

## **Statements from the Co-chairs:**

Good evening. My name is Olivia Dorfman. Bloomington recently unveiled its new transportation plan and unified development ordinance, or (UDO), two documents that will guide development here for the next twenty years. As residents of the Near West Side, it makes sense for us to consider where our neighborhood fits into the city's plans.

The Near West Side Historic Designation Committee was formed to explore what some form of historic designation could mean for our Bloomington neighborhood. Our first presentation, on February 28th, focused on how historic designation works. If you missed it, a video of the program may be viewed on our website [HistoricNWS.org](http://HistoricNWS.org), which also has lots of information about the topic.

Tonight's meeting is focused on what makes our neighborhood historic.

When my husband and I moved to Bloomington three and a half years ago, we knew that our house had been built around 1900 - but little else about local history. As we explored the Near West Side, we noticed signs explaining that this modest working class neighborhood has been racially diverse for decades. We learned that the Showers furniture factory - the very buildings we are in tonight - had employed many who lived in these homes. We learned how the African-American history of Bloomington is deeply rooted in the Near West Side. And we met families who had lived here for generations.

One neighbor told us about June Hammond, an African-American woman whose family had owned and lived in our house for at least 65 years. June Hammond's father, Henry, served as bailiff in Monroe County court. In his youth, he had played jazz with Hoagy Carmichael.

And many other Near West Side houses were home to families like the Hammonds - people who lived lives well worth remembering and left their marks on Bloomington. The Near West Side **may be** a modest, working class neighborhood but it has a very RICH history, which we will explore in tonight's program.

We'll be following the same format we used in our February meeting, allowing our speakers to make their presentations and then asking you to kindly hold your questions until the end of the program. We have index cards and pencils for your use if you need to jot down your question. We expect our meeting will last around 90 minutes. Before our speakers begin, here is Christine Lovelace with a recap of our February 28 presentation.

Olivia Dorfman, Co-chair  
Near West Side Historic Designation Committee

[At this point, Christine Lovelace reviewed the Feb. 28th program, followed by Karen Duffy's remarks.]

Thank you, Christine, for that refresher on our first Public Meeting.

And thank you all for coming tonight to our second one, as we turn our attention to consider yet another topic we need to understand in order to make an informed decision about whether to pursue local historic designation.

That topic is, of course, “The Historic Value of the Near West Side,” and our guest speakers, Duncan Campbell and Cynthia Brubaker, are eminently qualified to address it. In fact, they’re so qualified that I’ve chosen to take an unorthodox approach to introducing them—by pointing out some experience they have in common that I think will be of interest to you as you listen to their presentations:

- Both are Native Hoosiers; both have lived in Bloomington for several decades; & both once lived in the NWS on W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, in different houses with their respective families. This is to say, both of them know our neighborhood well *personally*, just as we do.
- Both are historic preservationists with the same, highly respected credential: a Master of Science degree in Historic Preservation, from Columbia University, which has the oldest Historic Preservation program in the country. (They earned their degrees at different times, which didn’t overlap.)
- Then, in the 1990s and early 2000s, the two collaborated professionally in Bloomington. As partners in a private historic preservation consulting firm, they contributed their expertise—sometimes as consultants, sometimes fully as project managers—to the rehabilitation of many key buildings on the West Side and in Bloomington more broadly, including the Johnson Creamery, the Indiana Theatre, and the Showers Building.
- Most notably for us tonight, they researched and wrote the National Register nomination for the “Bloomington West Side Historic District.” As a result of their efforts (and those of Nancy Hiestand, then Historic Preservation Program Manager for the City), the district was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1997. If you’re a little unclear on what the National Register is, there’s some information on the FAQ sheet you got when you came in the door.

Finally, I must mention some of the work they’ve done independently since then: Duncan directed and taught in Ball State University’s Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, and currently serves as an advisory member of Bloomington’s Historic Preservation Commission. Cindy continued renovation work, including the Coca-Cola Bottling plant, and most recently, the I-Fell Building, which she now manages.

Clearly, they bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to their presentations tonight. Duncan will speak first, telling us how our neighborhood developed over time—highlighting its social and cultural significance. Then Cindy will give us a look at some of its architectural characteristics—the styles and features that give our neighborhood distinction and coherence, both visually and structurally. Please welcome them warmly.

Karen Duffy, Co-chair  
Near West Side Historic Designation Committee