

Roundabout June 18, 2024

NEXT WEEK'S PROGRAM:

We will meet in the State Room East on June 25 to hear fellow club member **John Zody** speaking about "Community Investment through CDFI Friendly Bloomington."

John, who is CDFI Friendly Bloomington's executive director, has 25 years of experience in public service in Indiana, including his most recent role as director of housing and neighborhood development for the City of Bloomington from 2021 to 2023. John has also held roles at the state and federal levels, where his duties included program management, fundraising, advocacy, communications, and Congressional administration. For his service in state government, John was twice awarded the Sagamore of the Wabash from Indiana governors. He has also served in higher education and is currently an adjunct instructor in ethics and leadership at Indiana University's O'Neill School. He is a Martinsville native and lives in Bloomington with his wife and two children.



THIS WEEK'S NEWS

Summer Service Project: Teachers Warehouse Supply Drive. Join your fellow Rotarians on Saturday, July 13, and help Teachers Warehouse stock the shelves for the next school year. Sign up for a two-hour shift at a local Kroger or office supply store. We started Teachers Warehouse 20 year ago; let's help keep it going. Sign up at this link: [2024TWSupplyDrive](#). Teachers Warehouse this year has served 1,224 teachers in the course of more than 3,000 visits, providing

\$400,000 of supplies to area educators. That's roughly \$330 per teacher, 1,200 times over. Questions? Contact Anne Bright, annebrightmi@yahoo.com

JUNE 18 PROGRAM: MAYOR KERRY THOMSON

YouTube link can be found here: [Celebration of Service June 18, 2024](#)



Jeff Richardson introduced Mayor Kerry Thomson. A Bloomington resident for 27 years, Mayor Thomson is embracing the new challenge of serving as the city's mayor. She was the CEO of Habitat for Humanity for 20 years. She took the position with Habitat facing organizational debt and struggling to meet its mission but concluded with a \$6 million portfolio, having built more than 400 homes, and Habitat the leading developer for housing in Bloomington.

She then took on the new challenge of heading Indiana University's Center for Rural Engagement. The center began with seven counties and has expanded to 53 counties, with more than 53,000 residents engaged.

Mayor Thomson described her first six months in office as extremely busy and very rewarding. She finds herself supported by a talented staff and a community hungry to be engaged and see numerous specific issues addressed.

She thanked **Charlotte Zietlow**, **Jeff Richardson**, and **Traci Jovanovic** for encouraging her, a reluctant candidate, to run for office and for their support along that journey. The new staff in the Office of the Mayor has undertaken myriad initiatives. Efforts to increase efficiency are underway across all city departments while simultaneously finding new ways to develop outreach in the community in order to respond more dynamically to civic needs. The city website is being overhauled, with new reports and documents being added on more accessible pages so citizens can be better informed about government decisions, expenses, and future plans.

Those outreach efforts were furthered detailed in town halls held throughout the community to

hear what residents had to say and to uncover what the city government might still be missing about individual community needs. Resident advisory teams have been formed and deployed to better administer the new Hopewell and Showers West developments. Mayor Thomson continues to hold traveling office hours, where she sits down with members of the community one-on-one in restaurants and coffee shops around the city to give them a chance to meet and address their mayor directly.

Mayor Thomson asked Rotary and the broader community for additional help in her efforts. Numerous positions on city and joint city and county boards and commissions remain vacant. Interested individuals can go to the city's webpage for boards and commissions and apply for positions on boards addressing issues they might be passionate about.

She also offered progress reports on ongoing projects: Hopewell, Trades District, and the Convention Center. With the Convention Center, a site has been selected and Weddle Brothers has been chosen as construction manager for the project. Mayor Thomson's administration estimates that the project will bring \$18 million in additional revenue to Bloomington annually and 40 to 60 new fulltime jobs.

The Trades District development will bring more office space, a new hotel, and a tech center hosting a Department of Energy project that will link 17 national labs in ongoing work.

Wrapping up, Mayor Thomson addressed the ongoing need for workforce housing. Lack of housing remains the biggest driver of homelessness in the community. Her administration continues to engage with and listen to community social service providers. It places great emphasis on incentivizing developers to build more affordable units and on holding them accountable to promises made with regard to those numbers. She closed her presentation by describing the Sheridan project, an attempt to build on city-owned land holding areas for storm water that include native plants and removal of invasive species. This project is intended to offset flooding that becomes an increasingly dangerous risk with each year of climate change.

UPDATES: June 18 Celebration of Service

President **Ron Barnes** offered his thought for the day, quoting Bernard Berenson: "Miracles happen to those who believe in them."

Dave Meyer offered this week's reflection, describing Bloomington Rotary's ongoing resettlement efforts that were described at last week's meeting. Efforts continue to bring a cousin of the club's currently sponsored family to the United States. This young man has been trapped in what Dave described as political purgatory in Indonesia for nine years, unable to work and unable to receive permanent resident status. He recently was granted refugee status by the UN, and it is hoped that he will be arriving in the United States soon.

Bloomington Rotary works with Exodus Project and Welcome Corps, a program established by

the Biden administration for local communities and service providers to handle initial resettlement costs with later ongoing support. These ongoing efforts are at the heart of the commitment to service Rotary endeavors to represent in its communities.

Claire Kest introduced our guests this week. They included:

Elizabeth Mitchell and Thomas Horrocks (Jim Bright), Desiree DeMolina (City communications director), Noah Jager (Rotary Global Scholar), Eric Ost, Kyle Seaver, Joyce Kaplan, Carol Seaman, Robert Woolford, Tim Peck, and Anushka Pandey.

Michael Shermis asked members to bring ideas for speakers to the program committee as soon as possible because meetings are already booked well into the fall. He thanked members for the consistently wonderful quality of suggestions and noted that usually the committee is forced to choose only about half of them each year.

A generous round of Happy Dollars raised \$190.

We celebrate four Rotarians with birthdays this week: **Jillian Rich** (June 17) and **Marshall Goss, Jim Harvey, and Peter Kroener** (all June 20).

We celebrate five Rotary anniversaries this week: **Forrest Gilmore, Amy Kendall, and Caleb Poer** (all one year), **Amy Osajima** (seven years), and **Martha Wailes** (eleven years).

Acknowledgments

Greeter and Guest Introductions – Claire Kest

Reflection – Dave Meyer

Reporter – Sam Ujdak

Camera/Mic Operator – Traci Javanovic

Zoom and Audio Producer – Tylar Martin-Nichol

Reporter: Sam Ujdak