JACKSON PARK ADVISORY COUNCIL 37th YEAR!

J.P.A.C. NEWSLETTER MARCH 2020 Vol. 27 No. 3 Rev 2

NATURE-HISTORY-RECREATION JACKSON PARK- WE DO IT! WE HAVE IT! BE HERE!

BOARD elected 12/09/19
Louise McCurry, President
Anne Marie Miles, VP
Gary Ossewaarde, Secretary and Newsletter editor
Dwight Powell, Treasurer

JPAC usually meets monthly 2nd Mondays, Feb 10, Mar 09, Apr 13

DUES/ VOLUNTARY CONTR.
$35 BASICTO JPAC c/o Dwight Powell, 7206 S. Luella, Chicago, IL 60649. Or print from website.

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Chicago Park District-
www.chicagoparkdistrict.com
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MONTHLY MTG -MARCH 9 2020 MON. 7PM
AT JP FIELDHOUSE, 6401 S. STONY ISLAND AVE.
Guest Kim Du Buclet (MWRD) on Saving our Waters

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JOIN JPAC FOR 2020. Mail checks made out to JPAC to JPAC C/O Dwight Powell, 7206 S. Luella 60649. (Memb. can be printed from online and mailed with check.) (Fiscal agent Chicago Parks Foundation, a 501c3). Print: http://www.hydepark.org/parks/jpac/JPAC_2020_memb_form.pdf.


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OBAMA Ctr. and related – our continually updated mid 2018 page
http://www.hydepark.org/parks/jpac/Obama_Ctr_Reviews_Updates.pdf


OPC https://obama.com/, CITY info http://www.cityofchicago.org/OPC

ELECTR. DELIV of NL, ADDR UPDATE- garyossewaarde@yahoo.com

The purpose of the JPAC is to provide a forum for …users of Jackson Park; to advise and make recommendations to the Chicago Park District on park improvements and programs (and create/ ensure programs); to encourage long-range planning; promote community use of park & program & partic. in planning, and seek alternative funding.
Minutes of the February 10, 2020 Jackson Park Advisory Council Meeting

Louise McCurry convened the meeting and distributed the agenda at 7:10 p.m., with a quorum present and a total attendance of 23.

Minutes of the January meeting were accepted as presented.

Treasurer’s Report. Dwight Powell. Beginning balance for January was $4,662.72, end balance was $4,282.44. Deposits were $100, expenditures $580.27--$230.27 to Discount School Supplies for the day camp small kids table and chairs and $350 for film rental for the March 14 One Earth Film Fest. We are expecting a generous gift of $250 and made an expenditure of $100 both of which should appear on the next balance.

New initiatives. Proposed service event. Dwight Powell and Mary Anton announced planning underway for a Feed the Hungry in the Park Dinner for the Thursday before next Thanksgiving. We have the supervisor’s approval, donation commitments from food suppliers (more in progress) and cash donations, and we have secured the services of a major chef in the food industry. We will include residents of senior and low income buildings in Woodlawn as well homeless who can be located and invited. Members agreed we should serve the community in need and assented to the project.

Drowning-Swimming-Safety Study and programs. JPAC proposes to collaborate with Lurie Children’s Hospital and the Red Cross to fill a major data and programming gap around near-drownings. Members were especially alarmed that there may be significant underreporting by life and safety personnel of non-injury and non-fatal incidents. There also appears to be low access to swimming opportunities and classes and low ability to swim and be safe whether in pools or greatly varied beach and other natural settings. The Park District designated Jackson as the focus locale on the South Side to get at these issues.

Discussed from the pre-meeting earlier in the evening, a set of JPAC members shared with a team from the project (led by Michelle Macy, MD, MS and Amy Hill at Lurie Children’s Hospital) our life experience with swimming and water safety and how swimming adds to both health and confidence, especially for kids. We set out a suite of needs and actions—surveys and beach/pool observations for the Study and planning for citywide and Jackson Park needs and facilities, and a set swimming and water safety lessons and demonstrations.

Suggested was that although there are several pools within a couple of miles radius, some are too small or too much in demand and that access for learning and swimming tends to be restricted or proprietary resulting in poor hours for families—so general community access is limited, especially where the pools are shared between a school and a park. And there are only limited programs at the beaches. It seemed that existing facilities are not satisfactorily serving our kids. (Initiatives by the boating clubs were gratefully acknowledged.) And it’s too often assumed that since so many people in our communities don’t swim, they don’t need pools or beach programs. Those with experience in other cities and countries cited programs and equipment used there but not in Chicago to create widespread water literacy. This includes portable pools.

The JPAC officers said that for several reasons they have come to the conclusion that our long-asked-for new fieldhouse needs to have a major swimming pool, and now the Lurie program gives us the opportunity to get the data and make the case. Members volunteered for the Study and water/bike safety programs this summer.

Fieldhouse and park program. Fran Vandervoort asked that we revisit the furniture that we bought for the preschool class, noting that it will grow because it includes a focus on physical skills that lead into the tumbling program. She moved that buying up to two more sets of tables and chairs. Seconded by Dwight and approved.

Bears. Louise led a shout-out for lead recreation instructors/coaches Erika Robinson and Pierre Nealon, who were sent all expenses paid to SuperBowl LIV by the Chicago Bears as part of Jackson Park and JPAC’s winning grant application showing “why recreation is important for our youth.” Andria and Pierre were given a big sendoff to the game by staff and JPAC. The prize also includes equipment for the Junior Bears program.

An Iowa Building committee was established to plan for and oversee that portion of the $625,000 state grant.

OPC landscape. Robert Rock (of Living Habitats) gave an in depth update on multi-perspective planning for the Obama Center site (summarized as an appendix document below).

After announcements the meeting was adjourned. Next meeting March 9 7 p.m. Gary Ossewaarde ######
At the February 10, 2020 JPAC meeting Robert Rock, PLA, ASLA, Principal at Living Habitats, a Chicago firm that is part of the Obama Presidential Center Landscape Design team led by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, gave a presentation and answered questions about the OPC landscape planning. An overview sheet was handed out that has been utilized for some of the detail below. Rock emphasized that the planning is very much a work in progress; a formal prospectus will be issued in the near future.

The research and planning focus, he said, is creation of a functioning landscape that can sustainably adapt through time, changing climate and other conditions and re-connects a now-isolated site into the park, not one that is de novo or stands apart. It seeks to bring Olmsted’s principles and vision forward using modern research and experience plus challenges, such as climate change to make a beautiful landscape and a valuable habitat that will thrive over the next 100 years. They aim to create a national model. The design guidelines cover Stormwater Management, Tree and Soil Ecology, Bird Habitat, and Biodiversity.

The Stormwater plan is intended to capture, cleanse, and keep most stormwater onsite—up to 2 million gallons a year—so it infiltrates on the site rather than, as at present runs off into the city sewers and the lagoons. In addressing stormwater impacts on the site, the team is addressing both the 100-year and the relevant percentile events referenced in sustainable guidelines for LEED & SITES certification. The existing low point on the project site is the Perennial Garden/Women’s Garden and as we are reestablishing this low point, stormwater will still flow across the surface to it. As a part of the OPC design, the Women’s Garden is to be reestablished in the same location, using the existing stones, incorporating accessible pathways, and extending the perennial garden palette as well as the canopy trees.

Trees, Plants, and Soil Ecology. The tree and shrub plan combines preserving healthy legacy trees near the comfort station and retaining valuable soil biology with a more diverse planting palette at all levels of vegetation. There are currently 326 trees slated for removal with about 500 to be planted in the proposed design. The final planting palette and exact numbers and palette will continue to be refined. Two major tree surveys were done. The traditional survey by Bartlett looked at the age and health of each tree and how to manage it. The other tree survey by ELM examined the ecological value of the trees and the soil employing the services of arborists, mycologists, and ecologists. The qualitative ELM tree survey took into account each tree’s generational age, condition, ecological value, and aesthetic value. The object was to provide an ecology-based evaluation of the existing vegetation. Within the limits of the future OPC site the tree surveys identified a relative few trees that potentially could have been planted during the timeframe of Olmsted Sr.’s influence on Jackson Park. Many of the current trees would have been within the footprints of the World’s Columbian Exposition building. Nearly 50 percent of the trees on the project site are of three genera- Maple, HoneyLocust, and Ash. In addition the tree survey indicated that nearly 40% of the existing trees on the OPC site are unhealthy, in decline, or undesirable. There is a general lack of diversity within the vegetation on the existing site—65% of the groundplane is lawn or athletic field, 5% is perennial plantings (at the Women’s Garden) and the rest is pavement. The current design reduces the amount of lawn to approximately 15% of the site and the design goal is to diversify the tree canopy such that the palette includes a range of species and not a domination by a handful of genera.

Soils. An innovative study was performed to evaluate the potential re-purposing of the existing soil biology. The soils have co-evolved with the trees and the goal is to retain resident soil biology, protect a select portion of it throughout construction, and redistribute it within the new site to support the new vegetation. Also, where possible select existing trees will be repurposed as nurse logs, similar to fallen trees in natural woodlands, where the resulting decomposition builds the soil ecosystem and serves the new vegetation. The goal is to support a natural nutrient cycling capacity in the landscape as opposed to supplementing plants with an abundance of commercial fertilizer. Harvested soil biology, re-purposed as inoculants, and the nurse logs will carry forward a piece of the site’s heritage and as a more natural supplementation strategy, will assist with plant establishment and support sustainability efforts.
Bird-friendly Habitat and Biodiversity. The planting palette (still being refined) is intended to support the human uses in the park while also supporting the ecosystem function. The design provides a boost to overall biodiversity, supports migratory bird populations that frequent the park and is intended to be integral with the rest of the park. The design goals for the planting palette target a mixture of vegetation where no more than 10% will be of the same genera. The design anticipates the reestablishment of the now-missing middle layer of vegetation. The planting palette will take account of creating natural plant communities as well as how it will look and how it will last or 100 years. They will consider plants most likely to adapt to scenarios of complex climate change (especially for more extremes) including physical and behavioral responses of both plants and wildlife.

Bird and pollinator habitat and safety are especially important. The accommodations needed for them (food, water, shelter, pairings) and for host plants are multifaceted. Design of the project for bird-friendly measures have been in discussion, with conversations about building features, lighting, and plantings to avoid dangers.

Members questions:
Q (Jerry Levy) How green are the green roofs atop some of the buildings? A- They will be full-profile, not thin-soil landscapes, not what one sees on a lot of high-rise “green” roofs. Also, most of the buildings are embedded down into the landscape, and the roofs are part of the groundline.
Q (Jerry Levy) Where does the project stop along Cornell Dr. and the lagoons, and will the emergent wetland plants put by GLFER in the west lagoon be changed or affected? A- We are not changing the GLFER project, our project stops at the limit of the GLFER project. In some ways using the same palette from the GLFER project would not be appropriate because we are essentially transitioning between the emergent plantings and the upland plantings.
Q (Robin Kaufman) Will old trees be saved and which? A- The large sycamores by the English Comfort Station will stay. While there are other large old trees, like the old oak at the north end of the site that are being removed. In the particular case of that old oak, the mycologist identified a pathogenetic fungi in its roots that we would not want to retain.
Q (Gary Ossewaarde) Is water from Jackson and the site migrating into the Midway east panel? A- That’s mostly from the landforms west of Stony Island and other adjacent contributing sub-watersheds. In heavy rains Stony floods from all sides; our stormwater strategy is aimed at retaining stormwater on the OPC site. (Members suggested a kiosk on site explaining the evolution and changes in the soils and plantings and for development of other educational opportunities and resources regarding the same.)

DARROW BRIDGE- Design (Phase II) is underway, having passed historic and other regulatory review.

PROGRESS ON RECYCLING? At last month’s meeting Ken Dunn of the Resource Center called for the city to adopt “best practices” recycling and other grass-roots environmental action. Mayor Lightfoot and leaders in City Council seem to be moving in that direction. Also, City Council’s Health and Environment Committee has given approval to a non-binding resolution of a Climate Emergency ranging from recycling, carbon footprints, bad EPA rules regarding designation and protection of waters and wetlands, to lakeshore erosion. AT JPAC’S MARCH 9 MEETING METROPOLITAN WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT COMMISSIONER KIM DU BUCLET WILL SPEAK ON “SAVING OUR WATER- IMPACT OF THE NEW EPA REGULATIONS.”

WHAT ABOUT LAKESHORE EROSION? Since the presentation and discussion at the January meeting and update in the last Newsletter, city, state, and Army Corps officials toured the lakefront, with a press conference at LaRabida Hospital. The Mayor and Governor declared the shore a disaster area, a step in getting Federal funding to even study the matter. That step seems to have been too late (although city and state officials and members of the Congressional delegation have sought such designations and funding for years with increasing urgency and governmental task forces have been set up). President Trump’s 2020-2021 budget contains no such Army Corps funding, nor for the Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study authorized in 2018. That does not preclude Congress from inserting funding that could be negotiated with the White House. In any case, the studies and solutions are years away. The Corps can supplement in a limited way city and state funds, for “emergency” action. READ MORE at http://hydepark.org/parks/jpac/jpnewsbuls.htm.
INT’L BIRD TREATY- keep it and enact stronger regs. for bird-friendly surfaces/ materials, sound / complete habitats, protections for Great Lakes, waterways, wetlands and against dumping, and killing of migratory birds.

RECOGNIZING VOLUNTEERS AT PLAYGROUNDS AND OUR LITTLE LIBRARIES. The care of our playgrounds can be a chore, but it can become a labor of love. South Shore resident (and chef) Sylvia Brooks daily cleans up and watches over the playgrounds on 63rd Street and arranges occasional play or community parties. She also secured a memorial bench at the 67th Ridgeland playlot and concrete support pads for a playground in Woodlawn, and helped create an alliance of the playgrounds along 63rd St. Member Alexander Jones brought his fraternity brothers for work in the playgrounds. UCPD, CPD, and CPkD did their part. South Shore neighbor and JPAC member Erin Adams, working with Brownbooks and Paintbrushes, JPAC, Southside Neighbors 4 Hope, Neighbor2Neighbor Literacy Project, and the park district, built by hand and maintains the kids Little Libraries at the 67th playgrounds and is working to get the next by the fieldhouse. She engraved the boxes with names of African and African-American authors. She keeps them clean and flyer-free (not an easy task) and filled with books families can take home, and has held reading parties. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO DONATE KIDS BOOKS or would like to read to the kids PLEASE CONTACT sosideneighbors4hope@gmail.com. Our Little Libraries WERE RECENTLY NAMED LIBRARIES OF DISTINCTION and featured as a Steward Spotlight by the Little Free Libraries organization. (Search for it in https://shoutout.wix.com/.) Also, Louise with parents re-chipped at playgrounds at 62nd and 56th.

And continuing our focus on serving the littlest ones, PRESCHOOL FURNITURE ARRIVES. The two sets of tables and chairs JPAC brought (through Dwight) for the preschool crafts and tumbling class (that parents and JPAC asked for) arrived at the fieldhouse in Jan & Feb from Discount School Supplies. This was enabled by generous membership gifts for kids programs by Fran and by Hyde Park Bank, a branch of Beverly Bank-A Wintrust Company. We look for additional needs at the fieldhouse, and for donors.

JACKSON PARK YACHT CLUB ADDS TO ITS SAILING PROGRAM THIS SUMMER thanks to JPYC Foundation. Please share the information about the Youth Sailing Programs Summer 2020 from the Jackson Park Yacht Club Foundation. Our diverse south side children who live near the lake have the opportunity to learn how to sail in Jackson Park at the Jackson Park Yacht Club this summer. This is an awesome sailing and water safety program for our kids. (Ability to swim is a prerequisite—such lessons are possible through or at the Yacht Club—contact Johnny Mercer at jpycsailingdirector@yahoo.com.).

“This summer, in addition to our Junior Program and Open Horizons Youth Sailing Program, we are offering a new program called the Siebel Sailors Program... a partnership with U.S. Sailing to increase opportunity and diversity (through) resources and support to youth sailors regardless of socio-economic background” writes the Foundation. JPYC is one of 4 sites chosen in the Midwest.

There is a host of activities and expert counselors, but programs SELL OUT FAST. So contact one of the following—Karen Harris: Foundation_President@jacksonparkyachtclub.org or Johnny Mercer, Director of Youth Sailing: jpycsailingdirector@yahoo.com.

Watch for JPAC-partnered swim-water safety-bike safety programs, returning after several years this summer.

GIVING COACHES SENDOFF to SUPERBOWL LIV. We had a fine send off for Erika Robinson and Pierre Nealon to represent Jackson Park and JPAC at the Super Bowl. Louise gave them t-shirts saying that “History didn’t end with Olmsted” and pictures to share of 5 generations of Jackson Park History Makers who are reactivating Jackson Park! Chicago Bears provided the trips, and equipment/jerseys for our Junior Bears teams at the fieldhouse. A program Sept. 7 in the park honored the Bears’ 100th year and the Bears had an essay contest we won, on the value of sports to youth.

Also, Jackson Park Golf Association, a member of JPAC along with individual members, honored golf winners, programs, and black heroes at its annual banquet, at DuSable Museum. Next-Women in golf 3-18.

JPAC THANKS those who discovered and created with the Children’s Black History Month- CELEBRATING OUR HEROES program February 22- Candice Washington, Jamie Flaherty, Dr. Stephanie Jefferson, Andy Carter, and help from Gary Ossewaarde, Dwight Powell/friends. Louise organized. And the kids discovered and created! We will have more activities for kids—the kids voted for birds. Can you help?
CALENDAR. Take advantage of these programs in the park and beyond!

(Others produce:) MARCH 13 ANNUAL CLARENCE DARROW WREATH TOSS, READING, AND SPEECHES. Parking lot on east side of the bridge 10 a.m. Turn off LSD at 5800/Science Dr., turn left.

March 14, Saturday. One Earth Film Festival. 6401 S. Stony Island. Free.

- Work projects lagoons, 57th beach-meet at fieldhouse. Details: commissioner751@icloud.com.
- Resource Fair – national to local projects -- in the fieldhouse to engage you and answer questions.
- 1-3 p.m. Screening of “A CHILD OF NATURE” followed by discussion with the producers, youth panel and Q & A. This is a powerful movie by youth of 5 countries who are using their smarts to organize, empower and inspire and change their communities. Come, but we ask you also to sign up at https://www.oneearthfilmfest.org/ UPDATE 3/12 CANCELLED, WILL BE RESCHEDULED.

April 18, Saturday. EARTH DAY –sign up with Friends of the Parks www.fotp.org/events-page/earth-day/. (site -Jackson Park). Activities tba or see Workdays, below. Celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day (which was April 22, 1970).

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Coming- Migratory bird program in May. May 11 On the Table Community discussion, June 21? Make Music Chicago. NIGHT OUT IN THE PARKS events, OUR FAMOUS ‘WHITE CITY’ TOURS RESUME IN MAY. Saturdays, 11 am, East of Darrow Bridge.

AND DON’T MISS THESE OFF-SITE OPPORTUNITIES

March 18, 6 pm. Jackson Park Golf Association celebration of pioneer women golfers. DuSable Museum, 740 E. 56th Pl. Register at the JPGA website.


WORKDAYS TO BEGIN

Our Recurring Monthly Workdays start in March or April and continue through Oct. or Nov.:

- March 14, 2nd Saturdays, 9-12 Bobolink Meadow- Meets at the south end by the Golf Driving Range lot. Check with Norm Bell re start at normwbell@gmail.com or www.bobolinkvolunteers.org.
- March 21, 3rd Saturdays, 10-12 Columbia Basin (south of Museum) njoseph2008@aol.com.
- March 28, 4th Saturdays, 10-1 Wooded Island. Meet at the south bridge to the Island by the lot at Cornell and Hayes. sjlevy@jeromelevylaw.com.

April 18, 3rd Saturdays, 10-12 63rd St. Beach Natural Area. Contact Edward Warden at ewarden@sheddaquarium.org.

If you would like to help with larger occasional groups—there are already several groups signed up this spring—contact Louise McCurry at commissioner751@icloud.com.

Remember JPAC monthly meetings- 2nd Mondays, 7 p.m. Jackson Park Fieldhouse, 6401 S. Stony Island. To add to the agenda, contact Louise McCurry, commissioner751@icloud.com.

UPDATE: WITH CPD SUSP OF ALL PAC MTGS APRIL 13 MAY BE CANCELLED (coronavirus).

March 9- guest Kim Du Buclet, a Commissioner of the MWRD on “Saving Our Water” April 13, May 11(our annual On the Table community and planning conversation), June 8, July 13 (annual picnic at the Iowa Building unless being repaired under state grant)