St may want to question if it will have a chiller and condenser that will add noise and chemical water vapor and/or spray. (Elm Heights)

Middle Way House is moving forward on the renovation of the Coca-Cola Building across the street from 3rd St park. We had a brief update on the progress at the

October meeting. (Elm Heights)

Bloomington Playwrights Headquarters has moved to the old Axis Nightclub on north Walnut. A resident of the Old Northeast NA expressed pleasure at the change. (Old Northeast)

Development near Armory, South old 37. Project is going slowly. One unit is done but no one moving in. This is near my Neighborhood. This is part of the city that is bounded by several of Bloomington's walkpaths but also the Armory and an old Sewage treatment plant, the one that was shut down because of PCB contamination. (Sunny Slopes)

1213 S. Madison. The property is a nuisance and has been difficult to deal with. A number of vehicles have been parked on the property for far too long and getting them off has been difficult. The occupant has been taken to court by the city but has not appeared. At present he has warrants out for his arrest on failure to

appear and contempt of court. (McDoel Gardens)

Stephens Olds-Honda on 11th Street. The property owner will likely come back with another plan but nothing has surfaced to date. Is there any chance that this property can be cleaned or disposed of? The Graffiti is ridiculous. (Maple Heights)

CSX Yard and Corridor. A contract has been sent to CSX. If signed it will likely be approved by the Redevelopment Commission. We should know by December 19th. Most likely the first work will begin on the northern section from Rodgers south to 2nd street.

Note: Tom Micuda's father passed away recently. We extend our sympathy to the family in its time of grief.