

Appendix J - In the News

November 27, 2009

Covington looks to improve Latonia

By Scott Wartman
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COVINGTON - A study commissioned by Covington will look at how to improve Latonia.

Residents and business owners said they hope the study will create a plan that encourages more homeownership and recreational opportunities in the Covington neighborhood.

The city of Covington commissioned the Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission for \$59,000 to look at issues such as housing stock, business environment and traffic as part of the Latonia Small Area Study.

"Latonia is a major area of the city," said Covington City Manager Larry Klein. "I think the city wants to encourage more owner-occupied housing. Maybe there needs to be more programs for owner-occupied housing. There are some vacancies at the shopping center. The market study will find some types of commercial uses that would thrive there."

The study would be similar to one NKAPC completed in 2008 for the Linden Grove area of Covington, Klein said.

The Linden Grove study led to changes in traffic patterns and other improvements, he said. The city is continuing to implement recommendations from the Linden Grove study, he said.

"The study keeps moving," Klein said. "You have a committee that includes citizens that is working with city staff and the Center for Great Neighborhoods to make sure the recommendations become reality."

A committee of about 20 residents, business owners and public officials assembled to lead the Latonia study began meeting this month. Over the course of the next year, input from the committee and from a series of public meetings will form a plan the city commission can use to address issues in the neighborhood.

"I was thrilled when I heard about the study," said Rita Dreyer, a Latonia resident and member of the committee. "In the recent past, most of the emphasis in the city has been on the riverfront area. I'm thrilled about the study and hope it can bring in more restaurants and homeowners."

An increasing amount of rental units concerns several residents on the study committee.

Dreyer and other residents on the committee want the study to highlight Latonia's strengths and encourage people and businesses to invest in the area.

Resident Lisa Gillham said many people don't know about the area's rich housing stock. Gilliam, whose family has lived in Latonia for five generations, moved back to Latonia to rehab her great aunt's Victorian home.

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A senior center in Latonia also ranked high on residents' wish list. Concerns about traffic spurred resident Kate Ladipaolo to join the Latonia study committee.

Ladipaolo, who has two children ages 2 and 3, and is expecting her third child, said cars speed down streets, especially 40th to 43rd streets. She wants the city to consider traffic-calming measures and extending sidewalks.

"Without sidewalks on parts of the street and traffic going so fast, it is the makings of a serious accident," Ladipaolo said. "Something needs to be done to make it safer for pedestrians and drivers."

Study to keep Latonia 'viable'

By Regan Coomer
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Covington wants the community to visualize a bigger, better Latonia 10, 20 and even 30 years from now.

A small area study will commence this fall on the Covington neighborhood that was once its own city and still retains much of a city's character.

Business owners, residents and city officials will work with the Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission to evaluate land-use, transportation and mobility and community facilities as well as implementation strategies and recommendations for city commission.

"It's a neat part of town because at one time it was its own city and it has retained some of that distinction," said City Manager Larry Klein. "Now is a good time to plan for the future so that when the economy does rebound we'll be ready with that plan – hopefully our timing will be consistent with the national economy improving."

The \$125,000 study will get going this fall and should be completed by late summer next year, Klein said.

A task force will be created to steer the study. The task force will use data currently being gathered in a separate marketing study to how Latonia stands now in terms of residential and business properties, population, etc.

"There's a lot of large genera-



FILE PHOTO

Historic Ritte's Corner is one of the focal points of the Latonia neighborhood, which will be part of a Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission small area study for the next year or so.

tors of activities and businesses there and it was thought to be a good idea to take a comprehensive look at that area and see if there's something the city can do to help it prosper either through changes in land use, zoning or public infrastructure improvements," Klein said.

Ritte's East Neighborhood Group co-president Donna Horine said the study is a long time coming.

"We're just very excited about it," she said. "Latonia has maintained a viable community for a long time. We're putting things in place to make sure that continues in the future."

The life-long resident hopes the study can help facilitate homes for seniors who have "stayed in Latonia, grew old in Latonia and want to stay in Latonia," she said.

Klein said the task force should

be formed soon and that a meeting introducing the study and soliciting community input should be held in October or November.

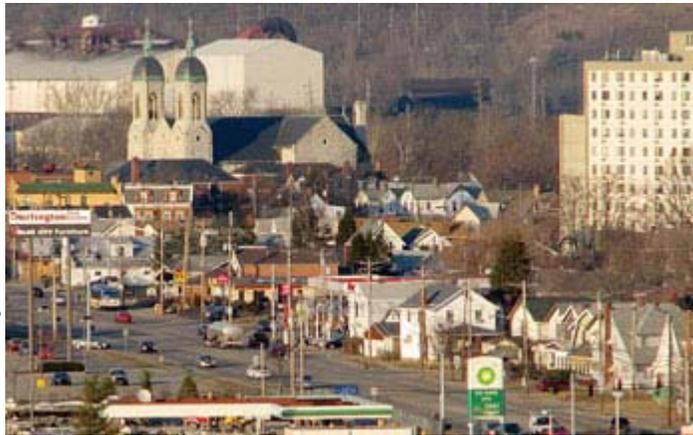
"It is a big commitment of time and energy. It's not just sitting down in a meeting you're taking the material home and studying it," Klein said.

"The reward is you're a part of a huge effort to make your neighborhood better."

The Latonia Small Area Study intends to address the current and future needs of the northern Kentucky neighborhood in a comprehensive manner. Annexed by Covington in 1909, Latonia was named after the nearby Latonia Springs resort. The study is in the early phases now and could potentially include topics like land use, transportation, community facilities, and implementation strategies and recommendations.

Much like a city comprehensive plan, the Latonia Small Area Study will look to engage the community and use that input to guide the comprehensive planning process that will hopefully make the neighborhood a better place for future generations.

At this point field work is currently being done to compile data on existing building conditions and land uses, and should be completed by the end of September.



This data will lay the ground work to discuss a variety of issues in the comprehensive planning process, and will provide needed information for the [Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission](#) (NKAPC).

Following the initial data collection, a market study will also have to be completed that looks at all aspects of the Latonia area. Demographic, real estate, business, housing, land use, and other information will all need to be collected during this step of Phase 1 of the Small Area Study.

Community input is going to be extremely important, but plan organizers note that residents and business owners will be engaged soon. A project website is currently under development and public meetings are being organized so that those interested can stay involved in the study and comprehensive planning process.

The first public meeting has not yet been scheduled, but will happen in late fall 2009. The comprehensive planning process will continue on over the next year with final public involvement wrapping up at

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the beginning of fall 2010.

Those looking to get involved and stay up-to-date are encouraged to contact Angela Cook at the City of Covington at (859) 292-2160, James Fausz at the NKAPC at (859) 331-8987, or Rachel Hastings at (859) 547-5546.

Writer: [Randy A. Simes](#)

Photography provided

Stay connected and follow Randy on Twitter [@SoapboxRandy](#)

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Thursday, February 25, 2010

Latonia small area study survey

Contributed By James Fausz | NKAPC | [ShareThis](#)

Covington, KY – February 25, 2010 The Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission (NKAPC) in conjunction with the City of Covington, Kentucky would like to invite you to share your thoughts about the Latonia neighborhood via the study's online survey. Survey responses will be used to guide the planning process over the next ten months of the study. The survey is open to anyone who lives in or visits Latonia for any reason. Individuals or organizations interested in participating in the survey should visit <http://www.nkpc.org/LatoniaSurvey.asp> to provide their insight into the area. Paper copies of the survey can also be obtained by contacting James Fausz of NKAPC at (859) 331-8980 or Angela Cook of the City Manager's Office at Covington City Hall at (859) 292-2160. Responses for the survey will be collected March 5, 2010.

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Thursday, February 25, 2010

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Surveys needed for Latonia small area study

By Regan Coomer
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Kenton County has until March 5 to respond to a survey about Latonia.

The survey results will be a key component in the Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission's small area study of the Covington neighborhood, said

Project Manager James Fausz.

"If you have an interaction with Latonia, you don't necessarily have to live there, we're interested in hearing from you and what you'd like to see in Latonia or some of the things you found that were problematic and needs to be addressed," he said.

The 28-question survey takes about 10 minutes to fill out and includes both multiple-choice and open-ended questions. The survey can be taken online at nkapc.org or by stopping by the NKAPC in Fort Mitchell if a computer is unavailable.

The survey asks residents and Latonia-enthusiasts to describe what they think are the neighborhood's greatest assets and greatest challenges as well

as which businesses and activities they'd like to see that are not currently in Latonia.

In addition to the survey results, the NKAPC is wrapping up interviews with "key" persons in the community such as businesses, property owners, neighborhood associations, police and fire departments, city officials and more. Fausz expects to have as many as 50 key-person interviews completed soon.

"The survey goes along with the key person interviews," Fausz said. "We're looking at finding as much information as we can for the existing conditions report."

Once Latonia's existing conditions report is wrapped up, the NKAPC will host three public meetings to get

input from residents on the information they've gathered and the small area recommendations for development and growth that will be drawn up by the study's task force.

Fausz said the first public meeting is tentatively scheduled for late April. The first meeting will ask residents to add to or correct the existing conditions of Latonia. The second meeting, which Fausz said could happen in mid-summer, will ask residents to look at redevelopment opportunities and the third, to be held in September or October, would solicit opinions on the entire plan.

"Our target date is to have everything wrapped up later this fall; ideally in October," Fausz said.

Covington mayor asks for help in developing vacant sites

BY REGAN COOMER • RCOOMER@NKY.COM • MARCH 26, 2010

On the fly during his talk at a Covington Business Council meeting, Covington Mayor Denny Bowman came up with an idea to help promote his primary message: working together to promote growth.

Bowman listed some of the city's 1,000 vacant sites that would profit from development at the luncheon, held March 25 at The Madison.

"It's going to take everyone here to turn these sites around," he said. "All of these sites are crucial sites for Covington."

Bowman went on to suggest that the city should form several three or four-person committees, assigning each one to focus entirely on a particular site.

"If we can bring our staff together with business leaders and financial leaders and bring them all in as part of that discussion with the property owner, I think you'll see some action," he said.

Bowman later admitted he had just thought of the idea but confirmed he would be following up on it.

"Absolutely," he said, adding it is important to mobilize stakeholders toward one goal. "If the organizations are going different directions you're not going to be successful."

A committee would approach the owner and ask what it could do to make the property more marketable and would be the liaison between the property owner and the city, Bowman said.

"These two people can't do it all," said Bowman, gesturing to City Manager Larry Klein and Assistant Manager Larisa Sims. "The property owners will work with us if you come to them in a positive direction."

During his presentation Bowman shared facts about Covington's history as well as about projects on the books now geared toward the betterment of the city.

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Bowman said the Latonia Small Area Study, the purchase of identifying signs for landmarks, landscaping the city's gateways, the Experience Covington online tours and more will help bring on a "continued re-birth of Covington."

Covington Business Council Executive Director Gary Keller said he and the group's members would work with the city in any way to promote growth.

"It's important to ask, 'How can we bring all these organizations together?' because all them do great work."

Holding the luncheons and promoting "connectivity" is allowing the CBC to help Covington, Keller said, adding "it's easy to forget about who's doing what."

<http://nky.cincinnati.com/article/C2/20100326/NEWS/3260306/-1/recorder/Covington+mayor+asks+help+in+developing+vacant+sites>

Vacant Marathon could become park

BY SCOTT WARTMAN • SWARTMAN@NKY.COM • MARCH 31, 2010

COVINGTON - Latonia residents and business owners have tired of looking at the vacant Marathon gas station on Decoursey Pike for almost 12 years.

A grassroots neighborhood group known as the Latonia Gateway Park Work Group hopes it can this year replace the boarded up building and cracked concrete with fountains, foliage and benches.

The group is negotiating with Marathon in hopes of buying the former gas station at the corner of Decoursey Pike and 32nd Street for a pocket park, said Marvin Wischer, president of the Latonia Business Association and one of the work group's leaders. Wischer is president of KW Mechanical in Latonia.

Wischer thinks the work group might have the gas station purchased by this summer. A letter-writing campaign to support the proposed park started in the past month and has yielded letters from 10 different organizations and a resolution of support from the Covington City Commission.

The park work group formed in July 2008. They've met monthly and have preliminary designs for a park. Public meetings in the past year on the proposed park have been attended by as many as 70 people, Wischer said.

"It is pulling Latonia together," Wischer said. "It is good that everybody is meeting together and talking about this. It is a good project."

The property is small, but it's centrally located in the Latonia business district. As the city and residents work on an area study to plan Latonia's future, the residents want to address this vacancy. Wischer said 25,000 cars a day pass this gas station.

"To get from downtown Covington to Latonia, this is how you get into Latonia," Wischer said. "It would be tremendous to have a park there. For prospective business owners, it would say, 'Hey, somebody cares.'"

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The gas station opened in 1963 and closed in 1998 and has remained for sale ever since. Kenton County has assessed the property's tax value at \$60,000, according to the property valuation administrator.

If the work group can buy the property, it would start raising money to build the park, Wischer said.

Resident Rita Dreyer, a member of the work group, said a park would improve Latonia.

"All it is, is an eyesore in the community," Dreyer said. "There has been a new interest in pocket parks, and that would be an ideal spot for one. The more we have started looking into it, the more interest it gained."

<http://nky.cincinnati.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/AB/20100331/NEWS0103/4010347>



www.nkapc.org