

LETTERS

Help PROUD unify area businesses here

Last week I attended an informational meeting of a new business group, PROUD, at Brickton Art Center. PROUD stands for Park Ridge Organization for Upton Redevelopment. Why should we consider another

group like this when we have the Chamber of Commerce and the City's Economic Development commission?

As a 53-year resident of Park Ridge, owner of a building in which I have my dental practice in Uptown, I have seen a lot in the 30 years I have been practicing

in Uptown. Although I am in health services and not retail, I have listened and been part of business groups for many years. It is my opinion that PROUD may be able to accomplish what others have been unable to in the past in spite of
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their best efforts (Uptown Business Association as an example). PROUD can become the unified voice of businesses with the expressed goal of making Uptown Park Ridge as vibrant and meaningful to the community as possible.

PROUD wants to organize and apply for designation as a Main Street Community in Illinois. This would allow the organization to tap into the resources available through Main Street and use it to Park Ridge's benefit. This alone may be the important difference over previous groups.

I believe we are at a crucial stage where significant, long-awaited, improvements to Uptown can and should be done. Most Park Ridge residents would love to have more dining, shopping, and event options in our Uptown area. With the initial stages of physical redevelopment becoming reality, PROUD could become an important advocate for change that will maintain the basic feel of our community while enhancing our considerable assets. We should not accept the transformation of our Uptown area to continue progressing at the glacial pace it has in the past. I urge all businesses in Park Ridge, especially those in the Uptown area, to become informed and consider participating in the formation of this group. Residents should also support PROUD since we all will benefit from the best Uptown possible.

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Park Ridge