
Lakeview coalition's meeting brings promises *Special to the Online Edition of Windy City Times*

by Blair Mishleau
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State Rep. Sara Feigenholtz at the Lakeview Action Coalition Meeting. Windy City Times photo by Blair Mishleau

Lakeview is a community woven together by its many threads of diversity. This diversity manifested itself June 22 when more than 700 people of all ages, economic classes, races and every color of the LGBT community came together for the Lakeview Action Coalition's annual Action Assembly to discuss how to improve the areas of Lakeview, Lincoln Park and North Center.

A variety of issues pertinent to the popular Chicago neighborhood were covered, broken up by different task forces who handle issues such as healthcare, homeless youth, environmental justice and affordable housing.

Some important Chicago figures present included Aldermen Gene Schuller, Tom Tunney and Vi Daley; Advocate Illinois Masonic Hospital CEO Susan Nordstrom Lopez; and state Rep. Sara Feigenholtz, among many others.

Each task force had one or more important figures come on stage to affirm their commitment to Lakeview.

In response to a yes-or-no question, police officers, alderman and others were asked to support certain measures. From the event's start to its end an hour and a half later, nearly a dozen figures committed to bettering Lakeview, ranging from promoting healthcare for the underinsured and uninsured to establishing affordable housing for seniors.

The middle of the assembly had a performance by the Xplosive J-Set Team, a drumming and dance squad that brought volume in both sound and visuals.

The proper handling of transgender people was a big focus of the Homeless Youth Task Force.

"Recently, we've become especially aware of patterns of profiling and inhuman behavior towards young transgender people, many of whom come to Lakeview because their safety and even their lives were at risk elsewhere in the city," said Heather Bradley, who was with the Night Ministry Youth Outreach team.

Lois Bates, the transgender health manager at Howard Brown Health Center, spoke on behalf young transgender girl named Paige, who faced harsh discrimination by the Chicago Police Department.

When she tried to file a complaint when an officer profiled her, assuming she was soliciting on Belmont, Paige was held overnight in a jail cell full of men, Banks said. Paige had no police record, and was shocked by the discrimination she faced when she was simply trying to report an officer.

Kevin McManus, youth leader at the Center on Halsted, asked Deputy Chief Bruce Rottner and two Lakeview area police commanders to take the stage. He asked for their cooperation in monitoring the treatment of transgender individuals by Chicago police. All three affirmed their commitment to the project.

The affordable housing task force focused on the fact that for many, living in Lakeview is becoming too expensive. For example, the median income for a teacher at Lincoln Elementary is \$45,781. Their average median home cost would be \$2,398, meaning that 44 percent of their income would be going towards their mortgage. If housing costs are over 30 percent of someone's income, federal standards deem it as unaffordable.

Tunney and Daley committed to Chicago's Sweet Home Ordinance. If passed, it would guarantee 20 percent of tax-increment funding (a type of funding used for city improvements) to be spent on affordable housing. This development brought the number of co-sponsors to 25.

The Lakeview Action Coalition was founded in 1993 and is composed of 43 institutional members, according to its website. Members include non-profit agencies, churches, banks, business associations and more.

For more information, visit www.lakeviewaction.org , or follow the coalition on Twitter: www.twitter.com/lakeviewaction .