

DATE: November 11, 2007

TO: Greg Weykamp, Consultant Project Manager, EDAW, Inc.
Patricia Natke, Consultant, UrbanWorks
Stefanie Levine, Landscape Architect/Project Manager, City of Evanston

FROM: Southeast Evanston Association Board of Directors

SUBJECT: Process for Developing Evanston Lakefront Master Plan Design

CC: Douglas Gaynor, Director of Parks/Forestry and Recreation, City of Evanston
Paul D'Agostino, Superintendent of Parks/Forestry, City of Evanston
Aldermen Cheryl Wollin and Melissa Wynne

As an active participant in the lakefront planning project from its inception, the Southeast Evanston Association (SEA) is at this time concerned about the integrity of the process and lack of clarity about the next steps.

A large majority of the participants in the visioning and design processes expressed support for a natural, quiet, and environmentally responsible lakefront, which was reflected in the evolving designs that were presented in September and October. In our letter of October 2, SEA's comments on the designs included praise for increased native plantings and habitats; reduced air, water, and noise pollution; and the use of sustainable materials. These elements are consistent with Evanston's unique charm, historic neighborhoods, and commitment to being a "green" city. We are not in favor of expanded paving or parking, or activities that will degrade the lakefront experience for more than will benefit.

For those of us who were faithful to the process from the first visioning meeting last January—and who had been assured throughout that all Evanstonians had been invited to participate—it was disturbing to learn at what was to be the final presentation on October 4 that three more meetings had been suddenly added. We are now very concerned that a small number of residents and non-residents have used these occasions to introduce their own agenda—one that is inconsistent with months of work on the part of many other citizens. In particular:

- The Lakefront Vision process explicitly excluded consideration of a marina.
- The final vision document included objectives to "consider increasing restrictions on motorized boat use" and to "focus on ... recreational program offerings that ... do not require extensive facility construction."
- All of the designs that were based on this vision suggested that enhancements to the existing motorized boat launch would be prohibitively expensive both to undertake and to maintain, and these concepts were well received by the participants in the design presentation meetings.

SEA has been pleased to be a part of the lakefront visioning and design processes. At this point we are unclear about the next steps, when/how the plan will be made final, and whether there will be further opportunity for citizen input. We are writing to clarify that:

- SEA is in favor of leaving the ramp as it is or removing it.

- SEA does not support the use of Evanston taxes to subsidize the ramp for non-residents.
- If any improvements are included in the design, we request an impartial financial analysis of the costs, and that the city commit to full disclosure of the financial implications including anticipated regular dredging, maintenance, and all related staff costs.

Lake Michigan requires special care and consideration as threats to the region's supply of fresh water, and the number of people dependent upon it, multiply. We ask that the design for our lakefront ensure the maintenance of this unique oasis in as natural a state as possible.