



John Barth for Council

Letter to the Editor (submitted to the Indianapolis Star 10/13/11)

Response to Mayor Ballard's Demolition of Historic Structure

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Talk to Neighbors First; Demolish Second

Less than a month until the election and Mayor Ballard has the paving crews - and the demolition crews - in high gear. There's only one problem, and it's a big one. The Mayor is not seeking input from neighbors on what matters most to them and, in one case, has destroyed part of what makes our City special - our history. This week, in his haste to keep checking projects off his list, the Mayor razed a historic structure in Tarkington Park without so much as a nod to the neighborhood or - according to his own spokesperson - even bothering to investigate the importance of the structure. The structure - a tennis shelter - was designed by Edward Pierre, a leading architect who designed Bush Stadium and conceived the idea of the holiday lights on the Circle, and was appreciated by neighbors and design fans alike.

Since I began my campaign for an at-large seat on the Indianapolis City/County Council I have focused on one issue - strengthening our neighborhoods. Meeting hundreds of people at neighborhood meetings, festivals, and walking door to door, I have focused on listening to residents tell me about their hopes and goals - and what they expect from their leaders. What I hear across Indianapolis is this: residents want change in the way our current administration does business - they want officials who listen and learn about the priorities and goals that exist in every neighborhood and work with them to help them achieve success.

What happened in Tarkington Park is exactly what happens when a Mayor makes decisions quickly based on an impending election and ignores our history and our neighborhood priorities. We need a mayor who talks to neighbors first and demolishes second. We need a real collaboration between our government and our community.