CITIZENS FOR GLEN ELLYN PRESERVATION 2009 PARK BOARD CANDIDATE SURVEY

1. What is your view of the purpose of parks in our community?

Melissa Creech: The parks serve several purposes. They provide green space for everyone to enjoy and to benefit our environment. They provide recreational and athletic opportunities and places for the community to gather.

Jeff Dickson: I fully support the Park District's current Mission Statement as philosophy for the role of a park district in a community and the services it should provide to the residents: Glen Ellyn Park District is driven to foster diverse, community-based leisure opportunities, through a harmonious blend of quality recreation programs, facilities and open space which will enhance the quality of life into the future.

Jeff Jourdan: The purpose of parks in our community is to provide the opportunity for an outdoor and indoor recreation experience that suites all members of the community. Some examples of this would be:

Village Green with its new playground tennis courts, baseball fields, soccer fields, basketball courts as well as the community garden plots. Maryknoll with its miniature golf, splash park, platform tennis, boccie ball courts, picnic area, playground and walking paths.

Ackerman with its soccer fields, baseball and softball fields, playground and new indoor facility.

Churchill with its nature walking path.

Spring Avenue with its fitness center and dog park.

The GEPD provides many opportunities to enjoy educational programs, nature, athletics, family fun, or just relax at the Lake on a warm summer evening listening to a jazz concert in the park.

Jay Kinzler: To maintain open space, provide areas for residents and their families to enjoy outdoor activities, and add to the tree canopy of the community.

Julia Nephew: Parks provide open spaces for residents to use for activities ranging from physical exercise, including team sports, to socializing. Our children play in parks and we meet our neighbors in our parks. Additionally, parks provide space for wildlife and plants. Parks, if properly designed, placed and managed can provide important resources in the community for environmental preservation, a tree canopy, and storm water management

Keith Schoen: Parks can be passive for enjoying the green space, weather, sky, etc., or active for sports and recreation, whether participating or watching, contributing to enjoyment. We have concerts in the park for passive use, just

enjoying the lake, nature; and for active use, from educational programs to playgrounds to all sports.

Bill Taylor: One purpose of parks within a community should be to provide its residents with recreational opportunities, whether planned or pick-up, on fields, rinks, courts, etc. which are safe, readily accessible and available when needed. Another purpose of parks is to be an area of escape, whether for a few quiet moments, such as walking a dog or watching a toddler navigate a playground or for a few hours while enjoying a picnic, listening to live music or enjoying the beauty of a nature trail. Parks should also provide an area for socialization, whether between small children, senior citizens, or even dogs and their owners as a way or bringing a community together.

2. How do you think the residents of Glen Ellyn view the function of parks and how would you act on this?

Creech: Given the outpouring of support for Ackerman Woods it is obvious that the residents of Glen Ellyn value natural spaces. These areas help preserve the character that drew many residents to Glen Ellyn. The Park District should look for opportunities to acquire natural spaces when they can, and to preserve and manage the spaces that we have now.

Our residents also place a high value on recreation. Our existing athletic fields are primarily native soil fields with inherently poor drainage. These fields can be improved with better drainage to maximize their use, at a much lower cost than construction of new fields.

Finally, we need to continue the excellent programming available to our residents. By regularly surveying program participants and acting on their feedback we can make our programs even better.

Dickson: I think a majority of residents view parks as a resource for leisure and recreation programs necessitating the need for open space. I would continue the current practice of acquiring open space when fiscally reasonable to do so. In addition, I believe we should continue to evaluate the utilization of our space and ensure facilities are optimally planned to meet the needs of our programs and the community at large.

Jourdan: I feel the residents of Glen Ellyn view the park district as an avenue to provide a variety of recreational programs that meet the needs of the community. I believe that the current board and staff have listened to the community's needs and are providing programming options while remaining good steward of the community's tax dollars. There are programs available from pre-school, grade school, high school, adults as well as senior citizens.

Kinzler: Most enjoy them. I think many would like to see improved and timely maintenance. For instance, repair and proper preparation of sports fields. Their beauty can be enhanced by more vigorous litter pick up. For the last several years I have helped coordinate the Prairie Path and Great Western Trail cleanup and the Village recycle events as a member of the Village Environmental

Commission. These are inexpensive but rewarding volunteer projects which really improve the aesthetics of the community.

Nephew: The residents of Glen Ellyn find value in our parks and open spaces. Many surveys over the years have demonstrated strong support for the preservation of open space and the purchase of additional land to add to the park network in our community. Our parks, playgrounds and sports fields are busy places year round. Residents want to see these spaces maintained and managed to maximize their use and utility. We are also a community that understands the need for improved environmental stewardship.

As a Park District Commissioner, I would work to better coordinate the preparation of sporting fields with the various clubs, teams and groups that use them for events. For instance, repair and proper preparation of sports fields needs to be better scheduled to better coordinate with the use of these fields by teams and clubs. We need to examine the district's use of pesticides and native plantings to be certain that we are not only making a minimal impact on the environment, but also actively engaging in practices and long range planning that will provide significant and long term benefits.

Schoen: I believe they view the functions as passive and active. The parks impact the well-being of their lives by contributing to their health and enjoyment and the same for their families. The parks can be very educational for all ages, from passive to recreational.

Taylor: I believe the majority of Glen Ellyn residents have a favorable view of parks and the services they provide. We act on this by continuing to survey District residents as to what is important to them as far as what parks and facilities have to offer. After selection of schools, many residents choose a community to live in based upon the quality of the park district and what it can provide. Another barometer of how residents perceive the parks and its programs is the continued growth of participation in its programs and usage of its facilities.

3. The last Park District opinion survey (2005) indicated a strong interest by the public in acquiring more open space (69.71%), the highest score of all the potential projects listed in the survey. How do you interpret this directive and how could it be put into action?

Creech: The last Park District opinion survey (2005) indicated a strong interest by the public in acquiring more open space (69.71%), the highest score of all the potential projects listed in the survey. How do you interpret this directive and how could it be put into action?

I believe that the people of Glen Ellyn want the Park District to purchase additional land throughout the community. While it is important to expand existing parks, I also believe that the Park District should also purchase land to create new parks throughout the community. In recent years, the Park District has stopped taking park land from developers and now only takes cash in lieu of land. I believe that each new development should be reviewed by the Park District Board on a case-bycase basis. When desirable land is available, it should be turned over to the Park District for new parks. Open space is a precious resource in our community and should be treated as such.

Dickson: I believe this to mean that survey respondents value physical park land and that the Board should use available resources to continue acquiring open space.

Jourdan: The acquisition of land is very important to the park district, unfortunately the community is land locked. With the limited space in Glen Ellyn the Park Board has made every effort to acquire all open spaces available within our budget constraints. An example of the most recent acquisition is the purchase of four homes on Lenox Road that enhance Ackerman Park. The board and I place land acquisition at the top of its priority list for future expenditures.

Kinzler: I think buying more land would be a good idea. I would watch for good opportunities at reasonable prices. This would have to be balanced with available tax revenues in a slowing economy, but would be a good investment for the future.

Nephew: This is a straight forward and clear mandate to increase the number of parks and wild areas in our community. The current economic slow down will provide both opportunities and challenges on this front. Foreclosures in our community may provide some opportunity for the purchase of parcels that would add to existing parks, but declining tax revenues will make additional capital outlays problematic. Moving forward, the park district must stop just accepting cash in lieu of open space from new development in our community, and spend more time analyzing the opportunities for open space as projects move forward.

Schoen: It already is. We have purchased land around Ackerman for the future use of the land there, open space land and additional soccer fields. We are in constant search for acquiring more open space as it fits our budget constraints.

Taylor: Part of the last referendum passed by the Park District included setting aside funds for acquisition of land. The Park District has already put into action the purchase of properties along Lenox Road contiguous to Ackerman Park to be used as open space. In addition, the District is always on the lookout for properties which could expand upon the current park system.

4. What do you think should drive the building of new facilities on Park land?

Creech: Before spending tax dollars on new facilities, the Park District must use community surveys to establish a strong desire for the project, justify the need for the project and provide cost-benefit analysis to prove the feasibility of the project. The Park District should provide estimates for staffing, operations and

maintenance costs, not just initial construction costs, when seeking approval for projects.

I believe the Park District should focus on improving existing facilities, such as the Boat House, before constructing any additional buildings.

Dickson: There should be a balance between maintaining existing facilities, to meet the community's needs and expansion or new development, to address new programs when they are identified.

Jourdan: The facilities on park land is driven by the community's needs and wants. The park district uses surveys and questionnaires to understand the community's needs as well as past programming history and community demographics.

Kinzler: According to the survey, this was not a high priority. However now that the Ackerman project is underway it should be finished. Future projects should be evaluated based on residents' desire for a project, its utilization, cost, available financial resources to pay for it, and amount of open space areas it will displace.

Nephew: Placing buildings on Park land must be a rare event and must only be undertaken after extensive planning, public discussion and financial examination. Any new facility will add to the future fixed expenses of the Park District, because it will require energy for lighting and heat/cooling, and personnel to provide cleaning and maintenance. Given the evidence cited in question 3 above of the community mandate for acquiring more open space, building on park land flies in the face of what residents are telling us. However, now that the Ackerman Park Sports complex is significantly under way, it would be foolish to stop construction. I will actively work to protect the community from future projects that do not meet the above criteria. Before we build on park land we must be certain there is a demonstrated need that cannot be met in other ways, that we can afford not only the construction, but its maintenance, and that a majority of the community is in favor of the project.

Schoen: The voting public and the demand that comes with usage, popularity and necessity, ie. washrooms, storage for equipment, sports equipment and maintenance, increase in programs and number of people participating. We also send our surveys to residents. Demand for buildings is usually driven by increased program size and enlarged numbers of citizens.

Taylor: The building of new facilities on park land is driven by program demand. Indoor programs provided by the park district have traditionally had to rely upon facilities not under park district control (schools, churches, etc.) This leads to irregular scheduling (non-favorable time slots) of park programs and more importantly the inability of many programs to be attractive to potential participants. Having ownership of facilities allows the District to prioritize its own programs thereby creating greater flexibility in its program offerings.

5. Given the current concerns about the environment, do you feel that the Park District should lead the community in sustainable practices? How would you implement "green" practices in both existing buildings and in new construction?

Creech: The Park District should take care of its natural areas, keep them free from invasive species and educate the public on how to identify and remove invasive plants. The eco-restoration work days held at Churchill and Ackerman Parks are a good start to this.

The Park District should strive to reduce the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides wherever possible. While it is difficult to take an organic approach to heavily-used athletic fields, it is possible to test soil conditions on fields and customize treatment rather than using a one-size-fits-all approach.

Additionally, the Park District should reduce the amount of grass in parks by adding landscaped area. With less area to mow, there will be less pollution and the need for fewer chemicals- and our parks will be more beautiful.

Future construction projects should look at ways to expand or remodel existing structures before building entirely new buildings - the greenest building are the ones that are already standing. The Park District should also examine ways to incorporate energy-saving ideas and recycled materials into new construction projects as well.

Dickson: I believe the Park District should evaluate the effectiveness of sustainable practices and implement programs that balance fiscal responsibility with the impact of the investment. Regarding the implementation of "green" practices in both existing building and new construction, a cost benefit analysis should be the basis for an evaluation and discussion. With an understanding of the finances, one can then weigh the benefit of going "green" against remaining status quo.

Jourdan: I do feel the park district should be a leader in the community in regards to the environment. I think the staff has done a fantastic job by being a leader in the state as well as the community for environmental needs. The GEPD was the first park district in the state to receive an award for our recycling efforts during the demolition of Maryknoll Seminary. The district received the Illinois Recycling "Outstanding Community Leadership Award. The park district has also received many grants for retrofitting indoor lighting to energy efficient fixtures and ballasts. The park district has many "green" programs currently in place and are working on implementing many more,

Kinzler: Yes, the Park District should be a leader in this regard. We should be recycling at all offices and facilities. We should evaluate heating, cooling, and lighting at all facilities to make sure we are most energy efficient. Look at insulation. Purchases of park district vehicles should be analyzed for their energy efficiencies. We can even look into composting, rain barrels, parking lot construction to collect water, and many other simple and cost effective practices. We devoted a significant amount of time on the Environmental Commission of the village over the years working on implementing green practices in the village.

Nephew: The Park District should begin by finding ways to take advantage of the recently passed economic stimulus package by applying for funding to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings. The district should choose an expert to examine our facilities and provide a comprehensive plan for their improved energy efficiency. Park District vehicles should be examined for their energy use and as they are replaced, an emphasis should be placed on choosing fuel efficient and environmentally friendly vehicles. In planning for improved or updated facilities we must remember that the refurbishment and updating of existing facilities is far more environmentally sound then destruction and replacement.

Schoen: This is a very touchy subject as we did many things with the new building and rehabbing the older ones, but some items become cost prohibitive for budget constraints. We are a leader as we control more land than other government bodies. We have received grants and we received the Illinois Outstanding Community Leadership award. We recently received a grant for \$30,000 to expand our recycling program. We use bio-solids for athletic fields and bio-diesel fuel for off road vehicles.

Many of our products are "green" for cleaning and we buy recycled as much as possible. We have numerous products in the new Ackerman building that are "green."

Taylor: Parks in and of themselves project an image of green, natural spaces. Of course, it should be a leader in the field of sustainable practices. The district has just initiated a new recycling program aimed at cutting down solid waste disposal volumes while helping the environment. The district has received numerous grants to switch to energy efficient indoor lighting at its facilities. Construction of new playgrounds and park benches is done, for the most part, with recycled materials. During the demolition and construction at Maryknoll Park, the district received the Illinois Recycling Outstanding community Leadership Award for diversion of 80% of demolished materials from landfills.

6. The Park District recently renovated Main Street Recreation Center, restoring the original 1920s exterior in response to strong public support for saving the building. Would you support landmark status for this historic building?

Creech: Yes, the people of the community fought hard to preserve the Main Street Recreation Center and it should be preserved as a landmark. The new renovations serve the community well, and it continues to be a much-loved building in the community.

Dickson: I believe landmark status can be evaluated.

Jourdan: After the extensive renovation and updating to save the Main Street Recreation Center I am not sure of the need of a landmark status.

Kinzler: Yes, if we can make sure it could be maintained in a safe and cost effective manner.

Nephew: There is value in landmark status, and I support the preservation of important community structures such as the Main Street Recreation Center. However, any action taken by the Park District must be fiscally responsible and provide enough flexibility that the building could be adapted to future needs.

Schoen: Not at this time, we did save the building though lost a floor that we would have had with a new one. The actual rehab came out extremely well along with the work at Spring Avenue Recreation Center.

Taylor: I would not support landmark status for the Main Street Recreation Center at this time. I view Main Street as similar to Ben Franklin Elementary School. Both were constructed during the same era. Main Street even once served as a school. Both buildings serve as viable, day to day functioning facilities, adding value to their neighborhoods. In addition, being older buildings, they will from time to time require improvements in the way of accessibility, heating and cooling systems, electrical upgrades, etc. Landmark status makes it more difficult to make the improvements necessary to keep these buildings vibrant and useful.

7. The Village of Glen Ellyn Environmental Commission has recommended the adoption of an ordinance that would protect specific valuable trees on private property. Do you feel that the Park District should adopt a similar policy to permanently protect trees in village parks from destruction or damage due to construction within or in close proximity to our parks? Please explain.

Creech: During the fight to save the trees in Ackerman Woods I discovered that the current Village tree ordinance does not cover Park District land. Because of this, the Village Forester was not aware of the plan to cut down 340 trees there and no Tree Preservation Plan had been filed with the Village. If anything, the Park District should follow a higher standard for protecting its trees, not a lesser standard.

I support the new tree ordinance and believe the Park District should voluntarily adopt this ordinance.

Dickson: I believe the Park District should evaluate all projects and consider both the economic and environmental impact of the construction on the surrounding area and the community as a whole.

Jourdan: I believe that the park district is not in the business of cutting down trees without justification. When trees are removed, it is not for the purpose of replacing green space with asphalt or concrete. When a tree or trees are removed the park district has always replanted just as many, if not more trees to keep the community happy. Therefore, I do not feel the adoption of a policy is necessary to protect trees within the park system. This is an issue is addressed with each new project.

Kinzler: I and the other commissioners worked on this ordinance for years. It would be a very good idea to use similar policies to protect trees in village parks.

With the park district policy there would also be no loss of an individual's private property rights.

Nephew: The protection of trees is of great importance to our community. Trees provide enormous environmental and aesthetic value, and are not easily replaceable. Protecting trees in our parks is incontrovertibly in line with the mission of the District.

Schoen: We have always planted more trees than we remove, granted they are much smaller in size. Most of the trees that we remove are non-native and do not have shade needs or others in the parks. It would be nice to have an ordinance that would protect our trees that are native to this area and in good health.

Taylor: Part of the Park District mission statement is to preserve flora and fauna within the district. The district's staff horticulturist, Jill Voegtle and Eco-Restoration instructor Renae Frigo do a tremendous job of identifying valuable species to insure their protection and encourage new growth. The park district understands the passion this community has for the protection of trees. Each and every year, monies are budgeted to plant new trees, keeping in nature with species in harmony with the nature of the Village of Glen Ellyn. The Village's policy is directed at thousands of property owners and new developers. With the Park District, it is a single property owner who has demonstrated it will listen to residents concerns when it comes to the protection of trees. For those reasons, I do not believe the park district needs to adopt this policy.

8. The historic WPA-built Lake Ellyn boat house is a public favorite; its renovation received the third highest amount of interest out of the 13 projects listed on the 2005 Park District public opinion survey. Would you support renovation that includes preservation of its original historic elements and would you support landmark status for this building?

Creech: I do support renovation and landmark status for the boat house. The boat house should be renovated and preserved in a way that keeps its historic charm, and should not be torn down. Renovating the boat house should be a priority for the Park District Board.

Dickson: I support renovation of the boat house that takes into account "green" practices and the preservation of historic elements where possible balanced against potential modernization and expansion to meet current and future community needs from the space and facility.

Jourdan: The renovation of Lake Ellyn boat house is a capital project on our list of things to do. The Park district hired Perkins and Pride Architects in 2006 for the drawings that will be used in the future expansion process. Craig Pride has a tremendous handle on the design and will be sure to keep the charm and integrity of this building for all the residents of the community. The new design will incorporate the original historic elements that have made the boathouse one of Glen Ellyn's finest destinations.

Kinzler: Yes, I would take into account, cost, safety, utilization, and ability to pay for project. I would garner public input and expert contractor opinions.

Nephew: Yes, however, the project must meet criteria laid out in question 4 above. There is value in landmark status, and I support the preservation of important community structures such as the Main Street Recreation Center. However, any action taken by the Park District must be fiscally responsible and provide enough flexibility that the building could be adapted to future needs.

Schoen: I would support the preservation of the original historic elements to keep the place intact. Mr. Craig Pryde has plans for future expansion and he is a local architect as his firm was the original architect.

Taylor: I would prefer renovation that includes preservation of the original historic elements. The recent renovation of Main Street Rec Center serves as a perfect example of the marriage of preservation of historic elements with the creation of a facility which can serve as host to a multitude of events and programs while addressing accessibility needs. The use of local architects who understand the historic nature of the boathouse should be utilized to insure that any future renovations preserve the character of this important building

9. How will the current economic crisis affect the Park District?

Creech: The Park District has greatly benefited from the rising home values in Glen Ellyn in over the past 10 years. The Park District has seen huge increases in tax revenues because of the housing boom. These days are over. With the value of homes dropping, tax revenues will also decrease. The current plan to deal with this situation is to raise tax rates. It is unacceptable to increase tax rates during these hard economic times. The Park District must control its spending on capital projects and trim down its own budget before even considering an increase in our taxes.

Dickson: The current economic crisis will impact the Park District in direct ways that include: lower interest income, flat/reduced tax receipts, pressure to reduce program fees, evaluation of the roughly 2100 Park District programs, deferred capital spending. This identifies but a few of the direct impacts; there will be numerous indirect impacts due to the economic crisis.

In this time of unchartered economic uncertainty, fiscal responsibility is of the utmost importance. Our goal should be to ensure our parks, facilities and programs meet the needs of the community but not at the expense of future users. All programs and budgets need to be reviewed to ensure a sound financial basis. The role of the Board of Commissioners is to help prioritize areas of investment and areas for reduced spending and then let the professional staff implement the actions.

Jourdan: I have been working with the finance director of the park district on this issue. The ramifications of the economic status will probably not be felt until 2010, if at all. We are working to continue too make all programs as reasonable

as possible. With families cutting their budgets this could provide less travel and more stay at home recreational opportunities for the park district. The cut back of county club use as well as fitness club membership could be another avenue of revenue for the park district.

Kinzler: We will have to be more efficient. We can look to enhance revenues by offering programs residents want and utilize. Watch costs. Work on annexing surrounding areas to enhance tax base and offer to these new members of the Park District a better value due to our scale of economy. Publicize our wonderful programs to get maximum utilization. I realized that with programming, the expense is not always correlative with the degree of success. Through my position with Glen Ellyn Youth Baseball (GEYBA) we started a fall baseball league with Lombard Baseball, the Glen Ellyn Park District, and the Lombard Park District. Hundreds of kids of all ages participated in our inaugural season in the fall of 2008. We utilized current existing facilities, equipment, and resident volunteers and enjoyed a very successful season that although inexpensive was budget positive.

Nephew: While it is impossible to predict the full impact of our current economic downturn, it is clear that the Park District, like all other entities, will have decreased revenue, both from program participation and tax receipts. Falling housing values will decrease the tax base, albeit with the odd time delay that a tri-annual reassessment will cause, and declining household income will result in some decreased participation in Park District events and programs even in an affluent community like Glen Ellyn. At the same time there will be opportunities for the Park District. For example, there will be Federal funding for weatherizing buildings, and new demand for low cost entertainment and activities for families.

Schoen: Program enrollment will be down, taxes could be compromised and there will be more requests for subsidized or free programs than our in-house donations for needy citizens.

Taylor: Residents will begin to closely examine how they spend their discretionary dollars. The park district has always provided a great value for the dollar but program fees must be kept reasonable and affordable. Now more than ever, the District also needs to be diligent with its own spending. Vehicles and equipment must be evaluated with respect to their useful life and replacement costs vs. continual maintenance costs. Programs should be evaluated for their profitability within reason. Some programs, however, fill a need for a certain segment of the population, such as teens and seniors and should be spared regardless of profitability.

10. Do you believe that it would be appropriate for Park District funds to be used to help with the construction of artificial turf and/or night lighting for the Memorial Park and Duchon playing fields at Glenbard West High School? Please explain.

Creech: In light of the current economic situation, the Park District does not have sufficient funds to help with construction of the Glenbard West fields.

Dickson: Improved outreach to and partnership with the various School Boards and the Village Board is a priority for my term as a commissioner. We need to collectively work together in partnership to meet the needs of all of our constituents. I support the Park District working with the District 87 School Board to evaluate ways artificial turf and/or lights could be funded on school property.

Jourdan: I do not feel it is appropriate for the park district to use park funds for this project. I feel that if the park district is interested in funding a project like this it must be done on park district land with the park district controlling the use. The terms of the proposed agreement are no favorable for the park district.

Kinzler: If the high school program feels a strong need for this renovation I have no problem with it. It becomes a matter then of finding revenue to pay for it. I believe the current park board felt that the amount of playing time the park district residents would receive in relationship to their financial contribution would not be equitable. Certainly, I would study this issue, and carefully analyze any park district contribution to this project in light of the benefit to the Park District residents and if we could afford it.

Nephew: The Park District involvement in this project has been limited by the current board's concerns that the Park District has not in the past received adequate return on investment for funds used to support joint projects with the school districts. I share these concerns and would predicate support on the terms of shared time at the new facilities. Additionally, I am concerned about the fiscal viability of the project, its environmental impact, and its benefits relative to both the financial and ecological impact. The issues surrounding artificial turf in general are properly within the scope of the Park District mission, but the facilities in question are School District properties, therefore the Park District has a minimal role.

Schoen: No, as this has been discussed at great length by our board and, especially, due to the terms of the agreement. Times are not beneficial for us. We are strapped in funding for projects also, and it would prove more beneficial to rent the field as needed, if time is available.

Taylor: With the park district, the availability of funds to construct the field should be based upon the availability of usage of the field. Given that District 87 has not demonstrated that it could guarantee either favorable or available time periods for park district usage, it would not make sense for the park district to fund the construction of this field. The district should consider renting time on the field, should it be built, just as District 87 rents fields from the Park District for use by its high school teams.

The above answers appear in alphabetical order by candidates' names. Guided by rules for 501(c)(3) organizations, Citizens for Glen Ellyn Preservation does not endorse specific candidates for government offices