A CLOSER LOOK

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The Conference in Action:
Actions of Board Endorse
Original Harper Court Mission

On May 4, 2006, the Board of the Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference voted 12 to 1 (2 abstentions) to endorse the need to preserve, in some form or manner, the original mission of the Harper Court Foundation: “the civic purposes of furthering the trade and economic development of the Hyde Park-Kenwood area in the City of Chicago and its environs, and promoting and assisting the growth and development of business concerns, including small-business concerns in said area” with special emphasis for “the continuation in the community of artisans, craftsmen, and educational, recreational and other services offered on a commercial basis, but of special cultural or community significance” (paragraph 5, Harper Court Foundation Articles of Incorporation, April 17, 1963).

In its three public meetings since the March TIF meeting, the Conference has heard a variety of worthwhile opinions and ideas that deserve exploring. There have also been several constants: (1) The original mission should be retained. (2) The current tenants should be “helped” during any construction period. (3) Any development must be appropriate for Hyde Park, and should preferably be appealing to a broad spectrum of the neighborhood: a “gateway” to 53rd Street. (4) Any new development should be kept at a height consistent with 53rd Street. (5) Adequate parking must be provided. (6) Public space (including chess benches) is required.

Following lengthy discussions earlier this year with the Illinois Attorney General’s Office of Charitable Trusts, the Conference raised seven questions it hoped would be answered by the Arts Council. Five remain unanswered:

1. What is the Council’s idea of appropriate development for Harper Court?
2. How are the Arts Council bylaws being revised to fit its new role?
3. What is being done to make the Council board more representative of the community, especially the arts?
4. What steps are being taken to eliminate conflicts of interest?
5. What framework will be created to make decisions about the dissemination of funds from the sale?

Key Points

- Harper Court’s original mission must be continued and included in Harper Court and what’s done by the managers of the assets of a sale: To support small (especially local) businesses, including those related to artists and our neighborhood’s cultural life.
- Current tenants must be provided for in Harper Court, including in a transition/construction period (should there be rehabilitation or new development).
- Whether the current Harper Court stays or is replaced, it must become more of a visible, vibrant, exciting place, a destination at the neighborhood center and a gateway. It must have a diverse mix of businesses, services, and cultural/entertainment uses, including such as are not currently found in the neighborhood and some that would not survive without help. The primary focus is on commercial space.
- Preferred scale is low, although certain areas offer possibilities for limited height.
- Active open space and provision for adequate parking must be included.
April 11:
Express Yourself: The Future of Harper Court
by Gary Osseaarde

HPKCC President George Rumsey opened the forum, stating that special guests would set forth background and field questions, then the floor would be open to the public. Rumsey noted two issues, future of the property, and management of monies.

Introductory Comments

Mark Johnson, former board member and executive director of Harper Court, set forth history and experience and conditions of Harper Court.

Harper Court was built to replace businesses torn down in Urban Renewal, Johnson said. It was a planned unit development (PUD) that included what is now the Court, the city parking lot, and the site of McDonald’s. Originally, police and fire stations were supposed to go there, but when that changed no buyer was interested until the Harper Court Foundation was set up and bought the land for a dollar. To build the center, $100,000 worth of $100 bonds were sold and the rest was borrowed in 26 loans from the Small Business Administration, one for each space. The University and the Archdiocese of Chicago bought over half the bonds. Harper Court is not tax exempt and is still structurally sound and not settling. Almost all the windows are original, but single pane non-weatherproof. He said the plumbing and flooding are the most persistent problems. The buildings including electrical and plumbing would be very expensive to upgrade—the concrete was poured around the lines, and balconies did fail. Also, it would not be easy to bring it to ADA compliance (which he characterized as rigid). He said complete ramping would make the lower spaces completely hidden and useless. Some ramps were added in the 1990s. He added that retail has changed and left these spaces behind, and the present businesses are highly dependent on the city lot being in operation.

Alderman Preckwinkle answered questions on the Request For Proposals process and her general hopes for the area. She said that with the failure of the Arts Council’s attempt to sell, they asked them to use a city RFP process and asked the city to prepare an RFP with the Council, hoping this and inclusion of the city lot would cast as wide a net as possible for developers. City staff meetings and initial meetings with the Council are in progress. While she has asked that a draft for public comment be ready for the May 8 TIF meeting, she was not sure that would happen.

She said in answer to a question about further expansion that the University already has its own RFP responses, although there would most likely be close coordination. The University is reviewing 7 responses and will report May 8.

Inclusion of the parking lot was logical, she said, because a buyer would likely want control over parking.

RFP language ranges from very vague to very specific language intended to steer. They all give the zoning or PUD and other legal restrictions. The University’s maximum height is the bank building’s. She appeared not to know what the Harper PUD restrictions are. She would not approve a proposal with a 50 story building. The language with regard to density will probably determine how much a buyer will pay. The PUD will have to be changed through negotiation with the city. What would especially matter to her in language would be (as was in the Theater and Leal RFPs) keeping neighborhood scale, character, standards and that development help enhance a viable commercial district. Language would disqualify off the wall ideas. And the city will specify development that is compatible with 53rd Street.

Preckwinkle named among Hyde Park’s assets that would draw developers its housing stock, the lakefront, and being 20 minutes from downtown. She said it’s hard for us to persuade national brands to come here without deep subsidies, although when they come (e.g. Office Depot) the stores are highly productive. But we have a lot of competition now. She thought it best to have a mix of big and small, local and chains.

Some worried that the Council will have no incentive to accept minimalist proposals, those that are not dense or that keep the present center. George Davis suggested to the alderman also that the community may have interests that differ from those of both the Council and the city and therefore will not be reflected in the RFP.

Judy Roothan said it is important to specify that proposals promote and include diversity and variety. She said there should be a way to expand the process beyond just owners ready to proceed now—the affected area that has to be in play and considered goes well beyond the Court and city lot. Preckwinkle said the city would be compensated for the land and that the present lot won’t necessarily have the parking.

Public Comments

Sam Ackerman proposed nearby owners and developers work together to achieve the best outcome and to leave space to carry on a portion of the original mission.

Nancy Stanek said she was exemplifying the needed transparent process by announcing she has a long-term lease and she with others was exploring a bid, if engineering studies showed restoration and upgrade are feasible—but they had no interest in seeing the present center torn down. She is for supporting locally owned businesses. She disputed that retail has changed so much as to make that obsolete. These businesses add to the character of the community. She said that a section set aside for subsidized businesses in a big new development is problematic—in her experience such businesses come and go as the center owner has no real interest in serving them.
Some noted that the Court currently seems dead with little traffic—more so since the chess benches were removed. The space is not inviting and convenient.

George Rumsey said redevelopment should be tied to a new gateway and open space at the northwest corner of Lake Park and 53rd.

Clairan Ferrono stressed the serious lack of trust in a Council with conflicts of interest and leaving too many questions about handling of funds after a sale.

Gabriel Piemonte said professionals should evaluate the matter and manage the sale. Also that support of small business is needed. What about the present Court has worked, what hasn’t. Don’t wipe out the whole space, especially without full input and consideration of community interests.

Aaron Cook, who said he has worked with developers, said mixed use including residential works best and can have very good outcomes. He suggested a public design charrette. Rumsey reminded the alderman that this was done for creation of the TIF and asked her if she would be interested in charrettes for Harper Court (not answered).

Charles O’Connell said we should study the original PUD and look at stipulating inclusion of sustainability (social and environmental) into the project as well as maintaining the areas character.

Sally Martini said the residential part would be a chance to create housing for commuting students.

Judy Roothan distributed a paper setting forth ideas for a gateway mixed development that would preserve our community’s diversity by making space that could be afforded by retirees, a broad middle class of professionals and workers and artists, and for small shops, perhaps with living space for owners—people who are in danger of being priced out of the community. This would be an ideal location to show our ideals while recognizing Hyde Park is becoming more “Gold Coast.”

Members of Artisans 21 of Harper Court came in (after their own meeting) and announced they want to stay in Harper Court.

Rumsey asked how the current tenants are being cared for and asked people to be prepared at the Workgroups April 25 to say if and how we want to preserve a space for current tenants, including maybe first right of refusal.

Charles Staples said that Harper Court has lost sight of its mission and just become commercial. The community is well served by the present center, and it’s handsome although in need of fixing.

Dorri Ellis of Artisans 21 said On the Nile is also maintaining the original vision. Artisans allows many artists to move in and out and find their bearings and move on. They tend to be the folks whose works will sell. She said there are lots of artisans in Hyde Park. She warned that rents elsewhere in Hyde Park are too high for Artisans 21 to survive outside the Court.

Alan Dobry called the transfer of the Court to the Arts Council a swindle and called on the Council to resign. He suggested seeking a nonprofit buyer or a land trust.

Robin Kaufman said the uncertainty is making things hard for current tenants, and they will not survive or return to a new development if they have to vacate.

Stephanie Franklin warned about creating too much density and congestion. Also against something that tilts too much toward residential (as she said Urban Renewal did).

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**What would you like the Harper Court Arts Council to do with assets from the sale of Harper Court?**

*Answers from the April 25 Evaluation*  
*More questions on page 5.*

Use it to incubate & nurture small startup and independent businesses  
Subsidize artisans shops/studios and funky small businesses  
Support artisans  
Give to community for community-led development; keep away from UC  
No sale  
Should give, not sell, property to a community group  
To arts org? A theater?  
They should not sell it to anyone except the community- a land trust which should be established- with leases given for buildings  
Put into Hyde Park  
Not waste them  
Give grants & scholarships - artists in residence  
Disperse slowly over years by means of grant proposals; form a larger HP Arts  
Dispense profits only through grant proposal process  
Scholarship funds for young artists  
Support arts/small local business  
Grant money for artists, artisans, musicians  
Redistribute through open grant proposals  
Please - no sale - that much money in the hands of one council is obscene  
Invest in the community  
Support arts/education  
Reinvest  
Support the arts in the community  
Part to arts, some to retail  
Support the artisans  
Use original purpose-reconstitute the board with community/tenant reps  
Other comments  
Affordable housing (NFP develope, with retail downstairs)  
Board transparency  
Open/expand the board  
Community land trust  
Have a referendum  
Combination of leased and owned businesses? Management company?  
Parking lot should NOT be a part of the plan.

**Mission of the Harper Court Arts Council:**

The purposes for which the organization was formed and for which the contributions are to be used are:

1. To stimulate, encourage and enhance public appreciation of various art forms primarily in the Chicago metropolitan area, particularly in the Hyde Park/Kenwood community, including but not limited to, fine art, theatre, photography and music; and

2. To foster and develop the arts by sponsoring public art exhibits and theatrical performances of unknown, but promising, artists.

*Attachment to Form CO-1, 1990*
HPKCC Harper Court Forum: Ideas and Principles

Summary of the Forum on the development of Harper Court hosted by the Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference

[Each table was assigned a color, then given 15-20 minutes per question to reach a consensus on three answers; answers were then posted for clarification and discussion.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Blue</th>
<th>Pink</th>
<th>Gray</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What should an improved Harper Court do for the neighborhood?</td>
<td>Provide a multiplex theater complex to revitalize the area, as in Evanston</td>
<td>A walking arcade with teen, kid-friendly skateboard park in parking lot</td>
<td>Connect and interact with 53rd Street to create a seamless retail/activity core</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Provide a multilevel parking garage, available day and night</td>
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<td>Esthetically pleasing low-rise low density height restrictions</td>
<td>Attract community residents, including students, to shop in Hyde Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Maintain low rise</td>
<td>Public open space (more than now)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mixed-use low rise small businesses</td>
<td>Pedestrian-oriented to encourage foot traffic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ADA Accessibility</td>
<td>All structural perimeters have retail or public use (no blank walls)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Nurture small business and artisans</td>
<td>Buildings with character and esthetic interest making cars invisible</td>
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<td></td>
<td>It should be a happening place, host art festivals and community events etc.</td>
<td>Provide significant central open space for gathering and greenery</td>
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<td>Provide needed goods and services, such as a vet, and should be flexible in response to the times (i.e. should change with the times)</td>
<td>Clear image including signs directions, and attractions to pedestrians and for pedestrian flow</td>
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<td>More imaginative management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Subsidize artisans and small businesses</td>
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<td>Hospitable, modern, dramatic, like the new Hyde Park Art Center</td>
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<td>Provide subsidized space for small business and artists</td>
<td>Build up vertically for additional shops, restaurants, housing, movies, and theaters</td>
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<td>Accessible (ADA as well as easy to walk through) and easy to navigate</td>
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<td>An agora, not a mall</td>
<td>Keep the Harper Court structure</td>
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<td>Subsidized art experiences and venues</td>
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<td>Business incubator</td>
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2. What should an improved Harper Court look like?

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3. How should our community influence this project so that the improvement benefits both the neighborhood and the mission of the Harper Court Foundation and Arts Council?

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<td>Actively oppose, through the city planning department, any plan unsatisfactory to the community. (We can stop them if we get the Alderman's help, when it comes to the city process.)</td>
<td>Use the Alderman's zoning leverage, and petition the state Attorney General for community/tenant reps on the Harper Court board.</td>
<td>Profits from Harper Court sale to be dispersed by arts council only through grant proposals</td>
</tr>
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<td>Design multi-use structure, retail, office, restaurants, residential, etc. with space for parking structure and below-grade truck service, allow height on the east half of site to provide maximum money to meet the arts council objective of money for the arts; and subsidize limited number of small businesses and artisans shops. [The east end of the site is what will border on Lake Park that could have more height, even if it casts a shadow on McDonald's. On the other hand, Nancy Stanek says that if it were a blank slate, you wouldn't think of doing that because it would block the rest of buildings.]</td>
<td>Use the Alderman's zoning leverage, and petition the state Attorney General for community/tenant reps on the Harper Court board.</td>
<td>Broaden arts council board to include many other constituents</td>
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<td>Initiate input in the Harper Court foundation/arts council by questioning their ethics through legal action</td>
<td>Have a festival celebrating Harper Court, publicizing the issue</td>
<td>Advisory council for private developer to provide community input for public uses [developer would want to get in good with the community and would want the community's idea, creating a public-private partnership]</td>
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Green
A referendum on high rises and density
Expand community base to be more inclusive
Get citywide media coverage

Pink
Development reflects community input and continues the original mission of Harper Court [subsidized spaces for retail, affordable spaces, arts and artisans]
Community ownership of land, not necessarily property/buildings [Hyde Park land trust]
Private enterprise [as an entrepreneur,
Nancy Stanek says there's a lot to be said for private enterprise. When you own and operate it and have something real at stake, then you care about it.]

Purple
Call Main Street National Trust; get that group to help us
Work with Alderman and TIF, but hold their feet to the fire to represent the community
Accountability process and rewrite the bylaws and reconstitute the foundation/ac board

Blue
Pursue legal basis of Harper Court Ownership [find out what the legal basis of the ownership of the real estate is, act accordingly]
Demand attendance by Foundation and Council members
Pressure Alderman to be responsive to community wishes
Other comments: Almost everyone present says a first priority is to give businesses in Harper Court a chance to keep operating
—Prepared by M.L. Rantala, 2 May 2006

April 25 Follow-Up Questionnaire:
Your Opinion on the Future of Harper Court

1. Would you prefer to see Harper Court rehabbed or rebuilt as something new? (27)
Rehab 16 59%
Rebuilt 11 41%

2. Should the original mission of Harper Court (help develop arts/small businesses) be retained in any degree? (32)
Retain mission 31 97%
Don't retain 1 3%

3. Should public space (such as the courtyard) be maintained and/or new spaces added? (32)
Public space 32 100%
No special space 0 0%

4. Should current tenants be “helped” to stay in business during any development? (32)
Help current 31 97%
Don't help 1 3%

5. In general, how tall is acceptable for development along 53rd and Lake Park? (31)
Two storey 0 0%
Four storey 23 74%
Fourteen storey 4 13%
Between 4 & 14 4 13%

6. Compared to the parking lot on the corner of 53rd and Lake Park, how much parking should be required for any development plan? (29)
Less parking 1 3%
Same parking 2 7%
More parking 19 66%
Much more 7 24%

7. Should any development include housing? If so, what kind of housing? (open ended)
For sale
If it's affordable (part rent)
No
Apartments or condos or mix
Only if necessary to subsidize small business
Not luxury condos, mixed affordable-home ownership
No
Moderate income rental
Yes
No
Artists/studios & small business 2-story live-in
Yes, mixed at local price & low price
Yes, mixed live-in studios & workshops
Two stories of apartments ina 4-storey bldg, source of income?
No, HP needs retail
Not necessarily
No
No
? Possible
No
No
No
No

8. What do you think would be appropriate retail for Hyde Park? What kinds of stores would you realistically like to see?
Clothing, food

Not national franchise; locally owned
Food specialty shops, body & fitness services, clothings (men, women, children), dry goods, home equipment
Clothing, sewing/notions, small stationery, garden supplies and plants
Non-franchise
Second hand store, art supplies store
Casual wear stores (sweaters, slacks, etc.) and lingerie
Something in general needs, like old worth's or Breslausers
Cool stores
Notions, sewing needs, good restaurant (an Indian/South Asian one), also many students
Vintage, charming restaurants, fiber art/yarn store (good for community), coffee
Small unique shops
Brown Elephant thrift store
Women's clothing, sportswear, varied gift wares, Chinese restaurant, antique shops
Clothing, sundries, yarn, fabric store
Restaurant, gift/craft shops
Artisans 21 and small businesses
Clothing, “fine foods” like chocholates, pastries, toy stores, artisans cafes, sporting goods, restaurants
Too many subcultures, too many choices
Canvas the community
Children's clothing, toys, housewares, jewelry, knick-knacks
Bigger Artisans 21
Local business - no franchises
Art galleries
Arts, crafts, practical shops, such as sewing, etc.
Vanities including basic and a few dining destinations
Women's retail clothes
Alderman Preckwinkle (TP): Asked for an "aggressive schedule" for the RFP. Parking lot included so it's a joint RFP of public and private land, so the Planning and the Law Departments of the city must sign off on it.

Jack Spicer: Where is the line defining the city part?
Mark Johnson (MJ): The true line is the line of trees behind the Dixie Kitchen to the east

Nancy Stanek (NS): Are these inextricably together?
TP: Redevelopment terms would want to guarantee parking

George Davis (GD): What is the prerequisite of a PUD and why is the city involved here?
TP: Harper Court Foundation was not able to cast a wide net so the lawyer brought the buyer. The Planning Department casts a wide net. RFP will go to the Planning Dept, mailing list of developers. A diverse pool of buyers. So all this is being done as a service to the Foundation.

George Rumsey (GWR): What is the legal standing of an RFP? Contract? Are there letters of intent, penalties, deposits with the bid?
TP: Saw the RFP as a way to reach a broader pool of developers
GD: does it bind the foundation?
TP: "It's always possible to reject all bids" Arts Council has held one meeting with the Chicago Consulting Studio folks

ML Rantal (ML): Bundling parking, so who decides it's ok for the city?
TP: Department of Planning. They are doing it as a "favor to me" "I work very closely with the Department of Planning"

Mary Anton: This is a parallel process, we have requested suggestions and not received any
NS: No one has suggested bulldozing Harper Court but now I hear the bulldozers now that it's one land mass.
TP: Keeping the court can be one of the proposals. There are no plans for bulldozing.

GWR: This is supposed to be a meeting to plan 4/11 "vent" forum and 4/25 working groups for ideas about good development for the neighborhood.
TP: The Arts Council owns it and will decide what to do with it, though anyone can give advice, but ultimately it's their decision.
GWR: Have they met with the attorney general about rewriting their by-laws?
TP: Know nothing about internal affairs

GWR: Are they the group best to do this? Will they open their board to someone with actual arts background
Mary Anton: We did ask for input through the e-mail site, we have defined a process, but no one dropped us a line, no one wrote, you just want a totally parallel process
TP: There was no response to the Arts Council offer for input at the TIF
NS: Was there a public announcement? No one saw it
Mary Anton: There is a letter in the Herald this week, we asked for feedback at the TIF but the community could care less.
NS: Where is the statement of the actual terms?

Mary Johnson: Most know HCF created during urban renewal in particular by Muriel Beadle and Bruce Sagan. Courageous people helped (lists). The mission was to find a place where artists, artisans, and small business displaced by the UR could find a home. A lot that ran from McDonalds, to the parkway, to Harper court sits on a PUD. It's all restricted, not zoned, controlled by ordinance. They bought the land from the city for $1 (originally for a police and fire station that were located elsewhere). The parking lot was unpaved for the first 20 years. HCF pays income and property taxes. The three buildings were built for $360,000, sold $100 bonds, and borrowed $250,000, 1 loan for each space. By the time it was built, the artists had gone from the neighborhood. They didn't want people to live in the studios, so the bathrooms are too small, there's no A/c for years! Don't push it back unrealistic process...

Chorus of voices--well, push the timetable back

Mary Anton: "I don't know what the history of Hyde Park has to do with what kind of real estate should be done.

Mary Anton: "I don't know what the history of Hyde Park has to do with what kind of real estate should be done."

Lady in back) ???: It's important to me--gives us a chance to find out what you're about.
GWR: The RFP will be open to comment when written.

Mary: These meetings are too late
Barbara O'connor: Nobody knew anything about this, no one knew who was on the Board, the first TIF meeting was the first anyone heard from you. Even I didn't know. We're concerned with what's going on. You negotiated for years but not an open process. You need to allow people to put together ideas.

Baby Ph.D.: History is important to refine comments. I am a tenant of Harper Court and I think we need to focus on a series of topics: land use, current building conditions, types of tenants wanted, where others may go if displaced

Barbara: I called George. The HPKCC since 1949 is always there for a crisis, they always dig in. TIF is not a community wide structure. I pushed him into doing this.

Mary Anton: It's too late, April 11 and April 25 are too late.
Carol Bradford: I don't know you from anybody. Mary, why is it too late?
Mary Anton: If a presentation is to be made at the TIF May 8, a working group 4/25 is too late. You just want a parallel process.
ML: The problem is of your making
Carol: You didn't have this open process from the get go. You are disingenuous and it's insulting

Mary Anton: We won't have adequate time to include your comments by May 8. It's an unrealistic process...

Mary Anton: We're concerned with what's going on. They open their board to someone with actual arts background

Mary Anton: It's too late, April 11 and April 25 are too late.

Barbara O'Connor: Nobody knew anything about this, no one knew who was on the Board, the first TIF meeting was the first anyone heard from you. Even I didn't know. We're concerned with what's going on. You negotiated for years but not an open process. You need to allow people to put together ideas.

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Carol: You didn't have this open process from the get go. You are disingenuous and it's insulting.

Mary Anton: We won't have adequate time to include your comments by May 8. It's an unrealistic process…

Chorus of voices--well, push the timetable back

Baby Ph.D. tenant--This has been dragging on for years! Don't push it back

Herald reporter tries to clarify what they think they included in the paper.

Person in back: We need a process to organize input.

Vet: The question is "do you want Harper Court to stay? If so, we'll try to put together a proposal unless the engineers prove that it's an unworkable white elephant. If you don't want it to stay, hell, I'll just get a site somewhere else. An important element in the RFP is how you think current tenants should be treated

Mary Anton: Well, go to the website, the contact information is there.
In 1998, the aggregate income for the primary market area served by Hyde Park was about $1.02 billion, and the aggregate income for the secondary market area was approximately $1.3 billion. Within Hyde Park, the average household income was over $63,000. Because of the trade area’s high population density, total resident expenditures on retail goods and services are substantial.

**Retail Expenditures are Lost to Competitive Retail Locations.**

Only a small percentage of the trade area’s high retail expenditure potential is actually captured by Hyde Park establishments. Like many inner-city neighborhoods in Chicago and other cities, Hyde Park loses sales to shopping locations that offer a greater variety of shopping selections and choices. In 1998, retail sales in Hyde Park establishments accounted for only about $106.3 million of the $780.1 million total retail sales potential for the primary and secondary trade area.

**A More Competitive Hyde Park Could Support More Retailers.**

**Demand for New Office Space is Limited.**

**WHAT RESIDENTS AND SHOPPERS SAY**

Residents and Shoppers Want More Shopping Alternatives.

One particular opportunity exists in women’s apparel: currently, Hyde Park shops are not meeting local needs and tastes, so women are going elsewhere to make their apparel purchases. Despite its potential for niche markets, however, Hyde Park is too small to compete with the Loop, Greater North Michigan Avenue, or regional malls.

**Adaptability Parking is Key.**

The survey found that the automobile is still their primary mode of travel for shopping, and convenient accessibility and parking are very important factors in their decisions on where to shop. Any new development will have to incorporate an access and parking strategy.

**appearance and Safety Count.**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Define a Core Retail Area. …the area lacks definition and focus. Efforts are required to define the core area more clearly and to realize this area’s potential as Hyde Park’s “main street” — a place to shop, browse, stroll, eat, and mingle with other neighborhood residents.

**Focus on Local Residents.**

**Enliven Retail Areas.**

Create a Vibrant Mixed Use Center for the Hyde Park Retail District (pages 8 and 9)

The Hyde Park Retail District will gain from the development of a central place that offers a critical mass of retail and street activity, and serves as a gateway to the entire district. To achieve this goal, the following steps are recommended:

- Locating a new center for the Hyde Park Retail District around the intersection of 53rd Street and Lake Park Avenue.
- Bringing new mixed use development to the Lake Park Avenue and 53rd Street intersection.

**Renovating the Harper Court Shopping Center.**

**Renovating vintage buildings at the intersection of Harper Avenue and 53rd Street, and the Hyde Park Theater buildings to create an attractive gateway to Harper Court.**

**Upgrading the quality of the streetscape around the 53rd Street and Lake Park Avenue intersection.**

**Energizing the “Gateway Plaza.”**

**Upgrading Metra stations, viaducts and the embankment along Lake Park Avenue.**

**Bringing New Mixed Use Development**

City Parking Lot (between 52nd and 53rd Streets): The City of Chicago is encouraged to pursue retail, office and residential development options for this site in conjunction with the renovation of Harper Court. Development of retail or commercial space on this lot will require replacement parking. A parking garage behind new uses along the streets can meet this need, and also met the demands of new developments on Lake Park Avenue and 53rd Street.

**Phase Two: Redevelop the City Parking Lot and Harper Court**

Introduce mixed-use development along Lake Park Avenue with retail along the street level, and residential, commercial, and/or institutional uses above.

Parking Garage: Encourage a three to four floor parking garage, with vehicular access on Lake Park Avenue, and landscaped setbacks along Lake Park Avenue.

5. Establish Design Guidelines for Buildings and Signs (page 22)

Hyde Park’s retail streets have a great pedestrian scale, with vintage buildings that are mostly three or four floors high lining both sides of the street. An attractive street environment will bring more shoppers to the stores and restaurants of the Hyde Park Retail District, increasing sales in existing businesses, and attracting new retailers to the district.

**Building Height**

- Buildings on retail streets in Hyde Park are scaled to the pedestrian environment. To maintain this quality, new buildings are discouraged from being more than four storeys in height.
- Where zoning allows a new building to be taller than four storeys, floors above the fourth floor should be set back at least 15 feet. This allows the character and scale of the street wall to be maintained.

Next Steps: Priority Actions (page 26)

8. Establish a Hyde Park Retail District Design Committee to encourage retailers to renovate and upgrade facades and signs in line with the design guidelines, and to review new proposals for development.

(Signatories to this document include 4th Ward alderman, 5th Ward alderman, University of Chicago Community Affairs, Hyde Park Chamber of Commerce, SECC, HPKCC, Harper Court Foundation, and Chicago Department of Planning & Development. Consultant Team was from SOM.)
Key Excerpts from the University of Chicago RFP for “53rd and Harper Properties”

Pages 12-15: Part IV. The Development Framework

A. Development Objectives

- Create a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood development to serve the community, the University, and the mid-south residents
- Improve the image and identity of the 53rd Street/Harper area as an attractive commercial district
- Leverage the historic character of the neighborhood and college town appeal
- Attract high quality retail tenants and/or entertainment uses, which enliven the area
- Increase the residential and office offerings in the neighborhood
- Feature high quality urban design and architecture commensurate with Hyde Park

B. Design Criteria

With prime frontage along 53rd Street, the property is a key anchor parcel and signature development for the district as well as an important entry into the Harper Court area. The existing buildings serve as a good precedent. Designs that propose a new development are encouraged to be complementary to this precedent with respect to the overall composition. The following are some general design criteria for the redevelopment of the property.

- Façade Preservation and/or Adaptive Reuse Option: preference is for options that preserve the façade and/or adaptively reuse the property, if feasible and economically practical, while being complementary to the existing materials and design intent
- Demolition and New Construction Option: a partial or complete demolition of the structures must produce a new design reflective of the character and quality of Hyde Park
- Scale, Massing and Materials: the scale, massing, and materials of a new construction project must respond to the historic context and quality of the surrounding area and the 53rd Street district
- Zoning: a development that exceeds the current B3-2 zoning (max. floor area: ±40,000 SF, max. dwelling units: 19, max. height: 50’) would require City approval through a Planned Development process
- Off-Street Parking: the project needs to accommodate off-street parking for proposed uses as stipulated by City zoning
- Pedestrian Environment: the overall development should reinforce the 53rd Street pedestrian-friendly character through quality storefront design, appropriate signage and streetscape, as well as follow the City zoning ordinance since 53rd Street is designated a “pedestrian street”

C. Program and Use Guidelines

...a list of preferred program uses and components to help ensure that the Proposed Development becomes part of a vibrant neighborhood district...

- High quality Retail uses at the ground floor are encouraged in order to reinforce an active, dynamic urban neighborhood center. The opportunity with this property, given its size, is to secure a national retailer anchor or signature store not currently in the area and possibly smaller local or specialty “home grown” retailer(s) that offer unique, boutique shops or one-off stores. The objective of attracting patrons from Hyde Park as well as the surrounding areas, a strong retailer(s) should help activate the area and create a “destination” draw for the district.
- Entertainment/Restaurant uses at the ground floor are also desired to energize the area, both daytime and nighttime. Building on the new Checkerboard Lounge venue, other entertainment/restaurant uses are encouraged. However, the site’s proximity to a church may preclude the issuance of a liquor license. . . Options that serve the student population, especially 24-hour dining (other than fast food), have also been suggested for the area...
- Residential development, above the ground floor, is highly encouraged to increase the number of people living in the district, and enhance the neighborhood vitality and vibrancy with a 24-hour resident population. . .
- Office options for “above-the-store” professional office space and service businesses could be included in market demand dictates.
- Off-Street Parking for the Proposed Development needs to be accommodated on-site as stipulated by City zoning ordinance.
- Civic, Arts & Cultural options could be pursued to enhance the unique character and destination appeal of Hyde Park.

D. Architectural Objectives

In conjunction with the design criteria, a number of architectural guidelines have been outlined to preserve the strong architectural character and quality of the Hyde Park community. Whether applicable for adaptive reuse or new development, these objectives are as follows:

- High Quality Design and Materials... Durable exterior wall materials, particularly on the ground level façade, should be considered including brick, stone, ornamental terra cotta and/or stucco that continue and reinforce the area’s masonry traditions. . . Unique and creative designs are welcome...
- Massing/Scale — building massing and scale should generally be appropriate to the context of the Hyde Park area, the size and nature of the street and adjacent buildings. Along 53rd Street, a two to four-story façade is common though some buildings reach upwards of twenty stories, particularly closer to the lake. Residential buildings of 53rd Street and further into the neighborhood vary in height and type from four-story walkups to eight to ten-story apartment buildings. As a general rule, no proposed building shall be taller than the Hyde Park Bank building that stands at approximately 160’ tall with 14 stories. In addition, key facades should be designed to respond to pedestrian scale, much like the stratification of the facades along 53rd Street.

Other

- Storefront Windows — maximize the transparency of ground floor, street facing commercial facades and provide primary building entrances facing or clearly visible from public sidewalks. Clear glass is preferred over opaque or tinted glass.
- Awnings/Signage/Lighting/Streetscape — architectural features that embellish the visual appeal of buildings as well as help create a more pedestrian scaled, comfortable environment are encouraged.