

# Evanston's Future!

*A Monthly Electronic Newsletter of*

*Evanston's Energy Future  
Evanston's Transportation Future  
Evanston Interreligious Sustainability Circle  
Evanston's Affordable Housing Future  
Citizens Lighthouse Community Land Trust*

**February 2005**

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## **CONTENTS:**

<b>Transportation:</b>	<b>Report on Activities</b>
<b>Housing:</b>	<b>Ordinance Introduction</b>
<b>Energy:</b>	<b>Green Building Proposed</b>
<b>Energy:</b>	<b>NU Wind Turbine</b>
<b>Energy:</b>	<b>Electricity Deregulation</b>
<b>Calendar</b>	

**All EVANSTON's FUTURE groups welcome new members, at any time and at any level of interest or participation.**

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## **Evanston's Transportation Future**

(submitted by Debbie Hillman)

1. State Mass Transit Committee. In September 2004, in response to CTA's funding crisis a new committee was formed by the state legislature. Originally titled, "Special Committee on Mass Transit for Northeastern Illinois", the chairman, State. Rep. Julie Hamos, expects the committee to be turned into a standing committee on Mass transit during this legislative session.

ETF met with Rep. Hamos in December to discuss ways that we can help the committee. In response to Rep. Hamos's request, ETF developed a comprehensive list of ways that all three transit agencies (CTA, Pace, and Metra) can improve existing service. ETF is also developing a response to the Committee's list of working questions primarily related to RTA funding of all three agencies, but including coordination and future transit expansion.

For information on the committee's activities, see <http://www.juliehamos.org/transit/>

2. Pedestrian Issues, etc. ETF is busy working on pedestrian issues such as shoveling snow (what are the city regulations and enforcement mechanisms), identifying faded crosswalks, identifying especially difficult intersections for pedestrians to cross, and generally improving mobility and safety for wheelchair users, bicyclists, transit riders, and other non-automotive trips. We are thinking of holding a forum related to all these issues in the near future.

For more information on this committee's activities, contact: Debbie Hillman [dlhillman@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dlhillman@sbcglobal.net) or 847/328-7175.

## **Evanston's Energy Future**

(submitted by Joel Freeman)

### **Green Building Proposed**

Staff from the Planning Division of Evanston's Community Development Department presented information to the Evanston Energy Commission that the building at 1800 Ridge (previously, The Vineyard) has renovation and remodeling plans based on green and sustainable design guidelines, possibly for LEED certification. The Energy Commission hopes to have a presentation from the architects of this project at one of their upcoming meeting.

### **NU Students Continue Pursuit of Evanston Wind Turbine**

This academic quarter, a group of NU engineering students meet on Tuesday evenings to relate their progress on feasibility issues for a new wind turbine at NU. The project is part of a design course, IDEA 298. Several students are enrolled in the course, others are taking it as independent study credit, and a few more are just helping out for non-credit participation. Members of Evanston's Energy Future have also contributed their background and experience. The initial site proposed for the new turbine would be on the prior observatory location at the lakefront landfill. Several ideas are being considered for use of the power to be generated. The group is being led by student John Romankiewicz.

For more information, contact Ross Vagnieres at [ross@rvdstudio.com](mailto:ross@rvdstudio.com) or 847/332-1722.

### **Electricity Deregulation: Post-2006**

December 31, 2006 marks the scheduled end of the legislated transition period for electricity deregulation in Illinois. Beginning in October 1999, residential electricity rates were frozen at a 20% discount from the 1995 rate tariffs. That rate freeze will likely come to an end at the beginning of 2007. Certain commercial electricity rates and pricing components will also undergo revisions, to take effect in 2007. Several different working groups have developed recommendations and outstanding issues for the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) regarding electricity deregulation in Illinois. ICC staff compiled the results and presented them to the Governor's office in December of 2004. The Governor, the legislature and, in particular the ICC, will be hearing additional testimony related to new rates, competitive electricity markets, and the responsibilities of various players in the electric industry.

## **Evanston's Affordable Housing Future**

(submitted by Sue Carlson)

The status of Inclusionary Housing policy in Evanston remains uncertain. Since November,

a package of three proposed Inclusionary ordinances have been under review by the legal department of the city's Community Development Department. Briefly, these ordinances would:

- (1) require proportional affordable units be included in condo conversions over a certain size
- (2) create a housing tear-down fee
- (3) create an inclusionary policy that
  - (a) offers developers an as-yet-unspecified subsidy for each affordable unit created, provided funds are available (availability being the key word)
  - (b) lists possible cost off-sets to the developer for including affordable units, but none is assured
  - (c) allows the developer to pay an as-yet-undefined amount of money for each affordable unit s/he decides *not* to include in the development, at the developer's choice.

This final package is not the strong policy that advocates had hoped for; however, politics is the art of the possible and this is clearly a compromise designed to be passable.

Politics is indeed in the picture with these proposals. Because of the length of time it has taken the city staff to review them, because there is some resistance in the staff to creating such policy, and because the aldermen have recently developed an aversion to giving developers any incentives, the proposals have languished. Now, it's aldermanic election time and the tendency of Council members is to want to hold off on significant policy decisions. We have heard that the ordinances may be coming before the Planning and Development Committee on March 14. As it gets closer to that time, we will inform you about the possibility to testify on behalf of the proposal.

In the meantime, it would be helpful if you would (1) contact your alderman urging his/her support, (2) go to [www.evanstonhousing.com](http://www.evanstonhousing.com) for further background information about why such policy is needed in Evanston, and (3) while at that site, sign the petition in favor of Inclusionary Housing.

## **Calendar**

**Feb. 10: Evanston's Energy Future Meeting**, 7:30 – 9:30 (at 1118 Sherman – Debbie Hillman's house, 328-7175). Contact: Joel Freeman 847/328-3555 ext. 216

**Feb. 13: Evanston Interreligious Sustainability Circle meeting**, 3 – 5 PM (Friends Meeting House, 1010 Greenleaf). Contact: Steve Perkins 773/278-4800 ext. 155

**Feb. 24: Evanston's Transportation Future Meeting**. 7:30 – 9:00 PM (Civic Center, 3605). Contact: Rick Martin [rmartin101@comcast.net](mailto:rmartin101@comcast.net)

**April 3: Earth Month Event. "Our Food: What don't we Know?"** 1:00 PM at Beth Emet Synagogue (Ridge & Dempster). Watch for details.

**May 22: Hands-on Habitat Restoration at Harms Woods**, 1 – 4 PM. Sponsored by Evanston Inter. Sust. Circle. Contact: Steve Perkins 773/278-4800 ext. 155