

LAKEFRONT COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF
Thursday, July 14, 2011, 6:30pm
Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Ave. Room 1700

MEMBERS PRESENT: J. Fiske, J. Grover, P. Berger,
M. Eberle, D. Reynolds, M. Sloane

MEMBERS ABSENT: M. Wynne, C. Burrus, C. Ernst

STAFF PRESENT: B. Dorneker, P. Belcher

OTHERS PRESENT: T. Hensley, K McHugh, M. Vasilko, M. White, J. Hillebrand,
A. McGonigle

PRESIDING MEMBER: J. Grover, Committee Chair

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

The meeting minutes of June 15, 2011 were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Review/Evaluate M. Vasilko's Lakefront Development Plan

D. Reynolds started the meeting responding to a comment made by M. Vasilko that most of the people who attend the Lakefront Master Plan meetings were lakefront residents and weren't very many people from other parts of town. He got copies of the attendance sheets for each of the meetings and plotted all of the attendee's addresses on a city map. Although there were a number of people who lived east of Chicago Ave, there were also a number of people west of Chicago Ave. especially in south Evanston. The Lakefront Master Plan was a well thought out process and is what the city decided to do in terms of a long term plan for its lakefront. Many citizens put a lot of time and effort into this and came up with a consensus of what should be done. If development on the lakefront is something the community eventually wants to do then there should be a lot of community input before making any changes. M. Vasilko's proposed plan has numerous financial problems and it would not be good policy for the city to make a 180 degree turn and approve something like this after having spent a lot of resources on determining what the community's feeling was about the lakefront.

M. Vasilko said there has been much debate about the type and scale of performing arts venues he has been proposing versus the venues being considered in Evanston. He introduced Todd Hensley, a partner with Schuler & Shook, to speak about the performing arts facilities he proposed and how a project like this might compare to other facilities in the country. Schuler and Shook is a nationally acclaimed theatre and lighting consulting firm, located in Chicago who have completed award winning performing facilities across the country, and elsewhere.

T. Hensley noted that the smaller venues in Evanston, including the Noyes Cultural Art Center, the music venue S.P.A.C.E., the Piccolo Theatre; the venues controlled by Northwestern University, primarily Pick-Staiger Concert Hall and Cahn Auditorium; and the venues controlled by Music Institute of Chicago, Nichols Concert Hall, all offer occasional opportunity for outside programming. Most of the venues in Evanston are home to resident performing arts groups, and those groups occupy those venues for the majority of their available days. Evanston does not have venues that act as a performing arts center: a dedicated facility supporting the production and presentation of major arts offerings in a commercial setting. Smaller venues in downtown Evanston, such as the Varsity Theatre, would provide great opportunity for smaller companies and acts. A performing arts center supports larger acts - mostly touring acts - to the extent that smaller venues cannot. T. Hensley supports M. Vasilko's recommendation that the City commission a market demand study for this development. That study would provide the City with a clearer view of financial risk and reward, a recommendation of the optimal types of venues to build, and more detailed benchmarking of similar developments. Most cities take this important step early in their planning process, and he heartily agrees with that approach.

J. Fiske noted that the City just spent approximately \$25,000 on a market study for the Varsity Theatre. The same group doing this study (Kennedy Smith) is also looking at the various requirements that we would want to have to establish an arts district in downtown and other business areas. She would be hesitant to put any money toward another market study without first reviewing the result of the Kennedy Smith report which is coming out tomorrow.

She said this is an interesting discussion to have but she's not supportive of it because she doesn't think the lakefront location is workable for a lot of reasons. One is that the huge cost of developing the island is prohibitive for the city to even consider. She feels comfortable with the way the city is moving toward a lot of different sites, creating a comprehensive arts district in Evanston.

Regarding the cost of the proposed project and how it might be financed, M. Vasilko suggested that a formal financial feasibility study would be conducted at the conclusion of an independent market research demand study. He introduced Ken McHugh, president of Institutional Project Management to speak. K. McHugh's firm is in the development business.

K. McHugh feels that creating more land use diversity by adding to the existing lakefront as depicted M. Vasilko's proposal, is worthy of careful consideration. The City of Evanston, Northwestern University, Local Corporation Leadership, prominent Local Citizens, and other anchor institutions should be considered parties in interest to come together as a working committee to weigh in on how the project could be made possible and successful. A project of this nature will have many financing options from Federal earmarking, State funding, Revenue Bonding, TIF support, Private Capital Investment, and Philanthropy. Rather than bring the project to an immediate halt, it is worthy of establishing additional dialogue with potential partners to ascertain their level of interest in supporting additional effort as member of a voluntary working committee.

M. Vasilko introduced John Hildebrand, a long time resident of Evanston who wanted to speak briefly. J. Hildebrand said there is a great need for a marina. Wilmette is probably the busiest harbor on Lake Michigan and has a 22 year wait list. Chicago has 13 harbors and they're building a new one a mile south of McCormick Place that will have 1,000 slips.

M. Vasilko noted that since the June meeting, an article appeared in the newspaper regarding Evanston's total Debt. The article states that the Treasurer's Office measured Evanston's debt to be \$536,000,000 dollars. This new information updates what he previously reported to the

committee. Evanston is \$536 Million Dollars in debt, not \$453 Million Dollars. He said he and the committee can agree or disagree about the type of venues, etc. but a market demand study performed by an independent group will tell us what would work and he would be the first one to withdraw any idea that doesn't produce revenue for the city of Evanston. He appreciates the talk about all the other things that are happening in Evanston and he hopes they're all successful, but nothing he has heard will achieve a significant dent in the city's debt, which is what the proposed development is all about.

M. Vasilko said he presented his proposal to the Evanston Chamber of Commerce. The members were enthusiastic about the proposal, asked good questions, offered suggestions, and requested seeing the results of the Market Demand Study and the Economic Feasibility Study. Several of the members spoke to him afterwards to comment on the potential Economic Development the proposal could deliver, and others commented on specific elements such as the need for the marina.

At the June 15 meeting he presented an illustration with the development site directly east of Northwestern campus that could combine the effort to build the facilities in his proposal with Northwestern University's need for future expansion. At that time he had not had the opportunity to share that idea with Northwestern officials before the meeting. He has corresponded with the President's office, Eugene Sunshine, and spoken with Ron Naylor of Northwestern University since that time. Northwestern is interested and open to discussion regarding the most recent scheme and we should not ignore them. That's one of the problems he had with the Lakefront Master Plan, that Northwestern was not engaged very much. There was one interview with the community relations staff. No talk about Northwestern's lakefront; what problems their lakefront causes our lakefront; and how that could be fixed.

M. Vasilko said he had hoped to avoid debating the merits of the Lakefront Master Plan but if it's going to be used as the measure against with any economic development proposals are measured, and others intend to make references to it, then he need to reply in some detail.

One of the first things the Lakefront Master Plan recommended was an engineering survey of the lakefront, which hasn't happened. Evanston has invested several million dollars in the bike /running path instead of doing what was recommended as the first step - an engineering survey of the lakefront. Also missing in the Lakefront Master Plan is discussion about water quality. Several of our beaches have had extraordinarily high e-coli contamination. From safe water perspective he was surprised there was no mention of water quality issues or provisions planned on the issue of safe water in the master plan. He has a hard time calling it a master plan, he thinks it's a nice landscape plan, but it doesn't deal with the bigger issues and ignores major aspects of the lakefront that should have been included.

He mentioned goal 6 of the master plan: Develop and implement lakefront policies that support and fund a balance of high-quality..programming and promote physical and financial Accessibility for all users. This goal has not been implemented or demanding an entry fee is a flawed policy. He took a mid day Sunday survey of the beach and park activity this past weekend and counted how many users there were in a one hour period. From Northwestern's property to the Dempster Beach office he counted 350 people who had either paid to use the beach or were using the park. Of the 350 people, 17 were African American. Two of the African Americans were life guards and one was selling ice cream. On that particular sunny day 5% of the park / beach users were African American. To say that everybody uses the beach, especially if they have to pay to get in, is a misstatement. It's used by people who can afford to use the beach. This led him to something else that's been troubling him about the master plan. It troubled him that not all of the wards were represented on this lakefront committee. He was led to believe that all the wards would be represented. He reached out to Ald. Holmes and Ald. Braitwaite to nominate someone to the committee or at least attend the meetings. He will attend

the next 5th Ward for a brief presentation and is waiting to hear from both Aldermen for a date to present the lakefront development plan in detail to both wards in a special meeting.

M. Vasilko said this is all about economic development, in a fair and balanced way, along the lakefront. He's made every effort to address concerns; he's engaged Northwestern who has interests; all of the proposed venues have demonstrated to have potential, which will be proven in a final demand study; and he hopes at that point a financial analysis will prove that it's successful.

J. Fiske said if it was determined that Northwestern was interested in the proposal, that someone from Northwestern should attend the next meeting.

J. Grover noted that the committee needs to develop a report to the Economic Development Committee and they will then pass on the report to the City Council. She envisions a report that would include attaching the Lakefront Master Plan and maybe the Varsity Theatre Report. The committee will meet sometime in August.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Note: minutes are not verbatim

Attachments:

Narratives from Todd Hensley, Ken McHugh and Mike Vasilko

Comments to Evanston Lakefront Planning Committee meeting, 14 July 2011
Revisions following discussion with the Committee – 15 July 2011

Prepared by Todd Hensley

Good evening. My name is Todd Hensley, and I am a partner in the Chicago office of Schuler Shook. Michael Vasilko has asked me to join you this evening to discuss the potential value of a performing arts center in Evanston.

Schuler Shook is a Theatre Planning firm with offices in Chicago, Dallas, Minneapolis and Melbourne, Australia. I direct the Theatre Consulting practice in our Chicago office. Our specialty is in the design of performance spaces. We work with architects, civic planners, and arts groups to design and equip theatre facilities that work for their specific needs.

Our projects range from small intimate theatres to large-scale civic and commercial venues, including, in Millennium Park, The Pritzker Music Pavilion; new theatres for Lookingglass Theatre and Victory Gardens Theater in Chicago; new Performing Arts Centers in the Seattle area, Oklahoma City and Northwest Arkansas; approximately twenty theatre projects for commercial presenters such as Live Nation; and major renovations of facilities for The New York City Ballet and Opera companies, The Seattle Opera, the Detroit Symphony, and the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Through these projects, we have gained perspective on the values desired within these facilities. We are not, however, theatre operators or financial planners. Our perspective has been developed by our presence at the creation of these facilities, and that is what I'd like to speak to this evening.

I have reviewed Mike Vasilko's previous presentations to the City Council and to this Committee. My comments are intended to address the elements of those proposals and to offer information on comparable developments.

Mike's presentations have discussed a multi-venue development in Evanston, with a convention center, potential hotel, marina, and performing arts center offering multiple theatres. That development is promoted to stimulate tourist traffic, increase tax revenues for Evanston, and to make a major increase to cultural amenities on the North Shore.

Evanston's existing performing arts facilities are worthy and attractive. The array of smaller venues in the City, including the Noyes Cultural Art Center, the music venue S.P.A.C.E., and the Piccolo Theatre provide worthy cultural amenities. The venues controlled by Northwestern University, primarily Pick-Staiger Concert Hall and Cahn Auditorium, and by the Music Institute of Chicago (Nichols Concert Hall) offer the occasional opportunity for outside programming. It is important to note, though, that most of the venues in Evanston are home

to resident performing arts groups, and those groups occupy those venues for the majority of their available days.

It is clear that Evanston is home to many exciting opportunities in the performing arts. However, Evanston does not have venues that act as a performing arts center: a dedicated facility supporting the production and presentation of major arts offerings in a commercial setting. These facilities are intended to stimulate cultural and civic value by offering performances from traveling acts as well as local arts offerings. I'd like to describe five cities that have supported new performing arts centers, or "P-A-Cs."

Appleton, Wisconsin conducted studies to investigate the desire for its own PAC, despite the fact that Green Bay had opened a new facility 30 miles away. That desire was verified in their marketing studies. The Fox Cities PAC, with a 2100-seat venue and a 450-seat flexible venue, opened in Appleton in 2002.

The cities of Brampton and Mississauga, Ontario, both adjacent to Toronto, developed large-scale PACs as local amenities. The Rose Theatre in Brampton is two-venue facility, and the Living Arts Center in Mississauga includes a 1300-seat hall and a 350-seat flexible venue.

The City of Bellevue, Washington, just outside Seattle, desired a local PAC even though Seattle's venues are only ten miles away. Through negotiations with theatrical presenters, they secured agreements for touring acts to make an added stop in Bellevue. We are on the design team for this project, which includes a 2,000-seat main hall and a 250-seat Cabaret. It is called the Tateuchi Performing Arts Center, and the plans are for it to break ground next year.

Finally, we are currently involved in expanding the Walton Art Center in northwest Arkansas. The existing PAC in Fayetteville includes a 1200-seat theatre and three smaller spaces. The planning includes augmenting that PAC with a new 600-seat theatre and a new 2200-seat theatre.

In the five examples I just noted, the cities investigated both cultural value and economic value of a performing arts center. Market demand was proven, and that demand drove capital funding. A mix of private giving and public funding has been used to develop all of these facilities. In most cases, they are owned by the cities and operated through contract arrangements. In all cases, the cities benefit from the cultural amenity and the spending created by these attractions.

It's important to note that the PACs described above offer more than excellent nights of performing arts. Most PACs expand their programming to include more general gatherings such as corporate meetings, civic group gatherings, awards nights, and even commercial expositions such as bridal shows. Lobbies are often developed as highly attractive spaces with great views, to be rented as separate spaces for catered events. These buildings are developed as an attractive and engaging experience, and they are often booked in conjunction with convention events.

The prevalence of this collateral use was discussed widely in a recent conference of the Performing Arts Managers Conference, which is a division of the International Association of Venue Managers. Every manager was reporting a great deal of events beyond the usual performing arts bookings. Collateral events are now important adjuncts in keeping the facilities filled at all times, thus increasing traffic and spending.

Mike's Vasilko's report has called for the development of a performing arts facility that is "world class." We agree that excellent buildings can draw excellent performances. In our experience, performers are drawn to a PAC by a number of factors, including the financial "deal," the anticipation of an audience base, and the facility's performance and backstage accommodations. As the old saying goes in the performing arts, "It's Show Business, not Show Show!" Developing an excellent facility, in our opinion, is a baseline requirement to draw the patrons that will lead to excellent and plentiful bookings.

We understand that the City has commissioned a study around activating a smaller downtown theatre (the Varsity Theater). The discussion has been around promoting a downtown performing arts district. This is a very worthy consideration, and it should not be viewed as an "either/or" situation in regard to a PAC. The smaller venues in downtown Evanston would provide great opportunity for smaller companies and acts. A PAC supports larger acts - mostly touring acts - to the extent that smaller venues cannot. Most of our clients call for a PAC with a minimum of 1100 to 1200 seats to support the presentation of touring companies. Many cities support this mix of smaller resident companies and the larger PAC - Bellevue, Washington (cited above) and Cleveland are good examples.

In conclusion, we echo Mike's recommendation that the City commission a market demand study for this development. That study would provide the City with a clearer view of financial risk and reward, a recommendation of the optimal types of venues to build, and more detailed benchmarking of similar developments. Most cities take this important step early in their planning process, and we heartily agree with that approach.

Thank you for your attention. I would be happy to answer your questions.

Addendum information:

Two questions were asked by the Committee that required follow-up:

1. *What was the construction cost of the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts?*

This information is published on the Center's website:

The unique, Award-Winning, State-of-the-Art performance venue designed by Boston based architect/developer Graham Gund opened in November 1996. In 1998 the NSCPAS was presented with the National Commercial Builder's Award of Excellence Merit Award, Division IV. Capable of hosting a wide variety of performing arts, corporate and special events, the NSCPAS is a multi-purpose, modern, efficient theatre facility with 68,000 square feet of space. World famous performers, tradeshow, and local productions are equally at home.

The facility was conceived in the mid 1980's when Dorothy Litwin (former Executive Director of Centre East) applied to the State of Illinois for funding under the "Build Illinois Program". The Village of Skokie supported the project as an economic stimulus to the area and as a cultural asset to the community. The Centre East Metropolitan, Exposition, Auditorium and Office Building Authority was then created by the State of Illinois as the owner of the new performing arts center. The Village of Skokie appoints six of the nine members of the Authority aboard and Niles Township appoints three members. Professional Facilities Management (PFM) has managed the NSCPAS since its opening.

The NSCPAS was constructed at a cost of \$18 million. The State of Illinois contributed \$13.2 million and the Village of Skokie \$3.4 million. The remaining construction funds were contributed by the Daniel F. and Ada L. Rice Foundation and other private donors. Northlight Theatre raised additional dollars for the build-out of its namesake theatre.

In reviewing this information, it is important to note that the Center has a relatively small main theatre (867 seats) and that it was built 15 years ago. A number of its desired features were deferred during construction, and certain design features were downgraded (for example, used theatre seats were installed originally). These issues contribute to a relatively low cost when compared to contemporary PAC projects.

2. *What is the yearly operating expense and income at the Appleton PAC?*

The Fox Cities Performing Arts published its 2010 Annual Report on its website. That report is available at:

<http://flipflashpages.uniflip.com/2/23917/77578/pub/>

More information is available about the PAC's Public/Private Partnership at:

http://www.foxcitiespac.com/about_us Click on "Financials"

“Nothing ever built arose to touch the skies
unless some man dreamed that it should,
some man believed that it could, and some
man willed that it must”.

July 21, 2011

I am very pleased to have been invited to speak before the committee, regarding the Vasilko Plan to produce additional revenue for the City of Evanston through the construction of a new series of lake front amenities. Traditionally, communities that have the most diverse composition find less need to tax private residential property. The notion of creating more land use diversity by adding to the existing lakefront, with the grace and beauty depicted in the work of local architect Michael Vasilko is worthy of careful consideration.

The Vasilko Plan is at a point where it must leave the venue of a single sponsor and transform into a partnership of many parties in interest. The City of Evanston, Northwestern University, Local Corporation Leadership, prominent Local Citizens, and other anchor institutions should be considered parties in interest to come together as a working committee to weigh in on how the project could be made possible and successful. This committee could be designed along the model that was used in the attempted to bring the 2016 Olympics to Chicago. Because of the great skill and experience present on that committee, they were able to create a vision, develop a budget, and a plan of financing on far less information than what is available for this plan.

A project of this nature will have many financing options. They run the gambit from Federal earmarking, State funding, Revenue Bonding, TIF support, Private Capital Investment, and Philanthropy. Given the length of time required for a development of this type to reach implementation additional options will become available. Rather than bring the project to an immediate halt, it is worthy of establishing additional dialogue with potential partners to ascertain their level of interest in supporting additional effort as member of a voluntary working committee.

Thank you

Ken McHugh
President/CEO Institutional Project Management. LLC.
Executive Vice President Emeritus

Michael J. Vasilko

July 14, 2011 – Lakefront Development Committee Narrative

I have invited a couple of speakers tonight to discuss two or three issues about which my credentials may be lacking. Some of the committee members have questioned the cost of the proposed project and how it might be financed. I have offered my comments and thoughts on that matter, and I have suggested that a formal financial feasibility study will be conducted at the conclusion of an independent market research demand study.

However, I did reach out to a professional acquaintance I have come to know well over the past 25 years. His name is Ken McHugh, president of Institutional Project Management. For lack of a better term, Ken's firm is in the development business. That said Ken is like no other developer I have met. He is an honest broker who is more interested in seeing his clients succeed than he is in profiting from the relationship. Before embarking on his career in development, Ken was DePaul University's Executive Vice President and under his leadership over a 20 years period, Ken built DePaul academically and physically into the nation's largest Catholic University. I hold Ken's credentials in the highest esteem and I have asked him to take a few minutes tonight to comment on this project, specifically on the steps needed towards funding considerations and ways to approach financing.

John Hildebrand, a long time resident of Evanston contacted me and wanted to speak briefly about the idea of a Marina in Evanston. John has some very interesting ideas of his own, is an experienced boat enthusiast, and knows of many of the marinas in Lake Michigan.

There has also been much debate about the type and scale of performing arts venues I have been proposing. I have been discussing the need for more significant performing arts venues over the past two years and recently there has been a growing city wide effort to consider other venues in Evanston, not the least of which is the Varsity Theatre Study. I feel I have not articulated enough the differences between the venues I am proposing and other venues being considered in Evanston. Certainly the goal of the venues I proposed is different than what would be achieved by more, smaller venues. So I asked Todd Hensley, a partner with Schuler & Shook, to speak tonight about the performing arts facilities I proposed and how a project like this might compare to other facilities in the country. Schuler and Shook is a nationally acclaimed theatre and lighting consulting firm, located in Chicago who have completed award winning performing facilities across the country, and elsewhere.

Jon Shabica of Shabica Associates, the marine engineering firm will not be present tonight. But I can forward any related questions that may come forward.

Since we last met, I was invited and I presented to 30 or so members of the Evanston Chamber of Commerce. The members were enthusiastic about the proposal, asked good questions, offered suggestions, and requested seeing the results of the Market Demand Study and the Economic Feasibility Study. Several of the members spoke to me afterwards to comment on the potential Economic Development the proposal could deliver, and other commented on specific elements such as the need for the marina.

At the last meeting I presented a location option that could combine the effort to build the facilities in my proposal with Northwestern University's need for future expansion. I did not have the opportunity to share this idea with Northwestern officials before of our June 15th meeting but I did correspond with

Michael J. Vasilko

July 14, 2011 – Lakefront Development Committee Narrative

the President's office, Eugene Sunshine, and I spoke with Ron Nayler of Northwestern University since that time. Northwestern is interested and open to discussion regarding the most recent scheme.

I reviewed the preliminary construction budget estimate that was prepared by Bulley & Andrews with pricing from Thatcher Foundations, Inc. Some have questioned the cost as being too low. Based upon the first scheme, the peninsula, the budget estimate for the work without the building remains a good estimate.

Lastly, I have contacted Alderman Holmes and Alderman Braithwaite to schedule a presentation of the Lakefront Proposal to their wards. I have always been disappointed that the 2nd and 5th wards were not represented on this committee. I do not yet have a date for this presentation.

Chairman Grover told me that one of the committee members wanted to spend time revisiting the lakefront master plan.

I too prepared some comments regarding the lakefront document which I would like to articulate:

Lakefront Master Plan Issues:

If the document referred to as the Lakefront Master plan is going to be used as the measure against which any economic development proposals are measured, and others intend to make references to it, then I need to reply in some detail.

I had hoped to avoid debating the merits of the Lakefront Master Plan but this document continues to be held up as if it were gospel and reason enough to put aside any economic development effort. I have read the document and I find it to be incomplete and fundamentally lacking in substance. To its credit, the lakefront plan has many nice landscaping ideas. But that does not make it a master plan.

1. The plan voted on by council was the November 15, 2007 Evanston Lakefront Corridor Master Plan. This vote took place just before the President Obama took office and just before signs of the 2008 recession appeared. The price tag for a fully implemented Lakefront Master Plan was reported to be nearly 50 million dollars in 2008. There was no effort taken during the planning process to consider a revenue stream that would offset the 50 million dollar price tag. That was a time when the depth of Evanston's underfunded pension obligation and the depth of Evanston's debt were beginning to surface. 6 months later there was a new council, a new mayor, a new city manager and his staff. In my opinion, today's council, knowing what it knows about our current financial situation would never have considered a 50 million dollar beautification of the lakefront while at the same time being presented with staff layoffs and the potential of reducing city services and selling off city property. The current council was elected to correct Evanston's financial course.

From what I was given regarding the master plan history there are some other remarkable omissions:

2. Blatantly obvious from the master plan drawings is any discussion regarding Northwestern University's lakefront. I can find only one reference to an interview with Northwestern's Communications Director at that time. Northwestern is Evanston's biggest neighbor. The shape and

Michael J. Vasilko

July 14, 2011 – Lakefront Development Committee Narrative

location of their lakefront affects the maintenance of Evanston's lakefront. Professionally I find it a huge flaw to have overlooked the university's needs and their input in a document referring to itself as a master plan. There should be a complete chapter of discussion about how the Evanston and NU lakefronts can be better engineered to limit the sand drift problems and other costly maintenance issues.

3. There was a recent article about High E.coli levels at two of Evanston's beaches as of 2010. Apparently this has been a reoccurring event over the years. From safe water perspective I was surprised there was no mention of water quality issues or provisions planned on the issue of safe water in the master plan.

4. There is mention that the first priority of the lakefront master plan would be to study lakefront protection, yet the first step Evanston took was the construction of a bike / running path. Doug's staff has to continue to dredge the sand drifts and redistribute the sand each year. I find no study included in the document evaluating lakefront protection from an engineering perspective. There is a sentence under objectives that reads: Evaluate natural or engineered shoreline stabilization systems, including off-shore islands, reefs, peninsulas, and or headlands..." There is reference to a technical analysis of these methods, but none of that information is included in the document. Only a sentence to follow that states these ideas were not proposed because of technical considerations. Yet one of the most revered Coastal Geological Engineers with the Illinois State Geological Survey is stated to have said: It is possible to build islands and peninsulas. We can design the vision for the next 100 years correcting the mistakes of the past" Michael Chzastowski recently retired from his post.

5. There is reference in the master plan text pondering the "highest and best use" of the lakefront, but the document goes on to say the definition of highest and best use is not clear. The premise of the document is seemingly captured in a sentence which reads: "While certainly not proposed in the Vision or our plan, some might say the highest and best use of the lakefront would be as a source of revenue generation to be exploited." These three words could have been omitted. Rather, the message clearly highlights for me the objective of the plan; demonize any effort on Evanston's part to raise revenue along the lakefront from cultural, recreational or other "higher and better uses", allowing the city to pay its bills. One would think someone suggested generating revenue from the lake by drilling for oil or placing a nuclear power plant in Dawes Park. Those two uses on the lake would truly be examples of exploiting the lake.

6. Goal 6: Develop and implement lakefront policies that support and fund a balance of high-quality .. programming and promote physical and financial accessibility for all users. This goal apparently has not been implemented or demanding an entry fee is a flawed policy. I took a mid day Sunday survey of the beach and adjacent park activity this past weekend and counted how many users there were in a one hour period. I surveyed the area between Northwestern's property on the north to the Dempster beach house on the south. I counted 350 people who had either paid to use the beach or were using the park adjacent to the beach. It was roughly a 50/50 split. Of the 350 people, 17 were African American. Two of the African Americans were life guards and one was selling ice cream. On that particular sunny day, 5% of the beach/park users were African American. This may be the most

Michael J. Vasilko

July 14, 2011 – Lakefront Development Committee Narrative

troubling aspect of the master plan document; access to the beach by all is an issue that was not solved, and only discussed superficially. Once again the claim by some that the document was supported unanimously throughout all of Evanston is not supported by the facts.

One thing that troubled me at the outset of these committee meetings was the makeup of the committee itself. I was expecting all of the wards to be represented. When I found that was not the case, I reached out to Alderman Holmes who assured me she tried to get someone from the community to participate. I persisted apologetically for being a pest. Alderman Holmes' response:

"I do not think that you are a pest. I hope you also understand that when people have been kept out of the process for so long, it takes education to engage them. I hear all the time that "it won't make any difference so why get involved?" Thank you for working to try and make sure that whatever happens on the lakefront will benefit all."

I will be attending the next 5th Ward community meeting for a brief presentation, and I await hearing from Alderman Braithwaite & Holmes for a date to present the lakefront development plan in detail to both wards at a special meeting.

These are just a few of the most obvious problems with the Lakefront Master Plan. I will be outlining many more in a document I hope to present to the City Council in the coming weeks. I also intend to present a map illustrating where the people who participated in the master plan live in Evanston.

Since the June meeting, an article appeared in the newspaper regarding Evanston's total Debt. The article states that the Treasurer's Office has measured Evanston's debt to be \$536,000,000 dollars. This new information updates what I previously reported to the committee. Evanston is \$536 Million Dollars in debt, not \$453 Million Dollars.

End