



# RANCH Reporter

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**June 2018**

“Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul.” - John Muir

Thanks to all of you who came out on April 21<sup>st</sup> to clean up our parks. We appreciate everyone who spent their Saturday morning raking leaves, sweeping sand, picking up trash and planting flowers to help maintain our parks and get them ready for the warm weather, which is finally here. This wonderful Earth Day event helps to remind us of the important role that our parks play in the quality of life in our city.

- Reatha Kay, President, RANCH Triangle Community Conservation Association

## ADAMS PARK - WATERPARK RENOVATION UPDATE



This past winter the Chicago Park District announced its plans to renovate the water park portion of Adams Park. The renovation would include the removal of the existing features, including the water slide and soft surface, which many felt was a tremendous loss for the park. As a result, several community members wanted to upgrade the new design to try and make this renovation the best it could be – even without a slide. In order to do so, the community was faced with the task of raising \$20,000 in less than one month. We are pleased to report that the community exceeded the \$20,000 goal by stepping up to donate over \$30,000! We would like to thank Randy Steinmeyer (RANCH Triangle’s Park Committee Chair), Maureen Belling (Adams Park Supervisor), Lori Benvuto and Jessie White (of the Adams Park Advisory Council), and Melissa Shoemaker for their work in organizing the fundraising efforts for this project. The extra money will go to the addition of a water table to the park and air conditioning for the clubhouse. Again, thank you to everyone who participated in organizing the fundraising effort and all who donated to this project. A list of donors can be found on page 7 of the newsletter. The renovation is underway (see picture to the left) and was originally scheduled to be completed by the first day of summer camp. Come by and check out the newly renovated park this summer!

## NORTH BRANCH PARK & PRESERVE

A public meeting on the [North Branch Park & Preserve](#) was held on April 23, 2018 with Aldermen Michele Smith, Scott Waguespack, and Brian Hopkins in attendance. Representatives from coalition members, including community organizations, environmental organizations, professional associations and sports organizations also attended. Richard

Wilson, from Adrian Smith & Gordon Gill Architecture, gave a presentation that not only set forth the vision and goals of this park, but also provided information on the scale and density of development permitted under the North Branch Framework Plan (“Framework Plan”), gave perspective on the estimated new daytime population in relation to the surrounding communities, provided a description of quantity and quality of open space provided for under the Framework Plan, provided information on the amount of open space that good planning principles dictate, and described how this concept-park aligns with Chicago’s existing goals of revitalizing the areas around the river. A copy of the presentation can be found by clicking [here](#).

Following the presentation, representatives from various coalition members, including Friends of the Parks, Sheffield Neighbors, RANCH Triangle, Lincoln Central Association Bucktown Community Organization, Wicker Park Committee, the design community, Lincoln Park High School, sports leagues and environmental organizations, were provided with an opportunity to express their support. Representatives from Lincoln Park High School and various sports leagues stated that they were unable to accommodate the existing demands for programs due to the lack of availability of existing open space. Representatives from neighborhood organizations, in echoing their support and the need for this park, argued that, in addition to the anticipated population from the Lincoln Yards development, there are several other large-scale developments in the surrounding area, some being planned and some currently under construction, that would exacerbate the need for additional open space – including [Lincoln Commons](#) (the old Children’s Hospital), [Lathrop Homes](#) (click [here](#) for details on the development), Triangle Square (click [here](#) for more information), and Father and Son Plaza (click [here](#) for more information). The Lincoln Park Chamber of Commerce also communicated its support for this park.

The meeting then allowed questions from members of the audience. The questions/comments were supportive of the concept park, with some questions and comments directed to Alderman Hopkins regarding whether he supports this park. Responding to these comments, Alderman Hopkins stated that he supported this park – however, his later comments seemed, to some, to be an equivocation on his earlier statement of support. When later asked, via email, what form his support would take, Alderman Hopkins responded: “the North Branch Coalition can list my name as part of the group, and in full support of this idea. I will be working with Alderman Smith and Alderman Waguespack to advance the concept and identify potential funding sources.” We look forward to hearing more about what actions Alderman Hopkins is taking to further this endeavor. This park, however, will not be possible unless the community gets behind it.

Get informed and stay involved. This is your community. If you support this park, talk to your neighbors about it, join the coalition and find out what you can do to help make this park a reality. If you want to find out

more, please come to the next meeting on **Thursday, June 14, at 6:00 pm** at DePaul University's Student Center (2250 N. Sheffield), Room 314.

## UPDATE ON LINCOLN YARDS COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

On May 14, 2018, the Community Advisory Committee established by Alderman Hopkins for the Lincoln Yards development met for the second<sup>1</sup> time. The purpose of this meeting<sup>2</sup> was to discuss the joint community group letter of April 12, 2018 to Alderman Hopkins (the "April Letter" click [here](#) for a link to the letter) which reiterated its support for a community process for the Lincoln Yards development. Notwithstanding the proposed process and rationale therefor outlined in the April Letter, Alderman Hopkins stated that his process would be one community-wide meeting to review and make comments on the proposed plan (and smaller community group meetings to review and comment on that same plan) and then Sterling Bay would file its Planned Development plan with the city. Alderman Hopkins claimed that the Lincoln Yards development was not a "done deal" and that he would hold as many community meetings as necessary, but that one community-wide meeting prior to Sterling Bay filing its Planned Development plan with the City Plan Commission would be sufficient. He further asserted that one of the benefits of this process would be that, because the plan would be filed, the community would be negotiating a "legal" document.

Certain community group representatives argued the proposed process was inadequate. Some of the reasons given therefor included:

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<sup>1</sup> The first Community Advisory Committee meeting was held on March 8, 2018 and included an overview of concepts and renderings presented by Sterling Bay, with a meeting with Alderman Hopkins following this presentation in which community group representatives urged for more community representation on the committee. This request included the addition of representatives from Friends of the Parks, Friends of the River, and Lincoln Central Association, and that ability to bring an additional member to the meetings. The original committee was strictly limited to one representative from each of the following community groups: RANCH, Sheffield, Wrightwood, Bucktown and Wicker Park, as well as Allen Mellis. Two members from the Alderman's North Branch Advisory Committee also attended this first meeting.

<sup>2</sup> Chuck Griffin and Reatha Kay attended as representatives of RANCH Triangle Community Conservation Association, Jim Gramata and Ted Wroblewski as representatives of Sheffield Neighborhood Association, Diana Faulhaber as a representative of Wrightwood Neighbors Association, Kenneth Dotson as a representative of Lincoln Central Association, Paul Dickman as a representative of Wicker Park Committee, and Phillip Edison as a representative of Bucktown Community Organization were the community group representatives in attendance. Erma Tranter, as a representative of Friends of the Parks, Alicia Berg and Linda Goodman of Alderman Hopkins' North Branch Advisory Committee, and Christian Ficara of Alderman Hopkins' office were also in attendance.

- There did not seem to be a downside to having all of the needed community meetings before filing with the Plan Commission - if indeed Alderman Hopkins intends to hold as many meetings as necessary. It would seem beneficial for both Sterling Bay and the community that these meetings be held prior to filing. For example, once filed, it is understood that, per the city's planning manual, certain changes could essentially result in a restart of the review process time frames, and as such, Sterling Bay would likely be more resistant to making changes once filed and/or such changes could result in a slower city review process.
- One meeting is not sufficient to provide the community with an understanding of whether any of the community's comments were incorporated and how.
- With respect to much smaller-scale developments, Alderman Hopkins has delayed the filing with the Plan Commission for further community meetings. Why, when this development is much larger and more complex, would he change this established process?
- The individual community group meetings would consist of the same information/presentation/plans as provided by Sterling Bay in the initial community-wide meeting and would not include new information or revised or updated plans. Rather, they would only repeat the same Sterling Bay plan and presentation as the initial community-wide meeting. This would not be an adequate substitute for another community meeting to review an updated or revised plan, and that the community should be given the opportunity to understand if any changes were made following the initial community meeting and what comments, if any, were incorporated into the plan, and how.
- Given the scale of the development site and the fact that it is marketed as a "once in a generation" development, this subsequent meeting would hardly seem controversial, especially with the Alderman's stated commitment to hold as many community meetings as necessary to address community concerns.

Community group representatives also stressed the importance of having the Plan Development plans made available to the public prior to the public meeting and that such information should be more than pictures – to include substantive information about the development.<sup>3</sup> Alderman Hopkins initially resisted this request, stating that the Committee would need to be ready to explain why it is getting a "sneak peek" at the plans. It was then reiterated that the expectation was that the plan and attendant

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<sup>3</sup> Such as information on density, the types and scale of buildings and where they would be built on the site, the quality and quantity of open-space and where located, traffic studies and traffic infrastructure improvement plans, environmental studies and remediation requirements for the site.

information be made available to the public, not just the committee members.

Alderman Hopkins stated that he would get a copy of the Sterling Bay plan to the Committee (and presumably the public) prior to the first public community meeting. Unfortunately, contrary to the request made by community groups in the April Letter and reiterated by community group representatives at the meeting, Alderman Hopkins did not commit to holding more than one community-wide meeting prior to Sterling Bay's filing its proposed plan with the city; rather, the Alderman stated that he would hold additional public meetings as needed prior to Sterling Bay's filing with the Plan Commission, and after the individual association meetings and a subsequent Committee meeting as needed. Whether this means that there will be more than one community-wide meeting prior to Sterling Bay's filing with the city is unknown.

- Reatha Kay. Reatha, President of RANCH Triangle Community Conservation Association.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS AND OTHER INFORMATION**

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**LINCOLN CENTRAL'S SPRING ZING – SATURDAY, JUNE 2, (from 1:00 – 3:00 pm) at LINCOLN CENTRAL PARK (corner of Lincoln and Dickens).** Lincoln Central's popular family-friendly Spring event, Spring Zing, will return for its 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive year on Saturday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>. The event will be held from 1:00 n- 3:00 pm at Lincoln Central Park (corner of Lincoln & Dickens) and along Richard "Dickie" Harris Way (the stretch of Dickens between Lincoln & Larabee).

**NORTH BRANCH PARK & PRESERVE – THURSDAY, JUNE 14, at 6:00 pm at DePaul University Student Center (2250 N. Sheffield), Room 314.** Please come and learn more about the North Branch Park & Preserve and its vision. Learn more about the details of the Framework Plan, the density permitted, the quality and quantity of open space planned for by the Framework Plan, and much more.

**OLD TOWN ART FAIR – SATURDAY JUNE 9 – SUNDAY JUNE 10 (Saturday from 10:00 am – 7pm and Sunday from 10:00 am – 6:00 pm) in THE OLD TOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT.** The Old Town Art Fair has been voted the #1 Art Fair in America for the third year in a row and ranked as one of the top 5 festivals in Chicago by U.S. News and World Report's Travel website. Come enjoy Fine Art and Family Fun in Old Town in Chicago with over 250 nationally acclaimed juried artists, live music, a garden walk, children's corner and food court. You can wander the streets of the Old Town Triangle Historical District and see a part of the city that is uniquely fun and find a great piece of art to take home as a souvenir. Admission is a suggested donation of \$10.00, and kids are free.

All proceeds go to benefit local children's organizations and the community. Click [here](#) for more information on this event.

**SHEFFIELD MUSIC FESTIVAL& GARDEN WALK, SATURDAY, JULY 21 – JULY 22, from noon – 10:00pm.** This year is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this iconic Chicago event!

**HOST A FOREIGN EXCHANGE STUDENT WITH AFS!** AFS is looking for families to host foreign exchange high school students for the 2018/2019 school year. For more information or questions, contact Linda P. Mellis, AFS Chicago Coordinator at 773-327-9123 ([afs.mellis@gmail.com](mailto:afs.mellis@gmail.com)) or Brad Thompson at 646-381-3318 ([bthompson@afsusa.org](mailto:bthompson@afsusa.org)). Click [here](#) for link to flyer.

Please remember to support your local businesses, because they support your community.

Stay in touch with community meetings and happenings by becoming a member of RANCH. Sign up on [www.RANCHtriangle.org](http://www.RANCHtriangle.org), and follow RANCH on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/RANCH-Triangle-Community-Conservation-Association-108461592543401/>

**THANK YOU TO ALL OF THE DONORS  
TO THE ADAMS PARK WATER PARK**

**\$5,000**

Randy Steinmeyer

**\$1,000**

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Adams Park Advisory Council

**\$750**

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