



The

Conference Reporter

Vol. 17, No. 1

Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference

January 2011

The Conference in Action:

Special Aldermanic Election Issue

In November 2010, HPKCC invited the announced aldermanic candidates for the 4th and 5th Wards to answer a set of 7 questions soliciting their views on several issues that we believe are important for the two wards. The responses are organized by ward and by question, and are reproduced exactly as we received them, without correction or comment.

Thanks are due to Board member Jack Snapper, who co-chaired a subcommittee of the HPKCC Board which devised the questions, and to committee members Gary Ossewaarde and Gail Isenberg.

A CLOSER LOOK

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HPKCC MISSION

The purpose of the Conference is to attend to the civic needs of the community; work toward an attractive, secure, diverse, and caring community; and to promote participation of residents, businesses, institutions, and organizations in programs and activities that advance the interests and concerns of the community. It serves the community as a watchdog, independent voice, and clearing house in the community's ongoing conversation and decisions about those matters which affect and define community life.

4th Ward Candidate Responses

The candidates remaining on the ballot for the 4th Ward, in the order listed by the Board of Election Commissioners of Chicago, are: William D. "Will" Burns, Brian Scott, Norman H. Bolden, James E. Williams, George Rumsey, Adam L. Miguist, and Lori S. Yokoyama. Of those currently on the ballot, responses were received from Burns, Rumsey, Scott, and Yokoyama.

1. *What are your three highest priorities for your ward? What do you regard as the most critical issues facing the ward? If elected, how would you go about addressing them? If the most critical issues are not the same as your highest priorities, why not?*

Burns: My top priorities are creating living wage jobs and economic development, improving public schools, and improving public safety. If elected alderman, I will work to complete retail projects that are currently on the drawing board and to attract new retail along the ward's major retail corridors. I will continue to be an advocate for education funding reform, raise additional private sector and other resources to fund enrichment programs at neighborhood schools. I will fight for more police officers for the 2nd and 21st district and introduce ordinances that provide additional tools to law enforcement while respecting fundamental constitutional rights.

Rumsey: My highest priorities are
• Reasonable and sustainable development (especially Cottage Grove, Michael

Reese, 31st and 35 Streets, 51st and 53rd Street), with new retail, businesses, and jobs. This would involve being a "steward" for the future of 53rd and 51st developments, working with residents and Draper & Kramer for Lake Meadows redevelopment, and working with the City of Chicago to resolve a use for Michael Reese.

- Affordable low and mid-income housing throughout the ward. It is important to have affordable housing in Hyde Park-Kenwood as well as in other sections of the ward.

- Accessible and affordable health care. Particular attention needs to be given to the future of Provident Hospital.

Stronger schools. "Thorough and efficient" are the key words. The state needs to change the funding structure of schools, the school board ought to be publicly elected (rather than appointed by the mayor), and more emphasis needs to be given to teacher training.

- Improved infrastructure, especially in parks and public places, including

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4th Ward Candidate Responses...

greater access to the lakefront.

Scott: My highest priorities for the ward are job creation, violence prevention and improving our schools. In terms of job creation, I will be looking to provide tax-based incentives for businesses to locate to the fourth ward as well as pushing financial institutions to provide the lending that is necessary to shore up small and medium-sized businesses in the area.

As far as violence is concerned, I want to work with law enforcement and residents to create a block-by-block policing strategy that we all can buy into.

Improving the schools in the area will require listening to administrators, parents as well as students to determine what resources are necessary to improve overall performance. I'll then work with the city council to secure those needed resources. Improving the overall education system in the city will require a much broader approach and cooperation from all the aldermen in addition to the next mayor.

Although these are my top priorities for the ward, I don't feel they are the most critical. I believe the proliferation of TIF districts is the most critical issue for the city. Unless these economic development mechanisms are handled properly and ethically, these instruments can do more harm than good by draining the desperately needed funding required to staff our vital government services, i.e. schools, police, etc.

Yokoyama: To begin, I firmly believe my priorities mirror those of the communities that comprise the 4th Ward. First, we must integrate the burgeoning neighborhoods in the north of the ward with those in the south, by developing a strong local economy that links all of our communities into an equitable, fair, and attractive series of neighborhoods. Second, our local education institutions must improve. The University of Chicago is just south of our ward, and integrating the educational opportunities of a major global university with those offered in our own schools must be a priority. Third, our alderman must take a strong stand on the runaway spending of our current mayor and city council. The urban renewal efforts of our

From the President's Desk

Cast an Informed Vote in February!

The upcoming municipal election on February 22, 2011 gives Chicagoans a rare opportunity to change the status quo with mayoral and aldermanic choices. As a public service, this issue of The Conference Reporter is devoted to responses to questions HPKCC posed to all the aldermanic candidates for the 4th and 5th Wards. As a 501(c)(3) organization, the Conference does not make political endorsements, but we encourage every voter to make informed choices in the voting booth on February 22.

There are several organizations which are concerned with life in Hyde Park-Kenwood as a whole, including the Southeast Chicago Commission and the Hyde Park Chamber of Commerce (of which HPKCC is a member). HPKCC is a community-wide membership organization, which offers opportunities for members to get involved in community activities and issues. If you've just picked up this issue of the Reporter and are unfamiliar with what we do, please give us a call at 773-288-8343 or send an e-mail to hpkcc@aol.com, and we'll be happy to talk to you! We'd love to have you join us.

HPKCC Board member Judy Dupont passed away in November after an illness of several months. As longtime chair of the HPKCC Nominating Committee, Judy did much to identify community members with talents to bring to HPKCC, and shaped our recent boards. In the Hyde Park Garden Fair Committee she helped coordinate the many volunteers who make the fair a success. Judy is sadly missed by her many friends among our membership and in the Hyde Park-Kenwood community.

The April issue of the Reporter will be dedicated to a roundup of development issues in the neighborhood. Stay tuned!

*Jane Ciacci, President
January 2, 2011*

areas are not guaranteed successes, and require smart spending on the part of city leaders. We must have a smart voice for the 4th ward, ensuring that resources are not taken from our ward and wasted elsewhere.

2. Is there a need for a reconfiguration of the transportation system for the ward? Do you have suggestions for changes to the public transportation system? Do you have suggestions for changes that will make the ward friendlier for pedestrian traffic, or for automobile use?

Burns: No, there is not a need for reconfiguration of the transportation system for the ward, however the following suggestions would improve the overall system and make the ward friendlier for pedestrian and automobile

use.

- Implement a trolley type shuttle the connecting Hyde Park, North Kenwood Oakland, Grand Boulevard, Washington Park, and Woodlawn key locations and transit nodes. The interior of these vehicles should be accommodating for people carrying packages and pushing strollers. The vehicles should be about the size of the CTA campus buses for route 171 et al. This initiative could be funded by partnering with institutions/businesses.
- Improve pathfinder signage on and around the Metra (all stations 53rd, 55th, and 57th) guiding visitors to University of Chicago and the Museum of Science and Industry.
- Improve the existing signage for CTA. The signage should be more informative

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for bus routes that have been identified as targets for improvements.

- Implement the “Bus Tracker” signs showing expected arrival time of next bus.
- Improve security lighting for Metra and CTA and repair and maintain lighting under railroad viaducts.
- Create a bike /friendly corridor along the major retail corridors through urban landscaping /streetscaping
- Implement findings from RTA study of mid-south transportation needs. The study will be completed in 2011.
- Require the RTA service boards to create a universal transfer card that will allow commuters to easily transfer between Metra, CTA, and PACE.

Rumsey: I have made a commitment to re-examine the entire transit structure of the 4th Ward, with the hopes that such an examination will include surrounding areas (a re-examination of the mid-South), with focus on CTA routes, expansion of Metra services (proposed Gold Line), and improved bicycle thoroughfares. Another area needing improvement is pedestrian lakefront access between 26th and 47th Streets, especially for people with disabilities.

Scott: No reply to Question 2.

Yokoyama: I would like to say in a perfect world, we'd have direct access to “L” train stations within the ward's boundaries. However, reconfiguration of any transportation network inside the 4th Ward will impact networks outside the ward. I support the concept, if not all the proposals, contained within the city's “Reconnecting Neighborhoods” plan. Further investigation is necessary to find the best solutions to increasing the accessibility of the 4th Ward. Urban renewal inevitably brings an influx of residents, travellers, vehicles, and traffic. Developing a ward transportation plan, with the input of neighborhood organizations, should be a critical part of any and all re-development measures.

3. *Are there significantly underdeveloped areas (or empty spaces) in your ward? Do you have*

suggestions for the uses of such spaces? Are there specific areas that can be developed to encourage retail, provide green space, or increase the availability of affordable housing?

Burns: Yes, there are underdeveloped areas in the 4th ward that can be developed to encourage retail, green space and increase the availability of affordable housing. In regard to underdeveloped areas zoned for residential, there are a number of vacant residential lots on Greenwood Avenue between 43rd and 47th, on Langley Avenue from Bowen to 44th, and on 46th Street from Cottage to St. Lawrence. The ward has a shortage of independent (non restricted) affordable housing that is not tied to public housing. There is also a shortage of market rate rental housing. The ward has a number of underdeveloped tracts of land in the Oakland community area from Vincennes to Pershing but this, like many other tracts of vacant land, are part of the CHA Plan for Transformation sites.

All of the retail corridors within the ward need improvement-including 53rd Street, Cottage Grove (51st-39th), 47th Street (West of Cottage Grove Avenue) and 43rd Street. Increasing security and improving the facade of the corridors will help attract retailers.

Green space can be increased in the Oakland neighborhood, west of Cottage Grove between 51st and 47th, and 44th Street from Pershing west of Cottage Grove.

Rumsey: There are sections in the center of the 4th Ward that are so empty, you can almost see from Lake Shore Drive to the Dan Ryan. We need to find a way to kick-start the housing plan for this area. I've been talking with staff at the Illinois Housing Development Authority to discuss affordable-housing programs that might come into play.

Michael Reese (approximately 6 blocks) is a giant question. I do not favour putting a land-based casino there, as some have suggested. One possibility would be to use the space as an auxiliary area for McCormick Place, with hotels and conference centers on the north end, housing in the center, and a new retail district along 31st Street (which is a TIF, adjacent to the new harbour).

Cottage Grove is the biggest worry. We

need to quickly find ways to develop more businesses along this corridor, and one way to do that is to provide more housing in the area (density).

Scott: The 37 acre vacant space at the former Michael Reese site will be a major focus of mine if elected. With a pending \$91M liability for the property, we must look to offset those costs with a revenue generating development. Whether a technology park, or some other development, the site will be a boost for the area economically as many jobs should be created. I will see to it that the lion share of jobs go to fourth ward residents.

I will also look to initiate gardening and beautification programs on vacant lots and help re-start stalled developments like the Muntu Dance Theatre on east 47th St.

Yokoyama: There are significant areas where vacant lots remain in the 4th Ward. Through the efforts of organizations like the Quad Communities Development Corporation, blighted areas of our ward have rebounded, particularly in Kenwood and Oakland. Although much of that redevelopment has emphasized retail shopping, office space, and mixed-income housing units (which I don't disagree with), I do believe we need to ensure much of the vacant land that remains be dedicated to community building purposes – parks, playgrounds, urban agricultural centers, and other efforts that improve the relationships of neighbors.

4. *What is the proper procedure for the management of TIFs? Should the ward have more or fewer TIFs? What is your view of the value of the TIFs that are now in place in the ward?*

Burns: For too long, TIF districts across the city have operated without transparency and public input. This has not been the case, however, in the 4th Ward. Each TIF has an advisory council that holds public meetings and secures community input on TIF allocations. I will maintain the 4th Ward's TIF Advisory Councils that promote community participation in TIF allocation decisions.

There are eleven TIF Districts located within the boundaries of the 4th Ward, each of which has added value to the

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area it was intended. They are the 26th and King, Bronzeville, Madden Wells, Pershing and King, 41st and King, 43rd and Cottage G, Drexel Boulevard, Lake Front, 53rd Street, 49th and St. Lawrence and small percentage of the 47th and King TIF. These TIF Districts were established to promote private investment, support infrastructure, affordable housing projects, and put vacant properties back to productive use. If elected alderman, I would carefully evaluate the need for additional TIFs within the ward.

Rumsey: I would try to strengthen the independent thinking of the TIF advisory councils, such as the 53rd Street and Cottage Grove councils. The current perception within the community is that decisions are made before the TIF meetings, and then presented as accomplished fact, with no serious examination or questioning taking place in public (for example, the decision to give the Vermilion Development Co. \$23.4 million of TIF revenues from the 53rd Street TIF, or the failure of the 53rd Street TIF Council to present the 3 finalists chosen, as they said they would, and instead only showing the details of the selected winner in the Harper Court redevelopment project). I believe in an open and transparent process, with as much input as reasonable from the community.

I believe there are at least 6 TIF districts within the 4th Ward, and to my knowledge, only 2 have advisory councils. I believe TIFs that are not serving any strong purpose or meeting their mission should be eliminated, with the funding returned to the city's general budget to help plug the giant gap in city finances.

Scott: The proper procedure for managing TIFs is to improve "blighted" areas and if done properly, it can be great for economic development. The 53rd St TIF district is an example. Unfortunately in many others around the city, TIF districts are not properly administered and their funds are going to projects that are not in blighted areas. That is a major concern of mine.

In fact, recently there's been a idea ban-

The HPKCC Schools Committee

Engaging communities and schools

by Gary Ossewaarde

The HPKCC Schools Committee serves as a resource, facilitator and networking provider for schools, school councils, parent groups and the larger community. Our aim is good schools in which the community and parents are engaged. To facilitate our goals, we meet with educators and school reform experts, hold networking dinners and lectures, attend school council meetings, and invite members of the latter to our meetings.

We have online directories of resources and of the many enrichment programs available to children and families during, after and outside of the school day. (Visit hydepark.org/schools.) We want to make sure there is a set of robust, varied, programs widely available. We are also preparing a user-friendly print directory of schools' contact and information. And we are planning a forum /workshop on "Where are the Parents? Help for Parents to Become More Involved in Their Children's Schooling." This will take place on March 29, or as announced.

We are now ready work with others to strategically bring community resources and volunteers to specific schools and to Hyde Park-Kenwood schools as a group. In that regard, we were pleased to learn of and work with a new community working group called Hyde Park Schools, convened by the Hyde Park Herald and the Hyde Park Neighborhood Club and intended to help Hyde Park and Kenwood schools discover common goals and resources and marshal the community and its businesses in support of our schools.

Hyde Park Schools has so far created focus groups of parents, educators, and citizens evaluating arts; fundraising; special needs and technology; curriculum, physical education, health and wellness. Joint fundraising, grant writing, and program-sharing are already being considered. There is a growing consensus calling for such neighborhood collaboratives—from experts, foundations, CPS administrators, teachers, parents, and community organizations. Other neighborhoods have pilot programs; ours would seem to be a likely prospect. Stay tuned!

died about suggesting we use TIF funds to prop up the city's operating budget. This is an example of improper management and is not what the program was intended for nor even supported by the law. If these kinds of abuses continue, I recommend placing a moratorium on the creation of any new TIF districts until we can obtain empirical data supporting the overall economic improvement of blighted communities in the city.

Yokoyama: The proper process for proposing, forming, and approving a TIF

is an arduous one, and more information on the specific requirements can be found at the website for the Neighborhood Capital Budget Group (www.ncbg.com/tifs/tifs.html). Our city needs significant, drastic reform in the ways we use TIF districts. Between 2004 and 2008, the 4th Ward received only \$4.98 million in TIF spending, while the 2nd Ward to the north received over \$350 million in that same time. I don't believe that our TIFs have fully benefited the people that need them most, calling into question whether or not we need them at all.

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5. *What problems do you see in the present level of public services (e.g. garbage and litter pickup, street maintenance, park maintenance, police presence) in the ward? What can the alderman do to address those problems?*

Burns: In order to help relieve the City of Chicago's budget deficit, employees are taking mandatory furlough days and unpaid holidays. This constant decrease in manpower affects the level of public service in all wards. Nevertheless, I will fight to ensure that the 4th Ward receives its fair share of city services including public safety.

In order to help address some of the problems in terms of neighborhood beautification, the alderman can allocate TIF or menu funding to support the services provided by CleanSlate. This program provides on-the-job training and transitional support services for students of the Cara Program who face significant obstacles to employment. Currently, through the existing contract funded by the 53rd Street TIF, the CleanSlate team helps city staff keep our retail corridors clean by providing for all litter abatement, snow removal, and landscaping services.

In terms of safety and security, the Alderman should not only encourage residents to attend CAPS meetings but attend as well. As alderman I would advocate for additional police officers for the ward.

Rumsey: I have been surprised at the number of calls I've received citing poor or no response from the alderman's office regarding trash pickup, street sweeping, and streetlight repair. The first job of the alderman is to maintain basic services. Some of our neighbourhood parks (such as Nichols Park and Mandrake Park) are poorly lit at night, making it unsafe to walk through them, especially in areas such as where there are running tracks and tennis courts.

I support the idea of switching Chicago to a grid-based garbage pickup system, which would save many millions of dollars every year (although I do oppose the privatization of such city services).

4th Ward staff in my office would be sure to respond to all complaints, and not just refer callers to 311.

Scott: No response to Question 5.

Yokoyama: Many of our ward's services are impacted by the financial boondoggle at City Hall. The 4th Ward has no recycling bins for residents, which is a disgrace in a city that touts itself as being Earth friendly and green. While our ward has benefited from urban renewal, seedy elements remain that require a police presence that will make the community more attractive to new residents and businesses. In these and numerous other cases, our city budget has held our ward's service hostage. We need budgetary reform immediately.

6. *Do you see any significant problems with real estate zoning in the ward? Do you believe that upcoming issues can be effectively resolved through individual variances, or is there a need for zoning review or for zoning revisions in any specific areas of the ward?*

Burns: There are not significant problems with real estate zoning in the 4th Ward. Yes, I believe that upcoming issues can be effectively resolved through individual variances. The last zoning revision for a specific area within the ward was in East Hyde Park. A particular area was down zoned to accommodate existing 6 flats, taking it from a RM-6 to a RM-5.

Rumsey: Yes. When the city revised its zoning regulations a few years ago, the Metropolitan Planning Council (in a community forum sponsored by HPKCC) recommended that every alderman form a zoning review board to look at every block within the ward. Although it has not been attempted in the 4th or 5th Wards, other aldermen have done this.

I have made a commitment to carry out such a review, with a series of citizens' committee with representatives drawn from each part of the ward to be reviewed. Moreover, if there is a request for special planned use designations, I would also begin the decision-making process by having a meeting with residents affected by such a zoning change, to see why they support or oppose it. Only after I'm con-

vinced that it would be to the betterment of the neighbourhood would I let such planned use zoning revisions proceed. In addition, I would make "quality" an important issue in any new developments. I have heard many complaints about the poor quality of some of the new construction going on in the ward. I would not permit open-face brick, and I would have an alderman's representative do "spot checks" on construction to make sure developers are following the architects' guidelines and not cutting corners to save costs (no under-strength beams, porches that are falling off, or sagging floors).

Scott: No response to Question 6.

Yokoyama: Frankly, our Ward needs a comprehensive, publicly accessible development plan that emphasizes community integration. Again, referencing the Reconnecting Neighborhoods plan, some proposals have been made. Looking at the zoning map for the 4th Ward, though, shows that some areas are zoned commercial where little commercial property exists (e.g., 40th Street and Cottage Grove). Variances, at this point, are wasted efforts, and that review must integrate the concerns of a revitalizing community with the needs of a 21st century, global city.

7. *What is the alderman's role in addressing the popularly perceived inadequacies in the public schools? Do you have proposals for additional youth-oriented programs in your ward?*

Burns: The alderman must be a consistent advocate for funding for the Chicago Public Schools. As a member of the Illinois House of Representatives I have fought to reduce the reliance on the state's property tax to fund public schools and to identify the resources necessary to provide every child with access to a high quality education. As alderman, I would leverage existing assets in the ward such as the University of Chicago and the Illinois Institute of Technology to provide teacher training and professional development opportunities for educators in the local schools. I would also solicit support from the private sector to provide supplementary education programming. I would also work with the Federation of Community

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4th Ward Candidate Responses...

Schools, CPS, the State Board of Education, and members of the state legislature to secure funding for additional community schools in the 4th Ward. Community schools link schools with social service providers, community based organizations, parents, and other community stakeholders to provide before school and after school programming, mental health services, and parenting classes.

Rumsey: I believe in having a strong accountability system in Chicago Public Schools that includes the following:

- Strong leadership at the Principal level.
- A culture of inclusiveness that involves parents in student-learning.
- A student centric culture.
- Community engagement that allows schools to stay open late and offers parents and others the opportunity to engage with school administrators and even take extra-curricular courses at the schools.
- Respect for faculty and their role in the schools.

While I am in favor of new schools being built in neighborhoods that have had increased enrollment, I am not in favor of reconstituting schools and dislocating faculty because a school has not made annually yearly progress (AYP). I find this to be particularly disruptive. Based on multiple research studies (see Consortium on Chicago School Research, for example), this is not a productive way to manage an underperforming school.

I strongly believe we need to work with the Teachers Union, Central Administration, and the schools that have been labelled as underperforming to see that they are fixed. Dislocating principals, teachers, and having children and parents upset about “transforming” schools that can be fixed requires too much angst and difficulty for the children that have to attend a new school. Charter schools can be useful, but are not the long-term solution.

We also need to reform how we pay for our public schools. This can only begin with a rewrite of our State of Illinois Constitution so that we can guarantee each child has a “thorough and efficient” education. We need to de-emphasize testing and allow our students to maintain a portfolio

of learning. Testing to see where they are in terms of learning is important; but then we must set standards that can be met state-wide and that are in keeping with national standards. So, a curriculum infused with arts, culture, reading, math, science, social studies, and extra-curricular activities is important.

We need to ensure that our children get adequate exercise so a curriculum that includes gym is important. I also strongly believe we need to teach health in schools that provide our students with “age appropriate sex education” and to provide an adequate menu for lunch and nutritious foods to be served on these campuses.

Lastly, we need to involve parents in the programming of the schools beyond simply inviting them to serve on a Local School Council (LSC). We need to offer after-school programming that actually invites parents — and community volunteers — into the schools, and we need to engage them in the learning life of the children.

If elected, I plan on attending Local School Council meetings and/or PTO/PTA meetings as appropriate and whenever possible in every school in the 4th Ward. I also want to visit the schools on report card pick-up day and make myself available to the principals and teachers of my ward. I will be highly visible in the schools and I will retain the services of someone in my office who has experience with schools and school policy to be my liaison to the schools in the 4th Ward.

Scott: The appropriate role for an alderman is to act as liaison between their local schools and the city council. With insight and guidance from professional educators, school administrators, and teachers union leadership, elected officials should be able to target the requisite resources and advocate for their schools at city council meetings.

In addition, I’ll look to work with others in the city council to collectively pressure state government to change the funding structure for public schools. The current formula is inherently unfair and needs to be changed.

Yokoyama: The 4th ward alderman, while not wielding direct control over Chicago Public Schools, certainly is in the position to serve as a liaison with our school officials and state legislators that influence education policy. We can have a direct impact on public education, though, by empowering youth members of our community. Creating neighborhood specific youth councils is a step in the right direction, where both adults and young community members have an influence over outreach planning and execution, helps to teach younger community members how to wield authority positively. The benefits are taken directly into the classroom by students, avoiding the bureaucratic nightmares of education administrators.

Now that you’ve read
what the 4th Ward candidates have to say,
wouldn’t you like to hear **how they say it?**

Come to a candidate forum
Presented by the Coalition for Equitable Community
Development in Hyde Park-Kenwood as part of its
annual meeting
Saturday, February 5, from 10 am to noon at the
Neighborhood Club
Co-sponsored by HPKCC and other local organizations

5th Ward Candidate Responses

The candidates remaining on the ballot for the 5th Ward, in the order listed by the Board of Election Commissioners of Chicago, are: Anne Marie Miles, Michele Tankersley, Leslie Hairston, Glen Ross, and Carol Hightower Chalmers. Of those currently on the ballot, responses were received from Chalmers, Hairston, Miles, and Tankersley.

1. *What are your three highest priorities for your ward? What do you regard as the most critical issues facing the ward? If elected, how would you go about addressing them? If the most critical issues are not the same as your highest priorities, why not?*

Chalmers: The highest priorities for my ward are addressing the issues of education, crime and violence, employment and protection of senior citizens with regard to daily living and financial assistance. I would address the following issues:

- Education: Hire learning facilitators for K-8 to develop curriculum in effort to improve scores and for the ISAT tests.
- Crime and violence: Create a stronger police presence work, with National Guard to encourage them to apply to become a police officers.
- Employment: Work with new career development organizations, in a effort to facilitate job creation, so that more adults can become working class citizens.
- Senior citizens: As alderman I will create a better alliance with DHS to serve seniors 24 hours a day and ask for an advisory committee to discuss the needs of the seniors with quarterly reports produced by trained consultants for my eyes and ears.

Hairston: My office will continue our focus on revitalizing the ward's commercial districts. Through working with business leaders, we have attracted an array of previously unavailable services and flagship companies, some of whom are expanding their presence in the ward. They include Staples, K&G Fashion Superstore, the city's first South Side drive-through Starbucks, Jewel/Osco, Anna's Linens, and Save-A-Lot. The majority of managers and employees hired have been from the ward. I created a Special Services Area not only to ensure the up-keep of a commercial district, but also to hire the difficult to employ through the CARA program, which has a classroom component.

We have a dearth in number and quality of our high schools. We have made strides with the recent opening of the brand new Gary Comer College Prep, but it currently serves only freshmen and sophomores. For three years we have been meeting with the community on how the new South Shore High School would operate, but just recently learned CPS has stated intentions not to follow that plan. I have made it a priority to ensure South Shore meets the needs outlined by residents.

The ward has a very diverse socio-economic mix of residents. Quality housing at all levels is extremely important. This means ensuring affordable, well-managed and up-to-code buildings. The ward has private homes, market-rate housing and the city's largest number of Section 8 properties. The abundance of subsidized rental property has brought many of those formerly in public housing, but not the services previously available to them. That requires ensuring landlords meet their legal obligations, as well as that tenants understand their rights and responsibilities. The ward also has one of the highest numbers of condominium associations and co-ops, which have been disproportionately burdened by the requirements of several new ordinances. We will continue representing their interests by advocating reasonable compromises.

Difficult economic times have meant increased vigilance about crime and nuisance behavior, especially related to youth. We have approached problem areas comprehensively in partnership with the police, businesses, community groups, block clubs, and schools, with whom we have partnered to expand after-school programs and sponsoring positive activities for young people. Our efforts are paying off and we expect them to play an important role in the future.

The ward is blessed with many assets – lakefront beaches, three harbors,

Jackson Park, the South Shore Cultural Center, Museum of Science and Industry, the Smart Museum, and the University of Chicago to name a few. We have hosted triathlons, marathons and music/culture fests that brought thousands to the ward and benefited local vendors. We expect to continue finding creative ways to showcase the ward as a means to economic development, as well as to maintain their accessibility and attractiveness to residents. As always, we request creative opportunities for youth employment, training and education.

Miles: a. What are your three highest priorities for your ward?

- i) Economic Development, with specific attention to “green” development, i.e. solar or urban farming.
- ii) Increased educational opportunities, and
- iii) Public safety.

b. What do you regard as the most critical issues facing the ward? If elected, how would you go about addressing them?

- i) I will create a Ward wide Advisory Council to focus on plans for Economic development, with specific attention being given to opportunities in “green” industries. For example there are many grants available for urban farming initiatives which create local sustainable jobs.
- ii) The money -- over 100K -- which has been spent from ward funds on providing free parking spaces will be used to leverage monies and services available from programs with proven track records that provide needed services to students in school.
- iii) The Fifth Ward is served by two police districts. The Alderman's office can facilitate an exchange of information regarding criminal activity when appropriate. Further, innovativemethods of crime prevention must be explored, including the expanded use of emergency boxes.

Tankersley: Violence and Safety: Violence in our communities including

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5th Ward Candidate Responses...

Hyde Park, South Shore and Woodlawn is out of control and is not being addressed. Incarceration is not the answer; it is just putting a bandage on an open wound. I want to address the issue by bringing in effective programs or by assisting with the development of effective programs where drug dealers can learn how to flip their illegal skills into legal skills. Our children and young adults need positive exposure; they need to know that they are a WINNER because "you do better, when you know better." Thus we need to teach them self-esteem, goal setting, conflict resolution, and career guidance. This formula works.

My background is Violence Prevention. I have won two awards for my work: One from the Citizen School Committee in 1993 for the workshops I developed for the Chicago Public Schools, grades K-12 and for the adults. These workshops address Life Skills for the Future and Career Guidance. My second award was from Housing and Urban Development (HUD). I was recognized for the work I did in Carpentersville, Illinois, developing Career Development and a after school programs for teen girls, called Keepin It Real. This program focusses on Life Skills.

2. Education: Our school system is broken and I don't blame the teachers. I have had an opportunity to work in all seven Districts, and all six Regions. Teachers are overwhelmed with all the social problems they must cope with. Whatever happens within the student home has a trickle down affect in the classroom. In most classrooms teachers must wear the hat of social worker, disciplinarian, parent and whatever else the students may feel a need to express to their teacher that particular day. Some classrooms have 32-42 students and some of these classes are split. How do you expect that teacher to be effective? A class size of 17-22 students would be conducive to learning for both the teacher and student, and more beneficial for all stakeholders.

In our high risk and disadvantaged area schools, the class sizes are too large and we wonder why our children are failing and can't compete the program. I strongly believe that Education is the Key and the

best gift we can give our children.

3. Employment: I want our communities to think outside the "Box." We are facing an employment crisis and we must start thinking about becoming Entrepreneur's. The banks in our Ward need to be more receptive and supportive of small businesses in our communities. This will be one way to increase economic development; we need midsize and large businesses as well.

2. *Is there a need for a reconfiguration of the transportation system for the ward? Do you have suggestions for changes to the public transportation system? Do you have suggestions for changes that will make the ward friendlier for pedestrian traffic, or for automobile use?*

Chalmers: Yes there is a need to reconfigure the transportation for the 5th ward. My suggestion for the public transportation system is to increase the presence of CTA supervisors to monitor the buses to make sure that they arrive on time. I would also work with CTA to improve customer service amongst CTA employees; in addition to working with CTA to redesign senior citizens and disability passes to clearly signify a passenger's status.

Hairston: The main complaints we receive about transportation have to do with buses – service cuts and safety issues connected with drivers working long hours and driving unfamiliar routes. We have already focused on upgrades to lighting on major thoroughfares, the medians on Stony Island Ave., "chirping lights" at 55th & Lake Park for the visually impaired, and countdown traffic lights. The Midway Crossings Project should be complete by early 2010 and will enhance Midway Plaisance for both pedestrians and vehicles crossing. My office will continue to work with Metra to make their stations/embankments safer and more attractive.

Miles: The current configuration of the transportation system will be reviewed in light of recommendations regarding economic development in the ward. An issue of changing the location of a bus stop to enhance safety for children has been raised and will be reviewed.

As I have walked the Fifth Ward, the issue

of parking has been raised repeatedly. The parking situation caused by commuters who drive in to Fifth Ward to avail themselves of free parking while commuting to downtown jobs must be evaluated as should summer parking issues. The Ward Wide Advisory Council will address the parking issue. Some type of residential parking permits may be considered.

Tankersley: My main concern is the condition of the streets. I drive and use public transportation; the streets' condition is herandous. I'm more concerned about the University students and bus service for them. This is a College Ward and the concern for the well-being of the students should be high on the list. There should be more bike lanes, not just on the lake front, but throughout all three communities.

3. *Are there significantly underdeveloped areas (or empty spaces) in your ward? Do you have suggestions for the uses of such spaces? Are there specific areas that can be developed to encourage retail, provide green space, or increase the availability of affordable housing?*

Chalmers: Yes the many empty spaces and blighted buildings. Previously there were programs in place to help interested parties purchase and rehab these areas, these programs need to be reinstated in an effort to encourage development of small businesses. For example Stony Island has blighted buildings and empty spaces, this area would be a great place where Chicago's Wall Street can create incentives to circulate and rebuild a declining ward. This area was once known as a diamond in the rough. The alderman and HUD needs to create an alliance to give one another access to reports to develop better affordable housing.

Hairston: The space at 78th and Stony Island was earmarked for K-Mart, which went under and continues to be a challenge. We have filled in most of the other vacant land – e.g., the Revere neighborhood in Greater Grand Crossing (affordable housing, youth center, school, public library); 76th & Stony Island (K&G, Anna's Linens, etc.); Starbucks, (which took over an abandoned

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5th Ward Candidate Responses...

fast food restaurant); and Bank of America, where nothing was previously.

Comer Youth Center has green roof and land gardens to educate residents about urban farming. We are exploring similar possibilities with the Urban Land Institute. The ward already sits at the top of areas with subsidized housing, and I will continue making sure all affordable housing is up to code and safe.

Miles: There are a number of vacant lots on Stony Island and South Chicago. These lots should be used for economic development, which may include urban farm initiatives. These lots may also be used to provide affordable housing as may infill lots in the interior of the ward.

Tankersley: Yes, on all of the above. I would like to see more community gardens for healthy eating. We are becoming too obese and it is not because we don't know how to eat healthy; it's because the healthy food is expensive and we choose foods that fills up and blows us up. My vision is to have gardens in all fifty-five precincts. I want to see green affordable and up-scale housing within the 5th ward; that's a winning combination.

4. What is the proper procedure for the management of TIFs? Should the ward have more or fewer TIFs? What is your view of the value of the TIFs that are now in place in the ward?

Chalmers: The proper procedure for the management of TIFs is to have the TIF monitored by different facilitators to make sure that the dollars that are used are implemented properly for the use of the tasks. These dollars is to sit in a bucket to create taxes for other upcoming developments, in acquiring these dollars for the TIF this project should create dollars and jobs for the ward and the residents of the community and them, and them alone.

Hairston: The allocation process definitely needs more transparency, fair distribution, oversight, and adherence to the original intention. Rather than address

“blighted” areas, the program has been concentrated in downtown areas at the expense of neighborhoods that truly need to stimulate development. Aldermen know what's happening in their ward, but should be apprised of TIF's in other wards as well.

We had community meetings in the 5th Ward to determine how we wanted to use our TIF funds. I worked to attract businesses to support the TIF. In the end, the money went toward constructing South Shore High School in the 8th Ward. The school was needed, but the allocation completely disregarded our community's efforts and needs. TIF money has also helped with beautification of 53rd Street, acquiring blighted properties, completing Comer Prep, and attracting Starbuck's.

Miles: The entire TIF program must be re-evaluated in terms of economic feasibility in this economic climate. That being said, while the TIF program continues the Fifth Ward is entitled to its share of the economic benefit. I will work to create other TIF districts to benefit the Ward. While the current TIF program is in effect, I would support the Proposed Sweet Home Chicago ordinance designed to aid in stopping foreclosures.

Tankersley: My concern has to do with the way the TIF's money is being allocated: Is it being used for the right purpose? Are those receiving the TIF's money receiving the amount that was promised?

5. What problems do you see in the present level of public services (e.g. garbage and litter pickup, street maintenance, park maintenance, police presence) in the ward? What can the alderman do to address those problems?

Chalmers: I believe that the public garbage and pick up should be evaluated better, because sometimes there has been missed pick up or non pickup of large item. When private garbage is not picked up these companies should be fined and all garbage pick up should be on the same day. There should also, no longer be privatized parking meters because we are no longer in a recession but a depression and people are no longer in a position to pay for paying such fees for parking.

Hairston: We have a very good working

relationship with our ward representatives, which helps greatly with problems that do occur. Our main issue has been with having sufficient police presence, which is now being addressed by Jody Weis.

Miles: The delivery of constituent services has been a major concern of Fifth Ward residents. There are numerous complaints about garbage collection, potholes, park maintenance. Yet this must be viewed in the context of Chicago's budgetary crisis. In order to reduce costs and provide equal or better services, I believe that the City must go to a regional system of garbage pickup. This move alone would save 30 Million dollars.

On a local level, rather than use Ward Funds to pay for free parking some portion might be used to augment street maintenance and park maintenance services.

Tankersley: I see a high presence of police service from the Chicago Police and the University Police in the Hyde Park area. In the South Shore area, that presence is low, except in the mini mall on 71st street. There also isn't enough police presence in the Woodlawn area. I don't want to see taxes on trash pick-up. Street maintenance could be improved. The park maintenance is being done well. I would work closely with the superintendent of all of these departments to keep us on target.

6. Do you see any significant problems with real estate zoning in the ward? Do you believe that upcoming issues can be effectively resolved through individual variances, or is there a need for zoning review or for zoning revisions in any specific areas of the ward?

Chalmers: There is a need for zoning review or zoning revision because certain areas such as home or businesses should automatically be rezoned and not assigned zoning numbers because most people are using their home for both residential and home use.

Hairston: We have been able to limit a preponderance of certain businesses on the ward's commercial streets and to diversify when possible. We should be able

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5th Ward Candidate Responses...

to control uses through zoning, so, for example, we don't have to put a moratorium on dollar stores.

Miles: The Fifth Ward Advisory Council which I will create will address the issue of zoning review if it becomes apparent it is needed as the Council focuses on economic development and affordable housing issues. If urban farm initiatives are being considered then zoning issues would be addressed in that context.

Tankersley: I would really examine the real estate zoning before I can say it will be an issue or not and make the best decision for the ward.

7. What is the alderman's role in addressing the popularly perceived inadequacies in the public schools? Do you have proposals for additional youth-oriented programs in your ward?

Chalmers: Yes, the alderman's role is important in addressing the perceived inadequacies in public schools. To address these issues there should be specific people assigned to assist students in public schools including tutors, and the development of learning labs, and there should also be student tutors who would be assigned a stipend to assist other students in learning.

Hairston: I meet regularly with the ward's principals to find out their "on the ground" needs. I see it as my role to advocate on their behalf with CPS and appropriate elected officials – as I did to save Ray School's language program. As mentioned in Q1 above, I also actively seek out educational alternatives to shore up gaps in the ward. The ward is blessed with several wonderful youth programs centered in organizations throughout the ward -- most notably the South Shore Culture Center, Comer Youth Center and Hyde Park Neighborhood Club. In addition, I will continue to seek private, city, state, and federal funding to support or sponsor initiatives such as the triathlon program, book club, art projects, etc. that offer a variety of healthy, broadening ex-

periences to our young.

Miles: I would make the majority of the monies from the Ward budget which were spent on free parking spaces available for additional youth-orientated programs. As a member of the Safe Youth Chicago steering committee of the Union League Club, I have realized that one important consideration is not to re-invent the wheel, but to use funds to support programs with a proven track record. Examples of programs that I would consider providing funding for include, Youth Guidance, After Schools Matter, Boys and Girls Clubs. It is the educators, including school administrators, who are in the best position to advise me on what programs they need and what services would provide the most benefit for their students.

Tankersley: Yes we need more programs, not only on weekdays but also on the weekends. Our children are missing childhood stages. They don't know how to play outdoor games and their environment isn't safe. This will change once I become alderman. It is important that our children enjoy all of their childhood stages.

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News From the Board

October

The “First Meeting of the Year” is organizational in nature; the new Executive is elected, committees are constituted, and Board members elected at the September annual meeting are seated and introduced to the workings of the Board.

Jane Ciacci succeeded Jay Ammerman (who remains on the Board) as President; Brenda Sawyer and Anita Hollins are Vice-Presidents; Mark Granfors remained as Treasurer; and Gail Isenberg succeeded Trish Morse as Secretary. New Board members are Daryl Crawford, of the Kimbark Laundry; Timika Hoffman-Zoller, of the U of C Police Department. Former members Jane Comiskey, George W. Davis, Irene Freelain and Gary Ossewaarde rejoined the Board.

November (Sawyer presiding)

The Board discussed the situation of Elm Park and the apparent disjunction between the Park District, which was supporting the park, and the plans by others to annex the park to Kimbark Plaza for a parking lot. It is assumed that the decision will be left to the next alderman of the 4th Ward.

The Board heard a written report from Ciacci about the Used Book Sale, which appears to be a viable and necessary source of revenue. For future years, it will be necessary to scout other locations for sorting, to better organize pickups of donated books, and to recruit more volunteers who can lift heavy boxes.

Snapper distributed the cover letter written by the Ad Hoc Committee on Aldermanic Candidates. Contingencies for dealing with responses were discussed.

December

The Board heard a presentation by Susan Alitto and Allison Hartman, the co-convenors of Hyde Park Village, and discussed some mutual concerns.

Jane Comiskey offered remarks in memory of our friend and colleague Judy Dupont.

Hamilton-Doyle reported on the Forum on Schools in Hyde Park, organized by the Herald and the Neighborhood Club on November 7. A role for the Schools Committee in this new venture was not clear, and the Committee continued to discuss this issue at its January meeting. Our Schools Committee has focused its attention largely on after-school activities. However, it was decided that the Committee would help out by providing a directory of staff in each school who are useful contacts. Snapper reported for the Nominating Committee that their membership in addition to himself as chair is Rumsey, Ammerman, and Sawyer. The Committee has two vacancies to consider (Bond and Dupont). They

will attempt to fill the latter and leave the former open until September.

January 2011

Peter Cassel of Antheus Capital, a former Board member, made a presentation to update members and answer questions on the progress of Antheus’ rental, retail and development projects in Hyde Park. Interior demolition at the Shoreland is beginning and the Del Prado will be ready for occupancy in May. Antheus has received approvals from the city for the 51st & Lake Park project. The condominium market is improving but still very difficult; Solstice on the Park is on hold, but planning with Bret Harte School to reconfigure their grounds continues.

The Board voted to send the complete aldermanic responses received by the Ad Hoc Committee on Aldermanic Responses to the Herald and other news outlets. The Board also voted to make a donation in memory of late Board member Judy Dupont, to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International.



The line for the Hyde Park Used Book Sale, held on Columbus Day weekend, stretches the length of the Treasure Island building

Board Members Honored

Several of our Board members have been honored in the last few months for their contributions to the community. Friends of the Parks has selected Gary Ossewaarde to receive its Individual Achievement award for his work in lakefront parks in Hyde Park and South Shore. The Friends' 2011 awards luncheon will honor the work of individuals and organizations that most significantly contributed to the improvement of Chicago's parks and forest preserves during 2010. As secretary of the Jackson Park Advisory Council during a period of change in leadership, Gary has provided continuity and helped to revitalize that group. Gary chairs the HPKCC Parks Committee, is a co-chair of the Condos Committee, and is a member of the Neighborhood Development and Schools Committees.

Board member Camille Hamilton-Doyle was honored by the Hyde Park Chamber of Commerce as its Volunteer of the Year at the Chamber's annual dinner in November. Among many activities, Camille chairs the HPKCC Schools Committee, co-chairs the Whistlestop/Safety Committee, is a member of the Hyde Park Used Book Sale Committee and the Friends of Blackstone Library, and gives generously of her time and energy to Conference and community activities.

One of our first-year board members, Timika Hoffman-Zoller, was honored in September with the Federal Emergency Management Administration's National Citizen Corps Achievement Award, for her neighborhood activities in safety preparedness. Timika is also the founder and president of the new Elm Park Advisory Council. Timika is a member of the HPKCC Parks Committee and the Whistlestop/Safety Committee.

The Chicago Theological Seminary Documentation Repository has been established to document the architecture, art and history of the CTS buildings. The repository includes photographs, published commentary, and personal commentary. The Chicago Theological Seminary Documentation Repository is not affiliated with the Chicago Theological Seminary. Visit the repository at www.ctsthreatened.org



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PROGRAMS

Chicago Academic Games League
Condos/Co-ops+
Development, Preservation & Zoning
Disabilities Task Force
Friends of Blackstone Library
Hyde Park Garden Fair
Hyde Park Used Book Sale
Nichols Park Advisory Council
Parks Committee
Schools Committee
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