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MEET THE CANDIDATE

People, get together

Alderman Madeline Haithcock wants developers, residents to hash things out

By HAYDN BUSH
Managing Editor

Madeline Haithcock has been alderman of the Second Ward since 1993. Haithcock, a native of Ohio, attended Ohio State University and Northwestern Business School in Lima, Ohio and worked for 25 years in the banking industry, eventually serving as assistant vice president and facilities bank manager at Drexel Bank. She also worked as Deputy Finance Director for Economic Development for the Illinois Treasurer's Office from 1991-1993.

Chicago Journal: You've been alderman since 1993. What do you think your biggest accomplishments have been as alderman?

Madeline Haithcock: Look at the ward. When I started it was all vacant. Central Station was just beginning, now it's all the way down to almost 22nd Street. Look at Roosevelt Road. Look at the new Clark Street. We have a state-of-the-art student center. The Pacific Garden Mission was a big problem ... because it was too small and people were standing outside. They didn't want to leave the Second Ward. Jones College Prep—which I am so proud of, and Dr. [Donald] Fraynd has done a tremendous job turning that into a college prep—needed a gym. We're moving the Pacific Garden Mission to 14th and Canal. It will house 900 families with children. The men—they will have some trade training there. They'll have an inside area where they'll sit. You won't see them standing outside. Stanley Tigerman did a good job.

CJ: Some people have complained the site's too far from the public transit system.

Haithcock: They go right to Roosevelt Road and get on the bus. You won't find another site in the Second Ward. It had to stay in the Second Ward. No other alderman wanted it. I think it's a great site. People didn't want to live close to them. ... It's a commercial area around there, so they can work. What we're trying to do is get them so they can be self-sufficient, not to stay there forever. It's a great spot, I don't care what anybody says.

It's just like the tall buildings we have. Down here [in the South Loop], the Central Area Plan calls for that. They can deviate because there's nothing in concrete. I can downzone, also; I've downzoned in the West Loop. Let's ... look at Roosevelt Square, with a lot of affordable homes,

and some market-rate. I'm proud of that too. Phase I is done, and we're going into Phase II. We put a lot of people to work. Rockwell Gardens is gone. Also on Roosevelt Road, you have a senior building. I've made things affordable for seniors and families.

CJ: The University Village Association has been critical of LR Development [who are building Roosevelt Square]. How do you see yourself fitting into that?

Haithcock: Mediating—I work well with all of them over there. You just have to come in there, and some people have to make concessions. They've been pushing for Taylor Street to be developed earlier ... And I understand. I think what they should do is get with the developer. And I'm going to recommend that as soon as I'm elected. I like Little Italy I think it should be something like you see going into Chinatown.

CJ: What about the West Loop, what are some of the things you'd like to see?

Haithcock: The West Loop is great. They wanted downzoning, so we did some downzoning. I work well with the West Loop Community Organization. They didn't want a high building [on the Carmichael's steakhouse site], so we stopped that. That area didn't need to have tall buildings. We'll ... do something with the Fannie May site, and get some things in there that they want. It's kind of quaint—I think the West Loop Gate is.

CJ: Some residents in the South Loop are concerned about some of the buildings going up in terms of height. How do you feel about that?

Haithcock: I think they're right. I think the developer [of the X/O highrise at 18th and Prairie] should ... compromise. They've made some changes, and they've made them. In each section of my ward, I like to have a group that cares about what's going on.

CJ: The community meeting that you hosted, there was a lot of community angst about the X/O building.

Haithcock: You always have people that others bring in to cause confusion. The people that actually live there, they weren't doing that. These were outsiders. I'm talking to people that are presidents of their homeowner's associations. They're not in favor of the way it is, they're in favor of having something but they want to have some input on it. It will have to be modified. The developer will have to sit down with us again.

CJ: Another area of the ward that's developing and has some issues is around Madison and Western.

Haithcock: There's no issue there. There was a grocery store that people didn't want. That's their neighborhood. I'm founding another group of people to look at it. I can't help it because they didn't want that store. We've started it with businesspeople, and Earnest Gates, and some of the ministers and some of the community leaders.

CJ: What about the Concerned Citizens of Westtown?

Haithcock: I don't know them. I can only do what I think is best for the community. If there's somebody in the Concerned Citizens

of Westtown, one person should be on this committee. ... I want them to have what they want. I wish they could get a Jewel to come there, or a Dominick's or a Trader Joe's. We'll look at that again, and put together a group of people that really works.

CJ: We've interviewed your challengers, and ... people keep saying you're not attuned enough with residents in the ward. How do you respond to that?

Haithcock: ... I've been to their block club meetings, condo associations, townhouse meetings, block parties. If they don't come to that, I don't know how I can see them. This is a perception with a lot of aldermen. That's because they've never been aldermen. They think this is something that's fascinating, and something that gives them a lot of power and grandeur. This is work 24-7, this is feeding



Madeline Haithcock

children, this is paying if somebody's gas goes off. This is helping people. ... I go where my people are. I have three picnics each year. I've partnered with the Dearborn Park Advisory Council. I don't have town hall meetings. They don't listen. They stack with it with people to cause trouble.

CJ: What are some of your ideas for your next term?

Haithcock: I've done a lot of parks. But what I really would like is a big community center. I think we'll get it somewhere in Central Station, where people can go and have their meetings, and have exercise space. I want to finish the [Roosevelt Collection project at Clark and Roosevelt] with homes and a movie theater. In the West Loop, everybody wants [development at] Fannie May. I want to finish doing what I'm doing with all the streets. Any street that we can fix—and lighting, we're doing them. I'm doing that little by little, and it's almost done.

CJ: What about the Taylor Street bridge? Is that realistic?

Haithcock: I think it is. Wells Street is more realistic—getting Wells Street to go all the way through. That's the way you're going to get people south of Roosevelt Road. You'll have homes, you'll have shops, you'll have new schools.

CJ: What about South Loop School?

Haithcock: South Loop would be too small. It's in a community. Parking is bad. I met with people the other night—the different condo associations. We're going to sit down and talk with the principal and CPS and come to some final solution about that school and the fence.

CJ: The city has been pushing for less parking in a lot of buildings. Do you support that?

Haithcock: I'm not for it. We need more parking in the buildings. The city is pushing for less, because they want them to use transit. They know how I feel. I want them to have guest spots in the building. That's the city, but it's not me. ... People are in love with their cars. I can't go out there and say, 'You've got two cars, get rid of it.' Kids come home from college, they have a car. You have to have somewhere for your guests to park. I'm trying to make it more convenient for them and everybody else.