

LAKEFRONT OUTLOOK

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Issue 9

King Prep begins new search for principal

by Erin Meyer

After multiple failed attempts last year to contract a principal, the Local School Council of King College Prep, 4445 S. Drexel Blvd., voted Feb. 17 to undertake the principal selection process over again.



Former King Interim Principal Linda Coles

On two separate occasions in 2005 former King Interim Principal Linda Coles failed to secure the votes she needed to win a four-year principal contract. With Coles

out of the running this year some LSC members are hopeful the council will finally select a principal.

"This is our opportunity to do the right thing for the children," said LSC

member Cathy Smith Dale, who made the motion to begin the principal selection process at the meeting.

The motion passed with the support of nine council members. Three were opposed. But the LSC will have to take a second vote to start the principal selection process at the next LSC meeting, according to James Deanes, of the CPS Office of LSC Relations. King's new Interim Principal Nathaniel Mason and the council's student representative took part in the vote, which is prohibited by LSC guidelines.

"We don't want the council to get frustrated by these technicalities," said Deanes. "That's why I give everyone my cell phone. All they have to do is call."

If the council is successful, King will have a contracted principal for the first time in almost 10 years.

"We need the stability a contracted principal would bring," Smith Dale said.

In 2001 CPS closed King in response

to chronically low test scores and a board of education consent decree that promised to give minority students equal access to selective enrollment schools.

Shortly after King reopened in the fall of 2002 as a selective enrollment school, CPS chief Arne Duncan appointed Linda Coles as interim principal.

When it came time for the LSC to contract a principal last year, Coles applied for the job.

In February and March of 2005, the King LSC voted twice on the question of whether or not Coles would receive a four-year contract. But LSC members remained deadlocked and Coles failed to win a contract.

In January Coles left King to take an administrative job at CPS Central Office.

Mason has come out of retirement temporarily to lead the school. The

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Tourism brewing in Bronzeville

by Tedd Carrison

The Supreme Life Building at 35th Street and King Drive once housed the first African-American owned insurance company in the northern United States. Today, the tenants have similar interests, hedging Bronzeville's vibrant history through neighborhood tours, cultural exhibits and a multi-media archive.

On Feb. 20, the Black Metropolis Convention and Tourism Council previewed the Bronzeville Visitor Information Center that is slated to open March 15, dependent on whether the council can raise \$150,000 by then, said President Harold Lucas.

The 4,000 sq. ft., Wi-Fi accessible space snakes through both floors of the 85-year-old Supreme Life Building's eastern wing. It offers offices, a conference room and gallery space. "Bronzeville to Harlem," the painted bronze sculpture work of School of the Art Institute professor Preston Jackson, is displayed upstairs. Black and white photographs of local people and places by Aleksandrovina Daria Amerik line the second floor walls.

"The first part was saving the building from demolition and then working with the community to develop the building for adaptive reuse," said Paula Robinson of BMCTC, describing the process.

She said the center is part of a larger effort to tout Bronzeville as a major tourist destination and preserve its storied past, which is under the constant temper of gentrification.

Mimicking a potential visitor, Robinson said "I've had the downtown scene. I've had the convention scene. Let me get into the community and leave some dollars' and we are ambassadors of that."

Ald. Toni Preckwinkle (4th) toured the center with state

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Mural painting by teens to brighten Cottage Grove

by Nykeya Woods

Blues, yellows and reds will color a drab Cottage Grove Avenue as teenage artists from Little Black Pearl Art and Design Center in North Kenwood design murals for a 1.5-mile stretch of the thoroughfare.

The participants, ages 12 to 19, presented their ideas to a packed 43rd Street Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Advisory Council meeting last week. Participants include students from King College Prep, Hyde Park Career Academy and Dunbar High School.

The seven-month project will brighten Cottage Grove Avenue from 39th to 51st streets with stained-glass windows, mosaics, paintings, banners and murals. "The area is lifeless and lacks color," said Gwendolyn Pruitt, director of prod-



A potential banner idea (right) for Cottage Grove Corridor Beautification plan. Teens from Little Black Pearl discuss more ideas.

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Mixed-use housing proposal in motion for Bronzeville

by Nykeya Woods

The 43rd Street Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Advisory Council approved plans last week to erect a six-story condominium on Cottage Grove Avenue.

To construct the building, Cottage Grove Development LLC still needs to acquire an adjacent parcel that contains a vacant building.

"There is blighted, dilapidated building," developer Art Gurevich said. "In its place we are going to build a beautiful building with traditional architecture that would fuse the area."

The building is designed with roof-top gardens, terraces, and gables. Of the 80 condo units, each ranging from 1,200 to 1,650 square feet, eight will be set aside as affordable, or 10 percent.

Plans include a parking garage with 50 spaces and an additional outdoor lot with 30 spaces. A kitchen and bath design studio will fill out half of the 15,000-square-foot storefront space along 4501-19 S. Cottage Grove Ave. The other half will be occupied by other

retail or office use.

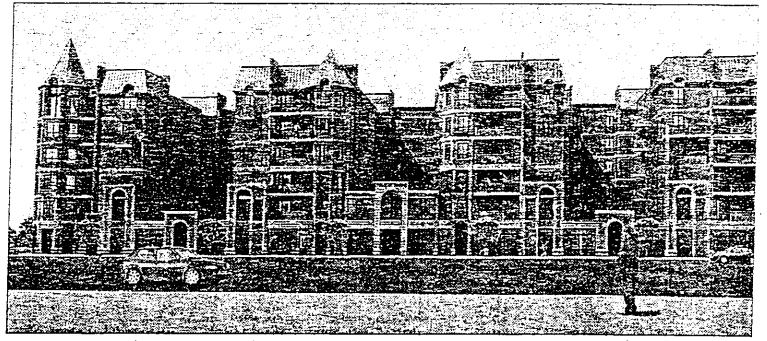
Still waiting on building permits, Gurevich said that he hopes construction can begin in the fall with the building opening in late 2007 or early 2008. The developer is not requesting TIF assistance, but the project is expected to generate \$370,000 a year for the 43rd Street TIF district, Gurevich said.

According to Illinois TIF guidelines, existing property taxes are distributed to the same taxing bodies such as schools, parks and libraries while all new property tax revenues within the district are diverted to a fund for building facade and street improvements.

The 43rd Street TIF district runs along Cottage Grove between Pershing Road and 47th Street and includes some other outlying areas.

During last week's meeting, James Wilson, a project manager for the city, updated the status of two other area developments.

At the corner of 47th Street and Drexel Boulevard the former 4th Ward Aldermanic Office will soon be home to a seven-story condominium by California-based Alliance



Architect's rendering of mixed-use new condos.

Property Group. Retail would occupy the first floor. Construction may begin in early 2007.

"We have to go through building permits which is a very lengthy process for a building that size," Wilson said.

Local developers John Gruszka and Lisa Pilot announced plans to build six rental units and a storefront space at 4315 S. Cottage Grove Ave. Wilson said the developers are currently completing drawings for the proposed four-story building.

Mural

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uct design for Little Black Pearl. Pruitt blamed the drab look of Cottage Grove on deteriorating buildings and façades, vacant lots and limited street lights.

The artists suggested that dull, stand-alone buildings like one located at 45th Street and Cottage Grove Avenue be a possible canvass for murals.

"There are many discolored buildings along the corridor," said Sidney Snelling, 16. "If we hit these bricks with a splash of imagination, inspiration, history and color, his building is bound to be admired as a result of its visual powers."

More than 70 street lights could receive handmade banners with specially designed fonts and colors. "We hope to let the community know that art sometimes speaks louder than words," Snelling said.

Plans also call for covering Chicago Transit Authority bus shelters with stained glass.

Melvin Gordon, 17, said that 70 plus street fixtures, manholes and protective tree grates would be painted in bright colors. Decorative, 13-foot-tall obelisks will be located at 39th and 51st streets and display positive stories and images of history.

Finalization of the concept is expected in the spring. Completion and installation of 72 banners will begin in the summer.

This is one of three major projects within the Cottage Grove Commercial Revitalization Initiative organized by the Quad Communities Development Corporation. The QCDC formed in 2002 to improve retail, entertainment and office development in the area.

Quarterly meetings of the QCDC occur at the King Community Service Center, 4314 S. Cottage Grove Ave.

The date of the next meeting has not been announced yet.

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Tourism

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Rep. Ken Dunkin last week. After the preview, she complimented Jackson's sculpture installation and praised the center's preservation mission.

"I am a history teacher," said Preckwinkle, referring to her years in a high school classroom before taking the 4th Ward helm. "So I am always happy to see people concerned about our past and focused on making that history more accessible to people."

Robinson said Bronzeville's location along the Dan Ryan and Stevenson expressways, a Chicago Transit Authority

Green Line stop and multiple bus routes make the Mid-South Side prime for tourism. But she said this requires a bevy of attractions to solicit tourists and keep them in the neighborhood.

"Some people are going to be interested in going to DuSable Museum [of African-American History] and some are literally asking where can I get some good barbecue?" said Robinson. "They have to have something to see and that's what we have been working on, is building those attractions."

The Black Metropolis Convention and Tourism Council is accepting donations to complete the first phase of the visitor's center. Gifts of \$20, \$100, \$250, \$500, \$1,000 and \$2,500 may be sent the council at 3501 S. King Dr., Suite 1 East, Chicago, IL 60653.

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King

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LSC has approximately four months to complete the principal selection process, as Mason is scheduled to leave in June.

"If Principal Mason decides not to extend his stay in June and the LSC has not found a new principal, CPS would have to appoint another interim," Deanes said.

Some parents in attendance at the meeting

expressed doubt that the current council members could successfully come to any agreement.

"I do not have faith that this LSC has the ability to choose a principal," said Michele C. Evans-Brock. "I think it would be wise to wait until after the next LSC election when a new council has been put in place."

But Deanes said it is crucial that the LSC move forward with the principal selection process.

"It is an awesome responsibility. Choosing a principal is the most significant work a [local school] council can do," he said.

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correction

In a story about research at the Jazz on the Boulevard mixed-income community, the Outlook erroneously reported that researchers exclusively interviewed current residents of Jazz." Most of the study centered on relocated residents of former Chicago Housing authority high rises who indicated that Jazz on the Boulevard was a site they would like to return to. The Outlook regrets the error.

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