

# A New Voice in the 43rd Ward

By: Tim Egan



## Olympics 2016 Yes! And Why

On January 14, 2009 the Lincoln Park Advisory Council hosted a forum at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum and the focus was Chicago's 2016 Olympic bid. It was promoted as a showdown between representatives of the Chicago Olympic Bid Committee and University of Chicago Economics Professor Allen R. Sanderson.

Professor Sanderson, prior to the forum, had written articles titled "Chicago Could Make A Better Investment Than Olympics 2016" for the Chicago Tribune and "Chicago 2016: The Tail Is Already Wagging Our Dog" for the November 2008 edition of Investing In Chicago.

Professor Sanderson is an absolute authority on sports economics issues and in 1998 was the winner of the U of C's Quantrell Award for teaching excellence.

He was called on to give the opening remarks and the Olympic Committee members looked a little nervous.

The first question posed: "Will the Olympics help Chicago financially?"

Sanderson said, "Maybe. Probably. A little." These were not the words of an expected protagonist.

In follow up conversations and correspondence with Professor Sanderson, his case is clear that the Olympics themselves will not be an economic boon.

However, Chicago will not face the chal-

lenges of other host cities who've gone broke because our city's infrastructure already includes large sports venues like Soldier Field and the United Center.

So why should Chicago take the risks of hosting the 2016 games? In Sanderson's own words; "Chicago is more like an Atlanta or Houston or Rio or Osaka in that they/we are still somewhat unknowns. So, yes, being the host could help one of us emerge."

The emergence of Chicago as an outstanding global city would have an impact that will benefit the city for the next century. It is painfully obvious that the City of Chicago cannot continue to increase taxes on current residents. Since higher taxes are forcing people to leave our city, county and even our state there must be an alternative. Hosting the premier international sports event will shine a spotlight on Chicago and when the international community realizes our "Gem on the Prairie," it will attract more business.

Increasing the employment base in the form of more corporate offices, especially corporate headquarters relocating to Chicago, is the long term financial benefit hosting the Olympics can bring. More jobs means an increase of tax payers and that is the way to balance a deficit. Balancing the books on the backs of taxpayers is not a long term solution. Increasing the tax

payer base is.

Now there have been some issues and it was especially proven at the Lincoln Park Advisory Council's Forum that the onus is on the Olympic Committee to prepare and present analysis on how local areas will be impacted by the games. In the GCN area, because of the fallout from what is locally known as the "Latin Soccer Field" issue, the Olympic Committee has abandoned much of what they had originally planned in Lincoln Park. Sadly, this means we can also expect no major improvements to facilities or park infrastructures.

While there is some concern about the impact the proposed temporary 20,000 seat Olympic tennis stadium will have on the Bill Jarvis Migratory Bird Sanctuary at Addison and Lake Shore Drive, the major event hosted within the GCN boundary will be the Triathlon at North Avenue Beach. The Olympic Committee pledge is that they will leave any area utilized by the 2016 games in a much improved state. And some of our parks can certainly use the improvement.

Above all, the 2016 Olympics Committee has made clear their commitment to working with the communities that will be impacted by the games.

So please "Imagine"... a wonderful 2016 Olympics in

Chicago that will bring positive international attention and the long term benefits so badly needed by our great city.

Your comments and responses are welcome by contacting Tim Egan at 43rdwardunited@gmail.com or by calling 312.714.4409. Please visit [HYPERLINK "http://www.43rdwardunited.com"](http://www.43rdwardunited.com) www.43rdwardunited.com for news updates.



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