



Quarterly Newsletter

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2022-2023**
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We're Glad You're Here.

Welcome to the first quarterly WEAR newsletter! We hope this space will serve as a way to hear about all the great things happening in our neighborhood, learn more about the passionate people that live within its boundaries and give us a way to share more about how you can get involved in all our activities and events.

From our community garden, to the development of Park 599 and the Metra station, WEAR is growing quickly. With so many developments on the table, we hope to hear from you as an active voice in our community! Remember to join us by paying your WEAR dues at wearchicago.org and to connect with us on Facebook to stay abreast of the latest developments.

We also hope you'll find this newsletter to be a helpful resource. If you know of anyone making a difference in the community who should be featured, have an article idea or want us to address a specific question in an upcoming issue, email us at wearorg@gmail.com.

Breaking Ground on Park 599

Our long-awaited neighborhood park is making progress! A team of stakeholders convened at the site in March to walk the perimeter of the park, review progress and outline next steps as a follow up from a community webinar at the end of February. Representatives from the Parks Department, CDOT, the developer for Anderson Point, ComEd, WEAR and Alderman Vazquez's office were present.

The team is working toward completing a checklist that will allow the transfer of the property from EMC to the Parks District –the biggest hurdle toward breaking ground on the park. Those items, including perimeter restoration and removal of a temporary ComEd post, are nearing completion, and the transfer of the property to the Parks District is imminent.

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Preparing for Spring in the WEAR Garden

Spring is right around the corner and WEAR is busy planning for another season of evolving the Horst & Anna Wagener WEAR Garden into our neighborhood Butterfly Sanctuary (and by that matter, all pollinators).

You may have noticed that last Fall, we didn't do any garden clean up—we only spread a truck load of compost throughout the garden. Why, you might ask? Many pollinators, like bees and butterflies, ride out the cold winter in dead plant material and emerge in spring to do their good work. Protecting these resting pollinators is also why we make sure not to clean too early in Spring.

By removing dead material too early, it risks destroying many of these pollinators who tend to stay put in their homes until the temperatures are consistently above 50 degrees Fahrenheit.



Volunteer in the Garden!

May 21 | 10 a.m.



Join us for our second annual Peirce Elementary School Day in the Garden. Bring the family to come have fun helping us plant flowers and milkweed, build Muddle Ponds and Pollinator Hotels to hang around the garden, and create some fun crafts! Light refreshments will be provided.

Stay tuned to our Facebook page for additional details.

Waiting for this temperature consistency helps protect habitats in the spring and ensures we have a robust and healthy pollinator population and overall garden ecosystem.

In the coming year we are planning on expanding our population of Butterfly Host plants, including by growing our Milkweed collection with new varieties.

Milkweed is the only host plant Monarch butterflies will lay their eggs on and what

they will eat when they are caterpillars. But other species of butterflies require other Host plants. Our hope is to plant some of those at the far south end of the garden which help spruce up the northwest corner of Ravenswood and Rosehill.

To do that, we need the support of neighbors to join WEAR so that we have the financial resources to buy these trees. Please join today!

The WEAR annual dues is only \$20 per household. However, you can use the same link to make additional contributions to the WEAR Garden.

We will also continue to expand our collection of Nectar plants and native wildflowers.

In fact, we have over a 100 milk jugs winter sowing. (If you're interested in learning more about this process, this is a great [FB Group: Winter Sowers](#)).

A big thank you to Starbuck at Ridge & Ashland for saving all the milk jugs for us!

WEAR Garden, cont'd

We expect that the coming season the Horst & Anna Wagener WEAR Garden will be more bold and beautiful than ever.

One thing I've learned the past few years working in the garden, is that the old saying about perennials and wild flowers is very true:

"The first year they sleep, the second year they creep and the third year they leap!"

We've planted so many new things the past few years, it's amazing how beautiful they are as they mature after a few years.



The WEAR Garden in bloom.

Spring Gardening Clean Up Tips

- Wait to clean your garden until it's consistently 50 degrees if you can!
- If you feel the urge to start cleaning your home garden early, cut standing dead stems back no shorter than 15 inches.
- For the materials you've cleaned out, find a corner to loosely stack it in the hopes that insects may still emerge. Densely piled materials can begin the process of decomposition and kill or trap insects.

Resources:

[Spring Garden Cleanup: University of Illinois Extension](#)

[Slow Down on Spring Cleaning in Your Garden \(dupageforest.org\)](#)

For nearly 30 years Gethsemane has been a proud supporter of WEAR and the Horst and Anne Wagener WEAR Garden

Gethsemane
GARDEN CENTER



Solutions For Passages Pickup Congestion

If you've driven down Bryn Mawr between Ashland and Hermitage by Passages School when school is beginning or letting out, you've experienced how congested it can become as families pick up kids from school.

Cars queue up around the block and backups cause through traffic to divert into the alleys north of Bryn Mawr. While previously a temporary one way eastbound during these key times, the opening of a new daycare at the corner of Ashland meant that practice was discontinued due to the dual need for families to drop off and pick up their children there as well.

WEAR is advocating for our community interests on this issue and worked to schedule a recent Zoom meeting in coordination with WANT to discuss options and receive resident input. We thank everyone for their participation on this call.

Permit Parking Petition Drive

With new changes in our neighborhood, we need YOUR input on zoning & parking! **Click below to voice your opinion** on revised permit hours for Rosehill, making Paulina one-way north of Thorndale and establishing new zones.

We also need volunteers to help collect physical signatures.

[**Take the Survey**](#)

Alderperson Vasquez's continues to research the issue together with CDOT, but there is not an easy immediate solution to the problem.

Currently, CDOT is proposing removal of parking on Bryn Mawr on that block in the short term, with a long-term goal of creating inlets adjacent and surrounding the school area.

The long-term solution cost for the inlets is looking to be \$1M, and the funding has not been identified as the school isn't a CPS location and it's not located in a TIF.

To get community input on CDOT's short-term solution, WEAR will include a question in an upcoming parking survey. Residents on Bryn Mawr are especially encouraged to provide their feedback.

Volunteer With WEAR!



Join the Garden Team

Help us save the endangered monarchs and join us as we create a butterfly sanctuary in our community garden. Email WEARorg@gmail.com to join!



Celebrate Earth Day

Join us for a community clean up event on Earth Day! Clean up your streets, and show your support on April 22 while crafting with the kiddos by coloring a globe and posting it in your window.



Save the Date: WEAR Garage Sale June 18th

Save the date for June 18 for our community garage sale! Clean out your old clothes, furniture, long-forgotten treasures and more. Email Ruthie Williams to join the list at WEARorg@gmail.com.

Improving New Bike Lanes

WEAR is working with Alderman Vasquez and Better Streets Chicago to improve the new bike lanes along Ashland and Clark.

While many of our neighbors are in support of the concept of bike lanes, many have also expressed concerns over the lack of community input into their development, loss of street parking and potential impact to local businesses.

WEAR has expressed these community sentiments to Alderman Vasquez and recently met with Better Streets Chicago (BSC), a transportation advocacy organization, to discuss ideas for a solution that would

reconfigure the bike lanes in a way that would better serve the community.

WEAR is also concurrently addressing the issue of high-speed traffic along the Ashland/Clark corridor.

Based on our discussions, BSC is developing a more comprehensive solution to address the entire Clark/Ridge intersection, with the goal of making it more pedestrian friendly, while also addressing the problems of speed and bike lanes.

WEAR will share more details as they become available.

Top: BSC is developing solutions to address all of Clark/Ridge.

Bottom: New bike lanes cause disruption.



Advocate For Your Community Join or Renew Your WEAR Membership



Annual Dues: \$20

[**Join or Renew Here**](#)

Park, cont'd from page 1

Several vaults will need to be filled at the property, however, due to their placement at the perimeter of the park, we are able to move forward with park development while their restoration continues on a separate timeline.

Alderman Vasquez's office has received approval to use TIF funding to fill the vaults.

Moving forward on filling the vaults in a parallel timeline with the park development will allow us to expedite progress on a completed green space.

Advocating for movement on Park599 is a large priority for WEAR and we continue to communicate with key stakeholders on its movement and progress.

The bottom line: We expect the transfer of the property and work to begin on the park this Spring—with the goal of completion by end of this year.

The next step will be providing input on trees and plants for the park. Look out for another community meeting with the Parks Department to discuss Park599 plantings this May.

Neighbor Profile: The "Stop Sign Guys"

The story of two neighbors who advocated for change, and made our community a safer place.

During the warmer months you might see us sitting on our front porch sipping a beverage, talking to passing neighbors, or giving a dog treat to one of our usual four-legged friends.

That's one of the many reasons we love this neighborhood. By introduction, we are Brett Malon and Steven Anderson who live on Bryn Mawr. We might also be referred to as the "stop sign guys".

After moving into our home, we quickly recognized a safety concern. Bryn Mawr is a congested street; many times, we've witnessed cars going over the speed limit sometimes not even slowing down or fully stopping at stop signs.

The corner that gave us the most concern was the three-way intersection at Bryn Mawr and Hermitage. Pedestrians couldn't cross the street without getting honked at, screeching of brakes was common; we've witnessed many "near misses". Let's add, trying to safely make a right or left from Hermitage onto Bryn Mawr, it would feel impossible.

Many neighbors would tell us they would just avoid that intersection because they felt it was unsafe. Lastly, our largest concern, having a school one block away; we couldn't live with ourselves if a child, person, or pet got injured.

Something needed to be done.

We were committed to try.



Brett Malon and Steven Anderson at home.

"Stop Sign Guys", cont'd

On July 14th, 2020, we posted our concern to the WEAR page on Facebook regarding this intersection. We were overwhelmed by the number of comments echoing the same concerns, and at that point reached out to Alderman Vasquez's office to see how we could add a stop sign.

The Alderman's office was very responsive and explained the process, which included, collecting signatures of residents, before CDOT would conduct a traffic study to determine the feasibility of adding stop signs. City code required us to collect 65% of the impacted residents. They attached the required PDF and we had what we needed.

It's not an easy task to collect signatures during a Pandemic, let alone ringing doorbells with a clip board, hand sanitizer, and countless pens while wearing a face covering.

We kept safety in mind; once we explained what we were doing many relaxed, realized we weren't asking for money or selling the next gadget and happily signed. Of course, some people didn't agree, we respected everyone's opinion and kept moving on, that didn't discourage us.

After several nights we had over 5 pages of signatures (40+).

We reached back to the Alderman's office with a scan copy of the signatures and that's when we learned to practice patience.

We met the signature requirement in September of 2020.

The next step would be to wait 45-60 days as CDOT conducted their traffic study (this took six months).

Throughout the process we continued to check in with the Alderman's office. In April of 2021 we learned CDOT approved the sign. The work wasn't done, the next step was for the request to go to the ordinance committee, followed by city council. This added several additional months. Our most joyous moment was when we saw the signs getting installed on November 1st, 2021.

It took one year and four months, but we made it happen.

Some final thoughts. We do have the power to evoke change; it might not happen tomorrow, but if we practice patience and are determined, it will happen.

"We do have the power to evoke change; it might not happen tomorrow, but if we practice patience and are determined, it will happen."

We live in an amazing community, and we cannot thank everyone enough who supported our effort.

Alderman Vasquez's office is amazing. Thank you for working with us and dealing with our countless e-mails. Your staff was patient and committed.

And we thank Scott Fink and the members of WEAR who do make our community stronger.

The stop signs have helped. We've heard a lot less screeching and honking of horns.

Lastly, do say hello if you see us sitting outside. (During the warmer months, of course!)

Meet Our Newest Board Member: Barry Love



Barry Love is our newest board member. Barry moved to the neighborhood last fall, after living in Roscoe Village for 21 years. While there, he served on the board of Roscoe Village Neighbors (RVN) for several years, including a stint as Secretary.

RVN runs one of the oldest and largest street fests in the city (Retro on Roscoe). In addition to helping run Retro on Roscoe, Barry worked on many events and initiatives, including the New Resident Party, Garden Walk, Garage Sale, and Neighborhood Watch.

With a degree in Economics and Business, Barry served as Treasurer of his 139-unit condo board for over a decade, managing an \$800K annual budget. He led the effort to obtain financing for a \$6 million capital improvement project and to communicate the plan to fellow owners. He has served on multiple other boards, including the Chicago Genealogical Society, and he leads historical walking tours of Roscoe Village through the non-profit Chicago For Chicagoans.

Barry has worked in IT for the past three decades and is currently an HR Data Analyst at Constellation Energy (a spinoff of Exelon). Although he doesn't drink, Barry is a founding partner in the popular northern Michigan brewery Hop Lot Brewing Company and understands the struggles of small business startups.

Being a big fan of the Andersonville area, Barry was eager to get involved in the community here.

"I'm excited to be part of WEAR. I really like this area, and I've spent a lot of time here over the years. Although I'm new to living in the neighborhood, I think I can offer a fresh perspective, broad experience, and a strong skill set," he says.

"I am driven to make my community a better place, and WEAR membership is a good way to do that. I also hope to meet people, and that's easier when working together toward a common purpose. Areas of special interest to me would be membership engagement, reducing crime, and improving our tree canopy and green spaces."

Public Art in WEAR



The ComEd station at Rosehill/Ravenswood

WEAR is excited for the possibility of two new public art opportunities in our neighborhood.

We have received approval to paint the side of the ComEd station at Rosehill and Ravenswood, and WEAR is advocating for placement of a mural or mosaic in that space. We are in the process of creating an RFP for the project as well as seeking funding. WEAR is also in the process of exploring options for a sculpture to anchor our community garden space. **If you have experience with grant writing and would like to volunteer, email us at WEARorg@gmail.com.**