

PORTAGE PARK

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION



News



FEBRUARY 2004



Meetings and Announcements

Portage Park Neighborhood Association

The next meeting will be held on **February 9TH, 7:30PM** at the Portage Park Field House, 4100 N Long.

Old Irving Park Association

Their next public meeting will be on February 9TH at 7pm, Salvation Army, Belle Plaine at Pulaski.

Jefferson Park Neighborhood Association

The next public meeting will be February 23rd at the Jefferson Park police station community room.

C.A.P.S. Meetings

Beat 1624 will hold a meeting Feb. 25th, 7pm at Biagio's Banquets, 4242 N Central Ave.

Beat 1633 will hold a meeting Feb 17th, 7 pm at Merrimac Park, 6343 W Irving Park Rd.

Beat 1634 will hold a meeting Feb 26th, 7 pm at Portage/Craigin Park, 5108 W Belmont Ave.

PPNA On-Line

Log-on to for the most current info from the PPNA at www.portagepark.org or email us at ppna_board@hotmail.com

City Names Klee Developer

by Mark W. Anderson

After years of high hopes, false starts and a long and involved selection process, the city has picked a developer to revitalize and renovate the historic Klee Building located in the heart of the Six Corners shopping district.

The Chicago Department of Planning and Development named Poter Construction and Development, to carry out the project, which is expected to turn the currently vacant building into residential and retail complex consisting of 64 mixed-income condominium units and 20,000 square-feet of ground-floor retail space. The city announced its selection January 8th.

Poter won out over the other finalist in the Dept. of Planning and Development's Request for Proposals (RFP) process, Pusateri Sandberg LLC. A third RFP entry, from G&A Construction, was removed from consideration in September of 2003.

In addition to the rehabilitation of the Klee Building, located at 4001 N. Milwaukee Ave., the winning proposal includes a new five-story building to the north on Milwaukee Avenue and a new one-story building on Cicero Avenue. Forty-eight of the new residential units included in the project will have two bedrooms, and 16 will be one-bedroom condominiums. Twenty percent of the units overall are expected to be priced at affordable rates for low and moderate-income residents. Underground parking for residents will be included in the plan with a total of 22 ground level parking spaces provided for retail use.

"We are very happy that they've made a selection, because perhaps no other project is as important in the ongoing revitalization of the Six Corners shopping district," said Ellen Stoner, chair of the PPNA Economic Development Committee. "Either of those two (development proposals) would have had a positive impact on the neighborhood. We applaud the aldermen involved for moving the project forward, and we look forward to seeing the redevelopment in 2005."

Decision is First Step in the Process

Gary Poter, president of Poter Construction, hopes that groundbreaking on the project can take place by the end of 2004 or the beginning of 2005, depending on the speed in which the next steps in the process can happen. "The next step is to get the project approved by the CDC (Community Development

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The Klee Building as it exists today, has sat vacant for the last 6 years. The selection of Chicago Klee, LLC begins a new chapter in the City's effort to redevelop the 72 year old building and three adjacent buildings. (Photo: Jerianne Garber)

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20 winners
will be drawn!

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Commission), hopefully sometime in March, and then go to the full City Council for approval,” he said, citing some of the steps necessary before construction can begin, such as signing a redevelopment agreement with the city and finalizing an application for financial assistance from the city. “We’ve already begun the process of finding retail tenants, and hopefully we can complete the project within a year after all of the approvals are in place.”

Competing Proposal Still A Good Idea

The competing proposal from Pusateri Sandberg, developed in conjunction with the Portage Park Center for the Arts, was geared towards artists as residents and a combination of smaller, mixed-use development in the site’s retail spaces. Both plans intended to tap access to the funds from the Six Corners Tax Incremental

Financing (TIF) district, and incorporates environmentally sound building systems designed to reduce urban heat levels.

Joe Angelestri, who owns City Newsstand at 4018 N. Cicero, supports the city’s decision. “We’re excited about it,” he said. “(Poter’s) plan has everything that the community has asked for over the years.” But he also believes that the selection of one developer over the other doesn’t necessarily mean that the competing vision for the area will be lost. “There’s plenty of opportunity for the artists idea – either rehabbing some of the remaining stores (in the commercial district), or creating working or living space for artists elsewhere in the community. This isn’t the end of the process - it’s not the like it’s the Klee or nothing for the arts center.”

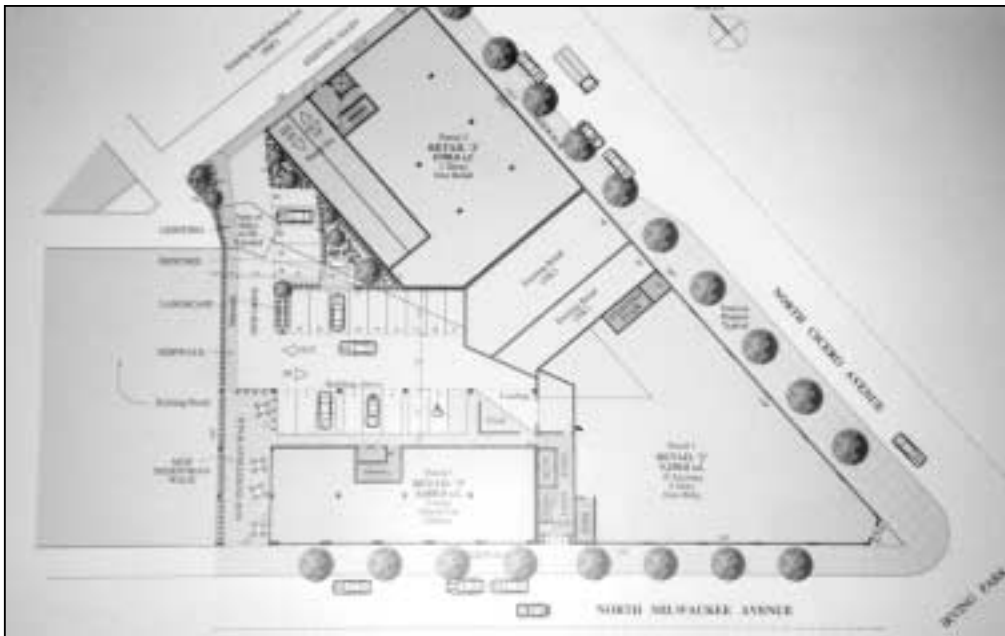
Jaques Sandberg, partner in the firm of Pusateri Sandberg, says he’s thinking along the same lines. “I remain convinced

Portage Park would be a great place for a project like the one we had for the Klee,” he said. “I remain cautiously optimistic that we will find an alternative site. Over the past 14 months the Department of Planning and Development has expressed enthusiasm for the idea of an arts-based project, and we will continue to work to see if we can make it a reality.”

Community Part of Process

At a community forum held at the LaSalle Bank Auditorium in April 2003, officials of the Department of Planning and Development, along with representatives of the three developers and aldermen Patrick J. Levar of the 45th Ward and Thomas R. Allen of the 38th, met with members of the community to present the various developers’ proposals. At the time, the city expected to have a decision made by the end of June. Alderman Levar, however, attributes the delay in announcing a decision in part to the necessary thoroughness required for such an important project. “This process was brought to the community, but the city wanted to make sure that everything that needed to be done for this to be a successful process was done,” Levar said. “I believe the project will help revitalize the area’s business and shopping districts, and I want to compliment the city for doing such a good job in this process.”

Poter, who currently owns a parcel of land adjacent to the development site, is understandably thrilled at the city’s decision. “It’s been five years of hard work in order to get to this point,” he said. “But there’s still a lot of work left to do. We hope to make the community proud (with this project).”



TOP: This artists rendering shows the redeveloped Klee and the new structure that is planned as an attached addition. This new structure will match the existing buildings five stories and will allow for a pedway at it’s north end to connect Milwaukee and Cicero pedestrian traffic.

BOTTOM: This floorplan shows the layout of the first floor retail spaces, and the 22 ground level parking spaces. The developer’s plan includes the allocation of approximately 25,000 square feet of retail space in the existing Klee Building. The hope is that this will attract a larger retail chain such as a book or record store according to the developer.