

River North Residents Association

Minutes of the September 26, 2006 Community Meeting

The quarterly Meeting of the River North Residents Association was called to order at 7:15 p.m. on September 26, 2006 at Reza's Restaurant, at 435 W. Ontario Street, Chicago, Illinois.

Brian Israel, President, opened the meeting. Membership Officer Rene Reinglass Treasurer Frank Krug and Secretary Thom Willis were present, Vice President Andrew Swedenborg was not present.

The Mr. Israel asked that the minutes of the June 27, 2006 annual meeting be approved. Mr. Willis seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously passed.

Mr. Israel reminded attendees that for reference and for those who were unable to attend, a PDF copy of the PowerPoint presentation from this and previous Community Meetings would be available in the Archives section of the RNRA website along with Minutes and Update Messages.

A roll call was taken by Ms. Reinglass.

A review of the July 23 River North Summerfest was given by Mr. Israel. It was a joint venture between RNRA and the River North Association featuring four sponsors, nine local restaurants, live music, children's activities, raffle and "door" prizes along Erie between Kingsbury and the River. The event was attended by approximately 500 and produced substantial revenue for the two presenting organizations.

Mr. Israel reviewed the Officer Appreciation Day event, which provided more than 500 18th district officers with meals, gifts and recognition at the Larrabee Street station on September 21, 2006. RNRA provided promotional, volunteer and financial support to this worthy cause.

An Election overview was given by Ms Esta Keller, President of the League of Women Voters and Ms Kelly Bateman, Manager of Community Services- Chicago Board of Election Commissioners. They described the election calendar, identified polling places and explained the new electronic ballot machines that were set up for demonstration.

A new Parent's Resource Initiative was presented by Mr. Israel on behalf of Katerina Kouzoukas. This group will collect and disseminate information, organize activities and serve as a forum for parents in our area. Plans are underway to produce a survey to identify and prioritize related issues.

A residential and commercial development update was presented to address local projects whose status had changed since the last community meeting. The update included information regarding several projects.

- No news on the project at Kingsbury and Chicago.
- Ronsley may reoccupy the Kingsbury and Huron property as a commercial tenant.
- The 469 West Huron project has broken ground and is on schedule.
- No news on the "Coyote Ugly" project at Erie and Orleans.
- French Restaurant - Montgomery Lobby
- Jewel Foods – Des Plaines & Kinzie
- Whole Foods – 1500 North Kingsbury (80k sf facility to replace Lincoln Park store)
- Trader Joes – Ontario at Deerborn

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- Luxury auto dealer – Chicago & Larrabee

Mr. Israel reviewed the results of the latest Community Issues Survey, which may be viewed online via the RNRA home page.

42nd Ward Alderman Burton Natarus addressed the attendees about the state of the River North neighborhood. Among the issues he raised were the following:

- The main south section of the new Erie Park which opened earlier this year.
- Construction of the children's playground (to be located in the northeast corner of the main section) could begin construction in September of this year.
- A second designated dog area is being considered for the north section of the park between Larrabee and the river.
 - There was a spirited discussion about the pros and cons of current policy prohibiting dogs in the south section of Erie Park. The Alderman stated that the policy was necessary to address concerns about safety, hygiene, liability and maintenance in the public park.
 - In light of the policy that has been imposed, it was suggested there be both "on-leash and off-leash" portions in the new north dog area to safely accommodate a broader range of pet owners. This concept was generally endorsed by the Alderman and most of the attendees. Michelle Wiedman and Brian Israel agreed to work together to flesh out the proposal.
- The hoped-for Farmer's Market will not occur this year due to the difficulty of locating qualified farmers to participate. It is still being considered for next year.
- It was requested that 2 speed bumps be added on Kingsbury to slow down the traffic.

The Chicago Hospitality Resource Partnership (HRP) update was given by Mr. Israel. Progress is being made to improve the relationship between hospitality businesses residents and other merchants in River North. More information is available our website.

Upcoming event: RNA/RNRA Holiday Extravaganza will be held on the evening of Dec 13, 2006 from 6-8:30 PM at Park National Bank, 801 North Clark Street. The event will be sponsored by Park National, Diageo, Mambo Grill, Ala Carte Entertainment and Lodge Management Group.

Brian Israel reminded attendees that the RNRA is their organization and that its mission, scope and agenda are dependent on the input and engagement of local residents. He invited members to get in touch with the Executive Committee to discuss any of their ideas, questions or concerns about the neighborhood and the issues we face. Residents were encouraged to contact Association Leaders via email: info@rivernorthresidents.com and to visit the RNRA online at: www.rivernorthresidents.com

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Thom Willis, RNRA Secretary