

**River North Residents Association**  
Minutes of the March 28, 2006 Quarterly Meeting  
Reza's Restaurant, 435 W. Ontario Street, Chicago, Illinois

RNRA Board President Brian Israel called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM.

Mr. Israel introduced RNRA officers present at the meeting: Frank Krug, Treasurer; Andrew Swedenborg, Vice President; Thom Wills, At-Large; and Renee Reinglass, At-Large. Areil Heneghan, Secretary, was not present.

Mr. Israel thanked Reza's on behalf the Board and community for its continued support of the organization.

Mr. Israel informed the constituency of an agenda change in order to meet a scheduled conflict and introduced Ms. Cynthia Brathurst to speak about the CAPS program on behalf of Barbara Sapstein.

**CAPS: Community Policing Program**

- Two Elements of CAPS
  - 1) District Advisory Council
    - Representing all Chicago Police Districts
  - 2) Beat Meetings
    - Representing specific Police beats (specifically Beat 18)
- Goal is to promote quality of life issues through Total Policing in River North, Gold Coast, Lincoln Park areas
- Facilitate relationship with Police and Residents
- Identify Problems and Solutions
  - 1) Auto Theft
  - 2) Retail Theft
  - 3) Quality of Life Issues (noise, dog policy, etc.)

Ms. Brathurst followed her introduction of CAPS with an overview of "Officer Appreciation Day."

- Officer Appreciation Day is forthcoming and is a day to say "thanks for the effort" to all the officers who police our neighborhood and to celebrate a good relationship with the residents.
- 24 hour shift of providing police officers with meals, gifts, etc.
- Paid for by donations
- Opportunity to meeting officers in a nice setting and really see their appreciation
- Presented an opportunity to donate money and/or time and provided a sign-up sheet and information letter for those interested.

Mr. Israel asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the RNRA meeting on February 8, 2006. Mr. Swedenborg so moved, seconded by Mr. Krug. Motion passed unanimously.

Roll call of buildings was taken by Mr. Swedenborg, acting as secretary in Ms. Heneghan's absence. The following buildings were represented:

520 W. Huron	500 W. Superior
510 W. Erie	630 N. Franklin
411 W. Ontario	120 W. Grand
550 N. Kingsbury	758 N. Larrabee
720 N. Larrabee	City Club Townhomes
653 N. Kingsbury	325 W. Huron
400 W. Ontario	River Village
900 N. Kingsbury	400 N. LaSalle
360 W. Illinois	

Mr. Israel introduced 653 N. Kingsbury as the newest member building to the RNRA and thank their association for its participation in the organization. Renee Reinglass, representing 653 N. Kingsbury, made some comments about the building on behalf of its association.

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Brian Israel presented the results from the community survey regarding 469 W. Huron development, noting that 195 total responses were received, with 64% coming from six buildings directly adjacent to the proposed development RNRA extremely pleased with the success of the survey and its usefulness as a polling mechanism amongst the River North community. A formal letter with the complete survey results was drafted and sent to Ald. Natuarus and involved parties for their review. The letter is also available at the RNRA website.

Bennet Haller from the City of Chicago Department of Planning & Development was introduced to give an update on the Cabrini-Green transition and redevelopment.

- Brief overview of what the River North neighborhood consisted of approximately eight years ago when the Cabrini Green rehabilitation began and what it is today
- Mr. Haller thanked the Alderman specifically on his efforts in the redevelopment
- The redevelopment is operated under a Consent Decree (“Decree”) from a federal judge
- Overall redevelopment process is managed by a team representing various affected parties including: The Habitat Company, CHA, Department of Planning and Development, and Cabrini Council
- Decree requires 700 public housing units in Cabrini North Extension as part of the redevelopment
  - Current Components
    - Northtown Village
    - Oldtown Village (20% are CHA units)
    - Renaissance Apartments (18 CHA units)
    - 53 flat project on Mohawk
    - Parkside of Oldtown (to be built Summer 2006)
      - 740 Units total, 100 in initial phase
      - 50 Market units, 30 CHA, 20 Affordable
    - 200 public housing units still to be identified and built
    - Old high school is next “logical” target for redevelopment; Mr. Haller will keep the RNRA apprised as information becomes available
    - Still working on plans for Cabrini South and William Green Homes
    - Public infrastructure projects as part of the overall redevelopment has spurred several private developments
      - Montgomery Ward headquarters and developments north of Chicago Avenue must have some CHA housing units
      - Habitat, CHA and Cabrini Council decision on the William Green home is expected in 1 – 2 months
      - YMCA on Halsted also interested in redevelopment options including sale and relocation
    - Building Demolition Schedule
      - Three William Green buildings already demolished
      - No set schedule for Cabrini South, but the eastern most building on Chicago Avenue is expected to be first, followed by the buildings on Larrabee, directly east of the police station
    - Q & A Session
      - Q: What is the difference between Affordable and Market rental?
      - A: Affordable is based on the 5 county median income (AMI), approximately \$60,000); Market is defined as whatever rental rate the market will bear
  
      - Q: What is the rent rate for an affordable unit?
      - A: 60% of the reported AMI
  
      - Q: Who determines which building is scheduled for demolition?
      - A: CHA and Cabrini Advisory Council negotiate; Steam tunnel ramifications are also considered.
  
      - Q: How many Cabrini units are currently occupied?
      - A: 700

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- Q: What will be the total unit mix be at completion?
- A: Guess by Mr. Haller of CHA 25%, 60 Market, 15% Affordable
  
- Q: Any inter-unit moves within Cabrini?
- A: No, only in the case of consolidation of a to be demolished building
  
- Q: How do the residents get relocated:
- A: They receive a Section 8 voucher for market rate housing; relocated to other CHA properties, or relocated within Cabrini (only in the case of consolidation)
  
- Q: How to stay abreast of current Cabrini progress, etc?
- A: CHA Website; Parkside Website
  
- Q: When will Parkside break ground?
- A: This year at some point

Mr. Israel thanked Mr. Haller for his time and presentation.

Alderman Naturaus was introduced to give a community update.

- Erie Park
  - Flowers and grass will be planted once the weather gets warmer
  - Sidewalk on southside of park will be provided
  - Tentative opening date is July 1, however, there may be some additional flowers, benches, etc., still needed post-opening
  - Looking into "Movies in the Park" for summer
  - Sophisticated playground being designed for the existing dog park
- Traffic Light
  - Not too many objections
  - The area around the light will be restriped
  - Railroad tracks at 530 Erie will be removed
- Farmers Market
  - Farmers Market being considered for the summer
  - Must convince farmers that it will be worthwhile financially
  - Probably staged at Erie and Kingsbury
- SBC Site
  - Supports the taller building being proposed because of additional open space and plans for retail on east end of space
- Q & A
  - Q: Is the developer "sweetening" the deal with the onsite park?
  - A: No, they have the right to build lot line to lot line, to 14 stories
  
  - Q: Could there be a dog park in the new Erie Park?
  - A: No, go to Ohio Street park
  
  - Q: Would you rather have a Dogs on leashes park or kids park?
  - A: Kid park
  
  - Q: People are not picking up after their dogs, what can we do?
  - A: Community needs to help; Police starting to write tickets; installing more boxes with bags
  
  - Q: What about construction staging issues, especially at Grand Avenue?
  - A: Alderman will personally get after them.
  
  - Q: Why was a dog park not considered for Erie Park?

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- A: Plans were developed 15 years ago; will look at an alternative site for additional dog park.
- Q: Where can residents see the plans for the park?
- A: Perhaps on the Park District website.

Mr. Israel thanked the Alderman for his time and giving the community an update on what was happening.

Mr. Swedenborg then gave short presentation about neighborhood development projects, new retailers, etc. It was noted that he development update would be given approximately two time per year.

Mr. Israel gave an update on the progress of Erie Park and other neighborhood news:

- Erie Park Update
  - Discussed forthcoming park schedule
  - Sculpture introduced as "Omages"
  - Opening in May, June or July
- Other Neighborhood News
  - New traffic light has been a success
  - Sanitation issue initiative
    - Personnel being hired to help with litter, maintenance, etc., on Saturdays and Sundays
- Proposed Transitway Study
  - Brian gave overview
  - Encourage people to take the survey

Heather Imhoff of the River North Association was then introduced for a brief presentation.

- Overview of the River North Association (RNA)
- Offered the RNA Mission Statement
- Asked to be considered a resource that was looking to be utilized
- Responsible for newsletters, mailers, general promotion of River North businesses
- Referred group to the RNA website for additional information

Michelle Joseph of the Responsible Hospitality Institute was then introduced for a brief presentation (Mr. Israel gave statistics on late night liquor licenses, specifically in River North, prior to Ms. Joseph's presentation).

- Overview of the Responsible Hospitality Institute (RHI)
- Works in various cities modeled after successful campaigns in Seattle and Philadelphia
- Aligned with the Chicago Department of BA(?) and Hospitality Resource Partnership
- Announcing full scope of project this coming Friday
- Offered main objectives of group
  - Hospitality Business Orientation
    - For new and or businesses with officer changes
  - Hospitality Roundtable
  - Early Assistance Project
    - "Intervention Team"
- Trying to model the River North success citywide
- Referred the group to website, [www.RHIweb.org](http://www.RHIweb.org) for more information

Mr. Israel thanked Ms. Joseph's for her time and made the following comments:

- What to do about a problematic business?
  - Call the Alderman's office
  - Email the RNRA with specific concerns
- Gave additional review of the RHI and offered the RNRA's support

Mr. Israel then went over 2006 RNRA initiatives:

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- Erie Park Christening/Opening Party in the works
- Annual block party being moved to the park
- Joint venture of the RNRA and the RNA
- Tentative date of July 23<sup>rd</sup>
- Exploring two specific summer activities:
  - River North Movies in the Park
  - River North Farmers Market
- Ongoing Initiatives:
  - Membership drive to increase RNRA participation
  - Safety, streetscaping and transportation input
  - Website enhancements
- Community Reminders
  - Send building representative to CAP meetings
  - General reminders
  - Encouraged people to volunteer
  - Next quarterly meeting scheduled for June 27<sup>th</sup>

Mr. Israel asked for a motion to adjourn, so moved by Mr. Swedenborg, passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:51 PM.