



Jefferson Park Forward General Meeting

October 20, 2016

Meeting Notes

Location: Fannie's Café, Bakery, and Boutique—5044 W. Montrose Avenue

Time: 7:00 PM

Attendance: 16

1. Welcome

Ryan Richter kicked off the meeting and welcomed the group. A smaller group was expected because of the Cubs and Bears both playing tonight.

2. Financial Update

a. JPF Treasurer Robb Van Hook was out of town, so Ryan gave the update and reported that we currently have about \$1,100 in the bank. We're currently paying down debts the Board has accrued over the past year.

b. Paid membership totals at 68 members, with about 80% regular members, 10% business members (primarily those having in-home offices) and 10% associate members. Ryan mentioned that JPF should approach those businesses where we've held our events and general meetings to secure memberships. The businesses will be able to promote themselves on our Facebook page, as well as receive space on our website for additional promotion and publicity. Ryan also mentioned leveraging our mailing list, which has around 300 names (including all of our members) as a source for new memberships.

3. JPF Committee Updates

a. Community Development

- i. Susie Ernst, Chair of the Community Development Committee, provided the update. Several JPF members volunteered at Open House Chicago last weekend. A couple of the venues had some coordination difficulties so Rev. Jacki Belile at Eden United Church of Christ opened her church for our neighborhood guests to tour if they wished. Eden hosted about 25 OHC visitors who remarked about the beautiful stained glass windows and history of the church. JPF wants to recognize Rev. Jacki and Eden United Church of Christ with a huge "Thank You" for your hospitality. Approximately 500 guests visited the sites in Jefferson Park (Copernicus, Masonic Temple, OLV, and Eden). It was a great opportunity to showcase our neighborhood.

- ii. The CD Committee is also discussing holding some salon-type discussion activities where particular books and/or articles on urbanization might be reviewed. There will be more to come on that later. Next meeting would normally be on November 8, but an alternate date is being arranged due to this date being Election Day.

b. Fundraising & Services

Sam Wertime, Chair of the Fundraising & Services Committee was unable to make the meeting, so Ryan Richter provided an update. Gayle Nelson, Executive Director of Hands to Help Ministries spoke at our September meeting about activities under way in Portage Park to help the homeless. We are looking at ways we can work with Hands to Help in Jefferson Park. Conversations are ongoing. If anyone has a local charity that they think JPF could partner with, please email Sam Wertime at fundraising@jeffersonparkforward.org.

c. Livability & Attractiveness

- i. JPF Board Director Doug Grom provided an update for the Livability & Attractiveness Committee. The Committee is planning for holiday decorations around the transit center, including holiday lights and other decorations. If anyone has a pick-up truck or vehicle that could carry sheets of plywood, that would be a help.
- ii. The committee released a survey posted on our Facebook Page for people to vote for their favorite business with the nicest landscape which beautifies Jefferson Park. The Committee will post on the JPF website to share.
- iii. The committee is finalizing a list of places people can go to recycle items.
- iv. The committee has also contacted Metra to ask UPRR to clean up the train platform.
- v. Progress on the lending library is underway. JPF has received a newspaper box, which is currently being sanded and primed by Director Dennis Davis. Once that is done, it will be turned over to the 8th Grade teacher at Beaubien School whose class will decorate it and place it in Roberts Square Park to house a free lending library.

d. Social

- i. Jenny Conlon provided an update for the Social Committee. There was a small turn-out for the bowling party on October 15. Habetler Bowl was wonderful to work with and we thank them for that. We're thinking if another bowling event is held, it should be in the winter, when weather is likely to keep people to indoor activities.

- ii. The committee is considering perhaps a pub crawl or some other kind of a social event before the Holidays. JPF Vice-President and Social Committee Chair Rolando Rodriguez has reached out to other 45th Ward neighborhood associations to coordinate a Neighbors Night Out event. The event is scheduled for Monday, November 7, 7PM at Old Irving Brewing Company.

4. New Business and Announcements

- a. Merrill Miller, director of the Jefferson Park Sunday Market, reminded everyone about the Winter Sunday Market which will be held at the Copernicus Center Annex, 5214 W. Lawrence Ave. from 10am – 2pm on 4 Sundays this winter: December 18, January 29, April 2, and May 7. This coming Sunday 10/23 is the final Sunday Market of this summer season. www.JeffersonParkSundayMarket.com
- b. Matt Michel announced that there will be a fundraiser for the family of Rodrigo Garcia, who passed away on 10/8, leaving a wife and 4 small children. Rod was an employee of Fischman’s Liquors and was deeply liked by all who knew him. The fundraiser will be held at Mo Dailey’s Irish Pub, 6070 N Northwest Highway, at 12—4pm on Sunday November 6. Matt posted a notice on the JPF Facebook Page.

5. Guest Speaker

Our guest speaker this evening was Alderman John Arena of the 45th Ward. The Alderman provided an update for some of the developments that are being planned for downtown Jefferson Park.

- a. Lipps & Ainslie—A 13-floor building behind Veteran’s Square and adjacent to the Jefferson Park Transit Center is well into the planning stages. The City is negotiating some changes to the design and also the number of residential and parking units it will contain. The developer is proposing about 250 parking spaces on the first 5 floors of the tower with 108 residential units on floors 7 and above. Retail space will be on the ground level. This will add some residential parking along with overflow parking for Copernicus and other events which take place downtown. Since there probably won’t be that big of a demand for residential parking, the Alderman is asking that one of the parking levels be exchanged for another residential level. He described the new design of the building as “an iconic design that overwhelms the mediocrity of Veteran’s Square” with a roof-top deck on the tiered building to accentuate the architectural flow into the transit center and Copernicus. Because the project has planned development zoning, the City has much more control over the design. It includes a makeover for Veteran’s Square and the public way on Lipps that leads to the transit center. All of

Veteran's Square and the former Cowley site on Lipps are included in the planned development zone.

- b. Lawrence and Laramie—39 units with indoor parking for residents. Building is 4 floors with ground floor retail. Some modifications have been made to this building design to provide a nice transition to the residential area just south of it. A pedestrian crossing/refuge island will be installed at Laramie with a commissioned permanent piece of artwork that the developer is providing on the triangular strip across Laramie that will include approximately 18 surface parking spaces for the retail tenants. The City is ready to move on this site, but the developer wants to include the Lipps/Ainslie site together with Lawrence and Laramie for financing purposes. Assuming the developer and the City can reach final agreement on architectural design, it's possible for the total package for the 2 sites to go to the Planning Commission in December with ground breaking in the Spring. Completion would follow 18 months later.
 - c. Long & Argyle—The height and square footage of this building was significantly adjusted from the initial proposals by the developer. It's gone through Plan Commission and it's zoning has been approved. Ground breaking is anticipated in the Spring.
 - d. Former Edward Fox Building—Plans for redevelopment are underway for it to have 3 floors with retail on the ground level and 6 apartments above. This is the same owner as the one who redeveloped the building across the alley from Popeye's. This development is in the permit stage.
 - e. Vacancy Relief Hearings—Hearings have been held concerning alleged abuse of the vacancy relief exemptions that property owners can receive on vacant property. In order to receive the exemption from property tax, the property owner must be actively trying to rent the property. It appears that some are signing the affidavit saying they are actively seeking renters, yet stories are told about potential tenants calling on properties and not receiving a returned phone call from the property owner/rental agent. There already exist remedies that the Cook County Assessor can apply if complaints are received. An investigation can be undertaken, and the tax exemptions on the particular property can be removed. It sounds optimistic that these hearings will result in those property owners being held accountable if they are not actively trying to rent the vacant property.
- 6. Adjourn—GO CUBBIES!**
- 7. Next Meeting: Thursday, November 17, 7 pm. Location TBD.**