

West Andersonville



Neighbors Together

West Andersonville Neighbors Together
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September 30, 2013

Alderman Patrick J. O'Connor
5850 N. Lincoln Ave.
Chicago, Illinois 60659

Dear Alderman O'Connor:

I write as a board member of West Andersonville Neighbors Together ("WANT"), a community organization representing hundreds of residents living in the West Andersonville area. Our neighborhood is in close proximity to the West Ridge Nature Preserve (the "Preserve").

The general membership of WANT has passed a resolution supporting the position of the West Ridge Nature Preserve Park Advisory Council (the "PAC"), and urges the Chicago Park District to consider its recommendations as it develops the Preserve.

Specifically, WANT is in agreement with the PAC's position that the West Ridge Nature Preserve should be maintained primarily to preserve wildlife habitat for viewing, nature appreciation and education, while preserving and enhancing maximum biodiversity. To reach that goal, WANT supports the full extent PAC's recommendations to CPD, including:

- that all paths in West Ridge Nature Preserve should be permeable;
- that the widest path should not exceed three feet in width;
- that half the path circumventing the pond should be a secondary path;
- that the northern part of the Preserve should be designed and managed as a wildlife refuge;
- that boating, fishing, bicycling and dog-walking be prohibited;
- that savannah should be limited in the design plan;

- that as many native and old-growth trees as possible should be preserved, and that the planting of any additional native trees should be timed to minimize disturbance to the wildlife.

Given our close proximity, we are some of the Chicago citizens who would most greatly benefit from increased access to the Preserve. We believe, however, that the necessity of limiting human activities in order to promote the Preserve as a wildlife refuge outweighs any recreational needs. The primary purpose of the Preserve should be to promote biodiversity and to support wildlife.

The WANT organization stands with the PAC in its recommendations to CPD, and we urge CPD to take the position of the local residents (as well as the concurring opinions of the Chicago Audubon Society, the Chicago Ornithological Society, and the Edgewater Environmental Sustainability Project, among others) into account.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Fick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "M".

The Rev. Michael D. Fick, President, W.A.N.T.