

Ironwood Association Meeting Minutes
Ironwood Clubhouse
July 17, 2018

Board Members Present: Walt Clark, David Brown, Ashley Cunningham, Linda Rheeling, JoEllen Bahnsen, Susan Parrent, Floyd Aper

Residents Present: 23 resident of Ironwood were present.

Meeting was called to order at 7 pm.

Jim Schmidt introduced himself from the SUV committee and asked if there were any concerns to address in regards to the subdivision or city. Joining the meeting is Lieutenant Nick Thacker from the Normal Police Department.

Nick is familiar with the investigations and issues we have been having in the subdivision and said he will answer any questions as best he can. He presented 3/27/2018, aerial photos and time dated information about the houses that have been burglarized. There were 5 houses impacted and one in Fox Creek, Bloomington. Normal did put out a person of interest video from an in-home surveillance system onto social media. They received a lot of leads from the video, suspect was wearing gloves, had a mask on, gait to his walk and specific mannerisms. The police have served 2 search warrants based off of the person of interest information from the video. They obtained a search warrant on 2 locations and have excluded that person as a suspect. They are still actively working the investigation at this time. They are working with Bloomington and have a suspect in Fox Creek that matches the description, they believe the burglaries are linked. Can put together a timeline based on the information they received to watch the area at night. He noted that there were some high dollar items that were stolen and most of these items are gotten rid of quickly. They do have a database that tracks serial numbers and pawn shops for stolen items and will be notified and as of now, they have not found any items that were a part of these burglaries. Most of the homes impacted have been on the outer perimeter. He did mention that the surveillance systems are very helpful and can be purchased for around \$100.00. He noted that this is a priority and they have officers actively working it and taking proactive measures to catch him.

Resident asked if they were all related and asked if this was any connection to what happened 2-3 years ago. Also asked what kind of items were stolen. Lt. Thacker stated that it was high dollar items that were taken.

Resident mentioned that all homes were unoccupied at the time and there was forced entry by prying open doors or windows.

Resident asked if most of them were through the garage door and the officer stated that yes, most of them were. Residents, most of them, were on vacation and it seems like the person knew of the resident being on vacation.

Resident mentioned that looking at the video, she thought it was a woman based on the top the person was wearing. Officer stated it's a good idea to keep an open mind because it could be a female.

Resident asked how tall based on the video but the officer did not have an exact answer. Estimated close to 6 foot tall and skinny.

Resident that was impacted said the burglar disabled the motion protector light and tried to enter through the slider but couldn't, went around and took the screen out of the window and popped the latches on the window. Took jewelry and file papers from a locked drawer with financial information in it including credit cards. Started trying to use the credit cards the next morning and the card company caught it and shut it down. Used the card at a flea market in Alsip, IL and was able to get a description of the 3 people that were trying to use it. It happened at night sometime between 6:30-9:30pm while he was gone. Resident asked if the homeowner had an alarm, if it went off, would the police be there in time to catch him? The officer believes that if the alarm went off, it could scare them off. Prefers the one that has the app on your phone and you can see them in your house and contact the police without having an alarm going off.

Resident asked about what pawn shops they are tracking. Officer stated that pawn shops are legally required to enter that property serial number into an online database. They check locally and also check other locations such as Chicago.

Resident asked why they keep hitting this neighborhood. Officer stated that it's easy access from the interstate, the houses are on the outside and easily accessible from Northtown Road.

Resident asked what more can we do to protect our homes? Officer recommended notifying neighbors if you see anything suspicious in the area, purchase a security system, if you are gone, contact the police department and they can put you on the vacation list. If you mount motion lights, mount them high so they can't tamper with them.

Officer stated that it looked like they had done it before, were professional, believe they are all the same person.

Resident asked if there could be any connection with mail being on hold? Officer stated that one detective is looking into that.

Resident asked how many people are involved? Officer didn't know but they do have some thoughts. Usually it's believed that there is a car waiting for the person and another person performing the break in but they don't have facts to confirm that.

Resident said that in the video, it appeared the person had a bag, took it out the back door and came back in? Officer stated that in that case, the burglar was in the house for 41 minutes, which is a very long time to be inside someone's house so it's an odd scenario.

Resident that took the video said they had deadbolts that were compromised, broke the back light off, unscrewed the bulb in the rear of the sliding door. Said he was neat on the inside and probably wouldn't have noticed it had they not had the security system. The resident said the pry marks on the door were difficult to see, was no damage on the door frame. Resident said there were obvious items that were not taken, such as weapons. Resident said it sounds like there are a lot of cars on Northtown Road that are stopping late at night and asked if the police were patrolling the area. If you see anything suspicious, contact the police. Resident also asked if there were any plans for lights along Northtown but the officer stated he wasn't sure of any plans. If we are interested, we can funnel that information through the Association president or the City Council. Resident stated they were out of state and their mail was put on hold. Resident's car was in the garage and was unlocked. Officer stated if the car is in the garage to

lock it. Resident mentioned that they use the Canary security app on their phone which has a line to the police dept.

Resident asked if they ever come back and hit the same place twice? The officer wasn't sure of that.

Resident asked of record of catching house burglars? Officer said it's rare to catch them in the act, it's usually tied back to the items being sold or using credit cards.

Resident asked about video cameras in the neighborhood? Jim Schmidt stated that it is recommended for residents to have videos on their home.

Resident asked if they could be from Chicago and not locals? Officer stated that was possible.

Resident asked if there was a way to do an email blast to homeowners in the community so they can be more aware of what's going on? Greg Liepold likes using next door but will also work with us on whatever communication tool we want to use.

Resident has asked about neighborhood watch? Officer stated that 5-7 years ago it was in effect and it's very similar to Nextdoor. Officer stated that neighborhood watch wasn't successful which is why they went to Nextdoor. Getting more officers in the area is a priority. They are patrolling the area but it would be nice to catch them in the act.

Resident mentioned an incident that happened with a neighbor that lived on the golf course at 6 am where a rock was thrown into their patio door, broke the glass and many items were stolen.

Jim reminded residents that we need to remain observant of things that are out of the ordinary. People walking streets at night, lights coming on for no reason, solicitors, etc.

If residents will be on vacation, they can call 309-454-9535 and reach the front desk of the police department to be placed on a vacation list. Officers will walk around the house, check door locks and security. If they see an open door, they will contact other officers for assistance.

Resident's Comments/Concerns:

Resident stated annual dues usually come by US Postal service, asked if we could ask for an email address for each homeowner. Asked if someone could send an email blast to all homeowners to be aware of an incident in the neighborhood. David said he has a list to send out the newsletter, however, we don't have every homeowner on that list. We have a total of 583 homes in the neighborhood. Resident asked if we get updated email addresses when we send out the dues? There is a part of the form that asked for that information. We also try to get the information upon the closing of property. Some realtors are good about getting it, others are not. Can we make residents aware of the purpose of the email and that they can receive alerts of issues in the neighborhood if they provide email? David will include this information in the next newsletter and assure residents that we will not share it. Resident that was impacted said she is not on Nextdoor and was not aware before she left and if she had known, she would have taken precaution. It is also good to let your neighbors know if you will be gone so they can keep a look out for suspicious activity.

Resident stated that you need to have a plan in case something happens. The police will not get here in time to catch the person so you need to find a way to protect your home and/or have video.

Resident mentioned that not only should you tell your neighbor when you'll be gone but it may be wise to give the neighbor permission to walk around your house a couple of times to see if there is anything that looks out of place.

Comcast, for \$10 a month, can get all door alarms and motion detector. It's not wi-fi but it does let the resident know that there is motion in the home. Also mentioned Simply Safe, is a wi-fi self-installed option. Nest is another option and there are also more expensive options with the ones that attach to your phone. Also mentioned that you can purchase the ADP sign online to place in your yard even if you don't have a security system.

Resident mentioned vehicles parking on the wrong side of the street and parking on both sides. Also mentioned Saturday garage sales and issues with parking. Some residents will make up their own signs for certain occasions and place them on the side to not park on that side of the street. If you have company over, make sure they are parking on the correct side of the street. David will place a reminder of this in the newsletter.

Resident mentioned that speeding is a problem and it's not always the teenagers.

Resident at *** ***** stated there is a curb and he knows of 4 people who have hit that curb and gone up in the grass. Resident says there is something wrong with the curb or maybe the city needs to place reflectors so it's more noticeable. Resident says that they have had the issue going both directions but the ones they saw were heading west.

David said he can start watching for posts on Nextdoor in regards to burglaries or other issues in the area and send it to the email list for the neighborhood.

Linda encouraged residents to join Nextdoor because it's a good resource.

Resident asked about the swimming pool on ***** and *****. Walt stated the homeowner is hiring a firm to complete the installation.

**** ***** has been sold, foreclosure.

Resident asked about geese. Linda said she thought the golf course was putting in fountains to deter the geese. Floyd mentioned the berm and water belongs to the City. Resident asked about putting goose lines around, it is approved. Resident said they have put them up and they have been snipped. Resident said that the geese will snip them. Resident mentioned getting swans to put out to deter the geese but wasn't sure if it was approved since the property belongs to the city.

President's Report: Linda has some correspondence from various residents addressing concerns/complaints in neighbor's yards that the board has tried to address.

Secretary's Report: Minutes have been corrected. David moved to approve minutes as corrected. Minutes approved.

Treasurer's Report: Balance \$21,194.11. Deposits totaled \$833.07. Expenses included various bills including postmaster for box rental, mailing of newsletters, LKM. Ending balance totaled \$16,839.25. We still have 3 payments for mowing and landscaping of over \$6,000 which leaves the balance around \$10,000 for end of the year to cover additional landscaping. 13 people still have not paid dues. Report received and filed.

Beautification Report: Walt received a quote from LKM to remove the dead trees on the berm. The total paid to LKM was \$705.84, there was email approval from the board. Trees have been removed. LKM removed at least one other tree and a limb from that contract. LKM will replace the dead one that was planted last year this fall. Should not be any more trees that need removal. Walt mentioned that a homeowner planted 2 new spruce trees on the berm, they are not very large. Walt had correspondence from *** ***, they are interested in buying and planting the tree and the board reimbursing them for tree and mulch. That project would not cost more than \$500.00. Linda doesn't have any objection as long as it's a tree that the board approves. She thinks the board needs to place a reasonable dollar amount on tree planting/replacement. Linda stated the project can't be done until the fall and Walt will need to get in contact with the homeowner to discuss details.

Resident stated that back in the 1990's they were reimbursed for trees they planted, they did not ask for reimbursement. Jim stated that by reimbursing the homeowner, we would not have to pay the labor cost for LKM to plant them. We will be saving money on labor and watering the trees through LKM.

Resident mentioned that Ironwood sign on the west side can use a little paint. Linda stated we won't put stone on the ends, may redo wood on each end.

Communication Report: Dave said IHOA bulletin board is consistent with 380 unique visitors with an uptick in June, up almost 50 visits. Pages viewed increased by about 100. Next newsletter goes out Sept 1st, articles due August 25th.

Covenant Chair: Susan stated that she was given a list of properties that probably need a letter in relation to covenants. Board will be following up before a letter is sent (trailer moved, etc.). Two letters have gone out in the last two months. Floyd stated that he saw one of the letters and it's a neighbor of his. He would be willing to speak to the neighbor. Linda disagrees and says the covenants are put in place to maintain the neighborhood and thinks concerns should be addressed by mail so that we can be legal and have written documents outlining the issues. Linda says that when people ignore the covenants, it should be addressed. Linda said she would be concerned for her safety if she were to personally approach someone. Linda thinks the property on the corner of ***** and ***** should have been addressed with a letter. Walt volunteered to talk to the homeowner about the issues.

Resident asked how new residents receive the covenants. Linda stated the realtor is supposed to notify homeowners of the covenants and they receive it through their realtor or they can go to the IHOA website to find the bi-laws and covenants. JoEllen stated that when Chris does the newcomer visit, they are notified. Sometimes, there are homeowners that don't use a realtor and there is also a lot of paperwork that is not looked at during that process. Floyd thinks a hand delivered document with notice is recommended.

The discussion was regarding the property at the corner of ***** and ***** . David agrees that we need documentation sent to the homeowner stating the issues. Resident asked what the violations are. Violations include the golf cart being parked in the yard within view of the street (it's a Normal police

issue), garbage should be in containers concealed from public view especially on a corner lot. One issue, not a covenant, was parking of large rigs on the street because it's so close to the intersection.

SUV & Government: none.

Board Member Floyd Aper: Didn't receive information on the meeting date change. Need to schedule a monthly meeting to discuss issues. Some people respond, some don't and some action is taken. It may be better service to everyone in Ironwood that these issues be resolved within a month. Walt makes a motion that we return to having a monthly meeting. JoEllen mentioned having bi-monthly in the winter and monthly in the summer months as there are usually more issues during that time. Motion on the floor, second by David to go back to monthly meetings as opposed to bi-monthly. Motion made and carried. Monthly meetings will begin going forward.

Floyd mentioned *** ***** ***, wood pile in backyard. Floyd spoke to the neighbor about the wood pile and stated that homeowner said the wood was for the fire pit. Asked if they would monitor it for critters or other animals. Homeowner said he would take that into consideration. Covenant says you can't leave construction material in the yard. Resident asked if there is something that states how close to the home a wood pile can be. Linda mentioned that the bi-laws and covenants were written 30 years ago that don't always apply to things today. Linda stated that there are things in the covenants that we would like to change but we can't get enough people to vote to make those changes.

Susan stated that a neighbor sent a message saying they were bringing their boat back to the neighborhood and storing it in their driveway for repairs. Said it should take a week and a half and then it will be gone. Stated that the board appreciates the homeowner notifying them since it does relate to a covenant.

Floyd stated that several months ago, the outlots at Northridge were discussed and Floyd performed some research on those. There are two triangles owned at the entrance of Northridge. One is still owned by Snyder Development, the second owned by Heartland Bank and Trust. There is an outlot at the end of Foxwood Run. There are outlots on Northtown Road recorded to the homeowner's association. We are only taxed \$33.00 on the lot East of Towanda Ave. Question was in regards to the brick structure that houses the gates that sit on the lots, they belong to the owners of the lots. The city paid \$2,400 for access and easement for the berm to the East of Towanda Avenue but we still maintain ownership. Two years ago, we collected from a Utility to provide access to the berm. This is based on information on file with Mclean County. Linda stated the center strip on Northridge is maintained by the board but currently owned by the Town of Normal.

Newcomer's Report: Chris was not in attendance but told Linda that she has visited 4 new residents. Two she spoke to and two she left information with. She has several closings coming up and she is also running out of supplies. Resident asked if part of her information could be the covenants. Susan said this should be a part of the information she is giving but Linda was going to confirm that with Chris. Resident new to the neighborhood stated that there were no covenants included but David stated that she should be providing the website so they can view the covenants online.

Old Business: Walt asked about the status of the koi pond. Linda stated a letter was sent rejecting the fence. Floyd talked to the buyer's agent to let them know of the covenants. David said it looked like the homeowner put in an underground fence. Linda stated there was a second fence request. Linda

responded to the homeowner and let them know that a fence is usually approved for a special needs child or in-ground swimming pool.

New Business:

Resident at **** ***** sent a letter asking to install a fence. He has talked to neighbors and has plans to submit. The resident has a letter explaining the reason for the fence. Linda stated that the process for fence approval is typically a 2-month process and it's voted on the following month but it's always been a 2-month process for approval. Board decided it is a 2-meeting process, rather than 2-month. Resident stated it's for safety reasons for grandkids that are 4 or younger. Resident has more grandkids coming and occasionally his wife will watch the kids when their regular daycare provider is not available. Wife has had knee issues and can't get around quickly so the fence is for safety reasons. The fence would be a decorative black metal fence by Ifft fencing. Resident stated you won't see it from ***** **** and from the sides, it will blend in with the landscaping. Resident commented that all children are important and asked that a fence not just be considered for special needs children. Linda stated that the neighbor would need to provide a written statement of their approval. Resident will leave information with the board and Chuck from Ifft fencing said we can contact him directly with questions. Dave will scan the information and send it to the board.

Was discussed that if a board member can't attend a meeting to send a proxy vote.

Walt motioned to adjourn, all in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 9:11 pm.

The next meeting is on August 14, 2018.