

As the Executive Director of the Naperville Park District I need to respond to the comments made by Albert Cain in an article that ran in the *Daily Herald* on Saturday, November 15, 2008. While I wholeheartedly support the gardeners' voicing their opinions on this issue, I must once again correct some inaccuracies that were presented on behalf of the gardeners.

**1. Mr. Cain stated, "the specific goal is to destroy two-thirds of the plots and to install three sports field for existing and newly acquired sports."**

While the gardeners may see this as destroying plots, from the Park District's position, it would mean that approximately 370 of the 590 existing garden plots would be relocated to areas in the southern portion of the West St. location and to either DuPage River Park or Southwest Community Park. Based on the initial concepts, over 100 additional garden plots would be available to the community with room to expand. Over 50% (approx. 360) of the garden plots would remain at the West St. location.

**2. Mr. Cain stated, "DuPage River Park has questionable soil and a history of toxic pollution. It is adjacent to a flood plain."**

We recently completed soil sampling at DuPage River Park to address gardener inquiries regarding the quality of the soil for farming. As stated in our Garden Plots FAQ's, the soil is in good condition to support gardening at the proposed site. Approximately 12 to 13 inches of topsoil exist with soil pH that is very good for our area (6.6 to 6.7). Organic matter of 3.6% to 4.0% is within the recommended levels. It is recommended that gypsum and lime be added to the soil – a common recommendation for this area. This could be completed prior to use of the area for gardening. Potash levels are low, however, this also is an area that can be addressed prior to the development of any garden plots. The area of DuPage River Park proposed for garden plots development is not located in the floodplain.

**3. The gardeners have also stated that DuPage River Park has a history of toxic pollution.**

The area of the park in question is located well to the south of the proposed garden plot site, across the DuPage River and at a lower elevation, and would not impact the proposed gardening site.

Contaminated soil found at the Two Rivers (DuPage River Park) property, which is located more than 1/3 of a mile from the proposed garden plot location and south of the DuPage River, was removed by the City of Naperville in 2005 pursuant to a remediation plan submitted by the City and approved by the IEPA. In 2004, an asphalt contractor illegal dumped left over materials at the far southern portion of DuPage River Park. Confirmatory sampling indicated that all of the contaminated soil was removed. In accordance with the remediation plan, the City then initiated a three-year groundwater assessment monitoring program which resulted in tests that determined that the clean-up was indeed successful.

Complete remediation and clean-up documentation was submitted to the IEPA in the fall of 2007. On January 8, 2008 the IEPA issued a "Return to Compliance" letter to the City for the Two Rivers site indicating that no further action or remediation is required. There is no history of any other pollution at or near this site.

**4. Mr. Cain stated, "while the gardens are used from dawn to dusk for six months of the year by many hundreds of people, they would be used only for 2 hours a day only during lacrosse and soccer season."**

As stated on many occasions, the Naperville Park District has not taken a position on any of the options put forth. That being said, the fact is that the statement made by Mr. Cain is simply not true. Mr. Cain was in attendance at all three of our Community Engagement meetings, and there was much discussion on the uses of 3 three new fields not only by the school district and the Park District, but by the numerous community partners including St. Raphael Football, the Naperville Youth Football League, and multiple soccer and lacrosse organizations. These organizations draw from all of Naperville, not just from any one geographic location, and they serve thousands of Naperville participants on an annual basis. It is also important to note that the initial concepts for the athletic field areas include the development of a walking/hiking trail, landscaping and open green space. If a portion of the garden plots area is developed, the resulting park area would be available for all residents to enjoy, not just for those who are involved in athletics.

**5. Mr. Cain stated, “as well as the many fields available within a short distance, we feel that it would be a major mistake for Naperville to abandon the gardening program for extracurricular sport fields.”**

The Naperville Park District has no intention of ever abandoning the garden plots program. If Option #1 were selected, this would allow for the program to “grow” by 100 plots with the opportunity for more plots in the future at either DuPage River Park or Southwest Community Park. The program could potentially bring in new users to this program since the plots would be on the south end of Naperville where none currently exist.

I greatly appreciate the involvement the Naperville community has had with this discussion. The three community meetings alone had well over 300 people in total attending. I only ask that in the future that those who wish to voice their opinion on this subject make sure the statements they make are based upon facts when used to support a particular position.

Ray McGury

Executive Director

Naperville Park District