

RAVINIA NEIGHBORS ASSOCIATION MEETING NOTES - SEPTEMBER 25, 2008

Present:

RNA Members - Don Miller, Doug Purington, Eva Tarm, Al Klairmont, Bob Burack, David Wigodner, Harold Rafson, Jeff Stern, Ken Tempkin

City Staff - Will Jones, Assistant City Manager, Carolyn Hersch, Economic Development, Mary Anderson, Director of Public Works, Director of Community Development, Michael Blue

a. Green and Sustainable Improvement Concepts for the Ravinia TIF Harold Rafson proposed that a portion of the TIF funds be used for a study to identify economic benefits to property owners and business owners from green and sustainable improvements in the TIF area, and suggested the following:

1. Any concrete changes should be replaced with pavers or with permeable concrete. This is both important for storm water and plantings.
2. All plantings should be native plants. We should consult with the Botanic Garden and Rebecca Grill of the Park District. There should be diversity in the plantings.
3. All signage or whatever painting is to be done should be low or no VOC paints.
4. All lighting should be powered by solar energy. In fact, this is cheaper than the cost of lighting where it has to be wired. In certain areas, lighting should be controlled by motion sensors to limit energy use. Lighting intensity should be evaluated to avoid over lighting. Guidance can be obtained from standard ASHRAE 90.1 or Energy Star. Lighting should be aimed downwards to limit light pollution.
5. Wherever possible, particularly for stores on the north side of the street where windows face south, have thermo pane windows. Also, they now have window coatings that are zero UV which decreases heat in the store prevents discoloration and saves energy. Awnings and shades on the north side should be designated for winter/summer to maximize winter heat and provide shade in the summer.
6. Bicycles – There should be bicycle racks and possibly a clearly marked bike path.
7. The alleys could be paved with permeable asphalt or pavers, to limit storm water.
8. To go further, consider solar panels on all the roofs, and all buildings improving windows, insulation and lighting.

Action: Staff will obtain a cost estimate for an energy audit/study prior to the December 4, meeting.

b. Brown Parking Lot Planting Plan

The RNA requested plantings in the parking lot adjacent to Brown Park for the following reasons:

1. Screening would help Brown Park feel like more of a park, not just a strip of land in front of a parking lot, and it would improve the appearance of the neighborhood, particularly since the area is heavily trafficked by thousands of people walking to Ravinia Festival every summer and visiting Ravinia Business District, the lakefront, and other parks.
2. The parking lot installed about 10 years ago does not have the buffer needed to shield car headlights from going into 18 adjacent homes, especially when days are shorter and there are no leaves on trees.
3. The current landscaping has never matured as expected and a beautification plan should be implemented.

Estimate

At the request of the RNA, an estimate for these improvements has been provided by Jodi Mariano and Nicholas Patera, Teska Associates and is as follows:

220 x 3 ft high shrubs @ 80 ea. = \$17,600 - installed

61 x 4 ft high shrubs @ 100 ea. = \$6,100 - installed

Planting preparation & shredded = \$2,400 – installed

Hardwood mulch allowance

Total Estimated Budget = \$26,100

If it is better for budget purposes, the installation may be done over 2-3 seasons to better manage the costs. This design allows for incremental implementation over time.

Action: To supplement the TIF funds, staff will look into grant opportunities and other government subsidies to fund the project (i.e. through DCEO).

c. Screening of Vending Machines at Ravinia Train Station

The RNA is concerned about seeing the sides and backs of the vending machines outside the train station, and the effect of a 20+ square foot illuminated sign board. The RNA is cognizant of creating a security situation so in Option B the opening is as wide as possible. Plans have been submitted to Bob McCraren, Public Works.

Action: Mary Anderson will get an estimate for the project but indicated that funds are not available to complete this project in 2009.

d. Screening of ComEd Transformer Yard on St. Johns Avenue Plans have been reviewed by Larry King, Forestry. At the request of Don Miller, Teska Associates provided the following recommendation:

1. Naturalistic pattern of medium scale evergreen trees along the existing wood fence; species selected must remain away of the wires, like an Upright Cedar or Juniper rather than a Norway spruce that would get too tall.
2. A small sitting area with a few shrubs and a bench facing west along the sidewalk.
3. Complimentary plantings near the existing Oaks in the yard north of the transformer; this would reduce lawn maintenance and create shrub planting beds similar to the Jensen Park design.

Action: Don Miller will put the RNA's concerns in writing and send it to Will Jones. Thereafter Mr. Jones will have the City's ComEd liaison arrange a meeting for them with to discuss screening the transformer.

e. Other Business: Director Blue suggested that we revisit the Master Plan and develop the scope of the project by identifying the desired improvements and design aspects.

Action in advance of the December 4, meeting: RNA to develop their TIF wish list.