

Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference

Saturday, March 10, 2012

Summary Notes

On Saturday, March 10, HPKCC hosted the second forum with representatives of various local community organizations and groups to encourage networking, discuss issues, and exchange ideas, as a follow-up to the meeting of October 15, 2011.

See the last page for a list of attendees. All but three had attended the October meeting.

There were five topical groups: Accessibility, Affordable Housing, Parks, Schools, and Transportation.

After introductions, there was a short breakout session for groups to review what has happened since October and prepare to report. Then each group reported, and the whole group discussed future issues and collaborations.

Accessibility

- The group had decided to set up a website, and oriented it to getting around in winter. This is at www.hydeparkchicago.blogspot.com
- Plan to expand this website, for example by adding a list of buildings with accessible elevators ("accessible" means that a wheelchair can fit in the elevator)
- They would like to collaborate with Envision Unlimited, formerly CARC, Chicago Area Retarded Citizens. This group wishes to build a residence modeled on the D.A.R.E. residence in or near Hyde Park. The residents would be mentally handicapped adults who work and who need a bit of help and supervision, but do not need assisted living. They are looking for land on which to build, and will meet with Ald. Burns this spring.
- Watching the 51st St. and 53rd St. developments. Antheus has committed to 20% affordable housing on-site, and they would like to get the same commitment from the Harper Court developers for Phase 2 of that project. They would also like a commitment from Antheus for community benefits from the project, such as affordable business space.
- For summer, a Sidewalk Survey of accessibility is planned on 55th from the lakefront to Cottage Grove, and on Lake Park Ave., the streets most often used by those in wheelchairs. There are numerous curb cut problems, where the materials used in the curb cuts have degraded. In addition, the timing of crossing lights is too short. A system in which there is a "pedestrian period" and a "car period" at crossings was described.
- It was suggested that the Sidewalk Survey be publicized to parents' groups in local public schools, who might be interested in helping out, as well as to the Parent Support Network and the parents group for U of C grad students. Sara Bigger will work with George Rumsey on this recruitment.

- They are watching with concern the plans to set up bike lanes on the South Side. The change of orientation in these lanes at 55th and Dorchester is potentially very dangerous, and the bike lanes do not extend under the viaduct at 55th and Lake Park.
- Continual close monitoring of the impact of state funding on accessibility issues, such as the provision of home helps for D.A.R.E. residents, is essential.

Affordable Housing

- The group learned from Wendy Williams about the SECC's Building Code Enforcement program, which is largely concerned with conditions in rental housing.
- Qumbya Housing Co-op is trying to get the Haymarket up to code, and there is a zoning issue.
- The CECD is proceeding with its market analysis of affordable housing, presently seeking funding from other groups.
- Antheus has committed to make 20% of the rental housing at 51st St. affordable/accessible. The group wants a commitment that this will be onsite rather than contributed to a set-aside.
- The CECD has been talking with the [Low Income Trust Fund](#) about whether set-aside money is being collected and where it is going.

Parks

- In October the group discussed how to reach out to other groups. Since then, there is a new website for Jackson Park, www.jacksonparkadvisorycouncil.org
- Persuade the Herald to carry information about more parks meetings, and have a feature "what's happening in the parks."
- HPKCC will publicize all the neighborhood Earth Day events we can learn about. These can also be [sent](#) to Ald. Burns for his e-blast.
- For volunteers to work in the parks, reach out to [Chicago Cares](#)
- Safety issues: Jackson Park and Elm Park are getting better cleaning. However, there are more problems in Jackson Park, and it is important to keep on the issues by calling 911 and Park Security at 312-474-2193.
- There was some discussion of the concept of a dog park in Hyde Park, which is very much wanted by some in the neighborhood. The chair of the Jackson Park Advisory Council would like one east of the tennis courts. Harold Washington is another possibility. Elm Park was suggested and rejected as a venue. Group members who have some experience with dog parks noted the need for people to police the dog park and be responsible for maintenance, as well as issues about controlling dogs, mixing large and small dogs in the same park, providing isolation for anti-social dogs, etc.

- The Nichols Park Advisory Council is responsible for 4th on 53rd and needs volunteers to join the various committees. Contact Stephanie Franklin (773 955-3622) to volunteer.

Schools

- The new subcommittee of the HPKCC Schools Committee was formed, Friends of Hyde Park-Kenwood Public Schools.
- The group has a Google Group which is active.
- This group's school supplies drive was a "moderate success."
- Members are also involved in an advocacy group [Raise Your Hand for Illinois Public Education](#), which will host a forum on the longer school day on March 22 at 7 pm at First Unitarian Church.
- Group would like to advocate for more parents to send kids to local public schools, e.g. through Friends groups.
- Idea for annual all-school Fair at which people could see what is available in the neighborhood. This could be in spring so that parents can plan ahead for fall.
- Local School Council elections are coming up and LSC's need new members! Most schools don't have enough members. The deadline to apply is March 23 and the election is in April. Check the [CPS School Locator online](#). Phone the school and ask who is running. They are supposed to post names and candidate statements at the school.
- Kozminski and Kenwood Academy have new principals.
- Murray seems to be problematic, adding 7th and 8th grades, and having structural conflicts between principal and teachers, centering on curriculum and teacher assignment. Parents are withdrawing children in mid-year.
- We can be supportive of the parents creating their own solutions.

Transit

- The RTA study of the South Lakefront Corridor continues. Recommendations that affect us are about Bus Rapid Transit on 55th and Cottage Grove. Look for public meetings on this subject.
- The Gold Line proposal is still part of the study, although the RTA now says it would cost \$1 billion. There is no transparency in the process. RTA also claims that the ridership switch will be only 10%.
- SOUL will meet with Ald. Burns on March 20.
- State legislation to mandate fare transferability is expected?
- The group favored the idea of a Bike Education Program, which could be publicized through the parents groups at schools, and is seen as a cooperation between Whistlestop/Safety, the Disabilities Task Force, and the Transportation Committee.

- We discussed the possibility of a traffic study of the intersection at 53rd and Kenwood, which is a difficult crossing for pedestrians. The [Active Transportation Alliance](#) does “street calming” studies.
- With the developments on 53rd and 51st and increased congestion from new restaurants, theaters and a large office building, how will we deal with cars, bikes and pedestrians? This is the time for community members to make known their wishes for bike safety, a circulator trolley, parking issues, public transit, etc.; all the elements of an integrated neighborhood transportation system. In particular, the role of the automobile comes up all the time, but does not get addressed. There is a perception that residents and business owners are upset about traffic issues, and we would need to get a co-sponsored plan together now. There is a role here for those interested in not just transportation but also accessibility and safety issues. A meeting will be convened soon with members from these groups, plus the SECC. We will also need someone to represent the bicycling interest in the community. Wendy Williams will check whether the transit study done as part of the Harper Court project is available to us.

Other issues

- The Neighborhood Club indicates that they may not be able to do the Pancake Breakfast this year, and is asking whether people would miss it. It is very time-consuming to organize and very expensive. The Co-op used to contribute the food, but that doesn't happen with Treasure Island. It seems that none of the groups at our meeting are very close to the Neighborhood Club now that their focus has changed so completely to serving young people. Also, they were formerly one of the few sources of affordable meeting space in the neighborhood.
- Some discussion of whether there are groups missing who should be included in future meetings of this group. At this point we should bring in representatives of Civic Engagement at the University, especially if we are talking about a transit project. The current staff have built a much more positive relationship with the community than existed in the past, and the group members felt receptive to their representation at these meetings.

Attendees on March 10, 2012

Susan Alitto, Hyde Park Village

Nancy Baum, HPKCC Schools Committee

Sara Bigger, Friends of HP-K Public Schools

Jane Ciacci, HPKCC

Joy Clendenning, Friends of HP-K Public Schools

George W. Davis, HPKCC, Burnham Park Nature Area

Stephanie Franklin, Nichols Park Advisory Council

Mark Granfors, HPKCC, CECD, HP Transitional Housing, Nichols Park Advisory Council

Camille Hamilton-Doyle, HPKCC Schools Committee, Kenwood LSC, Hyde Park Kiwanis

Allison Hartman, HPKCC, CECD, OWL, Hyde Park Village

Timika Hoffman-Zoller, HPKCC Whistlestop/Safety Committee, On the Safe Side, Inc.
and Elm Park Advisory Council

Anita Hollins, HPKCC

Madiem Kawa, Washington Park Conservancy

Vicky Long, Friends of HP-K Public Schools

David Nekimken, HPKCC, CECD, Qumbya Housing Co-op

George Rumsey, CECD

Brenda Sawyer, HPKCC, Friends of Blackstone Library

Jack Snapper, HPKCC

Linda Thisted, SOUL, CECD

Ismail Turay, HPKCC, Kenwood LSC, Friends of Shoemith

Frances Vandervoort, Jackson Park Advisory Council

Wendy Walker Williams, South East Chicago Commission

Pat Wilcoxon, CECD