

Patrick Butler's column: Booster shots

Neighbors don't want another hardware store

Members of the Greater Independence Park Neighborhood Association say they've collected 301 signatures from local residents opposing plans to put a Home Depot store at Addison Street and Kimball Avenue.

Thomas Rae and Howard Turrentine said their group wants the vacant 10-acre site zoned industrial or residential -- and has already talked with two housing developers they said would be interested in building there if the zoning allowed it.

Rae has already sent letters asking Mayor Richard Daley and Chicago Planning and Development Commissioner Chris Hill to deny any tax-increment financing request by the Atlanta-based home-supply retailer. He noted there are already three Home Depots, two Menards and numerous other smaller hardware stores within 15 minutes' drive of the neighborhood that would be hurt by another "big box" retailer.

Those letters were accompanied by additional petitions opposing the proposed Home Depot signed by more than 260 other area residents at a recent neighborhood meeting hosted by Ald. Mike Wojcik of the neighboring 30th Ward.

Ald. Richard Mell (33rd), whose ward includes that Addison/Kimball property, said that, although he would prefer to see that land kept for manufacturing use, "They (Home Depot) don't need our permission to come in here" since the land was already rezoned for a planned-unit development when Builders Square was thinking of locating there several years ago.

"If there had been this much indignation then, we could have done something," said Mell, adding that he personally doesn't expect Home Depot to build there without a TIF.

And that's not very likely, Mell said of the TIF.

"The community is against it, and the mayor's against it," he explained.

ARVE news

Robin Langer took over as acting president (with Scott Henriquez as vice president) of the Associates for Roscoe Village Enterprise after Scott Gelzer, the group's founding helmsman, moved to Milwaukee. Langer and Henriquez will serve until ARVE's regularly scheduled officer elections next January.

ARVE, which represents the business community along Roscoe Street between Western and Damen avenues and along Damen between Belmont Avenue and Addison Street, holds its next regular meeting 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 27, at Ascension Lutheran Church, 1901 W. Cornelia Ave. Guest speaker will be Belmont (19th) District Police Commander John Minoque, who will offer security tips for small businesses.

Told ya so

You read it here first. Two months ago 1996 Ms. Illinois Carolyn Morris hinted at a 44th Ward Republican dinner at Little Bucharest Restaurant, 3001 N. Ashland Ave., that she might run for Cook County sheriff. Morris was scheduled to make it official Tuesday, Aug. 12. The would-be town-tamer is the founder of the World Security Bureau, which draws on a list of 750 law-enforcement officers who have volunteered to provide women with protection from death threats and stalkers.

Moving on...

All the best to Jean Smith, who recently retired after serving more than 50 years in various volunteer capacities (including president and endowment committee chairman) at the Mary Crane

Center, 2905 N. Leavitt Ave. Another longtime board member, social worker Marge Perham, also packed it in after 20 years. Their slots on the board are being filled by Donna Stgernicki and Jennifer Dodson, who both just got out of DePaul Law School.

Kudos

Congratulations to Elizabeth Mikelson of West Byron Street, one of 30 Chicago area high-school students who recently received Illinois Restaurant Association Pineapple Awards at Charlie Trotter's, 816 W. Armitage Ave. According to Katie Cushing, a spokeswoman for this other IRA, Americans, for the first time, spent more eating out last year than they spent in the grocery store. If the trend continues, an estimated 10.8 million of the nation's best and brightest will be needed in the food service industry by 2005.

Word of mouth

Think you've got something to say that people should hear? The College of Complexes is always looking for a few good speakers for its weekly forums, held at 8 p.m. Saturdays at the Lincoln Restaurant, 4008 N. Lincoln Ave. There's no honorarium, but guest speakers do get a free dinner. Call program coordinator Charles Paidock at during the day at (312) 353-0446 and (312) 842-5036 in the evenings. Past speakers have covered topics ranging from ``Great Hoaxes of History'' and ``Why America Needs a Labor Party'' to an Aug. 16 slide show on ``The CTA and Me'' by elevated train motorman Walter Collins.

School notes

Seven Lane Tech High School students were recently honored for together putting in more than 460 volunteer hours in the Ravenswood Hospital Teen Program. More than half that time was worked by Melissa Grimm, who contributed 136.5 hours this summer and another 101 hours over the past school year. Kemi Awoniyi served 68.5 hours; Destinee Donelson did 55 hours; Arabelle Almoradie gave 38 hours; Karim Gowani, 32.5 hours; and Maria Cisneros, 31 hours.... Registration is under way for a half-day kindergarten program at Coonley School, 4046 N. Leavitt St. There's a choice of 8 a.m. to noon or noon to 4 p.m. sessions. Coonley is also organizing a pre-kindergarten for three- and four-year-olds. Call (773) 534-5140 for details.

On the road again

Resurfacing work is under way on the Kennedy Expressway underpasses at Irving Park and Pulaski roads, and Diversey and Fullerton avenues. State Rep. John Fritchey (33rd) said the \$500,000 job was needed because of increasingly heavy traffic.... Meanwhile, 1,289 feet of 8-inch water pipe is being installed on Wellington Avenue between Elston and California avenues, according to Chicago Water Department spokesman Renee Prejean, who said the new main will mean improved water service and fire protection.

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