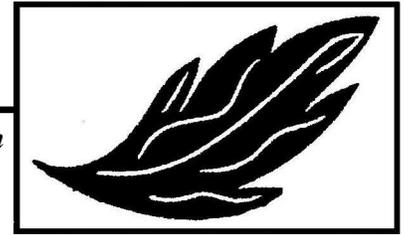


# *West Street Greenspace Preservation Coalition*

*P.O. Box 84, Naperville, Il 60566-0084 Phone: 630-357-0289 WSGC@FyrFox.com*



## **Newsletter November 7, 2006**



**Dan Bennett 1946-2006**

It is with great sadness that we must share news of the passing of Dan Bennett. Many of you may already be aware that Dan lost his battle against a malignant brain tumor in July. As late as last March Dan exhibited no signs of illness. He died at his home with his wife Marcia, son Teddy, and daughter Audrey at his side.

A touching memorial service was held Aug. 20 at Naperville's First Congregational United Church of Christ. Dan's family was there as well as numerous friends from the church, Boy Scout Troup #8, the East Central Homeowners Association, and the West St. Greenspace Preservation Coalition. After the religious service, several people spoke of the many ways in which Dan had touched their lives through his professional work as a remodeling contractor, devotion to his church, concern for the Naperville community, friend and father.

Coalition board member Warren Gill reminded those assembled of Dan's love of gardening, mentioning that every time they drive down West St. and see the Garden Plots they should think of Dan and his many efforts to protect them from development. During the service Teddy played the church's 100-year-old Austin Opus pipe organ. Dan highly encouraged Teddy's artistic abilities and was very proud of his son's musicianship.

Dan was instrumental to the early success and organization of our Coalition. Acting as Recording Secretary and drawing upon his abilities as former professional writer, it was Dan's concise press releases that helped to establish the credibility of the Coalition. As a founding Board Member, he understood the importance of bringing together a large cross-section of people from the various user groups along West Street. This Coalition is an outgrowth of his vision. He used to say that "politics make strange bedfellows", an illusion to how he as a gardener found himself on the same side of the garden plot debate as members of the Sportsman's Club. Different interests with the same goals.

Dan was devoted to our Earth Day and Fall Fling Adopt-a-Highway beautification efforts from the beginning, always arriving with son Teddy. Dan also was the architect of both of our "Plant a Row for the Hungry" collection booths. The first booth was constructed in July of 2000. In the fall of that year Dan told "Naperville Sun" reporter Kathy Millen, "I am happy that we were able to build a conduit for the transmission of surplus produce for those who can use it. It's a shame for things to go to waste. Sometimes when you get a bumper crop you can't use it on your own. It was a good way to handle the surplus". The new booth, built last year, handles the surplus even better.

Those of us who knew Dan will sorely miss him, not just for his commitment to the mission of the West St. Greenspace Preservation Coalition, but as a genuinely kind man who gave of himself for the good of others. To contact Dan's family please send your thoughts to WSGSP Coalition, The Bennett Family, PO Box 84, Naperville 60566. The Board would like to extend most sincere sympathy to Marcia, Teddy, Audrey, and the entire Bennett family.

### **Fall Fling- Saturday November 11, Naperville Community Garden Plots (9AM-11AM)**

Please join us at our Collection booth our 6th annual

"Fall Fling". Feel free to come by the garden plots at any point during the 9-11AM time frame. This is Veterans Day, so it is understandable that you may be out early to pay tribute to those who have served our country. Why not stop by the Garden plots on your way home? Light refreshments (coffee, juice, water and donuts) will be available. We once again will honor our "Adopt a Highway" beautification effort, but no coalition member should feel obligated to do any more than enjoy fall at Naperville's beautiful Community Garden Plots.

The Fall Fling was added in 2001 to our Earth Day event (which was first held at the Municipal Center in 2000). The Fall Fling has become a permanent Coalition event, celebrating the end of a successful harvest season. The conversation is always enjoyable, the garden plots and prairie always beautiful, and the weather always cooperates (with the exception of the last two years).

### **New Coalition Phone Number**

The new temporary phone number for our group is (630) 357-0289. Please discontinue the use of any old numbers. We will announce a new permanent number in January.

### **Coalition Meeting Held**

The Board of Directors conducted the fall Coalition meeting at 7:30 Wednesday October 11<sup>th</sup>. Much time was spent discussing the status of the Hobson West Ponds proposal. As well, the issue of Naperville Central's proposed expansion (and potential impact on West St.) was raised for the first time. Both of these items are very important, and will be covered later in this newsletter. Additionally, funds have been set aside for the purpose of creating a new sign at our collection booth. This sign should be ready to go by April.

It was decided to set the date of the winter board meeting. It will be Wednesday, January 10 2007 at the Naperville Township Building. All are welcome. Drop us a note if you have ideas for us to consider.

### **Hobson West Ponds Update**

By now you will have notice an enclosed letter addressed to Park District Executive Director Barbara Heller. If you have not contacted the Park District regarding the Hobson West Ponds since the October 17<sup>th</sup> council meeting, please sign the letter and send it to the Park District Administration Building. The following are updated details concerning Hobson West Ponds.

As a Coalition, we agreed in early 2005 to oppose re-zoning of the property from R-1A (single family) to R-3A (medium density multi-family). Since our July newsletter the City Council has twice debated the pending re-zoning request of the Clark-Soper property (now known as the Hobson West Ponds). They are doing this despite two recommendations from the Plan Commission **not** in favor of Crestview Builders request. Although when we completed the summer newsletter we thought the case

would be heard July 18<sup>th</sup>, the issue was tabled until September 5<sup>th</sup>. Deliberation on September 5<sup>th</sup> came within one vote of effectively killing the proposed town home development. The October 17<sup>th</sup> meeting also did not end the threat that the current single family zoning will be changed, but did move us by a 5-4 vote towards the creation of a larger, more attractive park including the existing two ponds. Yes, you did not misread this! **Well after midnight of the council meeting that began October 17<sup>th</sup>, the Council directed city staff to enter into discussions with other governmental and non-governmental entities for the purpose of purchasing 1000 Plainfield-Naperville Road-the missing link between the current Hobson West ponds. This is exactly what our Coalition asked for in a letter written to the City in July!** Although we may be headed for a considerable victory, we have not won yet. We have work to do. A committee has now been set up by the city for the purpose of accomplishing the above. The following is a description of what that committee has done so far.

### **The Ponds of Hobson West Open Space Committee**

The above committee includes City, Park District and Conservation Foundation staff. They had their first meeting on October 27.

The purpose of the committee is to:

- Assess the existing conditions of the property
- Investigate funding options, federal, state, and local
- Discuss long term maintenance if purchased

During the first meeting a number of items were discussed:

- The various state programs - one could provide \$750,000 and requires local matching funds. DuPage Forest Preserve District will be contacted.
- Park District - possibility of providing \$250,000
- Started researching what other programs and agencies there are that may have funds.
- Will develop a statement about the uniqueness of the property.
- The Conservation Foundation's Buy and Hold program may allow the Foundation to purchase and hold the land for up to two years provided arrangements are made with another group for purchase at the end of that period.
- Will explore the site used for stormwater needs.
- The possibility of setting up a Special Service Area (increase in property taxes) and/or request homeowner contributions to a special fund.

### **Contact members of the City Council**

Please do sign and send the enclosed letter to the Park District, but remember that the City Council has yet to make a final re-zoning decision. **On Tuesday, December 5<sup>th</sup>** the City Council is scheduled to once again take up the debate on whether to re-zone. Only one changed vote would effectively erase the work of the Ponds of Hobson West Open Space Committee. Re-zoning would drive up the value of the land, making it

purchase and conversion to a park unlikely. We need to keep the pressure on in opposition to the town home development. If funds can not be found to turn the land in question into a park, it should remain zoned single family.

Many of you reading this newsletter have already attended a number of meetings on this issue and/or written to the City Council. The work of the Council has been positive to this point, and gratitude should be expressed when in contact with them.

Now is the time to either stay involved or get involved. Either attending the meeting Dec. 5th or write a short letter to the members of the City Council. These letters should mention your opposition to re-zoning the property at 1000 Plainfield-Naperville Road, as well as your support for the work being done by the Ponds of Hobson West Open Space Committee. It can be noted that because the area is surrounded by Park District land, the OBVIOUS best possible land use would be as a park. Mention that you applaud the action taken by the Council on October 17<sup>th</sup>, and ask that the Ponds of Hobson West Open Space Committee be given a chance to fulfill their mission by voting "no" on the re-zoning request Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>.

Letters should be sent to the following City Councilmen, as well as City Manager Peter Burchard:

- George Pradel
- Kenn Miller
- Grant Wehrli
- Richard Furstenau
- Douglas Krause
- John Rosanova
- Mary Ellingson
- Darlene Senger
- James Boyajian

It is important to send letters to each of the Councilmen, and better to send one form letter than nothing at all please address letters to the above individuals at:

Naperville Municipal Center  
400 South Eagle St.  
Naperville, IL 60566

### **December 5th City Council Meeting**

This meeting should not be taken lightly. This is the night for those of you who have not yet spoken to come out and do so. New speakers are often prioritized and given more time and/or consideration.

The City Council creates a final meeting agenda less than one week prior to most meetings, so the issue may be tabled and moved to a later meeting. Under the leadership of Hobson West Homeowners President George McConaghy, Hobson West has been very effective conveying a unified front in opposition to the proposal. For up to the minute updates on the potential that the City Council will change the December 5<sup>th</sup> scheduled hearing, the official Hobson West

Homeowners website has been very reliable. Before heading to City Hall on the 5<sup>th</sup>, it is recommended that you take a look at [www.hobsonwest.org](http://www.hobsonwest.org). You may also contact our Coalition, or call George Bennett directly 630-319-0289.

### **New Central High School- New threat to West St.?**

In recent months there has been an ever increasing amount of time spent by District 203 trying to convince area residents that the Naperville's first high school- Central- is too old and too crowded to offer students the world class education they deserve. The purpose of this newsletter is not to debate whether a new school is needed, or could be paid for...at least not yet. Any final decision is still months away and there would likely be a referendum needed to raze and re-build the high school. The problem is that the district's facilities committee may not be content to re-build the school on the land it currently occupies. On Thursday October 26<sup>th</sup>, the district brought together a group of city and park district officials and made an appeal for a land swap allowing part of what is now Knoch Park to be used by a rebuilt high school. If this were to occur, tremendous pressure would be applied to all of the West St. properties as users of Knoch Park look for alternative locations for ball fields and playground equipment. According to the October 27<sup>th</sup> "Daily Herald", district officials say that "most modern high schools campuses are about 80 acres, the current site is only about 30.....The project, which would cost about 133.8 million, could save about \$10 million if the school is built (on Knoch Park) so the current sports stadium can remain intact. The school board recently approved a traffic study to investigate closing all or part of Hillside Rd. to make the site safer and give the district more land to work with."

"Park district Executive Director Barbara Heller has said she would be open to swapping some land with the school district as long as the parks don't lose anything in the long run".

One school board member wishes to open up the discussion to the entire 212 acres donated by Caroline Martin Mitchell, including Naperville Cemetery, the Garden Plots, Von Oven Scout Reservation, and Sportsman's Park.

Mayor George Pradel said, "I think 203 needs to take the lead, and then the park district and other people involved in this need to weigh in on how it affects them"...

Public hearings have been scheduled. We must be very careful and follow this situation as it develops. It has seemingly come out of nowhere fast, and there is a possibility of large-scale adverse effects upon the greenspace on West St.

### **Park Board changes length of terms**

I believe the Park Board made the correct decision in July when they opted to change the time new commissioners will serve from 6 to 4 years. It is an issue that has come up before, most notably in 2001 after the failed referendum. I have publicly supported and spoken for this change for some time. The best arguments against this change pertained to the high cost of

campaigns and the large amount of time it takes to "get up to speed" once elected. I have always believed that 4 years is plenty of time for that, and if you do a good job donations will arrive allowing for a less costly re-election. Most importantly, 6 years is simply too long to insure that commissioners are accountable to the voters. One individual who voted to build on the garden plots in 1999 did not come up for re-election until last year! She did not seek re-election.

We will be better served by 4-year terms.

Written by George Bennett

### Contact Information

See info in letterhead

Website: **[www.FyrFox.com/WSGSC](http://www.FyrFox.com/WSGSC)**

(WSGSC must be caps)

### Board of Director

George Bennett	Carl Krone
Teddy Bennett	Elaine Fisher
Warren Gill	
Chris Wilkinson	Fred Turek
Wendy Mouche	

### Past Members of the Board

Dan Bennett	Jim Cavenagh
George Goodwin	Teresa Ryan
Thomas O'Hale	

**President:** George Bennett

**Vice President:** Fred Turek [tureks@ameritech.net](mailto:tureks@ameritech.net)

**Treasurer:** Wendy Mouche

**Secretary:** (open)

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

**Newsletter Editor:** Fred Turek

**Public Relations:** (open)

**Special Consultant:** Teresa Ryan

### 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.*

### Renewals

To renew, please send \$10 (or a different amount of your choice, higher or lower) for a 1 year renewal to the address in the letterhead. If possible, include any updates on you contact information (new email address, phone # etc.) You can also do a multi-year renewal for \$10 per year or greater. If you are uncertain of your current membership status please contact Fred Turek at [tureks@ameritech.net](mailto:tureks@ameritech.net) or contact the Coalition using the information on our letterhead.