



Miller Message for June 2017

Miller Walgreens closing

It appears likely that the Walgreens Drug Store at Rt.20 and Lake Street will close before the end of June. The decision is based on the claim that the store does not have enough prescription sales to be viable. However, Miller and Aetna residents are working on strategies to put pressure on Walgreens, and MCC members who have inside Walgreens contacts are hopeful, through private meetings, to keep it open. Meanwhile, Miller residents are urged to COMPLAIN, and WRITE TO John Gremer, Director of Community Affairs at Walgreens Greater Chicago Area

Retail: john.gremer@walgreens.com.

The closest alternative pharmacy is Fagan's, off Rt. 12 in the same strip mall as the improving Miller K Market.

Lake Effekt is back, June 17

In the background, there will be a street festival, where you can purchase art, crafts, food and drink from a host of eclectic and innovative vendors while you enjoy live music up and down Lake Street's business district. Family fun for everyone!

(NOTE: This event was erroneously announced for May 17. You haven't missed it.)the Third Lake Effekt Public Art and Street Festival, sixty artists will transform more than 20 walls into works of art during Saturday, June 17 from noon to 10:00 pmOn

Gary School situation

At the invitation of the Wirt/Emerson PTA, state Senator Melton appeared to discuss SB567, which he sponsored along with Senator Kenley. He had serious disagreements with the bill, but being a co-sponsor was the only way he could have a voice in how the bill was written.

In September 2016, the Gary Community Schools (GCS) applied to the state Distressed Unit Appeals Board (DUAB) for assistance, in case the pending school bond referendum failed, which it did. The GCS has a debt of \$103M, which has increased by \$8.5M this year, and is expected to increase by \$6M next year.

SB567 places the whole operation of the school system in the hands of an Emergency Manager, who will appoint a Chief Academic Officer (CAO) and a Chief Financial Officer (CFO). The DUAB will determine their pay and will pay them from state funds until July 2019. The DUAB has to consider Gary and Lake

County applicants for the manager jobs. The DUAB may provide grants and restructure or forgive loans to the Gary schools. The GCS must make regular “substantial” debt-reduction payments. There are many requirements for all the parties involved to make regular reports to each other. Participants at Melton’s meeting had numerous questions and comments before the meeting ended at 7:00.

Friends of Marquette Park celebrate first anniversary

From the beginning of the Marquette Park renovation, the MCC and other Miller participants in the planning felt certain that the park would need some sort of private support organization to maintain the revitalized facility. However, we were never able to establish such an organization in cooperation with the city, and we eventually set up the independent Friends of Marquette Park to fill this role. The Friends organization will identify modest tasks which needed to be done and, with

the Park Department's permission, would provide the funds and the man-power to do them.

The Friends of Marquette Park (FMP) celebrated their first anniversary in May, 2017 by having a party for their 110 charter members at the Fr. Marquette Statue. In this first year, the organization has raised \$12,800 and spent \$4,541, leaving a balance of \$8,272 for future projects. Accomplishments include providing liners for beach cans and organizing volunteers to use them; installing kid alert green men; landscaping the garden around the Fr. Marquette statue; and removing non-native plants from the area east of the lagoon. In the future, the FMP will continue landscaping, will bring educational and recreational activities to the park, and will promote Marquette Park as the southern-most point of Lake Michigan.

You can make tax-deductible contributions by writing checks to Friends of

**Marquette Park/Legacy Foundation and mailing them to Friends of Marquette
Park, PO Box 2645, Gary, IN 46403**

Duly Noted

PANTHERA'S – A NEW CAFE

Anyone who drives by can see that Murphy's Saloon on Rt. 12 has been transformed from a grungy dive into an attractive café. Inside, the same improvement is visible. The new business, now called Panthera's, is an upbeat cocktail lounge, aiming at an older and more refined clientele. The community is welcome to the meeting of the Miller Business Association at 6:00 pm on Tuesday, June 13. Attendance is free for MBA members, but there is a charge of \$5 from non-members to cover the cost of hors d'oeuvres.

NELSON ALGREN DISCUSSION

On the First Friday, July 7 at 5:00, the Nelson Algren Museum on Lake Street will host a discussion of *The Texas Stories of Nelson Algren*, edited by Bettina Drew, a collection of eleven short stories which introduce the themes that characterize his later works. The book is available at www.amazon.com for \$15 to 20 from third-party sellers. Admission to the discussion is \$10. Participants should be prepared to read passages out loud and talk about common themes. On Saturday, June 17, the museum will be open from 3:00 to 6:00 for Lake Effekt Fest.

WEDNESDAYS ON WELLS ST.

The Wells Street Beach concession stand has revived its weekly Wednesday at Wells Street events, from 4:30 until dusk. They will be serving, on the patio, all their usual menu items, plus weekly specials, soft drinks, beer and wine. Angelo and Buddy will play background music on alternating weeks.

JUNE 2017 MCC MEETING

THE MONTHLY MCC MEETING WILL BE HELD ON MONDAY, JUNE 12, AT 7:30 PM, IN THE MEETING ROOM OF THE MARQUETTE PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ON GRAND BLVD. MCC members are invited to attend and participate.

SPECIAL GUEST WILL BE CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT RON BREWER.

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

MILLER FARMERS' MARKET

The Miller Farmers' Market, on Lake Street at the South Shore tracks, is again open for business every Sunday from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Through September.

The market offers food to take out and to eat there, craft products and plants, with music and special events in the background. This week, they are promising fresh greens and strawberries.

GARDEN CLUB MEETING

The public is invited to attend the monthly meeting of the Miller Garden Club on Saturday, June 17 from 10:00 to 11:30 am at the Aquatorium in Marquette Park.

The speaker will be Robert Nevel, who will speak on “*Climate change and the Miller Garden Club.*” The event is free.

The annual Miller Secret Garden Walk will take place the weekend of July 15 and July 16 from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm, starting at the Aquatorium and featuring visits to 5 gardens. Ticket price is \$10.

May MCC meeting highlights

MILLER DEVELOPER CHOSEN.

A federal task force, led by the Environmental Protection Agency (because Gary

has so much industrial contamination) has been working behind the scenes to develop renewal plans for the city of Gary. Proposals for the Miller/Aetna area were presented at the Gardner Center in February. The Gary Redevelopment Commission has now approved memoranda of understanding with three firms, including Meridian Hospitality Group, which has been assigned to pursue development around the Miller South Shore station and at the Lake Street beach. They will be negotiating the details of highway, railroad, building and land use changes before any actual construction can begin. Joe Van Dyk, Gary's Executive Director of Planning and Redevelopment, promises that the public will be kept informed as plans develop. In the end, the Meridian Group will have the responsibility of funding and building what the plan calls for.

WESTERN SOUTH SHORE EXTENSION

When board members suggested that Gary should stop contributing to the

construction of the western extension of the South Shore Railroad, they were informed that we had signed a contract which we can't get out of. In addition, this project is being undertaken by the Regional Development Authority (RDA), which finances projects for all of Northwest Indiana, and not every project benefits every community equally.

TITTLES' JUNK GONE

Finally, all the trash from the demolition of the former Tittles' store in the Rt. 51 Plaza has been removed – nothing is there now except empty space.

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE IS BACK

By a gradual process, the Shoreline Committee has taken over the functions of the MCC public safety committee, maintaining relations with the police and fire departments. This has become a burden for the Shoreline Committee, even though

some of its interests do include public safety in the beach area. At the May board meeting, the MCC voted to reactivate the former committee, and members are being recruited.

REBECCA WYATT'S COMMENTS

Councilwoman Rebecca Wyatt appeared at the MCC meeting with several reports:

—Residents can volunteer to help out at local schools and will be given work.

Suggested roles were tutoring, keeping order, and sweeping.

—The person who dumped broken-up asphalt next to Melton Road has been cited.

—A wallet was stolen in a robbery at Oak and Putnam. Shots were fired at Ripley and Oak, but were not reported.

—With reference to the Fadel Dune, east of the Rt. 51 Plaza, there is an ordinance prohibiting the sale of land for sand-mining. Both the National Park and Save the

Dunes Council want to buy and preserve the dune, but can only pay the assessed value, while the owner wants much more.

—Wyatt has sponsored a “welcoming city” ordinance, which passed. She thinks the city cannot afford to do the Federal Government’s work.

—Wyatt has obtained the voluminous assessment of Gary street quality, but not the key to understand it. She suggested that MCC board figure it out. A poorly-received suggestion.

The Ming Ling conundrum

The Ming Ling restaurant on Lake Street has been closed since 2010, and the historic building in which it was located has been slowly decaying. Something needs to be done before the building collapses.

A group including Gary residents Tom Collins and Pat Lee have examined the building and have concluded that it cannot be salvaged at an affordable price.

Collins has offered to pay the cost of demolishing the structure and replacing it with parking space and a sculpture garden.

Another group, headed by Cullen Ben Daniel and the Miller Historical Society, have joined with Indiana Landmarks to do their own assessment. They have concluded that the building is structurally sound and could be gutted, fitted with a new roof, and readied for use at a cost of \$245,000. The historic building and the adjoining lounge would accommodate two retail businesses and two or three second-story apartments.

It is uncertain what the Yau family, who own the property, think of either proposal.

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