

MINUTES

Ravinia Neighbors Association Meeting
Wednesday, January 27, 2010

Don Miller called the meeting to order at 8:10 p.m. in the home of Carol and Paul Willis, 360 Woodland Road.

In attendance were Amy Amdur, Michael Bloomquist, Ray DeLong, Al Klairmont, Peggy Laemle, Alisa Leander, Amy Lohmolder, Don Miller, Marcia O'Hara, Doug Purington, Jeff Stern, Eve Tarm, Dave Wigodner, Carol Willis and Aaron Wolff.

In his Membership Report, Doug Purington said there were 3 new members and 8 renewals, with \$330 collected. He noted a steady drop in membership renewals, from 92% three years ago to 85% two years ago to 71% last year. He said overall membership stood at 497, and included 299 households.

Eve Tarm said business owners should want to support RNA, that finding new members was only part of the issue, and that renewals were also important. Amy Lohmolder suggested that meetings should be more social and fun events, rather than just business meetings. Given the economic situation and the fact there was nothing really bad happening in the neighborhood to get people upset, Dave Wigodner thought it was amazing we had as many members as we do. Carol Willis suggested having a committee devoted to keeping membership up. She felt many people didn't understand why RNA exists or what it does. Doug thought it was important to keep merchants informed of what was going on. Don Miller recommended that Lohmolder, Wigodner and Willis form a committee to plan special events to help raise awareness of and membership in the RNA.

In his report on the Newsletter, Ray DeLong said he had been fine-tuning the form to be used for soliciting advertisements, and that for now half-page ads would be retained. The possible enlargement of the newsletter from 8 to 12 pages that was discussed at the last meeting would depend entirely on the amount of copy being presented. He noted that the last issue carried almost the same amount of editorial space as ads. He predicted that the spring issue would be out by the end of March. Al Richman, who arrived late for the meeting, was still in charge of selling ads, but DeLong said Al had asked for another person to assist him who could eventually take over the job. Carol Willis said she has found a volunteer, and expects to have the person on board soon.

Regarding the possible closing of the Ravinia branch of the H.P. Post Office, some members thought there was nothing that could be done about it, but Don Miller said Mayor Belsky and Congressman Kirk were working to keep it open. Miller suggested spreading awareness of the issue by having someone write an article emphasizing the importance of the Post Office to the community. In the absence of Ken Temkin, no Treasurer's Report was presented.

In her Business District Report, Eve Tarm said that despite the poor economy, there were no new vacancies in the district, but no fewer, either. She said the convenience of the Ravinia Post Office was important in attracting new business while the downtown facility was inconvenient and often crowded. She urged everyone to sign petitions being circulated to keep the Ravinia office open. Peg Laemle said the amount of business the Ravinia Post Office handles would influence any decision, and that it needed to take in a minimum of \$1,200 a day.

Tarm said the market study for the TIF District has been finished and that the city was planning a meeting at the Ravinia School at 7 p.m. February 11 to discuss it. Miller said Mayor Belsky asked Tarm to represent 2,600 area residents at the event. Tarm also said a prospect had been found for the Ravinia Plumbing building at 595 Roger Williams, but that the landlord wanted to charge the same rent as in better times. She also said the auctioning of condos in the Burack-built structure on Green Bay Road showed good real estate deals can still be made.

Responding to Miller's introduction, Al Klairmont said he had been asked to serve on the committee dealing with the TIF District, but that much more money would have to be collected before anything substantial could be accomplished.

In the absence of Harold Rafson, Eve Tarm said that in regard to environmental issues, there was an initiative from the neighbors around Brown Park that there should be better screening in the parking lot west of the Ravinia Station to keep car headlights from disturbing residents on Burton Avenue. A city Public Works team was to check the situation out next week to see what was really needed.

In his train station report, Jeff Stern said he and Miller had moved the Ravinia Neighbors Newsletter holder from the west to the east side of the station kiosk, and moved it up higher to keep it from being damaged by commuters who were leaning against it while sitting along the base of the kiosk waiting for their trains.

Miller said Amy Amdur, a director of the Port Clinton Arts Festival, had offered to help plan NRA's proposed Garden Walk, which was to include eight or nine area homes. He suggested sending out a postcard with a map showing garden sites, and that the event should be free to all members, who could bring up to six guests free as an incentive to sign up. Non-members would pay \$20 admission, which could be applied toward RNA membership. Miller said Debbie Blanks and Lydia Walker, who weren't at the meeting, are considering chairing the event. The walk is to be held from 1 to 5 p.m. on Sunday, July 18. Details will follow, and plans are to be finalized at the next meeting, which is set for March 24.

Miller asked for and received approval to endorse a city plan to extend parking until 10 p.m. as a benefit to Ravinia restaurants during the festival season. Purington agreed to support Aaron Wolff in trying to persuade the City Council to ban all driver use of cell phones. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

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