

EPIC Block Club
Minutes of a Special Meeting with 48th Ward Alderman
April 26, 2008

President Lynn Pierce called the meeting to order at 10:10 am.

Announcements:

- Ernie Constantino from Alderman Smith's office provided information on neighborhood walks, environmental series and a neighborhood green market
- President Pierce announced that the 14th Annual Neighborhood Garage Sale will be held from 9-4 on Saturday, June 7th. All participants will be encouraged to donate one item to EPIC, the proceeds from the sale of which will be donated to Care For Real.
- President Pierce announced that the EPIC Spring Potluck will be held from 6-8 p.m. on Saturday, June 14th at Bethany Lutheran Church.

Alderman Many Ann Smith's State of the Ward Report:

- Green Initiatives: A Green Cleaning Workshop will be held on Tuesday, May 6th from 6:30 to 8:30 pm.
- Edgewater is one of the most stable neighborhoods in a recent study of the impact of foreclosures in Chicago.
- Interest in both commercial and residential development in Edgewater is high. Plans are underway for a cutting-edge Transportation and Business Center at Berwyn and Broadway that is being developed by US Equities. The CTA station will be inside, along with shuttle service to Metra stations and van pooling services. A new Jewel will be built at the Center.
- Had a recent meeting with new Chicago Police Department Superintendent Jody Weiss and discussed ongoing safety concerns along Thorndale.
- Swift School has received national recognition for a writing program. Some of the concrete on the property will be ripped up and replaced with durable turf to enhance playground.
- Developers have approached the office regarding development of 6100 N. Broadway. Plans have yet to be submitted and once available will be referred to EPIC.
- Fire Station Updates:
 - o Parking will be restored on Ridge during non-peak hours
 - o Requested old station to be held for community use, but not to be a community-owned building
 - o Seeking to buy adjacent property and demolish current building
 - o Develop open air space, seating and coffee shop
 - o Use for community programming
- There are plans in the works to establish Ridge Avenue as an Arts Corridor with the updating of the auditorium at Senn, the art center at the former dairy, the garage at Glenwood and Ridge to be converted to a gallery and other arts related development on the block.

- Senn High School Updates:
 - o Upcoming major rehab of school auditorium
 - o Disturbed by Seen academic shortcomings, especially in comparison to other neighborhood schools
 - o Felt the need to set expectations for Senn
 - o Most students are not from the neighborhood
 - o School can hold 3,000 students, but current enrollment is only about 1,200
 - o Some Senn teachers approached the Alderman and Board of Education with a new vision for Senn, in part, based on Northside Prep
 - o New curriculum would include a 4-part high school at Senn: one would be Rickover – science and technology; one would be theater and performing arts program; one would be language and diplomacy (general curriculum) and one would be college preparatory program
 - o Students would be allowed to take classes from any combination of the schools
 - o Cost to run four-school model would be about the same as current model
 - o Working with Representative Osterman to bring groups together to develop final plan
 - o New plan would not displace any students currently enrolled
 - o Goal would be to open new school in September 2009
- Question & Answer Session on Senn High School:
 - o Q: Would this be a magnet school or require testing for admission?
 - A: Will not be a magnet school, but may require testing for admission to college prep school
 - o Q: Would this be a selective enrollment school?
 - A: College Prep may be.
 - o Q: The Senn Strategic Plan Committee presented at EPIC’s Annual Meeting and at that time, it didn’t seem that you were working with them. Is that true?
 - Working with Representative Osterman to develop a shared vision
 - o Q: Will there be separate administrations at each school?
 - There will be a dean for each school with one campus administrator.
 - o Q: Could the old fire station be used for anything at Senn?
 - A: No need, Senn is big enough already.
 - o Q: What about military school?
 - A: Not sure what will happen in the final plan.
 - o Q: What would population be at each school?
 - Likely to be capped at 400-500 per school.
 - o Q: Is there any way to end the disconnect between the community and the school, particularly those who do not have children?
 - A: Yes, we’re working on plans to use Senn and all Ward schools as community centers.

President Pierce adjourned the meeting at 11:27 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael G. Bergmann
 EPIC Recording Secretary