

Wicker Park Committee

Membership Meeting Minutes

August 5, 2020

7:00 p.m.

Held via Zoom

Introductions and Welcome

Mr. Sneed welcomed the public and began the meeting at 7:03 p.m. At least 30 members of the Wicker Park Committee and public were present. Mr. Sneed thanked all participants for attending the meeting via videoconference, to remain in compliance with the city’s social distancing recommendations. He further provided an update on the Committee’s website redesign, and discussed the new online features to renew/begin membership for voting privileges.

New Business

The Committee discussed an upcoming in-person event to be held on August 25, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. at The Perch, and advised that all social distancing recommendations would be adhered to at the outdoor event.

Mr. Sneed further reviewed a recent article from Block Club Chicago, which featured the Helendora Frame Shop. Due to the publicity, the independently Black-owned business has seen an uptick in business recently.

Preservation and Development

Mr. Sneed reviewed a recent zoning matter at 1720 N. Damen, and advised of the recent proposal for a recreational cannabis dispensary. He advised that a zoning change had been granted through the city council, and reminded the public of the Committee’s strong preference to postpone zoning changes for recreational cannibis until social equity applicants have been considered. Mr. Sneed further advised that WPC didn’t support the current applicant, and urged the community to email Alderman Waguespack if so inclined.

New Business

Mr. Sneed introduced Robert Scott, the executive director of Power Up Illinois. Mr. Scott provided an overview of American Wind Week, to celebrate wind energy, and encouraged community members to participate in various virtual activities.

Wicker Park Business Spotlight: Buzzed Bull Creamery

Mr. Sneed introduced Chip Vonlehman, the owner of Buzzed Bull Creamery. Mr. Vonlehman provided an overview of ice creams and shakes available at the Creamery, as well as his desire to make a positive impact on the neighborhood.

Discussion with Alderman LaSpata

Alderman LaSpata thanked the community for their time, and discussed recent trends in Covid-19 infections within the city. He also reviewed the recent and ongoing water main replacements going on in the neighborhood.

Ald. LaSpata further discussed economic development across the city, including sidewalk permits for bars and taverns. The Committee discussed potential street closures to accommodate additional restaurant outdoor seating, as well as the low interest from businesses within the community.

Additionally, Ald. LaSpata discussed the second e-scooter pilot program scheduled to begin in the coming weeks, as well as anticipated upgrades to the CTA electrical system. He advised that additional information regarding a CTA substation would be brought to the community as plans develop.

Ald. LaSpata further discussed the decrease in zoning applications over the past several months due to Covid-19, and maintained a promise to the WPC to discuss any potential cannabis zoning changes with the community group prior to approval. He also provided an update on 1648 W. Division, and reviewed ongoing negotiations with Mr. Mosky regarding development of the site.

He urged community members to visit the First Ward’s website to weigh in on community infrastructure spending matters.

Community members discussed various matters of concern and interest with Ald. LaSpata.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7:58 p.m.