

# Let's 'beautify the city' — and Joliet Park

*On the 17th of February, 1969, trustees of the Trust created by William P. Denis, Louis Denis, Mary Denis Bosse, and Sister Gregory (Barbara Denis) donated the stretch of land along the bay now known as Joliet Park. The deed, on file at the city's Register of Deeds office, state's that the land must be used for "park purposes only." Now, 45 years later, it is time to honor that agreement.*

On March 19, in his State of the City address, Green Bay Mayor Jim Schmitt told the audience at the Meyer Theatre, "We are a special city with special neighborhoods. I'm pledging by the end of next year, every resident in Green Bay will be represented by a recognized neighborhood association where they can engage with neighbors, prevent crime, and beautify the city."

A few weeks prior to his talk, the Nicolet Drive Neighborhood Association Board of Directors already had moved toward fulfilling those goals. On Feb. 10, the board voted 13-0 to support the improvement of Joliet Park along Nicolet Drive. One board member was absent at the time of the vote.

Improvement of the park, which now is overrun by invasive plants and has numerous dead and diseased trees, is mostly inaccessible. Turning it into a park that the entire community could use and enjoy would immediately meet all three of the mayor's goals.

**1. It would provide a scenic, peaceful and enjoyable place for neighbors to meet, talk, walk and enjoy the waterfront.** If cleaned up, we could even hold neighborhood events such as picnics and movie nights after watching the sunset.

**2. It would prevent crime.** The thick brush and unpruned trees provide cover for numerous illegal activities such as drinking parties, campfires and people shooting guns from the shoreline. If cleaned up, law enforcement personnel could get a better view of what is going on in the park.

**3. It would beautify the city.** Joliet Park is the only city-owned land that

## By the numbers

**700** — More than 700 area residents have signed the petition or voiced verbal support to improve Joliet Park.

**1** — The No. 1 person at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Chancellor Thomas Harden, has sent a letter supporting the improvement of Joliet Park.

**7** — Members of seven Neighborhood Associations in Green Bay's District 1 have signed the petition. The majority of the petition signers are from the Bay Highlands, Baird Creek, East Shore Drive, Nicolet Drive, Lake Largo, Red Smith and Schmitt Park neighborhoods.

**100** — Nearly 100 recent graduates of Leadership Green Bay have signed the petition to improve Joliet Park.

**10** — At a meeting last summer of the Brown County United Way Emerging Leaders Society board of directors, all 10 members of the board signed the petition to improve Joliet Park.

**12** — Twelve Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Cross who reside at the St. Francis Convent at 3110 Nicolet Drive, which is in walking distance of Joliet Park, signed the petition. They're hoping to someday sit at a table near the shoreline to play cribbage.

community residents can drive by and see the beautiful asset that the city is named after, the Bay. It could be the most impressive beautification project the city ever undertook.

The NDNA's plan for improving Joliet Park is based on a plan drawn up by the Northeast Wisconsin Technical

College's Horticulture Landscape Design Program.

The plan, which can be seen on the next page, calls for a trail to loop around the park, a kayak launch and an improved parking lot. It also calls for removing invasive plants and replacing them with native plants, wildflowers, and fruit-bearing shrubs to attract more birds and wildlife.

Most of the existing trees would remain, with many of them having lower branches pruned based on good forestry practices.

Most of this would cost the city almost nothing because numerous organizations already have come to the NDNA board offering volunteers for the cleanup. They include Integrys (WPS), the Invasive Plants Association of Wisconsin, UW-Green Bay student environmental organizations, NWTC horticulture program, a Green Bay men's club, and members of Leadership Green Bay. Numerous area residents and the Holy Cross Boy Scout Troop also have volunteered. An area Realtors Association's community-service group also has expressed interest to participate as has the Green Bay School District, which says it would be a good community-service project for students in general and a hands-on experience for students in the district's horticulture career-path program.

While the Mayor pledged neighborhood improvements by next year, the NDNA already has a plan of action.

What now is needed is the city's approval to move forward.

As Paul Hartman, a long-time Green Bay environmentalist who supports the Joliet Park cleanup effort, said, "It's the right thing to do."