Let’s Set the Record Straight

Over the last few months, there have been several stories in the local news related to EPNIA being “under investigation” and quite a few people have reached out to me to ask what’s going on.

Judge Roger Holmes, the acting inspector general for the City of Springfield, presented a report to the city council on December 20 regarding his research concerning the Enos Park Neighborhood Improvement Association. He was asked by Mayor Langfelder to conduct this investigation after a citizen came forward in September to make several allegations regarding EPNIA’s use of TIF funds. EPNIA’s current request for TIF funds to acquire additional blighted properties has been on hold, pending the outcome of the investigation.

After Judge Holmes reviewed hundreds of pages of records from the past five years, he concluded that EPNIA had not intentionally done anything wrong. Every allegation made by the complainant was determined to be unfounded. He also pointed out that the complainant was an individual who had previously been a paid subcontractor on one of our projects and is now involved in litigation with EPNIA.

During the course of his investigation, Judge Holmes encountered several additional matters that he ultimately included in his report. He noted several shortcomings, including the need for better recordkeeping, while acknowledging the challenges of overseeing an organization our size with a group of volunteers. At the end of his report, he recommended a moratorium on acquiring further properties and finding ways to dispose of the large number of vacant lots owned by the association as a way to reduce carrying costs, in light of the fact that EPNIA has overdue property taxes. This is the only part of the report where we must respectfully disagree with...
Judge Holmes. On the surface, his advice is quite practical, but it is also contrary to the long term goals of our master plan.

While EPNIA has existed since 1989, it was in 2010 that it began to evolve into its current form when our land bank (Enos Park Development) was added under the umbrella of the existing 501(c)3 organization. The consultants who were working on our master plan at the time recommended creating a land bank as a way to begin to control the properties in the area as well as assemble vacant parcels that could be used to entice private developers. EPD did just that, and has acquired nearly 150 properties over the past six years, most of those by utilizing TIF funds for acquisition.

Almost 50 of those properties have been sold, and we have gained many new homeowners in the neighborhood as a result. Of our remaining inventory, the vast majority are vacant lots. While they are currently a liability due to the carrying costs and maintenance required, we believe they will prove to be a valuable asset in the long run. The one piece of the puzzle that is still missing in order to fulfill our master plan is infill new construction. It’s certainly not for lack of trying, but we are determined to work with developers that will agree to abide by our design standards and have a proven track record of new construction in historic areas. We are now engaged in discussions with both a local developer and Rock Island Growth, who is also a partner in the recently unveiled plan to renovate the former Methodist Church building downtown.

For years, we have refused to give away or sell our vacant lots to neighbors who simply wanted to have a larger yard. Our master plan recognizes that we are a densely populated urban neighborhood and calls for infill new construction to preserve the historic character of the area, rather than having “missing teeth” in the streetscape. But most importantly, a vacant lot in Enos Park generates around $200 a year in property tax, versus $4000 a year that could be generated by a market-rate new home. We feel it would be extremely shortsighted to dispose of our vacant lots now, and a moratorium on further acquisitions prevents us from continuing what we have done successfully since 2010, which is bringing new families to the neighborhood.

People often complain about money wasted on consultants and comprehensive plans that sit on a shelf. This is a prime example of a master plan that is actually being implemented and has been proven to work. We are six years into a master plan that was intended to take 10-15 years to fully come to fruition. The choice is whether to stop now or see it through.

Michelle Ownbey, President, EPNIA

Remember to always report suspicious activity!

Police Emergency
dial 911

Police Non-Emergency
217-788-8311

2017 EPNIA Officers
Michelle Ownbey, President  553-4629..... info@epnia.com
Danyel Pitts, Vice President ........................................ 717-5346
Linda Maier, Treasurer ........................................... 971-9138
Dan Linn, Secretary ........................................... 847-341-0591
Chris Becker, Director ........................................... 408-882-7658
Fletcher Farrar, Director ........................................... 523-2801
Jane Buis Henry, Director ........................................... 741-3000
Ryan Mobley, Director ........................................... 801-8225
Keisha Purchase ........................................... 708-925-7129
Larry Quenette, Director ........................................... 414-7227
Dave Steward, Director ........................................... 622-6591
Marcus Stewart, Director ........................................... 816-4928
Jason Vincent, Director ........................................... 544-2703

Associate Members (non-voting)
Betsy Dollar, SAA ........................................... 523-2631
Karissa Nulty, SIU ........................................... 309-360-4207
Aileen Portugal, SIU ........................................... 619-993-4298
Heidi Wareham, RCC ........................................... 498-9264
Enos Park Access to Care Collaborative
Springfield, IL

Who has been reached and how reached in the first year?
October 2015 - September 2016

Residents
- 111 clients enrolled in Community Health Worker Program
- 19 kids in bike club
- 27 kids in Summer Enrichment Program

320 families through community outreach events (560 people)
28 people through Memorial Behavioral Health MOSAIC Program

455 People *
*The program impacted a total of 455 individuals. Some were assisted more than once through various services.

Community
Health Care Providers Alliance
- 12 members
- 5 meetings
- 151 social service referrals made

Community Advisor Group
- 14 members
- 11 meetings
- 27 new activities created

Access
Visits
- 339 primary care appointments
- 44 mental health appointments
- 40 dental appointments

423 Visits

Other
- 41,070 minutes spent with clients
- 983 transportation trips
- 290 doctor visits accompanied by Community Health Worker

A collaborative initiative of HSHS St. John's Hospital, Memorial Medical Center and SIU School of Medicine’s Center for Family Medicine FQHC
Did You Know?
By Michelle Ownbey, EPNIA President

Enos Park
Access to Care Collaborative:
Year One Impact Statement

The goal of the Enos Park Access to Care Collaborative is to improve access to health care in Springfield’s Enos Park neighborhood, a vulnerable, low-income neighborhood.

You can download the full report, which covers October 2015 to September 2016, at www.epnia.com/access. Here are some quick highlights:

- **Measurements set for the project include:** resident enrollment, primary care provider engagement, emergency room utilization decrease, and community outreach.

- **Residents, 455 People Reached:** increased self-sufficiency, increased access to health care services and addressed other needs.

- **Neighborhood Connections:** 11 meetings held with community residents leading to 27 different activities.

- **The Good:** new collaborative partners, new model for housing, positive effect on recidivism, reduction in neighborhood crime, and system changes.

- **The Challenges:** overall needs are great: data access is complicated; transient nature of frequent E.D. users; lack of housing, employment and parolee support programs.

Please join us at our January meeting to hear details from Dr. Tracey Smith from SIU School of Medicine.

January 10 Meeting, 7pm
Guest Speaker
**Dr. Tracey Smith**
Director of Population Health Integration and Community Health
SIU School of Medicine.
SPRINGFIELD WINTER Farmers Market

THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1030 N 7th St., Springfield

4TH Saturday January - April
Jan. 28
Feb. 25
March 25
April 22

9am-1pm
LOCAL Fresh

pasture-raised

Brought to you by:
THIRD PRESBYTERIAN

SIU School of Medicine
Department of Family and Community Medicine

HSHS St. John’s Hospital
What would Lola Lucas write, for At Home in the Park, this New Year’s, 2017? Writing it, with deadline mid December? I’m sure she’d regret the national stalemate on climate change action, when most of the rest of the world is wanting to work hard at it, and already is—especially low-lying Holland—and the harmful setback in social services we’ve experienced this last year, with more threatened to come. She would probably write a conciliatory note, as Bud Farrar did, in Illinois Times, on November 9: “…we must bind the nation’s wounds …remember that this is a nation of laws, and due process, to protect even those who aren’t citizens. To all who support peace, racial equality, and social justice, it becomes more important than ever to remain healthy and strong, to stay in the fight.” She would quote conciliatory words from Obama. I think she’d regret not living to see the landmark of a first woman president, now receding into the future—it WILL happen, but when?

I think the best I can do is not surmise about Lola, or quote others further, but give what I wrote recently for my weekly spot in Illinois Times, for it ties in to our neighborhood association. It is called “Continuity”:

in my daughter’s dining room I sit at a table where I sat my first nine years facing me the matched cupboard my brother tipped over not once but twice during those years broke all mom’s crystal behind me a marble topped chest from my grandparents’ farm maybe via the rich relatives to my left a graceful stand once pink now black and gold from the house where I lived from ten to twenty-two (the farmhouse designed by the u.s. dept of ag) to my right a seven-foot glass front cabinet that lived sixty years unnoticed in a cellar corner of that house originally it came from aunt ida’s downtown we know because its photo is in the background of uncle jimmie’s feet on a radiator (a curmudgeon I never knew) now it’s filled with nested bowls spackled but familiar and eggcups whose rooster cosies I made one year my grandparents, parents, my daughter’s sibs, her own two kids in framed photos trophies fill a shelf a sign above the doorway reveals my daughter’s heart: “home is where your story begins” it’s also where it continues—with love memories faith for the unfamiliar future

What of us in Enos Park? Many have memories of this locale that go far back, with our starting strivings, as well as building on the memories of others; some of us are recent, but all of us are creating memories in the now, and in our hope for the future—a future that we will all have a part in bringing to pass, with justice, tolerance, caring, and love.

We will also need courage! Let us face the new year with courage and compassion, with helpfulness and hope, for our neighbors here, and for our world neighborhood, as we go into this unfamiliar and uncertain future.

— Jackie Jackson

Lola Lucas’s column continues, hosted by Lola’s friends, and occasionally by Lola herself through past writings.

Will you volunteer a column, something about Enos Park? Call Jackie Jackson, 544-2916.
Pajama & Pizza PARTY!
Monday, January 16th 10am-noon
Northside Community Children’s Library
3rd Presbyterian Church
1030 N. 7th Street

Featuring:
Story Hour on Martin Luther King Jr.
Pizza Party
Games & More!

Be sure to wear your new pajamas given to you by Enos Park Access to Care Collaborative!

Brought to you by the Enos Park Access to Care Collaborative (HSHS St. John’s Hospital, Memorial Medical Center & SIU Center for Family Medicine) in partnership with the Enos Park Neighborhood Improvement Association.
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**Third Presbyterian Church**  
1080 N. 7th Street  
Springfield, IL 62702  
217-528-0467  
www.third-presbyterian.org  
www.facebook.com/ThirdPresbyterian/  
The Heart of Christ in the Heart of Enos Park.

Want to Support Enos Park?  
Call 522-9381  
for more information

facebook.com/pages/Enos-Park-Neighborhood-Improvement-Association-EPNIA/  
www.EPNIA.com  
twitter.com/epnia