

Beachwalk News



Where'd everybody go?

October, 2007

Vol 1, Issue 6

Hi Neighbor,

September at Beachwalk has been nothing short of spectacular. Essentially everyday deserved the label, "Another day in Paradise". On the other hand, I'm reminded of the college philosophy class exercise "If a tree falls in the forest and noone is around to hear it fall, does it make a sound?" If Beachwalk is as pretty as I say in September and October, and (almost) noone is around to see it, then maybe we should find more excuses to spend time here in the fall (see below).

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Developer's Corner - \$750,000 grant

Developer Tom Moss was awarded a US Government grant to underwrite the construction of 12 units of subsidized, low income, "Section 8", housing. These homes, which will serve an important function in the Michigan City area housing market, will be open to purchase by families earning less than \$50,000/year. The grant, in the amount of \$750,000, will subsidize the construction of the 12 homes with a hefty 40% pure profit left over that Tom will be able to pocket. This rather large profit percentage was negotiated, in part, to recompense Tom for all the abuse he expects to come his way as a result of this entirely fictitious grant. You see, it has been a rather slow month for news, so I thought I'd try my hand at making up a story that matches a rumor that has sprung up, like Medusa's snakes, from the fertile soil of Beachwalk in September with not enough to do. Had ya goin there for a minute, didn't I ?

Beachwalk/Michigan City News Charrette - New Urbanism and Potential

What the heck is a **Charrette**? A design charrette is a public participatory process during which designers, local citizens, and relevant officials collaborate on a vision for development. It is a planning tool which provides a public forum for ideas and information so that designers are provided with immediate feedback and direction. Mayor Oberlie's Office was able to host a charrette, focused on the development of the "North End", by obtaining the services of Andrew University's Graduate School of Architecture. The first phase of this project included an intensive 9 day period when the entire team plus an array of big shot, nationally-known consultants set up a studio in City Hall. This phase culminated in a very impressive report to the planning commission which I had the pleasure of attending. I will just emphasize a few points and then urge you to click through to these excellent summaries of the charrette thrust and progress to date ([Herald Article](#)) and ([Andrews University Main Charrette Web Site](#)).

Two things were of particular interest to me at the community meeting of the planning commission: the planning principles organized under the rubric of **New Urbanism** and the **potential** of the North End. Like many of you, my first introduction to "New Urbanism" was in reference to the planning concepts underlying the design of Beachwalk and Seaside. Turns out that the concepts embedded in New Urbanism, such as: people-friendly rather than car-friendly, walkaround, multi-use, attractive streets and public spaces and protected natural areas, are driving new developments and re-developments around the country as the preferred method of rectifying the many ills of suburban sprawl. New Urbanism then, is a return to the best elements of the Old Urbanism, before the ever-insistent presence of the car dominated all planning. (or Musically, "Don't it always seem to go. You don't know what you got 'til its gone. They paved paradise and put up a parking lot." [Big Yellow Taxi](#), Joni Mitchell) Mayor Daley is seen as one of the heroes of New Urbanism as he presides over what has become, and is increasingly, the most liveable big city in the world.

The other important focus that came from this meeting was concept of potential. Every speaker seemed to mention the word, some cynically or disparagingly, focusing on the many plans for the re-development of North End gathering dust on the shelves of the Planning Commission. Others gushing about the sky being the limit, one bringing up the Burnham plan as a model of the lasting positive impact of thoughtful planning on a city's evolution. It seems unlikely that Chuck Oberlie will be mentioned in the same paragraph as Richard Daley, or that many years from now the "Andrews Plan" will be held in the same esteem as the Burnham plan. Fact is they don't have to in order for the redevelopment of the North end to be a rousing success. If Union Pier and New Buffalo can turn quaint, some chachkee shops and salt water taffy and a very clever marketing plan into the giant engine that is Harbor Country, then Michigan City, with the potent anchors of the

harbor, Sheridan Beach, Washington Park, Lighthouse Place, the Blue Chip, and now coming on line, the truly impressive "Andrews Plan"..... Don't get me started.

Homeowner's Corner - Things to do

Kudos, again, to Marge Chapello for pulling together two more good reasons for spending a fall week-end at your place in Beachwalk. Mark your calendars for these two upcoming events. **October 20th** is the Margarita Party at the O'Mahoney's House, 307 Beachwalk Lane at 7:00. Tacos and Beverages will be provided; bring an appetizer or dessert to share.

November 17th is the Progressive Dinner at 6:00pm. Dinner will be catered by The Duneland Beach Inn. The night will begin with appetizers at one home and then everyone will break-up into smaller groups for dinner; we will come together at the end of the evening for dessert. RSVP to Marge Chapello at mchapello@comcast.net or 630-789-5721. Also, contact Marge if you are interested in being one of the hosts for the evening.

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