

Press Release and Meeting Report

Jackson Park Advisory Council Golf Committee July 17 2017

The JPAC Golf Committee for Review of the Golf Proposal held its third meeting July 17, 2017 at Jackson Park Field House. The committee is composed of representatives from JPAC, including Chairman Jerry Levy, and South Shore Cultural Center PAC, the chair of Alderman Hairston's Golf and Coordinating Council, the Chicago Parks Golf Alliance, and golf clubs, with staff from Chicago Department of Transportation, and Chicago Park District staff and stakeholder observers present.

The committee met to consider the proposals after the recent four initial public presentations and comment-gathering on proposed projects for Jackson Park and the start of park framework planning, availability of new information, and to hear from deliberations of the Alderman's Council the preceding week that included stakeholders such as Friends of the Parks.

Latest thoughts and some changes by the proposers and government representatives were given and discussed in detail. The members queried in detail and expressed concerns about a number of design features and issues of concern to the community and our organizations members, including commitment to non-disturbance of natural areas in Jackson Park. They also asked for additional accommodations for the public, youth, safety, and aesthetics, and a clear statement of measurable economic benefits to communities expected. The committee said in unison that we expected to see changes in the next version.

The Golf Alliance and Park District restated their commitment that the golf course will remain a public and people's facility, usable by the general public, general golfers, and the local golf associations—a commitment also made to the Alderman and her council. We received assurances on some matters, assurance of some flexibility and that each feature of the park whether natural area, recreation, or open area will be treated with the respect it deserves, including needs study for each recreation type. While not all studies such as traffic are complete or completely evaluated, CDOT said it is confident road changes it proposes are workable—and they reported new progress in public body approvals for historically restoring the Darrow Bridge, which is owned by the state.

The public comments—a large volume-- is being taken and studied very seriously and used in preparing the next iteration, and will be answered promptly by the Park District Team. Also, they appear to be trying to incorporate the public's ideas and thoughts into the projects and the framework plan. The planning process is deliberate and will not be rushed despite the natural desire of all to see results. There will be some changes in the next iteration. At the same time, a first-draft plan of the whole park and options will be prepared, with public input meetings called on the same in the next few weeks or months. The public comments already given and continuing and answers to them will be published both in totality and also in summary by subjects starting in about a week on www.southlakefrontplan.com. Comments can continue to be posted on www.southlakefrontplan.com/join-conversation-posting-comments-idea-wall.

Chairman Jerry Levy summed up and asked that in light of what we heard and further changes being made, we hold off on final determination but renew the conditional resolution approved at the committee's January meeting—Based on what is now known, the members are of the opinion that the new course would be a great asset for Jackson Park and the Hyde Park, South Shore, and Woodlawn communities and would bring prestige, status, and new economic benefits to the community. Agreed by all the members of the committee.

Jerry Levy, chairman. sjlevy@jeromelevylaw.com. Gary Ossewaarde, Secretary