

An Open Letter About--Indian Hill

To the Property Owners of South-east Winnetka:

It has been said that the property owners surrounding the proposed Indian Hill park should pay for it. Most of them are doing their share, and many are paying far above the average sum asked. But they are not the ones who will suffer most if commercialism comes. Don't forget this: the whole section south of Elm street is involved in this upward or downward trend of property values. It isn't the petty question of who should pay the most. It is the question of "how much will it benefit my property to keep all south-east Winnetka high-grade instead of letting it get cheap?"

If the matter involved was simply the pleasure to be derived from a park, the interest might safely be confined to the neighborhood of it. But such is not the case. In Indian Hill gets cheap and "thrashy", the whole of Winnetka will be lowered in property values.

Let us not be found "asleep at the switch." Let us not be lulled to peaceful slumber by the present home-like tranquility and believe it will continue. There may be a rude awakening when it is too late. Shall we admit mediocrity and yield to inferiority in the near future? Do we think the present peaceful conditions will go on without effort on our part in the big construction period now coming? Who is so blind as no to see the impending change?

South-east Winnetka is full of good business men. Why not put the same good business judgment into the study of your own property? Did you ever know of a community which became high-grade except by the alertness and pull-together spirit of its property owners? Nobody outside of our own community is going to help us. We must help ourselves to advance. This is the strongest and probably the FINAL effort for civic betterment in south-east Winnetka.

The Ugly Picture

If we were lacking in community pride and were content to let everything come in that wants to, WHAT WOULD SURELY HAPPEN? No more good residences would be built, the present ones would be allowed to get out of repair, cheap "ungalletes" would go up and the present ones would get to look cheaper than ever. Little corner shops would appear, with flats and apartment buildings. The property located in the

new commercial district, near the stations, would advance; but purely residential property farther away, as for instance adjacent to Willow street, would advance very little or not at all, while other suburban villages which have started right would witness a wonderful growth. The home-lovers would move away, renters taking their places, and we would have city condition on a small scale. If that time comes, there will be an apartment building where my house stands and my home will be far away. But now about the lots farther from the stations? Will they not be the first to suffer in values? They can't all be used for apartment buildings.

Would you trade a lot in south-east Winnetka for one of equal size in Kenilworth or Lake Forest? Of course, you would. Why is property there worth more? There can be but one answer—the owners have kept these villages exclusive. We cannot hope to overtake them in the race, but we can prevent falling back still farther.

The raising of money to buy this store-lot means these things:

1. The keeping out of stores.
2. Prevention of stores on the proposed larger park property.
3. The zoning of south-east Winnetka for residences only.
4. The prevention of flats and apartments.
5. The making of a large and beautiful park in the near future with railroad stations to correspond.
6. Higher real estate values everywhere south of Elm street.
7. A united community spirit that will get us other things equally important.

Winnetka has almost a national reputation for its community efforts and unity of work along certain lines. The work of Mr. Davies and our record during the war are known everywhere. It is time we started in to help the Zoning Commission with their plans, of which this is an important part.

For Property Owners Elsewhere

Property owners living outside of Winnetka, be advised and warned: You are not being asked to subscribe to a charity; you are not being asked for disinterested benevolence toward the residents of Indian Hill; you are not being appealed to for civic pride and community spirit—although the plan means much along this line. We are presenting to you a plan business proposition,

which any real estate man will confirm but which you have not understood because of not living here. The business proposition is—make a small investment now to get big returns in increased valuation of your property later.

Like most good business propositions, quick action is necessary. We win NOW or we lose. Are you going to say to yourself in a year or two—"why did I ever buy in Winnetka, the cheapest town on the north shore? Why have values gone down there when they have been going up most everywhere else?" Nothing but the keeping out of commercialism and the beautifying of a residence section ever has, or ever will, make it high-grade or higher in value.

Your Help Needed

We have a few good workers. We need many more. The fund is growing steadily and enthusiastic meetings are being held. Who will help with their subscriptions, according to their means, and with their influence also? Who are going to remember this, drive with pride after helping it to succeed; or who would be pointed to as slackers three or four years from now is our efforts failed and Indian Hill had become a mongrel mixture instead of a pedigreed population?

Yours, for a better Indian Hill,
J. D. Pierce,
Chairman,
Indian Hill Improvement Association

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