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An independent news service for the people of Chicago's Southwest Side.

No bells or whistles. No gossip or political glad-handing. Just neighborhood news, reported plainly and honestly by people who live here.

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ABOUT US

The Southwest Chicago Post is an independent news service delivering news and opinion to the people of Chicago's Southwest Side.

We promote prosperity, progress and peace in the neighborhoods we serve.

We intend to champion homeowners, locally owned and operated small businesses and professional practices, schools, libraries, parks, houses of worship and more.

We also strongly support efforts to prevent crime and make our neighborhoods safer.

We cheerfully assist and promote members of our business and professional community, particularly those that are independent, locally owned and which hire local residents.

This online news service is owned and operated by lifelong Southwest Siders Joan Hadac (Editor and Publisher) and Tim Hadac (Managing Editor), both of whom have worked as local newspaper reporters and editors for over 25 years each.

Do you have a news tip, big or small? A letter to the editor? Want us to come out and cover your event? Let us know: editor@swchicagopost.com.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 22, 2018

End of the Rainbow May Be in Sight

Garfield Ridge leaders want motel shut down

By Joan Hadac
Editor and Publisher
Southwest Chicago Post

To some, the Rainbow Motel is a fun and kitschy remnant of decades gone by—a quaint, yet respectable place that gives Garfield Ridge a bit of character.



The colorful, kitschy Rainbow sign by day.

To others, it's a no-tell motel that—despite its remodeling and attempts to attract respectable couples looking for a romantic getaway—can occasionally be a haven for sex workers and johns, as well as drug abusers.



...and by night. Most of its colorful lights long ago burned out.

In the latter group is the Garfield Ridge Neighborhood Watch crime fighting group, as well as new 23rd Ward Ald. Silvana Tabares, who this week announced that she has asked City Hall to bring legal action against the motel at Archer and Nottingham, with an eye on shutting it down.

"I don't know about you, but I've seen a lot of problems with that place," Tabares said before about 125 people at Monday's public meeting of the GRNW, coincidentally held at the headquarters of the Croatian Radio Club, next door to the Rainbow Motel.

"In the past year, there have been 42 calls to the police about prostitution, about public intoxication, drugs" at the motel," Tabares said, as a number of people nodded their heads in assent. "Last week, I had a visit from a resident of the 23rd Ward who found a syringe [near the motel property]. He brought it to our office. That is unacceptable."



Leading the charge to bring a public nuisance case against the Rainbow, at least initially, was the leadership of the neighboring 13th Ward. A flyer from the office of Illinois House Speaker Michael J. Madigan and 13th Ward Ald. Marty Quinn urged people to sign a petition asking the Emanuel Administration to bring a case forward. Those who want to sign the petition or have any questions were encouraged to call (773) 581-1313 or stop by the office at 6014 S. Central. The original flyer has since been updated to put Tabares and the 23rd Ward office, 6247 S. Archer, (773) 582-4444, in the forefront.

The Rainbow Motel has been around since 1954. Its tall sign was reportedly erected in the early 1960s so that motorists on the new Southwest Expressway (which opened in 1964 and was later renamed the Stevenson) could see it.

The Rainbow expanded in the 1970s when it absorbed what had been a fast-food restaurant, according to a WBEZ-FM report last year that quoted manager Sagar Patel.

Over the years, its imaginative and occasionally outlandish "theme rooms" have included a pink palace, a space-walk room, Valentine's suite, a Las Vegas room, a "night in Paris" room and more.

Is the motel what its detractors claim? A call to the Rainbow earlier this week for a response was answered by a person who said, "There's no one here." When asked when the manager or owner would be available for a brief conversation, the person said, "I don't know. In about a week, maybe."

Reaction in the neighborhood late Monday night was mostly in agreement with Tabares.

"Just the thought of that place grosses me out," said Garfield Ridge resident Sandy Bauer. "I like where I live; but to think we have that in our midst...maybe it fit in years and years ago, but I don't see it being compatible today. I'd shed no tears if it were gone."

Rafi Villanueva said that "every motel will have some calls for police service, even the nice ones. I think they should check the motels at 65th and Cicero. I'll bet they get a police call a week, too."

"I think we need to look at what effect [the Rainbow Motel] is having on the business strip," said Diana Peresutti. "It's right across the street from Weber's [Bakery]—a place so popular that some of its customers drive in from other states to buy its cakes. Do we really want a place like the Rainbow right across the street from Weber's? I wouldn't want Weber's to leave. Maybe there's something better that could go there."

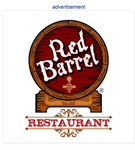
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Posted by Southwest Chicago Post at 10:07 PM

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1 comment:

Anonymous August 23, 2018 at 9:37 PM

Some people...really think Weber Bakery is losing business because of the Rainbow? I dont think so. They have been together for decades. Yes, Rainbow may have its issues, but every motel, hotel in this area will have its share of hookers, johns, and druggies. Perhaps the new Alderman, who I have met and like, needs to meet with the owners. What do people want to go on that property, more condos? Olive Garden? People say you shouldnt buy a house next to a park if you dont like kids playing ball. People should'nt buy a house near a motel if you dont want people coming and going.

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