



March 13, 2013

The Honorable Rahm Emanuel
Mayor
City of Chicago
121 North LaSalle Street, 5th Floor
Chicago IL 60602
VIA EMAIL – Mayor.Emanuel@cityofchicago.org

Re: Proposed Wrigley Expansion

Dear Mayor Emanuel,

Lake View Citizens' Council is a grass-roots community organization that strives to protect and enhance the quality of life in Lake View for its residents and businesses. We are an aggregated voice of ten neighborhood organizations whose boundaries are Lake Michigan on the East, the north branch of the Chicago River on the West, Diversey Parkway on the South and Irving Park Road on the North. LVCC helped create the original Cubs Neighborhood Protection Act and we hope to further improve these protections and address potential issues with the proposed expansion at Wrigley Field.

Residents of Lake View enjoy many of the benefits that the Cubs and Wrigley Field bring to the community. These same residents also bear the brunt of the negative effects such as traffic, noise, disorderly behavior and increasing density. Alderman Tunney has been a constant champion for residents on these issues and we ask that you listen to Alderman Tunney and the voters within the Lake View community who support the Cubs organization but also want to ensure the quality of life is improved for our neighborhood. Also attached is a letter written in April 2012 to Alderman Tunney after multiple meetings with the Cubs regarding night events at Wrigley Field. The proposed expansion is larger in scope and our concerns and need for additional information have increased as well.

Concerns regarding the current proposal as communicated can be summarized into three categories.

Game and Event Concerns

In regards to night games and concerts at Wrigley Field, we continue to advocate for limiting the increase in night games to thirty-three game total and four concerts as outlined in our recommendation to Alderman Tunney in April 2012. This proposed increase provides the Cubs more flexibility in scheduling night games with national networks and permits adding two additional concerts in lieu of two night baseball games. Many of the neighborhood impacts from these events have not been addressed and

increasing the amount of these events will compound the issues. We are supportive of additional events at Wrigley Field in the Fall and Winter, outside of the busy baseball season.

In regards to adding Friday 3:05 starts and Saturday night games, we are very concerned about the effects on businesses throughout Lake View. Many restaurants and entertainment venues in Lake View are not part of the Wrigley Field economic engine. Changes to Friday and Saturday games will not only create a burden on residents with the increased traffic and parking during rush hour, but also harm these businesses that will lose patrons avoiding the area during prime weekend hours. As many of these owners are aware, weekends drive an overwhelming majority of sales. Even businesses that benefit from the economic engine could suffer if sales decrease due to the time changes. These businesses generate a substantial portion of sales during the baseball season, allowing many to operate year-round. Negative effects will force some of these businesses to shutter and could turn Wrigleyville into a desolate area with closed businesses during the offseason. The rush hour conflict and impact on local business were two of the reasons the ban on Friday 3:05 and Saturday evening games was implemented.

In regards to the proposed use of Sheffield during game days for festivals, many questions need to be answered before a public street should be closed for such a repeat event. Sheffield is currently closed during games for safety concerns by the City. Does the proposed use for festivals increase these concerns? What are the hours that the street will be closed to traffic? Will local restaurants be invited to participate or will they be left out as large outside firms drain money from our local businesses? How can we ensure this is truly a family-orientated event and safeguard against the creation of a large beer garden in our community? The City should determine whether this is possible on a pilot basis versus approving unlimited use of Sheffield during the baseball season. These questions must be answered to determine the impact on the local community.

Planned Development Concerns

The proposed infrastructure improvements to the actual ballpark are sorely needed and we applaud the Cubs for this much needed undertaking. While needing to adhere to the Landmark Status regulations for the ballpark and the private relationship with the Rooftop owners, the Cubs have it in their best interest to preserve the unique product that makes Wrigley Field such a large tourist attraction.

In regards to the ongoing discussions regarding signage, the Rooftop owners and the Cubs are partners in a contractual agreement that needs to stay in place or be revised amicably by both parties. Each rooftop is a small business that employs people from the neighborhood and gives back to the community. Any signage within or outside of the ballpark must not impact residential neighbors.

Outside of the ballpark however, more details are needed before approving the overall expansion plan.

The improvements to the stadium are vital and so too are improvements to the deteriorated streets and walkways surrounding the stadium. Although we have seen thorough illustrations on the stadium renovations, we have not been provided details on the proposed surrounding streetscape improvements.

The proposed development of the “Triangle” corner, with an office complex, year-round tenants and a permanent winter ice rink looks promising. However, where are the detailed plans? Shouldn’t the plans and the relocation of the displaced parking during baseball games be addressed prior to approval?

With regard to the proposed hotel on the McDonald’s lot, the community has not seen any detailed plans from which to provide input. To date, only concept drawings have been presented. While a premier hotel in Lake View is needed, based on what has been shared neighborhood leaders, nearby residents will be negatively impacted by doubling the zoning, increasing the density and establishing a precedent for other properties on Clark St to build to nine stories. In regards to parking, where will the hotel guests park and where will the displaced parking spaces from the current lot be replaced?

With the amount of expansion proposed, we believe the city should require multiple independent traffic studies with recommendations on how to minimize extreme gridlock around Clark and Addison while maximizing the existing parking structures and open land near the ballpark. The Cubs must also create more incentives for fans to utilize remote parking.

Neighborhood Concerns

First and foremost, the existing Neighborhood Protections Act needs to remain in place and be fully enforced. Crowd control, traffic, parking and public intoxication need to be addressed as part of the solution. These issues are not just for the Cubs to address as the City needs to better plan for events at Wrigley and enforce the laws that will keep this community safe.

Detailed parking and traffic plans need to be developed and parking laws need to be enforced. For non-baseball events, night-time towing should be enforced much more than it is during baseball games. The Cubs Fund money established by the Neighborhood Protections Act can pay for the cost of updating the necessary parking signs in the neighborhood.

In addition, limousines and private buses are becoming a serious public hazard in the neighborhood on nights and weekends. Concerts and night time events at Wrigley significantly compound the problem. Intersections and sidewalks are frequently blocked making it difficult for patrons and residents to move throughout the streets and sidewalks. Dedicated drop-off and pick-up zones should be created and enforcement for non-compliance needs to happen now. The City should not wait for a tragic accident to occur before taking action.

The City also needs to demonstrate how the police and private security presence can control the crowds and ensure public safety. Often a large presence can be seen before and during a baseball game. However after the game, this large presence is reduced to mainly traffic aides regulating pedestrian and vehicular traffic around the ballpark. How will the new Entertainment District police detail be utilized for the increased night games and events? At a time when assaults, robberies and other crimes are dramatically increasing throughout Lake View, how can we be assured that police from other areas around neighborhood won’t be centered on Wrigley Field? Can the Cubs hire additional “officers” to help patrol the area around Wrigley Field and not further expose Lake View to a diluted police presence?

Are there are other City services that can be outsourced or paid for by the Cubs where they are the major driver for the need of such services?

We are very encouraged that the City, Alderman Tunney and the Cubs have slowed the rush to have a City Ordinance passed authorizing the unprecedented expansion of Wrigley Field into the neighborhood. We recognize that changes are needed at Wrigley Field, but neighborhood effects from additional night games, concerts and events have not been resolved. Now is not the time for City Council to rush to vote on a proposal that could have profound impact on the taxpaying residents for decades to come. Now is the time to answer these questions, adjust plans as necessary and then approve an expansion plan that all groups can support. We want to work with you, Alderman Tunney and the Cubs to come to a win/win solution for Lake View residents, Cubs fans and all of Chicago.

Many Lake View residents are baseball fans who want to see improvements in Wrigley Field. However, all residents of Lake View will have to live with the lasting effects of this expansion. Please ensure that the concerns of nearly 100,000 Chicagoans residing in Lake View are heard and addressed before advocating approval of this monumental proposal.

Sincerely,

William DeMille

President
Lake View Citizens Council

CC: Alderman Tom Tunney
Alderman James Cappleman
Alderman Ameya Pawar
Alderman Scott Waguespack
Mike Lufrano, Chicago Cubs Executive Vice President, Community Affairs/General Counsel
Kevin Foote, Belmont Harbor Neighbors President
Diann Marsalek, Central Lake View Neighbors President
Chester Kropidowski, East Lake View Neighbors President
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Kevin McIntyre, Hawthorne Neighbors President
Jan Sumrall, South East Lake View Neighbors President
David Duggan, South Lake View Neighbors
Jill Peters, Southport Neighbors Association President
Jim Ludwig, Triangle Neighbors President
William DeMille, West Lake View Neighbors President

Attached: 2012 April Letter Re Wrigley Recommendations To Alderman Tunney