

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2016

www.jpna.net

Reality Fair

by Peter Insley, JPNA Board Member,
Education Committee Member

When something unusual is happening in the neighborhood, it is part of the mission of JPNA to inform the members through the newsletter. It is in this spirit I wish to tell the story of the Reality Fair.

Parents at Beaubien Elementary School (a few years ago) noticed that their children were graduating and going to high school, where they would be treated as young adults, without any clear idea of the financial challenges of a family. To give them an idea, they designed the "Reality Fair."

Each 7th and 8th grade student picks a career and researches it. Then, on a Friday in May, each class is invited to the gym where they visit a series of 17 tables and encounter the financial decisions every adult makes. At table one, students are assigned a salary appropriate to their selected career. They are also given a spouse/partner and a number of children by lot. The spouse/partner may also have an income (or not). A monthly income is determined and the student visits the second table where a car or CTA fare may be purchased.

Each following table, health care, charities, rent, etc., uses up some of the student's "income." If they finish the tables without going broke they are sent back to class. If they run out of money before the end, they are sent to a separate table in the center of the gym for "counseling", where they have a chance to reconsider some of their

choices. The whole process takes about 1.5 hours, after which the students return to class with their teachers and discuss the experience.

All the tables are occupied by parents and community members and the whole process was organized and coordinated this year by Jenny Conlon, a parent. I was impressed by how smoothly the students moved through the tables and the interest they took in making good decisions. The student feedback the teachers got was also very positive.

With all the pressures on the Chicago schools these days, it takes some courage for a principal to do something extra for the students like this. It's no wonder Principal Ludford is so well liked.

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A Culture of “Overlook, Don’t Reveal”

by Ed Irsch

Board Member, Treasurer and past JPNA President

There has been much conversation (TV segments, newspaper articles, letters to the editors) about “the code of silence” practiced among police officers. To me, it is the equivalent of “overlook (don’t reveal) questionable decisions of your peers.” But they have examples to follow when we consider behind closed door compromises of politicians or aldermanic prerogatives when it comes to changes in zoning even with signed opposition from residents or rubber-stamp approval of mayoral initiatives. These all relate to “overlook or don’t reveal questionable actions when it comes to peers.

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- CONTACT:** Jefferson Park Neighborhood Association.
P.O. Box 30072
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or call Eva (773) 282-3879

JPNA Meets at 7P.M. the last Wednesday of the month at the Congressional Church of Jefferson Park, 5320 W. Giddings

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“Theoretically, They All Could Be” (Section 8 Renters)

said, John Pikarsky, the Long and Argyle developer’s attorney, in response to one resident’s question as to how many of the 48 apartments at Long and Argyle could be Section 8, or Voucher renters.

by Bob Bank, JPNA President

Despite suggestions from the alderman, and the developer, that they expect most renters to be double income, young upwardly mobile and non-car-owning people, the fact of the matter is that landlords of multi-unit apartment buildings cannot discriminate against families, and not against those who show up with a Section 8 rent voucher. As a matter of fact, who else BUT THE GOVERNMENT would pay between \$1,600 and \$1,900 dollars to RENT an apartment in Jefferson Park? This project cannot move forward without Alderman Arena’s approval.

Recent Sun-Times stories have shown how renting to those in the CHA Voucher program can bring much greater rents than the average, and thus bring in huge profits. It is hard to believe that this isn’t the actual business plan that many developers have in mind in the first place.

The narrative that increased density is the answer to the Lawrence and Milwaukee shopping area problem sounds plausible, but as one resident pointed out, density is not the main thing businesses look for when choosing a place to locate, but rather income is the main criteria.

Either way, increased parking problems (not just from the new renters, but their guests as well), alleys turned into thoroughfares for 48 rush-hour exiting cars, and more students for our already overcrowded schools is NOT worth the trade-off, even if the manufactured solution to an imaginary problem were true.

The Lawrence and Milwaukee shopping area has a landlord problem, not a lack of potential customers.

For over 5 years now, Alderman Arena, has allowed the illegal use of gravel lots for parking (even though City ordinances require lighting, landscaping, ornamental fencing and proper drainage), thus there is no pressure on the developer to build something under the current zoning.

Downtown Edgebrook, has very little density, and has more shopping than downtown Jefferson Park. Past Jefferson Park Chamber of Commerce President, Lionel Rabbe once scolded Mega Properties, Nick Black, that his storefront’s (Lawrence Ave., east of Milwaukee, and the old Woolworth’s) lease prices are so high, that they are virtually un-rentable. High-density is an anathema to people who chose Jefferson Park as a place to live. Jefferson Park residents like their quiet streets, front lawns and back yards, good local schools, and being able to park in front of their homes. Pride of ownership rules the day in Jefferson Park; why destroy a beautiful neighborhood, and a beautiful way of life?

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“We are Long and Argyle!”

by Bob Bank

Last year, on Christmas Eve, every single “No Up-Zoning @ Long and Argyle” sign was stolen from the lawns, fences and porch railings around Long and Argyle Avenues, near Roberts Square Park. Nearly one-hundred signs were stolen from the neighbors that banded together, collected petitions with nearly 1,500 signatures, and paid for the signs out of their own pockets. The signs are a grass-roots protest against a five floor 48 unit rental complex proposal that cannot be built without a “Spot Up-Zoning” approval from, 45th Ward Alderman, John Arena. The huge complex would be at the end of the block of tidy two-flat and single family homes, and completely out of character from the residential neighborhood of one and two story homes.

But their voices will not be silenced! With the help of concerned residents, even from other parts of the Ward, and the JPNA, 100 replacement signs have been paid for and delivered!



5629 W Higgins update:

Despite testimony from JPNA President, Bob Bank, and JPNA Board Member, Ron Ernst, and a petition with signatures from residents from the surrounding blocks, 45th Ward Alderman, John Arena, pushed forward the “Spot Up-Zoning” (RT-4), to allow a developer to construct a 2-story, 5-unit 12 bedroom, 12 bath building, with only a 6 car parking pad along the alley. This was pushed through even though the property is inside the boundary of the protective RS-3 (Single-family) designation on the City’s zoning map.

Don't miss JeffFest: July 29, 30 & 31