

Beach planning pays off

The MCC Shoreline Committee conducted countless meetings from late winter through spring to define the rules for behavior on the beach and to map enforcement. The Memorial Day weekend, which marks the official beginning of summer, gave everyone an opportunity to see how the planning worked, as exceptionally warm weather brought large crowds to the beach.

For the most part, planning paid off. The Gary Police and Fire Departments and the Lake County Sheriff's Department had additional personnel on the scene, and they successfully addressed their main objectives, discouraging alcohol consumption, fighting, and trashing the beach.

The Park Department started out behind the curve in keeping the beach clean. Although Mike Chirich obtained a large number of donated trash cans – 50 from the Isaac Walton League and 15 from Monosol on County Line Road – these were soon filled up. The park department did send extra workers to empty the cans and pick up the overflow trash on Memorial Day and early Tuesday morning.

In the background, Shoreline Committee chairman Carol Smith kept everyone on their toes. The result was a good weekend for the people enjoying the beach.

Of course, some work remains to be done. Although the city has paid past bills from the people who store and replace the buoys in the lake, the buoys were not in place by Memorial Day because workers were waiting for a really calm day to get them out. Flyers recapping beach rules were not available to be handed out at parking locations, and beach signs were not in place to show beach rules and locations. In fact, permanent beach signs, which are part of the park renovation, will not be in place until fall.

Still, the work of the Shoreline Committee has paid off, and their efforts will continue. The committee meets on the third Thursday of each month, and the next meeting will be **June 21 at 6:00 pm** at St. Barnabas Church. Visitors are welcome.

Arts District is developing

The Miller Beach Arts and Creative District (aka Arts District) was founded a year ago “to bring energy, vibrancy and economic viability back to Lake Street.” Since then, they have held a number of “pop-up art”

events, which brought large numbers of people to Lake Street on these special occasions.

THE NEXT POP-UP ART EVENT is scheduled for **Saturday, June 9, from 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm**. In contrast with the previous events which presented the work of local artists, this evening will feature unique and engaging works by nationally-known artists from the Craig Smith Gallery of Chicago, Dallas, and Union Pier, which will be on display at the Marshall Gardener Center (formerly Miller Drugs). The event will also include live background music, a wine tasting by Simon Barrios, and a performance (at 7:30) by the South Shore Dance Alliance. Several of the gallery artists will be on hand to discuss their work.

Later in the season, the fine arts graduate student program of the Chicago Art Institute will curate the October 13 Pop-Up Art event.

In the background, volunteer workers are transforming the former Miller Drugs building into the **Marshall J. Gardener Center for the Arts**, first as a display space for art, then eventually for studio space as well. The goal for 2013 is to begin our artists' live/work/show resident program.

The Arts District is also sponsoring the **Miller Beach Farmers Market**, on Lake Street next to the railroad tracks, which will be operating every Saturday from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm through September. Vendors are offering organic produce, ethnic foods, meats, flowers and candles, arts and crafts and whatever else. Picnic tables are available for visitors to socialize and lunch.

For the long run, the Arts District is working with several developers, the City of Gary and the National Park Service to establish **The Dunes National Lake Shore Lodge & Resort**, to be located at the north end of Lake Street. Costas Dillon, Superintendent of the National Park, sees this as a desirable service for many visitors to the park who want to stay overnight.

The Art District Planning Committee is working on a **Transportation-Oriented Development (TOD)** which will ensure that the South Shore Station remains at Lake Street, the gateway to the Arts District. This effort has the support of many organizations, including the Regional Development Authority which is funding the renovation of Marquette Park.

The Arts District has obtained some small grants from local donors, and they are vying for much larger grants from national funding sources.

Duly noted

DAY CAMP FOR KIDS. The **Miller Beach Day Camp** invites children from 5 to 11 years old, to join in adventure, arts and crafts and sports days, **from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from June 18 to August 10.** Activities will include scavenger hunts, behind scenes at a restaurant, field days, beach fitness and more. Headquarters is the Marquette Park United Methodist Church on Grand Blvd. The program aims to build friendships among children from various neighborhoods by allowing them to share in positive activities. For more information, call Maggie Mooers (219-576-3334) or Alison Reba (219-218-7736) or e-mail millerbeachdaycamp@gmail.com.

MILLER GARDEN WALK – JULY 14 AND 15. The Miller Garden Club is presenting its annual garden walk, **“Flower beds, bird baths and beyond”** on the weekend of **July 14 and 15 from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.** Nine beautiful gardens at five stops will be on display. Headquarters for the event will be at the Aquatorium in Marquette Park, where box lunches will be on sale and vendors will be selling garden-related items. A free shuttle bus service will move visitors from garden to garden. Tickets cost \$8 each and are available in advance at Ayers Realtors, the Lake Street Gallery, and the Marquette Perk, or on the days of the walk at the Aquatorium and at any of the gardens on display. **This is your chance to visit some of the great gardens which Miller residents have created for their enjoyment and yours.**

A RECORD CLEANUP. This year’s Miller Cleanup was a cooperative effort by the MCC, the Miller Business Association (MBA) the Miller Garden Club, and others, including the Warren-Vigo Block Club, which cleaned up from Vigo to County Line Road. In all, 66 volunteers signed in and can be identified, along with some number of workers whose names were not recorded. This was, by far, the largest participation in the 40-year history of MCC cleanups, and much of the Miller community benefitted from the effort. Thanks to all of the many people who helped!

MILLER VILLAGE CHANGING HANDS. The Miller Village Apartment complex on County Line Road has been purchased by Millennium Properties, who plan to invest \$9,000,000 into improving the buildings and grounds. As part of the renovation, they have asked the Miller Beach Arts District to help them find an artist who can create a mural for the north side of the high rise building. The new managers have a good reputation for checking out prospective tenants, and they have announced plans for weeding out objectionable residents.

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE MILLER CITIZENS CORP. BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL BE HELD ON MONDAY, JUNE 11, AT 7:30 PM IN THE MEETING ROOM OF THE MARQUETTE PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ON GRAND BLVD. Members are invited to attend and participate.

Contact the MCC between meetings at P.O.Box 2645, Gary, IN 46403, or e-mail mceaton@aol.com. You can also visit the MCC website at www.millercitizenscorp.org.

SMOKING BAN. State Representative Charlie Brown, a Miller neighbor, campaigned tirelessly for the passage of a no-smoking law, which was finally approved by the Indiana legislature and governor this year. The law, which goes into effect July 1, prohibits smoking in most public places, with exceptions for bars, service clubs, casinos, and tobacco shops. Rep. Brown is disappointed that the legislation allows these exceptions, but they were needed to get the law through the state senate.

Gary air show on for July 6-8

Enjoy the sun, sand and roaring action of Gary's South Shore Air Show on July 6, 7, and 8. The US Air Force **Thunderbirds** will return to the show this year, along with dozens of other military and civilian performers engaging in aerial acrobatics over Lake Michigan.

On Friday, you can enjoy one of the largest over-water shows in the nation on the beach at sunset with a fireworks finale! The show starts with the Thunderbirds at 3:30. Saturday and Sunday, the show will be on from 11:30 am to 4:00 pm.

Headquarters for the Air Show is the **Aquatorium**, where there will be food vendors, a beer garden, a Kids Zone, and interactive military displays.

Admission to all the shows is FREE. Premium parking, just steps from the beach, is \$20.

MCC urged to back income tax

The MCC Government Affairs Committee, headed by Ron Gholson, is proposing that the MCC support a county income tax. When this subject was raised at the May MCC board meeting, the issue was postponed until June, because the board needed more information and

time to consider the subject. The Committee argued that the city needs more money and the income tax would bring in additional revenue, not only from local residents, but also from people who work in Lake County but live elsewhere. They state that the money which is raised by the income tax would go, first of all, to replace ordinary property taxes which are not paid, then for public safety expenses. On the other side, many people oppose additional taxes in general and feel that the MCC, which has established its reputation for opposing unreasonable taxes, should not be a leader in promoting new taxes. There will be more discussion, maybe with more information, at the next MCC board meeting on June 11.

Marquette remake progresses

During May, there was a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Marquette Park pavilion, where one speaker proclaimed that the renovation was completed “on schedule and under budget”. The visitors were then admitted to the pavilion, to see for themselves how much work remained to be completed. However, significant remaining work has been finished in a rush as the facility is prepared for scheduled events beginning now.

When the west wing of the Aquatorium was dedicated, very little work remained to be completed. The facility is ready for the customers who have it reserved on all the weekends and some weekdays through September. However, the Aquatorium management has been clashing with the City of Gary over fire safety and security. It seems likely that the issues will eventually be resolved, but it was a struggle to get the permission of the fire marshal to hold the dedication party, at which Mayor Freeman-Wilson spoke. When the Miller Garden Club held its annual plant sale at the Aquatorium, two off-duty firemen stood by the whole time with a truck full of water (to revive wilting plants?), even though the whole event took place out of doors and no one was actually inside the building.

Throughout the summer, parking at Marquette Park will be a moving famine, as one parking lot after another is being reworked. Furthermore, repaving the road through the park is the final item on the schedule, and will not happen until fall.

One item which has not been addressed after two years of discussion is the formation of a support organization to help pay for and manage operation of Marquette Park. Such a group is needed to supplement city funding, but Mayor Freeman-Wilson has not indicated what she thinks of such a Park Conservancy and what she would want its functions to be.

