

MINUTES

Ravinia Neighbors Association Board Meeting
Wednesday, November 11, 2009

Don Miller called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. in the home of Carol and Paul Willis at 360 Woodland Road.

In attendance were Ray DeLong, Peg Laemle, Amy Lohmolder, Don Miller, Al Richman, Jeff Stern, Eve Tarm, Ken Temkin and Dave Wigodner, and Carol and Paul Willis.

Don Miller commented that 330 Newsletters – the highest in his memory – had been sent out as the Fall 2009 edition.

In discussing a proposed Garden Walk for next year, Miller floated the idea of sending out a jumbo postcard in the spring to advertise the event, which would be aimed at increasing membership and raising funds. He said the format for staging a Garden Walk was relatively simple, but would require stationing a number of people to watch the houses as well as the property outside.

Miller anticipated including eight to ten gardens in the event, which would be held on a Sunday in late July or early August. He suggested printing leaflets with a map pinpointing the address of each garden rather than taking on the expense of a booklet with advertising. He recommended having participants checked in at each garden on an honor system after pre-paying for their tickets. RNA would pay for a sign to be posted at the entrance to each garden on the walk. RNA Board Members would bring and man a table and chairs at each location.

Miller proposed that homeowners who open their gardens for the walk be given automatic membership in the RNA, although he thought many were likely to be members already. He said admission should be free to current RNA members and their families. Non-members would be signed up at the door and charged \$20 for admission and one-year's membership. He compared this favorably to garden walks in other communities where admission could be as high as \$45.

Miller said the four gardens he was recommending for inclusion in the walk were within three blocks of each other. He would like to expand that number to eight, but noted that any garden being considered must be one that is not visible from the street. Otherwise, there would be nothing novel for visitors to see.

Dave Wigodner said that before our next meeting in January we should identify additional gardens for the walk, since it was too soon to address other issues. Jeff Stern mentioned the need to check any proposed date for the Garden Walk carefully to make sure it does not conflict with any other popular local event.

In his Newsletter update, Ray DeLong commended Al Richman for his efforts to bring in ads, noting that the latest issue had 57 inches of copy vs. 53 inches of ads. In light of this, he suggested enlarging the next edition from 8 to 12 pages. According to the printer, he said that the extra pages plus the addition of 150 more copies would add only about \$150 to the \$500 cost of the current issue. DeLong was very satisfied with the current layout of the ads, and recognized that anyone who might replace Richman may not have the same degree of success. He said quarter page ads seemed to be the most sought after. He noted that four writers provided all the copy that could be used in the current edition, that there had been photos with each article, but that they could not all be used. He encouraged others to write articles, but couldn't guarantee they would all get in. A discussion then followed about whether publication of the Newsletter should be limited to the website or should continue to be printed and mailed out. A decision was made to await Doug Purington's input before pursuing the matter further.

Ken Temkin presented the Treasurer's Report, saying there was \$7,687.78 in the RNA account, of which \$5,100 was in a CD and the balance in checking. Expenses were around \$700, which included \$461 to print the Newsletter, \$150 for postage and \$75 to put the Newsletter on the website.

Regarding the Business District, Eve Tarm said a new business was opening today at 467 Roger Williams called the Calm Massage and Therapy Center. They were excited to be in Ravinia and signed up with a \$50 RNA membership. She said Abigail's Restaurant remains very busy while Trattoria is less busy, and both the Sloppy Joe's and a storefront next to the Bank of Highland Park remain vacant. Also, the former Ravinia Plumbing building has a temporary occupant.

Dave Wigodner discussed recent developments regarding the Ravinia TIF district. He said a city meeting scheduled for August had been postponed due to the Art Fair, and that in October, a draft report of a market study that had been undertaken was received. He said there would be a meeting January 13 on the subject that will offer a public forum so residents can have input in the process, and that a committee would be appointed by the mayor to handle aspects of it.

In his Train Station Report, Jeff Stern invited members to consider a new message for the smallest of the picture frames RNA purchased to decorate the station walls, suggesting something to tout RNA and its role in the community. He noted that the water fountain in the station still doesn't have enough pressure to be usable and that the screens that were intended to disguise the vending machines outside the south end of the station still haven't been built. Miller said the lights over the kiosk outside the station have never been turned on, and that he had reattached the RNA Newsletter rack in a new location on the kiosk. A discussion about signs in the windows of vacant Ravinia businesses followed. Al Richman's idea for RNA to list helpful tradesmen was left for future discussion.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.