

Minutes

Ravinia Neighbors Association

General Meeting

Wednesday, October 6, 2004

Ravinia Metra Train Station

Don Miller called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m. and introduced RNA Board Members to the audience.

Alison Brett served as moderator and drew attention to forms on seats which asked for input from the audience regarding priorities they would like RNA to pursue.

Brett welcomed Mayor Michael Belsky, Councilwoman Mari Barnes and the Park District's Rich Stumpf and Steve Meyer.

Mayor Belsky thanked RNA for inviting him to attend and mentioned efforts at beautification such as planters in Ravinia business district to attract people to shop and dine there, which improves quality of life for residents. He said RNA was an agent for change and discussed the possibility of TIF financing in Ravinia to extend streetscape and other improvements such as new sidewalk materials, benches and street lighting. He estimated the value of the improvements at from \$1.2 to \$1.5 million, and asked for RNA support for this plan, which aims to make Ravinia as inviting as downtown Highland Park. Belsky said Mari Barnes was part of a city beautification task force that was working to find new ways to improve the area and recognize businesses for their efforts.

Paul Wehner presented the Treasurer's report and said that for the calendar year ending June 30, 2004, the RNA had a fund balance of about \$5,200, or about \$2,700 more than the prior year. Of this amount, about \$4,300 or 83 percent was spent on community effort, such as the newsletter, the website, beautification projects and the EPA storm sewer project. New revenue was obtained from ads for the newsletter and reimbursement from the EPA for the sewer project. We are always looking for meaningful community projects to spend out money on and await feedback from our surveys regarding priorities.

Don Miller announced a meeting at his house at 7:30 p.m. October 20 of a committee to help develop the business community.

Deborah Rubenstein announced her plan to open up an arts and crafts shop at 473 Roger Williams, which was recently vacated by Ritzlin Antique Maps and Prints. The Raintree Gifts shop is scheduled to open in mid-November.

Bunny Mesirow announced extensive remodeling of the Ravinia Barbecue & Grill at 592 Roger Williams, which she estimates will cost \$750,000. Scheduled to reopen at the end of October, the refurbished facility will include a new bar carryout, awnings and French doors at the entrance on Roger Williams.

Bob Burack discussed the Crossings at Ravinia, a nine-unit condo project he has been working on the past 1½ years at Roger Williams and Green Bay. He said the DNC had approved final plans at its Monday (October 4) meeting, and that construction would begin within 60 days, with occupancy in late summer or fall of 2005. Parking will be underground, and prices for the three-per-floor units would start at about \$300,000. Renderings of the project were shown to the audience.

Mike Samuels, representing Dan Anbar, said completion was near at Ravinia Park Place, 578 Roger Williams, that five units have been sold, and that landscaping will start next week. The 3,100 square feet of commercial space on Roger Williams has not yet been leased. He also announced preliminary plans to redevelop the White Hen property across Roger Williams. The proposal is for a mixed-use building similar to Ravinia Park Place, with about 4,000 square feet of commercial space and up to 23 market-rate residential units, five "affordable" units, underground parking for about 25 cars and street parking for 18. The White Hen has a long-term lease and would be part of the new development. Samuels said the footprint for the entire property is about 6,000 square feet.

Rick Stumpf, Director of Parks and Planning for the Park District, encouraged everyone to let him know what they would like to see done in the parks. He talked about plans for Jens Jensen Park and the design of new play equipment for Brown Park. He said a second advisory meeting will be held October 25 and that the new playground equipment will be accessible to children with handicaps. Regarding Rosewood Beach, Stumpf said the walkway from the park to the beach house will be replaced, but that little could be done to save the beach house itself because of pressure from the slipping bluff above. He said the Park District had received an IEPA grant to monitor water quality at the beach, and that new flowers had been planted to spruce up the park. At Watts Park there will be a controlled burn this fall to remove non-indigenous species.

Responding to questions about non-compliant signs in the Ravinia Business District, Mari Barnes said the DRC was looking at the issue. She also said that city-sponsored holiday lighting could not be provided in the RBD because the electricity would have to come from adjacent buildings, which can only support a limited amount of power.

The meeting ended at 8:57 p.m.