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PLAINFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

RESOLUTION NO. 2010-02

**A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF
PLAINFIELD, INDIANA,
APPROVING AN ADOPTION OF THE CARTER'S
NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN, AN ELEMENT OF THE
PLAINFIELD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

WHEREAS, I.C. 36-7-4, et seq., empowers the Town of Plainfield Plan Commission to prepare a Comprehensive Plan for the promotion of public health, safety, morals, convenience, order or the general welfare and for the sake of efficiency and economy in the process of development; and,

WHEREAS, I.C. 36-7-4, et seq., authorizes a Comprehensive Plan to include a variety of elements, including but not limited to any factors that are a part of the physical, economic and social situation within the Town of Plainfield, and to prepare reports and recommendations setting forth plans and policies for the development and improvement of the physical situation so as to substantially accomplish the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan; and,

WHEREAS, I.C. 36-7-4, et seq., authorizes a plan commission to adopt entire comprehensive plan, amendments to comprehensive plans or individual elements of a comprehensive plan; and,

WHEREAS, the Town of Plainfield Plan Commission conducted a public hearing on August 4, 2008 in accordance with I.C. 36-7-4, et seq., with respect to a proposal to adopt the Carter's Neighborhood Plan as a new a Neighborhood Planning element to the Plainfield Comprehensive Plan of the Town of Plainfield, Indiana; and,

WHEREAS, the Town of Plainfield Plan Commission did certify said Carter's Neighborhood Plan dated February 1, 2010, to the Town Council of the Town of Plainfield with a unanimous affirmative vote.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved by the Town Council of the Town of Plainfield, Hendricks County, Indiana, that: The amendment to the Town of Plainfield Comprehensive Plan by adoption of the Carter's Neighborhood plan as a new element of the Plan that is attached to this Resolution as **Exhibit A** and incorporated herein by this reference (the "Amendment") is hereby approved by the Town of Plainfield Town Council. and directs the Clerk of the Town of Plainfield, Indiana, to place one (1) copy of said Duffy/Gibbs Neighborhood Plan, on file with the Recorder of Hendricks County, Indiana.

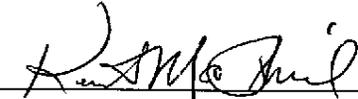
The foregoing was passed by the Town of Plainfield Town Council on this 8th day of February, 2010.

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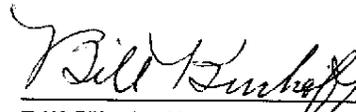
**TOWN COUNCIL, TOWN OF
PLAINFIELD,
HENDRICKS COUNTY, INDIANA**



Robin G. Brandgard, President



Kent McPhail



Bill Kirchoff



Edmund L. Gaddie Jr.



Renea S. Whicker

ATTESTED BY:



Wesley Bennett, Clerk-Treasurer of
the Town of Plainfield, Indiana

Publish: The Weekend Flyer

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EXHIBIT A

**Carter's Neighborhood Plan
February 8, 2010**

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NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

ORIGINAL TOWN BLOCK AND
CARTER, CRAWFORD'S, ELLIS
ADDITIONS AND OTHERS

ADOPTED: FEBRUARY 1, 2010
NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN
original town block and Carter, Crawford's, Ellis additions and others

TOWN OF PLAINFIELD, IN 46168

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I. INTRODUCTION

In an effort to help revitalize, strengthen, and improve some of the older, established neighborhoods around the Plainfield Town Center, the Plainfield Department of Planning and Zoning staff began 2008 with the goal of starting a Neighborhood Planning Program. The Carter neighborhood was chosen as the second neighborhood to continue this process. Traditionally, a neighborhood plan begins when a neighborhood is feeling development pressure such as commercial use encroachment or rental/apartment conversion. In this instance, neither of these conditions were major factors even though there is some change taking place along Main Street and vacancy issues in the downtown area.

Some of the goals of this process were to bring the neighborhood together to see what their concerns were, to develop a strategy for tackling those issues, to start a grass-roots effort that will empower the neighborhood, and to set realistic goals and objectives to enact with the ultimate goal of creating a sustainable neighborhood by improving property values that will endure.

II. NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY, PLATS, AND STATISTICS

THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The Carter's neighborhood is bounded by Main Street, Avon Avenue, White Lick Creek, and the old Vandalia Railroad Right-of-Way. See Figure 1 for a map of the neighborhood and its boundaries.

HISTORY.

CARTER'S

Starting in 1820, the first residents of the area now known as Plainfield settled along White Lick River after coming primarily from Guilford County, South Carolina along the National Road. One of the most prominent of those settlers was named Carter, and he claimed the area that is now downtown Plainfield in 1823. He used it to farm, and in 1833 he sold the first piece of his land.

This lot became part of the 1839 platting of the town of Plainfield. It was a plan of 64 lots from West Street to East Street, running two lots deep on either side of the National Road, which was renamed Main Street. At this time, the residents decided to incorporate as a town, but after some difficulties, ended up under township rule. This stayed in effect until 1903 when the town reincorporated. As time went on, Carter sold more of his land to be turned into lots until the neighborhoods reached the boundaries of North and South Streets in 1876.



Figure 1. The Carter neighborhood and its boundaries.

STATISTICS.

Some useful statistics include the age and population of the residents in the neighborhood, as well as the ages of the neighborhood's buildings themselves and the uses they are put to. This information is shown in the following tables. This data was obtained from the 2000 census, and as the next census is due to be conducted very shortly after the writing of this plan, the information is very close to being out of date.

Table 1 contains census data collected from those living in Census Tract 2109; Block Groups 3 and 4 (BG3 & BG4); Blocks 3000-3005, 3008-3009, 3011-3014, 3016-3018, 4010-

4011, and 4018-4022. These blocks contain the neighborhood and some surrounding properties. (See Figure 2 for an outline of BG3 and Figure 3 for an outline of BG4.)

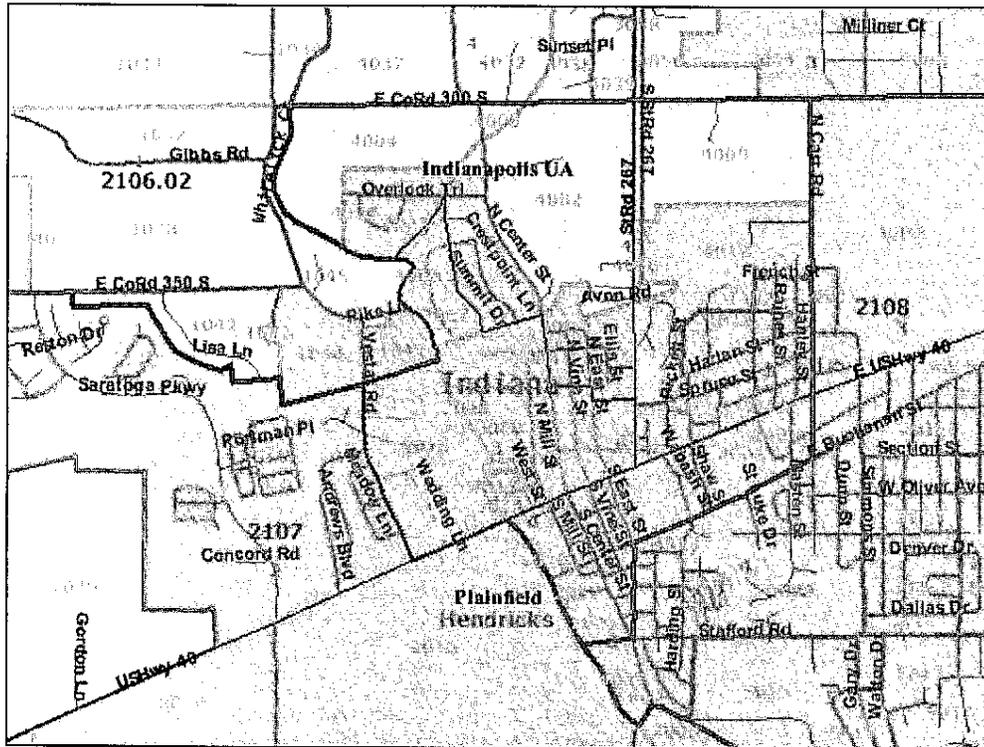


Figure 2. Census Tract 2109, Block Group 3, contains most of the neighborhood's population.

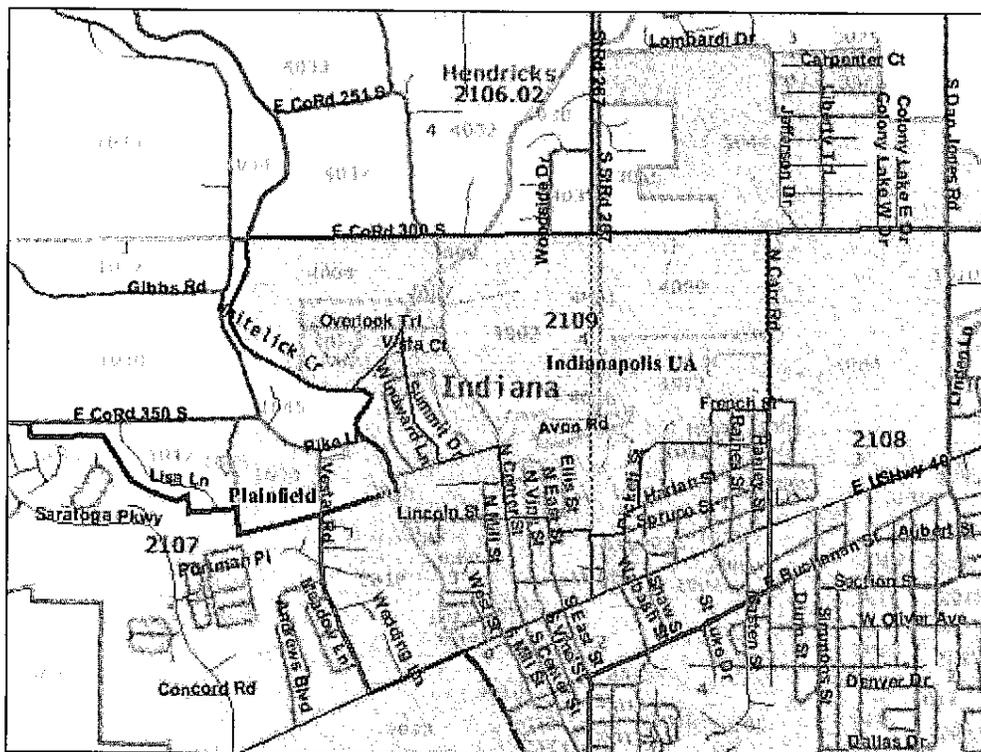


Figure 3. Census Tract 2109, Block Group 4, contains the rest of the neighborhood's population.

The total population of this area in 2000 was 1209 people. Table 1 shows a breakdown of the population and genders at the time of the 2000 census. A strong trend showed a large portion of the elderly population was female. People aged between 10 and 20 had a somewhat more likely chance of being male, while over 20 up to the elderly populations, the population tended slightly more toward being female. The 2000 census also has some housing data. Overall, it counted 644 housing units where 48 were vacant at the time of the census and 596 were occupied. Of those 596, only 164 were owner occupied and 432 were rentals. With 222 single-family homes in the neighborhood, this leaves 422 multifamily homes, which are very likely all rental units. The average household size contained 2.30 people.

Table 1. Population & Gender

<u>Age</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
< 5	44	42
5 - 9	40	40
10 - 17	74	58
18 - 20	31	19
21 - 29	96	87
30 - 39	105	122
40 - 49	73	82
50 - 59	45	52
60 - 69	18	52
70 - 84	26	75
85+	6	22
Total	558	651

Table 2 gives the number of buildings per use type as well as the average ages of those buildings averaged both by use and by subdivision they are located in. The data in this table was collected from the Hendricks County Assessor's website as well as the Hendricks County GIS website. The ages of each building were collected from the Assessor's information as the construction date of the primary structure and the uses were also determined from this information. This means it is possible for some homes to have been converted to different uses (typically multifamily) since the time of the information collected on the Assessor's site. Also keep in mind that the multifamily numbers listed are the number of buildings not the number of units. There are more multifamily units in the Carter neighborhood than just 53. In addition, the institutional uses include government buildings, religious use buildings, and lots that are used as parks.

Table 2. Building Uses and Average Ages.

<u>Subdivision</u>	<u>1 Family</u>	<u>Double s</u>	<u>Apts</u>	<u>Inst.</u>	<u>Comm.</u>	<u>Ave. Age</u>
Barlow's	4	1	0	0	0	1926
Bauer	3	1	0	0	3	1953
Bly Brothers	4	0	0	0	0	1982
Carter	82	7	6	1	2	1938
Crawford's	10	3	0	5	3	1960
Ellis	19	1	0	0	0	1934
Hayden	5	0	0	0	2	1944
Holton Wiley & Sluder	11	2	0	0	2	1912
JJ Lewis	1	0	0	0	0	1996
Jones	9	0	0	0	0	1970
Lawrence	2	0	0	0	0	1927
Moore & Reagan	10	2	0	0	0	1942
North Park	2	1	0	0	0	1961
Original Town Block	7	1	0	3	32	1920
Prather & Hornaday	3	4	0	0	1	1966
Westbridge	0	9	0	0	0	1999
No Plat	50	8	7	4	16	1943
Totals	222	40	13	13	61	
Ave. Age	1936	1969	1968	1962	1938	

See Figure 4 for a map of the neighborhood and its major subdivisions.

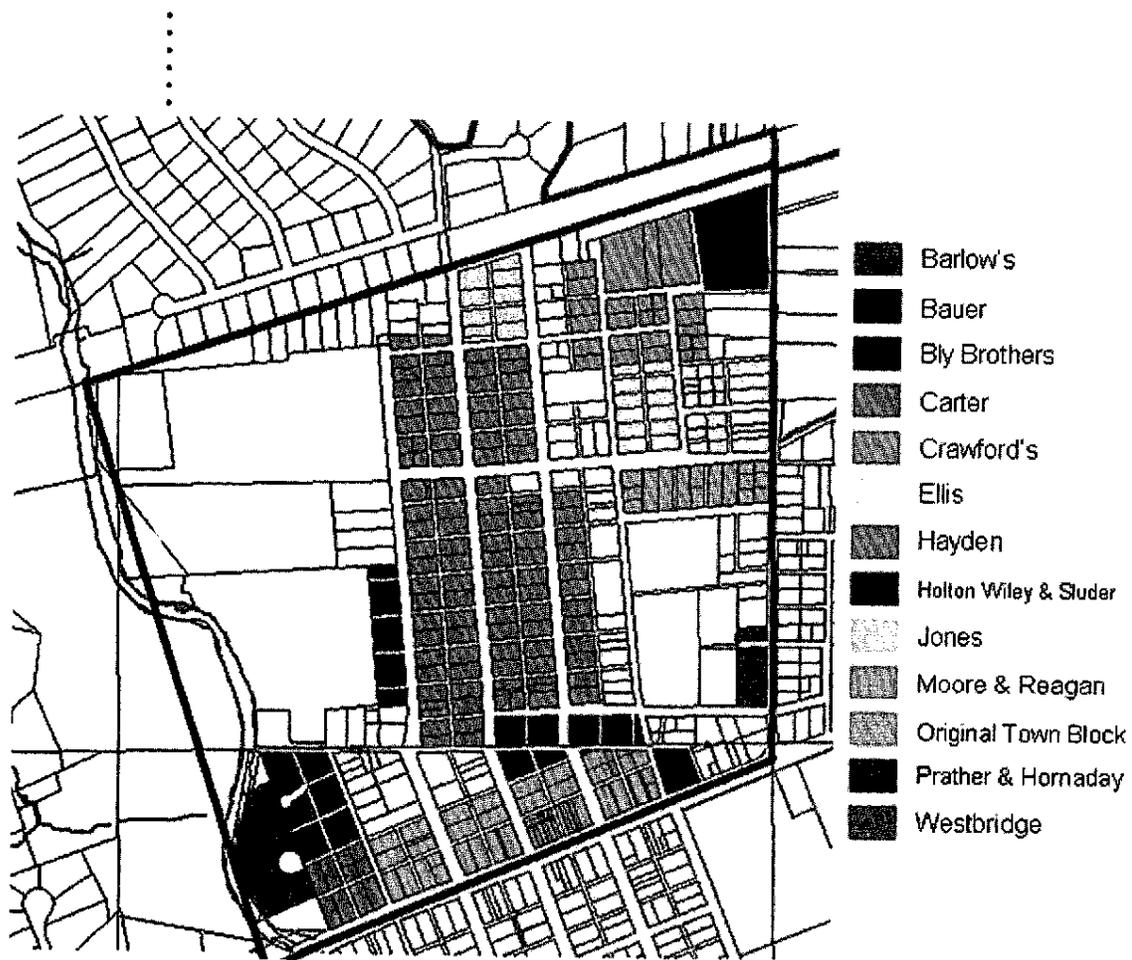


Figure 4. Carter neighborhood with the major subdivisions indicated in various colors.

III. INITIAL SURVEY AND RESULTS

On August 25, 2009 Town staff mailed out a letter informing the approximately 259 neighborhood households and property owners of the intent to start a Neighborhood Revitalization Project in the area enclosed by Main Street, Avon Avenue, White Lick Creek, and the old railroad right-of-way which is where the Vandalia Rail Trail passes through. The letter encouraged the recipients to meet and interact with their neighbors as well as fill out the enclosed surveys and return them within three and a half weeks for staff to review. In addition the letter informed the recipients of the Town's intent to have a neighborhood meeting on September 29, 2009 to discuss the results of the surveys and to open a dialogue between the residents and Town staff about any issues they may be having in the neighborhood.

A copy of the survey that was sent as well as a detailed collection of the data retrieved from the returned surveys is part of the appendix for this report. The following is a summary of that information.

Out of the 259 surveys that were sent out, 62 were returned. This was a very impressive 24% return and showed a strong interest from the residents to get involved with the Town in order to improve their neighborhood. In addition, of those 62 surveys returned, 51 replied that they would be interested in attending the meeting staff planned to hold.

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The survey asked for residents to rank sidewalk, street, street lighting, and property conditions in the neighborhood and then to make any specific comments they felt needed to be made. The ratings were from 1 – very poor to 5 – excellent or if there were no sidewalks for example, they were to put NE for non-existent. Other questions asked about the responder’s favorite thing about the neighborhood, something the neighborhood was lacking, what the Town could do to improve pride in the neighborhood, and any other concerns.

The results of the ranked section are listed in Table 3, below. All four of the categories except for sidewalks were rated on average close to 3. Sidewalks were rated at 2.2, with 11 respondents listing them as non-existent. This indicates room for improvement in all areas.

Sidewalks in the neighborhood have widely varying conditions. Most streets do have them, but at least one, Mill Street, which leads to Franklin Park, does not. Those streets that do have sidewalks tend to have buckled areas or locations that are frequently under water causing pedestrians to walk in the streets. Particular concern was shown for the many mothers with strollers who would end up walking in the street. Center Street’s sidewalk update was most likely the reason for the 5 ratings that were given. However, many residents showed concern that the trees that were removed for that project have not been replaced.

Several different concerns were mentioned about the streets. Some are issues that are unlikely to be fixed, such as the streets being too narrow and removing the curve in Center Street. Other issues were more commonly mentioned, however. These included drainage issues, and not enough parking for homes without driveways. In addition, alley conditions were a big concern. Many are paved, but those that are not are sometimes difficult to pass due to potholes and overgrown greenery. Snow removal on the alleyways, from which many homes receive their only vehicular access, sounds to be non-existent and was a big concern. Many respondents also mentioned the need for more frequent street cleaning. Some other street related issues were that cars frequently speed down the more major streets in the neighborhood, and many don’t stop at some of the stop signs. In addition, a request was made for better one way signage on applicable streets. Another concern about the streets and alleys is that they’ve been paved over so many times that their grade is frequently higher than many yards and sidewalks, again causing drainage issues.

Only a very few people mentioned street lighting as an issue. Those that did were able to specify areas they believed were problematic. Some respondents showed interest in having decorative lamp post style lighting installed.

Property condition was also rated as average by those who entered a rating on their survey. The conditions of the properties were generally rated all over the rating system. Staff averaged the numbers written for each respondent in order to come up with one number per survey. The primary issue in this neighborhood is that many homes have been fixed up while others are in bad repair. In addition, several surveys noted only a couple of properties that are considered big problems, and the ratings were likely affected by this perception. Some comments also stated that rental units in the area are often not maintained.

	Sidewalks	Streets	Street Lights	Properties
Average rating (between 1-5)	2.2	2.9	3.1	2.7
Noted as Non-Existent	11	0	1	0
1	19	5	1	2
2	16	14	11	22
3	4	24	26	17
4	5	17	16	11
5	5	1	2	0
Total Ratings	62	62	58	59
Total Surveys	62	62	62	62

A large portion of the survey was left open for comments from the respondent. One question asked what the respondent liked most about their neighborhood. These responses were primarily that the neighborhood is quiet and the neighbors are friendly. Some other common comments included the neighborhood having an old town feel, that there is a variety of character in the homes, and that they feel safe. A very common comment was that they enjoy having such good access to the Town's trail and parks system.

Most of the other comment and question areas led the respondents to air issues with or suggestions they have for the neighborhood. The main issues mentioned that did not include the four ranked categories were many and varied. Ranking at the top of the list, however, was the poor drainage the neighborhood experiences along with a few comments on updating the sewers.

Traffic was another topic of interest, and in particular the main complaint was speeding along Avon Avenue, Center Street, and Mill Street. Many residents were also interested in seeing a larger police presence in the neighborhood for varying reasons. Some complained of drug activity, others of gang activity at Franklin Park, and another felt that the neighborhood was being cased by people using the trails.

There were several other less frequently mentioned issues. Those included an interest in curb conditions as well as issues with dogs. The dog comments usually included problems with noise and smells. The other primary complaint was the condition of the core downtown buildings as well as their high vacancy rate.

IV. FIRST NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

Tuesday September 29, 2009 in the Council Room at the Plainfield Municipal building was the date and location of the first neighborhood meeting. The agenda included an introduction of the Town staff that was present as well as a covering of topics. The meeting was set up to go over some of the basics of the neighborhood, to discuss the survey results, and finally to rank the issues that were raised in the surveys.

Jill Sprague started off the meeting by showing the attendees the neighborhood's current conditions. These included the neighborhood boundaries, zoning districts within those boundaries, and a sidewalk survey that was conducted by the Planning Department's interns the summer of 2008. In addition, Joe James discussed the combined sewer project which would likely take place in five or more years that would hopefully help to improve drainage in the area.

The attendees were then shown a summary of the issues and points of pride that were mentioned in the neighborhood survey. Summarized, the issues were drainage, downtown, property conditions, sidewalks, speeding and police presence, and street and alley conditions. The points of pride were the friendly neighbors, historic area, housing character, low crime rates, access to the trail and parks, and that the neighborhood was quiet. They were also shown their survey averages which were summarized in Table 3 above.

Based on these summaries, Mr. James asked the meeting attendees to be more specific about issues and to add any new ones. He then asked them to rank the issues. Based on the public feedback, the attendees came up with the following ranked list:

1. Sidewalks
2. Property conditions
3. Police presence (including gang activity at Franklin Park and speeding)
4. Downtown
5. Drainage
6. Alley maintenance (especially snow plowing)
7. Street lights on Vine St.
8. Improved One Way signage
9. Center St. tree replacement
10. Curbs
11. Dogs (including noise and containment)

V. SECOND NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

October 27, 2009 brought the date of the second neighborhood meeting. Staff presented the proposed Goals and Objectives (see section IV of this report) for the neighborhood plan. In addition, Lt. Jill Lees from the Plainfield Police Department informed the neighborhood of the purpose of a neighborhood watch as well as the basics to go about starting one. She also addressed some of the concerns that the attendees presented to her at that time.

Speeding, drug sales, and gang activity at the park were the main issues addressed at this meeting. Lt. Lees said that the speeding issues can sometimes be difficult to catch as there is a limited number of police officers patrolling the Town. For the other issues, the residents would benefit the most by calling the police department when they see the issues occurring. If a police officer can make it to the scene in time to catch someone doing something illegal, they can make an arrest. For any believed drug issues, these should be reported to the Hendricks County Drug Task Force which would then try to watch a location for suspicious activity.

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This meeting's attendees brought up a few more issues after seeing the goals and objectives. A couple were related to the drainage issues in the area, including sidewalk flooding where the canal was enclosed and strong odors at a sewer drain at North and Mill Streets. An issue with mulch producing many insects during late summer just underneath the playground equipment at Franklin Park was mentioned. In addition, the residents wondered what happened to the plans they'd originally been shown of Bob Ward Park. The park has not been landscaped as they expected and the gazebo is smaller than planned and has no benches or other amenities.

VI. GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Goal: Improve sidewalk conditions within the neighborhood.

- **Objective:** Reassess sidewalk conditions.
- **Objective:** Prioritize repair/replacement locations.
- **Objective:** Perform repairs/replacements.

Goal: Improve property conditions in the neighborhood.

- **Objective:** Perform timely inspections and enforcement actions as needed.
- **Objective:** Update zoning ordinance to strengthen consequences and timing of enforcement actions.
- **Objective:** Gather together as neighbors to help each other when in need.

Goal: Improve police presence in the neighborhood.

- **Objective:** Have a police officer meet with the neighborhood group to air concerns about issues.
- **Objective:** Set up a neighborhood watch that can inform the police when issues arise.

Goal: Improve downtown appearance and amenities.

- **Objective:** US40 update (in progress)
- **Objective:** Façade improvements (to begin spring of 2010).
- **Objective:** Plainfield Historic Town Center (Main Street Program) has been formed and is in the process of determining activities to help improve the downtown.

Goal: Improve neighborhood drainage issues.

- **Objective:** Sewer separation project to be in progress more than 5 years from now.

Goal: Improve alley maintenance in the neighborhood.

- **Objective:** Assess alley conditions.
- **Objective:** Prioritize repair/replacement locations.
- **Objective:** Perform repairs/replacements.
- **Objective:** Inform residents that alleys need to be kept clear of obstructions.
- **Objective:** Discuss with DPW when/if alleys will be plowed.

Goal: Improve street lighting within the neighborhood.

- **Objective:** Assess street lighting conditions.
- **Objective:** Discuss with Town Council if some locations need additional lights.
- **Objective:** Discuss with Duke Energy if some locations need repair.

Goal: Improve One Way signage on Vine and East Streets.

- **Objective:** Discuss with Transportation Director/DPW what options are available for improved one way signage.

Goal: Replace the street trees along Center Street.

- **Objective:** Discuss with Town Engineer what may/needs to be done to replace the Center Street sidewalk project trees.

Goal: Improve curb conditions within the neighborhood.

- **Objective:** Assess curb conditions.
- **Objective:** Prioritize repair/replacement locations.
- **Objective:** Perform repairs/replacements (may be part of drainage improvement project).

Goal: Create a neighborhood association.

- **Objective:** Create one voice for the neighborhood to communicate with Town staff and officials.

- **Objective:** Disseminate information to neighborhood residents/property owners.
- **Objective:** Plan events to help bring the neighborhood together.

Goal: Redevelopment of the northern commercial area.

- **Objective:** Determine appropriate uses for the area.
- **Objective:** Enforce clean up of the area.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION

A final draft will be sent to the Plainfield Plan Commission for adoption by resolution. After it is adopted by the Plan Commission, it will be sent to the Plainfield Town Council for adoption. Once adopted by resolution by the Town Council, the Carter neighborhood plan will become a working element of the Plainfield Comprehensive Plan. Many things must happen to fully implement the plan. A crucial step in plan implementation is establishing a neighborhood committee consisting of several residents who will take ownership of the plan and ensure it gets implemented. Other key elements will be adopting new property maintenance standards to give the Town authority to regulate the exterior condition of apartments and rental homes. In addition, funding will need to be obtained to do capital improvements like paving the alleyways and installing sidewalks. As always, funding will be the biggest challenge. Above all, plan implementation will require patience since any improvements cannot be made overnight. However, with a diligent attitude and cooperation, small successes will be made with the final outcome being improved property values and a more sustainable neighborhood.