

September 17, 2008

Dear Naperville Sun:

On behalf of the Naperville Park District, I wish to address the opinions expressed in the September 16, 2008 editorial regarding the Garden Plots in light of the Caroline Martin Mitchell property discussions.

First of all, it's important to reiterate the facts of the situation. No decisions of any kind have been made to impact the current Garden Plots site and only initial concepts have been presented. So far, there have been discussions between the Park District and School District 203, community meetings to gather input from residents, and a recommendation that further public input is sought. There will be a number of forthcoming public input opportunities for gardeners and residents to voice their opinions, and I encourage all with an interest in this topic to be active participants. Ultimately, any decisions regarding changes to the property would need the approval of the City Council.

The Park District fully understands the importance of the Garden Plots to the community and we appreciate the longstanding tradition of gardeners who have farmed that land for many years. We certainly would not seek to make changes to the detriment of a program that has proven to be successful.

As for the assertion that "the Park District doesn't do much for older adults," I have to challenge that, but I first want to make it clear that gardening isn't just for seniors. Garden Plots users include individuals of all ages, families, children and community groups. We appreciate that our active adults and seniors are Garden Plot users, but they don't represent the demographics as a whole.

Each season, the Park District offers a wide variety of programs for our active adults and seniors. From exercise programs, to computer training, to day and extended trips, the Park District most definitely does address the interests of this increasing demographic. Also, our Alfred Rubin Riverwalk Community Center, which houses most of those programs, hosts several drop-in programs and clubs that offer friendship and enjoyment nearly any day of the week.

The Naperville Park District prides itself in being a part of a community that serves everyone. If you are of the opinion that the Park District doesn't serve you, I invite you to explore the programs, events, and facilities that we offer. Our mission is to provide leisure experiences that enhance the quality of life for our community, and that means for *everyone*.

Ray McGury
Executive Director
Naperville Park District