

Wicker Park Committee

General Membership Meeting Wicker Park Lutheran Church January 5, 2005

After mixing and mingling over pizza and soda, a raffle was held for a copy of Elaine Cooren's book, and several items of Wicker Park Committee memorabilia were given away to the first takers. The year's first big snow storm was piling up outside the doors, but 30 brave souls made it out to the meeting.

Alvin Joyner, president, presided, with assistance from Alice Prus, board director. The minutes of the last meeting were accepted, whereupon Alvin asked for statements of purpose from the new board members.

Treasurer: Craig Norris said he would have a budget in time for next month's general meeting, after hammering out budgetary issues at the upcoming board meeting, Jan. 20. In the meantime, he reported that there is approximately \$17,000 in the bank and that everything seems to be in order. There has been some discussion of switching banks; he'll have an update at the next meeting.

Membership and Marketing: Adam Napp reported that his main goals for the time-being are 1) to bring the database up to date and 2) to get more people involved in WPC meetings and events.

Communications: Gordon Ziegenhagen intends to impose a greater consistency in WPC communications, to use email as the principle means of keeping people informed, and to publish a newsletter on a regular schedule. He'll also be working on building WPC's image through signage and advertising.

Cultural Affairs: Although no dates have been set yet, Mark Sutherland reported that the junque sale and the Party in the Park will again be on this year's schedule of events. He's open to other ideas and is looking for restaurants to donate food and venues for mix-and-mingles.

Association House update: Craig Norris reported and took questions on the vigorous, undaunted grassroots campaign to preserve the Association House playground. The developer involved with the property has submitted plans for a multi-story condominium complex that he will present to the Preservation and Development sub-committee on January 12. Craig also reported that Alderman Matlak has formally asked the park district for money to buy the playground.

Earlier in the day Craig had distributed copies of related correspondence and photographs to members' homes. One of the lynchpins of the case being made against developing the play-lot is that streetscape contributes vitally to a neighborhood's character and is covered in the ordinance protecting the historic district.

New Business: In anticipation of the Jan 12 meeting, Craig proposed that the membership voice their support for the efforts against commercial development of the Association House playground. He proposed a motion:

“The addition of a multi-story retail condominium complex on the playground adversely affects and/or destroys significant historical and architectural features of the Landmark District and the entire Association House Campus.”

Char Sandstrom pointed out that because the membership was given no advance written notice of a vote, the motion could not officially be passed at this meeting. Feelings on the subject were strong, however, and wanted to be voiced. It was decided by acclamation that an informal vote would be conducted in order to measure the will of those members present. Mr. Gillespie proposed an amendment to Craig’s wording, which was seconded by Elaine Coorens. The complete statement submitted for vote was:

“The WPC strongly supports the position that the Association House play-lot is an essential part of the landmark designation of the Association House property and that it should be preserved as a public play-lot. The addition of a multi-story retail condominium complex on the playground adversely affects and/or destroys significant historical and architectural features of the Landmark District and the entire Association House Campus”

The vote was 19 for, 0 against, and 6 abstaining.

Preservation and Development: Aracely Joyce was not in attendance, so Gordon gave an update on sub-committee business. Elaine Coorens asked about the status of the house just south of Schiller on the west side of Hoyne. Gordon reported that John Joyce is the project manager monitoring that case and that Gordon, too, is constantly watching the ongoing work. Landmarks has been a big ally. At first, they allowed a permit to be issued only for the rebuilding of the original part of the house. A second permit was applied for (and received) for the addition that had very recently broken ground.

Gordon also provided an update on the townhouse/condominium development underway at the corner of Leavitt and Schiller. This property lies just outside the Chicago landmark district so the committee has had little sway. They have asked the developer to remove a curb cut originally planned on the Schiller side and to add a Schiller entry into the condo building. So far the developer has been amenable.

Respectfully submitted, with great appreciation for Char’s long service to the committee,
Laura Hunt, secretary