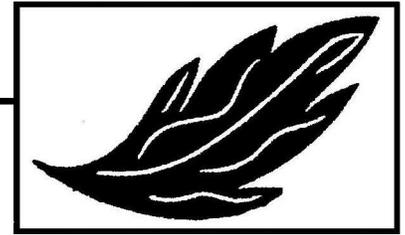


# **West Street Greenspace Preservation Coalition**

P.O. Box 84, Naperville, IL 60566-0084 Phone: 630-637-9236 Fx:630-717-0785



## **Newsletter – January 21st, 2005**

### **Coalition Meeting Wednesday Jan.26<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 PM**

The next meeting of the West St. Greenspace Preservation Coalition will take place at Naperville Townships Administration Building (135 Water St.) on Wednesday Jan. 26<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 PM. All board members have been notified in advance of this newsletter, and all members and guests are welcome to attend. With municipal election just around the corner we have plenty to talk about, so drop by if you can.

### **Fall Fling October 2004**

It rained heavily the day of the fall fling. So we left out the party phase of the event, and just fulfilled our "Adopt-A-Highway" duties. (Our coalition has adopted West Street from Oswego Rd. to Emerald, check out the signs on West Street)

Here's a photo from that phase of the event showing stalwart board members Wendy Mouche and Dan Bennett. (see a better copy and a few others at <http://www.fyrfox.com/gallery/wsgsc>)



Photo by Fred Turek 10/04

### **Jan. 26<sup>th</sup> Agenda Item- West St. Townhouse Development**

Our mission, included in every newsletter since our founding as a coalition, is very straightforward. It defines our efforts to protect greenspace on West St. The four properties on the west side of West St. (Garden Plots, Sportsman's Park, Von-Oven Scout Camp, and the Soccer Fields/Forest on Oswego) are public property and we want the land use to remain open space. Our mission has been limited to these properties because they are the contiguous public properties owned by Naperville. It is true however, that the corridor of greenspace on the west side of West St. stretches nearly uninterrupted to the junction of West St. and Naperville-Plainfield Road. This situation is likely to change somewhat in the fairly near future as the former Clark farmhouse, most recently owned by the Sopers, has been sold to a developer for \$5.4 million. The 5.56 acres is surrounded on the north and south by Park District land, which will remain undeveloped. The way in which the development is allowed to occur is partly based on what is considered "reasonable profit" and thus hard to agree upon. We will discuss whether or not we should involve involving the WSGSPC at our meeting. Be sure to attend if you have an opinion on this.

The history of this property formerly owned by the Clark Family is of interest. The original farm includes essentially the area now called Hobson West. Metropolitan Structures was the first purchaser of the farm site in the 1970's, and plans were soon drawn for multiple high rise condominium buildings just south of Green Acres. Due to citizen outcry, (thanks to the Green Acres Homeowners Association and other concerned citizens) these structures were never built. The Naperville Area Homeowners Confederation grew out of this effort. After the projects defeat the land was purchased by Mid-American Properties, which began selling to individual owners with the attached single family zoning of R1-A. In 1977 the Clark homestead itself was incorporated into the City of Naperville, also zoned as single family. It remains zoned this way today, but earlier in 2004 a developer requested that zoning be changed. In the summer a proposal for a 27-unit town home development reached the Plan Commission. Because of the small size of the land, this proposal would create a density of at least 5.9 units per acre, higher than the adjacent density of the Fields (5.1 per acre) and not even close to Green Acres density that

stands at less than 1 per acre. The density should logically be comparable to Hobson West.

On November 3<sup>rd</sup> a public hearing was held at City Hall before the plan commission. A resolution had been adopted by the Green Acres Homeowners Association on Oct. 26<sup>th</sup>, and it was read into the public record by George Bennett. The resolution urged the lowest density possible with maintenance of single family zoning a priority. Active residents in Hobson West (including WSGSPC Board members Warren Gill and Jim Cavanaugh) spoke against the proposal. Hundreds of signatures against the proposal had been gathered, and of those who spoke only 1 of 20 advocated the proposal. The Commission did not vote that night, but on December 8<sup>th</sup> they unanimously voted to reject the developer's high-density plan.

Although the decision Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> is certainly good news for those who would like to see single family development of the property, Crestview still has many options which can be used to re-introduce a town home development. The most likely situation will be a revised attempt before the Plan Commission, but the City Council is the final arbiter of the situation, and although unlikely, the developer may go straight to the Council.

Members of the West St. Preservation Coalition who are especially interested in this development should contact the Coalition so as to receive information as soon as it is available. Of course, if the Board decides to directly involve our group; more information will follow in future newsletters.

#### **Coalition Phone Number changes to 630-637-9236**

For many years Christine Wilkinson has maintained our coalition's phone line. Christine continues to do this, but the new phone number is 630-637-9236. You may also contact George Bennett at 630-357-0289 or by e-mail at [bennettgeorge@hotmail.com](mailto:bennettgeorge@hotmail.com). Another option is to get in touch with any board member using the method easiest for you.

#### **Jim Cavanaugh, Founding Board Member, Steps Down**

It's hard to believe but the West St. Greenspace Preservation Coalition is entering its 6<sup>th</sup> year of existence, and one of our eleven key founding members is Jim Cavanaugh. After these years of service Jim has stepped down as an active board member. Jim, who with his family lives in Hobson West, continues to lend his support to our mission as a member of the organization.

Prior to our founding Jim attended the array of meetings held by the park district in 1999 which resulted in the attempt to develop the Garden Plots. When the Park District asked the City Council for permission to do this he articulated the many reasons why the proposal was misguided, helping bring about its 5-4 defeat. Noting that the passive nature of the property use on West St. would likely be challenged again, he became one of our founding members.

As a board member, one of Jim Cavanaugh's most ambitious contributions was He then became authoring

our own proposed Land Use Ordinance, which seeks to codify our belief that all future uses of this land remain "passive" and "traditional". This Land Use Ordinance, conceived of in the absence of any imminent threat, was introduced to the City Council's Agenda by Douglas Krause in February of 2002. Our effort in Council Chambers was accelerated by a Park District Plan, never officially introduced but fully drawn and conceived, that would have generated large scale high impact development of the Garden Plots and Sportsman's Woods. On March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2002, the City Council soundly rebuked the plan and its numerous buildings, roadway adjacent to Green Acres and Von Oven, and changes to the hydrology of the area. Discussion of Jim Cavanaugh's Land Use Ordinance took place, but a vote on its adoption was tabled and ultimately never took place. Talks between the Council and the Park District were also planned, but never took place, at least publicly. The situation resulted in two front-page articles in the "Daily Herald", and other press coverage. At some point in the future it may be possible to re-introduce this ordinance.

The current Board of Directors wishes to thank Jim Cavanaugh sincerely for what he has given to this volunteer organization. Jim we hope you won't be far away when we need help.

#### **Good News from Garden Plot Affairs Committee**

The popular 1940's era radio comedian Fred Allen once said, "A committee is a group of the unprepared, appointed by the unwilling, to do the unnecessary". While this certainly is not always true, I couldn't help but feel that it was in the case of the Garden Plot Affairs Committee. As I indicated in the October newsletter, several Park District Committees have yielded surprising results over the years, and this new committee had just been formed to "discuss improvements " to a program that is currently functioning quite well. It was therefore with a good deal of trepidation that I walked into the meeting as Sportsman's Community Clubhouse on Oct. 27<sup>th</sup>.

My concerns begin to ease nearly from the beginning, as board member Warren Gill and coalition members Carl and Clare Kron combined with me to comprise more than a third of those attending. Discussion than turned to the Garden Plot survey, which the district had placed on their website (many thanks to any of you who filled this out). The Park District chose to share the results unedited, and many of the comments reflected some of the frustrations than gardeners have every year pertaining mainly to theft, non-weeded plots, dumping, and difficulty watering. NONE of the comments in anyway suggested that the program was inappropriate as a way of using the land.

As the evening progressed the forum became an opportunity for gardeners to tell Park District Staff and a member of the Park Board what they honestly thought could be done to make gardening at the plots more enjoyable. New Park District Police Chief Mike Ripsky was there to address the issue of theft, not only from individual plots, but from our collection booth as well.

Ideally all of the produce donated would go to either Loaves and Fishes Pantry or the Senior Citizens Apartments on Martin Ave. However, food is sometimes taken by those not authorized to collect it. I pointed out that although no one should do this, it is impossible to know if someone doing this really is in urgent need, and furthermore it is better to take the donated food rather than stealing it from individual plots. Chief Ripsky gave us all his cell phone number, and asked us to call whenever we saw theft or illegal dumping.

Some of the changes that the district will make to the garden plots for 2005 are both welcome and can only improve the program. The most noticeable change will be the erection of a fence along West St., which the City has asked for in the interest of directing youngsters to the new pedestrian signal found between the plots and Knoch Park. If the type of fence used is wooden and similar to that used between the plots and the wetlands, it should not only improve public safety, but be visually acceptable as well. Furthermore one of the biggest chores of gardening at the plots is watering, since the district correctly prohibits the use of hoses (they would trample other plots and not allow for sharing of the available water). The district has listened to these comments and committed to boosting the number of water spigots to make watering less taxing. Making this a success will require higher water pressure, especially in the north plots where the situation is more acute. Therefore it is expected that in early spring digging will commence in the plots designed to replace the existing network of old piping.

The only unfortunate aspects to the evening in my view were a lack of commitment to an area designated for organic gardening only, as well as the district's capitulation on renting roughly 20 plots said to be too wet, too dry, or too rocky to be used successfully. This is in addition to 12 plots lost in 2001 when the fireworks staging area was moved, perhaps at the request of Linden Oaks. In any event there will still be 630 plots available for 2005, and with the planned improvements it looks to be shaping up for another successful harvest in Naperville.

Written

by George Bennett

#### **Park District Elections April 5<sup>th</sup> - board considering 4-year terms**

Two incumbent members of the Park Board are not seeking re-election this year. Mary Lou Wehrli and Scott McKibbin will end their six years of service this spring. Each is leaving for different reasons, unfortunately with health concerns affecting McKibbin. Scott has been a tremendous friend of our coalition, and has consistently voted for our side on issues affecting our coalition. In 1999 he voted not to locate a skating facility on the garden plots whereas Mary Lou Wehrli was a primary advocate of this action. To Mary Lou's credit, she may realize that few outside of our coalition or others directly affected by that decision remember how individual commissioners voted in July 1999. Although her

motives are likely complex, she is gathering support once again for a proposal she has made in the past and on which I personally have spoken.

Her proposal is a very good one, as shortening commissioner terms from 6 to 4 years will not only increase interest among residents in serving, but also make commissioners more accountable for votes they may have cast. The argument is especially compelling this election as the district attempts to put the situation that developed with former Executive Director Ken Brissa in the past. It may be argued that a more vigilant board of directors, serving shorter terms, may have been able to prevent the still pending lawsuit over the awarding of contracts as well as the use of taxpayer funds for personal entertainment.

Commissioners will discuss and vote on shortening their terms Feb 10<sup>th</sup>. A referendum is unnecessary to do this, and the change would not go into effect until 2007 to avoid any challenges by those currently seeking office. I urge our members to support this change, although I must point out that this is NOT an official position of the West St. Greenspace Preservation Coalition.

The next issue of our newsletter will offer information concerning candidates for local office, as that information becomes available, based on how the information affects our mission. In both 2001 as well as 2003 we had members of our coalition running for Park District office, but as that is not the case this year our endorsements are currently restrained. As well, four City Councilman will be elected.

#### **Homeowners Confederation Trade Show Jan 29<sup>th</sup>**

The Naperville Area Homeowners Confederation will hold its 5<sup>th</sup> annual trade show and mini-conference from 8AM-2PM Sat. January 29<sup>th</sup>. The location is the Holiday Inn Select at Naperville-Wheaton and Diehl Roads. The event costs \$3, but it is free to any elected representative of a member Homeowners Association. More than 50 exhibitors are expected including the Naperville Park District which will have a golf pro on hand to analyze golf swings. Coffee and light refreshments will be served, and lectures on various home ownership topics are scheduled throughout the day. For additional information you may contact Confederation President Chuck Schlabach at [chuckschla@aol.com](mailto:chuckschla@aol.com)

#### **Conservation Foundation luncheon, Feb.8<sup>th</sup>**

Water resources and sustainable growth will be the topics of the Naperville based Conservation Foundation's winter membership luncheon. The West St. Greenspace Preservation Coalition has been a member of the Conservation Foundation in the past, as board members believe the Conservation Foundation may one day lend us assistance should development threaten the West St. properties owned by the City of Naperville. (It should be noted, after recent events at the Park District,

that we have never attended this or any luncheon using Coalition funds.)

The luncheon will take place at the Fisherman's Inn on Rt. 47 in Elburn. Landowners who have recently donated their land or placed a conservation easement on their land for permanent protection will be recognized. The cost is \$30 for Conservation Foundation Members (\$45 for non-members). Information is available by calling (630) 428-4500, Ext.10.

American Indian Center to Open in February or March

A late February or early March opening is expected for the American Indian Center of Chicago's new cultural museum in Schuamburg. The building at 190 S. Roselle Rd., will be leased from the Village for \$1 a year. Among the initial exhibits scheduled for the museum are "Fifty Years of Powwow", a photo display of the annual celebrations the center has had in Chicago since 1953. Another exhibit, "Dissipating Indians" will examine changing terminology used in relation to American Indians. An opening reception with dancing and instrumental music is expected.

Credit- Eric Peterson, "Daily Herald"

### **Coalition Website**

Our website, found at [www.greenspace.koolhost.com](http://www.greenspace.koolhost.com), is currently unavailable. The situation will be remedied in the future, and the information given to members. In the meantime, a temporary partial mini-site is available at <http://www.fyrfox.com/wsgsc.html>.

### **Greenspace Coalition Information**

**Mission Statement** *The West Street Green Space Preservation Coalition resolves to defend the existing green space west of and adjoining West Street against incompatible development and encourage and promote programs and amenities that foster conservation, honor historical tradition, and preserve the area for passive use.*

**More on Our Mission** Our focus is to not lose any greenspace the 4 properties on west side of West Street. (Garden Plots, Sportsman's Park, Von-Oven Scout Camp, Soccer Fields/Forest on Oswego.) Support current uses that keep it green, and advocate no more construction, lights, pavement or new high intensity uses. No reduction in trees, and additional uses should utilize the green or natural values of the properties.

### **Contact Information**

See info in letterhead

Our web site is: [www.greenspace.koolhost.com](http://www.greenspace.koolhost.com)

Temporary partial site at [www.fyrfox.com/wsgsc.html](http://www.fyrfox.com/wsgsc.html)

### **Board of Directors**

Dan Bennett	George Bennett 357-0289
Elaine Fisher	Fred Turek
Nan Kroll	Chris Wilkinson
Wendy Mouche	Warren Gill

**President:** George Bennett

**Vice President:** Fred Turek

**Treasurer:** Wendy Mouche

**Secretary:** Dan Bennett

**Newsletter Content:** George Bennett. Also Fred Turek, Wendy Mouche & Others

**Newsletter Editor:** Fred Turek

**Public Relations:** Dan Bennett

**Special Consultant:** Teresa Ryan

**Webmaster:** Elaine Fisher

### **Membership**

Membership is open to all individuals, families and organizations who would like to support our mission (see mission statement). Dues are \$10 or your choice of a different amount (lower or higher) A membership application is available to facilitate joining. *The WSGSC is always careful to note that its viewpoints on individual topics do not necessarily reflect those of individual members and member organizations.*