

Springfield ICON Monthly Meeting May 18, 2015

Dave Varner, former Ward 4 Aldermanic candidate, addressed ICON asking for support in requesting that the **City Council re-visit a city code change allowing an Aldermen to hold a city liquor license, but denying that Alderman's participation in discussion and votes on liquor and gaming-related issues.** The change was passed by the City Council on May 5th, after the April election, and signed by Mayor Houston on May 7th. Mr. Varner was concerned that Ward 4 residents would not be fully represented by newly elected Ward 4 Alderman John Fulgenzi, who holds a liquor license. ICON members voted to decline involvement.

Juan Huerta, Springfield's Community Relations Coordinator, outlined his priorities to meet with neighborhood associations and representatives to identify important issues that will be part of a strategic plan for improving various parts of the city. Other priorities include improving relationships with the aldermen and the police department, and exploring the possible development of a Springfield Community Center in a location yet to be determined. Programs that have been successful in other cities will be researched and evaluated to see if they could work in Springfield. Mr. Huerta has worked for 24 years at Horace Mann Insurance Company and is actively involved with the Springfield Boys and Girls Club.

Carol Kneedler, ICON Chair, asked if the Community Relations Coordinator position is evolving into a single-point-of-contact position for neighborhood leaders and Springfield citizens. Mr. Huerta seemed open to such an approach, but no firm commitments were made.

Newly elected **Ward 5 aldermen, Andrew Proctor** asked ICON to provide guidance on older neighborhood priorities, indicating a personal interest in **unregulated group home issues.**

A spirited discussion of multiple issues of interest to older neighborhoods is summarized below:

Numerous members of the Springfield Landlords Association were in attendance. The landlords group didn't want the costs of **non-owner-occupied property registration** to be borne by good landlords, but indicated a willingness to work with the City Council on a fair ordinance to address problems with those landlords who are a problem for neighborhoods and the city. Landlords in attendance expressed a desire to work with the Community Relations Coordinator and ICON to develop solutions for **problem properties.**

Kurt DeWeese suggested that ICON priorities be statements of issues to be addressed, such as **garbage collection** instead of specifying possible solutions. A member of the landlord's group proposed that the city switch to garbage pick-up one day a week (citing a community in North Carolina), and have a specific day for yard waste and branch pick-up.

Following the discussion, ICON members **voted on priorities.**

The top four priorities were

1. Incentives for developing empty lots and distressed housing
2. Establishment of an Urban Planner position
3. Resolving the city's garbage issues
4. Neighborhood association outreach and support

Additional priorities included: unregulated boarding houses, unoccupied property registration, reducing time to act for boarded properties, single point of contact for neighborhood associations and neighborhood leaders, neighborhood friendly zoning, and infrastructure.

ICON business:

- ICON Treasurer Darrell Riffey reported ICON's account balance was \$614.62.
- City Council Chair Sharon Riffey reported that the City Council meeting on May 19th would address the CWLP funds veto.
- Membership/Outreach Committee Chair Marty Vandiver discussed renewed efforts to attract additional neighborhoods and concerned citizens as ICON members.

City and Community news & announcements:

- Misty Buscher, the new City Treasurer, said an Investment Coordinator will be hired to fill an important role in her office.
- Herman Senor, the new Ward 2 Alderman, stated his support for a City Planner for Springfield and is engaged in neighborhood outreach in his ward. Alderman Senor will contact St. John's AME Church about hosting some ICON meetings in the future.
- Sue Massie, affiliated with the Neighborhood of Hope revitalization and project manager for the Taylor home project, said efforts are continuing to restore the historic Judge John Taylor home on Springfield's east side.
- Enos Park will be hosting the Rock the Block celebration on June 9th.

The meeting adjourned at 8:13pm.

Attendees

Bill Baskett, City Treasurer Misty Buscher, Kurt DeWeese, Michael Higgins, Carol Kneedler, Lynn McMenamin, Kerry Noonan-Lewis, Tony Nudo, Paul O'Shea, Michelle Pawlik, Ward 5 Alderman Andrew Proctor, Darrell & Sharon Riffey, Ward 2 Alderman Herman Senor, Steven Simpson-Black, Jill Steiner, Terry Young, Marty Vandiver, Larry Vinson, Suzie Weissburg

Guests

Lauren Gibson; SALA: Marissa Houchens, Leo Locricchio, T McGuire, Seth Morrison, Doug Rothe, Charlie & Linda Sprenkil, Dennis Stratton, Leza Ulrich, Kala Worker

Submitted by: Martin Vandiver, Secretary