



**MacArthur Boulevard Business Association
Monthly Meeting Minutes
American Red Cross
1045 Outer Park Drive
June 10, 2010 - 7:30 am**

Welcome

President Cory Jobe brought the meeting to order at 7:30am.

Treasurer's Report

Cory reported the MBBA bank account stands at \$13,450.

Secretary's Report

May minutes stood approved as presented.

We have a total of 150 current members, 65 still need to renew.

New members include Prairie Art Stamps

Guest Speaker: Beat 500 Neighborhood Police Officer Donald Bivens, Commander Bob Marcovic and Chief Robert Williams

Officer Bivens has been an NPO for 9 years, and will eventually be replaced with a different officer as our beat 500 NPO. His direct number is 217-741-0988. The Lakota Group met with Springfield Police to discuss the Redevelopment Study.

Our guest speakers discussed the MacArthur Park Apartment complex, saying the complex is not as bad as before. Most of the current calls are intra-complex, involving domestic calls. Commander Marcovic said statistics indicate a reduced number of calls to the complex.

When asked what kinds of calls police experience in the MacArthur area, they mentioned shoplifting and crimes of opportunity such as burglaries to unattached garages, sheds and unlocked vehicles. The Officers strongly suggest locking cars and buildings and not leaving valuables in plain sight. Cardboard boxes from electronic equipment should be recycled instead of being placed in the alley.

Police discussed the importance of public phone calls reporting suspicious activity. It can be difficult to solve burglaries if there is little evidence and no witnesses, and these crimes can remain unsolved until someone calls in a report providing information. Even calls about minor incidents, such as theft of a bicycle or flowerpots or of someone not belonging in the neighborhood, can lead to arrests and could even save a life. Citizens should call 911 in an emergency, and call Sangamon County Dispatch at 217-788-8311 for important but non-life-threatening incidents. Neighborhood Police Officers get copies of all Beat 500 reports, and can identify trends that can lead to faster arrests and fewer neighborhood problems. One member mentioned calling Dispatch about an incident, saying the attitude was not encouraging to those reporting relatively minor problems, with Dispatch perhaps reluctant to send officers out. The officers said Springfield police don't answer the Dispatch phones, and they encourage citizens to report small problems and suspicious activity.

There was a discussion about locating a police substation in the area of the previous Kmart property, formerly Colonel Days. A police substation would provide a location for NPOs and other officers to do paperwork, to be available to the public and to take a break. The advantage for neighbors is increased police activity and visibility in the area and increased opportunity for easier communication between police and citizens. There are currently 2 other police substations in the city at 4th and Capitol and at 4th and N. Grand. Should the previous Kmart property be redeveloped, the substation would be relocated. Talks with the property owner are in the early stage of planning.

Local Government Update

City of Springfield

- Springfield Alderman Debbie Cimarossa attended the meeting and discussed various issues as they came under discussion.
- Debbie clarified the City departments responsible for weeds and zoning violations.
- Debbie will research and inform the MBBA about whether graffiti must be removed from business buildings.

Sangamon County Board

There was no report from Sangamon County.

Project Updates

MacArthur Boulevard Redevelopment Study

Cory promoted attendance at the next public workshop on June 23 from 6:30-8:30pm at the Inn at 835. The event will be promoted on the radio, and by neighborhood groups. The Redevelopment Committee has been approached and will consider publicizing the event in the SJ-R and the Illinois Times. Cory handed out the State of the Corridor Report, Conclusion of Planning Study First Phase; unfortunately, the report is not available on the project website, <http://thelakotagroup.com/macarthur/>.

4th Annual Artists Market

Laurie Farrell reported that the first Saturday of the **4th Annual Artists Market** at Town & Country Shopping Center was very successful. The Market was well attended and everyone is very happy with the results – with thank you messages coming from artists. Although we had to change the location at the last minute, the new area appeared to work even better.

The Market committee of Laurie and David Farrell, Cory Jobe, Julie Dirksen, Sharon Whalen, Beth Zink, Wade Kammin, Abbey NN and Carol Kneeder have increased publicity, provided portable toilets, recruited food vendors and entertainment for every Saturday in June. Alderman Frank Edwards provided his fire engine. The market has more variety this year. The only negative note is that the City of Springfield has insisted we move the small signs from the public right-of-way to private property.

Volunteers are still needed for June 19 and June 26.

Neighbors Council

The Neighborhood Committee, 9 people led by Julie Dirksen, met Tuesday, June 8 to discuss how neighbors can help MacArthur Boulevard. The Council has several initiatives, including the Adopt-A-Street work – see below for details. The group asked about tougher rules for keeping business property maintained to deal with absent landlords and discussed the idea of implementing “windshield tours” and working with the City on violations similar to Downtown Springfield and Enos Park, both of which have been very successful.

Council members will attend, and encourage MBBA members to attend, the **ICON (Inner City, Older Neighborhoods) Group** meeting on Monday, June 28 7pm at the 1st Church of the Brethren near Ash & Yale to determine if the MBBA wants to become affiliated with the group.

The group discussed **communication with neighbors** and how best to get the word out about meetings such as the Lakota Group’s next public workshop and the cleanup days. In addition to publicity in newspapers and radio, we will work with current neighborhood associations. In areas where no neighborhood association exists, we will develop block captains to distribute flyers.

The neighbors discussed whether to **paint the graffiti on the previous Kmart property**, with reservations about painting on private business property. We would need permission and insurance. If a school group did it as a service project, the school’s insurance would cover them. A suggestion to paint in exchange for a donation was made, and someone mentioned that we would need to make a commitment to paint over any new graffiti for the project to successfully discourage future defacement. Alderman Debbie Cimarossa will research whether there is any way a property owner is liable to paint over graffiti.

MacArthur Adopt-A-Street

The MBBA will sponsor periodic cleanup days on **MacArthur Boulevard**, working with the City of Springfield’s **Adopt-a-Street program**. Four cleanup days are needed per year. Lisa Hills is coordinating leadership of the MacArthur area near South Grand and will recommend 4 dates. Another group of neighbors is needed to take the area more south toward Wabash Avenue. The MBBA will organize the 4 dates with the City, publicize the event to recruit more neighbors, and arrange food for volunteers.

New Business

IDOT Enhancement Grant Application

Cory discussed highway transportation grant funds available for improvements from IDOT and DCEO. The application is due mid-June to August, and the Lakota Group will work with us on the MBBA application. The grants require a 20% match from local sources.

MacArthur Area Business News

Previous CVS building has been temporarily rented to DCFS to dry out records that got wet in the recent flood. 30-60 workers are anticipated to be there one or more months.

The general consensus from business owners on and near MacArthur is that traffic – and business - has increased, with some businesses seeing customers from the Jacksonville area. Other owners said they didn't see as much traffic as they expected. Some people may not realize it's open yet; some folks aren't yet aware of the Scheels store currently under construction there and scheduled to open next June. According to the Springfield Business Journal, Scheels will begin hiring 300-350 new employees this summer.

The Springfield Business Journal also featured two MBBA members in their June 2010 issue for their Corporate Review 2010; Small Business Panel. Baskin Robbin's owner Glenn Yanow and Sharon Whalen, publisher of the Illinois Times took place in a discussion with seven other local business owners to discuss "important issues facing our community and with small business ownership and operation."

A suggestion was made to ask the Springfield Business Journal for space to promote business associations such as the MBBA.

Weeds are nearly 4 ft tall in the previous Coin Shop near Outer Park & MacArthur, and Alderman Cimarossa suggested calling Public Works.

A+ Pack and Ship has moved to 1820 S MacArthur. As a result, the MBBA's address is now: 1820 S. MacArthur, PNB 216.

Glenn Yanow thanked the City of Springfield for the May 18th Glenn Yallow Day and the MBBA for the framed newspaper article.

Area Events

Show Me's will host an **MBBA Business After Hours** to celebrate the opening of the MacArthur Extension on June 21 from 5-7pm. There will be complimentary appetizers and a cash bar.

South Side Christian Church will host their 3rd **Annual Big Block Bash** to help promote and celebrate life in the MacArthur neighborhood on July 18, 2010. **Sponsorships** are available in various tax-deductible amounts for the main stage, for the bounce house and for smaller games. Please contact Daniel Shelton, Worship Minister at SSCC at 217-525-0304 or Daniel@SouthSideChristian.com for more information; sponsorship deadline is June 28. The MBBA will publicize the event with a link to the event flyer closer to the event date.

The MBBA is considering a **Believe in the Boulevard October event** to celebrate the completion of the Redevelopment Plan. Stay tuned for more information.

Coffee Sponsorships Available

Please consider providing refreshments for our monthly meeting – sponsors provide coffee and treats for 20-30 people.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 am.

Submitted By:
Carol Kneeder, Board Secretary