**OFFICERS**
Louise McCurry, President
Frances Vandervoort, VP
Gary Ossewaarde, Secretary
Dwight Powell, Treasurer
Esther Schechter, safety
Aaron Stephens, sports
Fran Vandervoort, nature/trail

**JPAC meets monthly 2nd
Mondays 2014: 09/8, 10/13, 11/10, 12/8, 01/12**

**DUES/ VOLUNTARY CONTR.**
$35 per person.  Opp levels $100, $250, $500...
JPAC c/o Dwight Powell, 7206 S. Luella, Chicago, IL 60649

**CONTACTS**
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Dwight Powell (Treas/dues 7206 S. Luella, 60649 773 288-4943.
Jerry Levy (Wooded I steward) silevy@jeromelevylaw.com
Norm Bell/Gail Parry (Bobolink stewards) parrybell@ameritech.net

**Monday September 8, 2014 7 p.m. (2nd Mons)
Jackson Park Fieldhouse, 6401 S. Stony Island**

**MONDAY SEPTEMBER 8, 2014 AGENDA GUESTS**
Call to order and adjustment of agenda
Minutes & financial report- Gary Ossewaarde, Dwight Powell
Reports, updates, new and old business, confirm 7 pm starting time, announcements. adjourn.

**NEWSLETTER CONTENTS-
1-front 2-notices, minutes 3-6- reports, letters, of note**

**WORKDAYS- Bobolink 2nd Sat 9-12: parrybell@ameritech.net, Wooded Island 4th Sat 10-1 sjlevy@jeromelevylaw.com, 9/27 2-5 p**
others, specials- Louise-773 844-2225
White City 1893 tours- Sats at 11 east of Darrow Bridge

**2014 MEMBERSHIP/GIFTS NEEDED-** Mail checks to
JPAC C/O Dwight Powell, 7206 S. Luella 60649. Or bring to a meeting.
Basic (Friend) level $35. Info: garyossewaarde@yahoo.com.
Our fiscal agent is Friends of the Parks, a 501c3.

**SEND E-MAIL addresses to garyossewaarde@yahoo.com. You'll get newsletters and changing announcements faster!**
**Official website** [http://www.jacksonparkadvisorycouncil.org](http://www.jacksonparkadvisorycouncil.org)
**Newsletters current link:** [http://www.hydepark.org/parks/jpac.html](http://www.hydepark.org/parks/jpac.html)
**Keep current:** [http://www.hydepark.org/parks/jpac/jpnewsbuls.htm](http://www.hydepark.org/parks/jpac/jpnewsbuls.htm)
**Bobolink website:** [http://bluestem.info/bobolink/](http://bluestem.info/bobolink/)
**Friends of the White City:** [http://www.friendsofthewhitecity.org](http://www.friendsofthewhitecity.org)

**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 utilization and awareness of park and program and participation in planning; and seek alternative funding sources.**
Announcements

August 13, the Chicago Park District Board of Commissioners approved a contract with the US Army Corps of Engineers for $8.1 million in habitat work in Jackson Park, to be put out for RFP. The majority of this 5-year project is federally funded, the remainder by the Chicago Park District ($700K in bonds, $700K private grant from Project 120 through Robert Karr, $500K other private, and credit value of improved park acreage). The Jackson Park Section 506 Great Lakes Fishery and Ecosystem Restoration Initiative was increased to the full preliminary scope (adding lagoon islands, Outer Harbor work and otherwise modifying the acreage), after the update given at the Aug. 11 JPAC meeting. The final Solicitation (bid) document will be shared with JPAC. JPAC will work with project partners to ensure full and proper oversight.

Workdays. Our natural area stewards hold scheduled workdays (Bobolink 2nd Sats 9-12-parrybell@ameritech.net and Wooded Island 4th Sats. 10-1- sjlevy@jeromelevylaw.com) but we have many specials with groups—we could use supervisory help—contact Louise McCurry at 773 844-2225. Save the date September 20- beach clean at 57th, 63rd, Outer Harbor- 9 to noon.


Watch for our Bike Clinic at 57th St. Beach, poss. another elsewhere end of September or Early October

Minutes of the August 11 JPAC Advisory Council monthly meeting

(Presentations are attached- USACE Project, Darrow Bridge, Alliance for the Great Lakes/beach clean.) President Louise McCurry opened the meeting at 7 p.m. at the fieldhouse, a quorum being present. Louise congratulated Supervisor Bobbie Beckam on his tennis doubles championship in an American Tennis Association tournament.

Louise praised the upcoming Nike World Basketball Festival at 63rd and the Lake, with youth clinics and mentoring from some of the country’s top stars and coaches including from Team USA, and exhibition games. Nike funded rehabilitation of at least three basketball courts as state-of-the-art and other improvements. Attention was also called to the many activities in the park scheduled by the Park District, the 5th Ward Office, and private groups this summer. A highlight was Shakespeare in the Music Court. Many groups have participated in scheduled and special workdays in the park- 8 more private groups were already scheduled. Winter saw severe fish kill in the lagoons, as is common in hard-freeze winters, requiring frequent restocking. Summer camp, one of the largest in years, included a weekly one-on-one reading with volunteers with WITS. Camp included croquet and lawn bowling introduction- golf may be added next year, and field trips. Camp concluded with JPAC distributing a filled backpack to each child—Hyde Park Chamber of Commerce (Wallace E. Goode) invited JPAC to participate in its annual backpack program, Kaufman and Kaufman Dental paid for the backpacks, Dr. Anne Ridgeway at the 7109 S. Jeffrey Walgreens paid for the supplies, and JPAC volunteers and park staff filled the bags. All were thanked. Next programming: football and cross country. Louise reported on a thorough drive-through inspection and evaluation of the park- 6 JPAC volunteers rode in a golf carts caravan with Region Manager Daphne Johnson, Area Manager Cordell Hopkins, Jackson Park supervisor Bobbie Beckam, and staff. Many work orders had already been completed—Esther Schechter was especially pleased with repair of benches throughout the park. A poll showed members prefer to start our meetings at 7 pm.

Minutes of the July meeting were approved with corrections. Bank balance was $4,263.82. Announcements.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m. Next meeting Sept 8, 7 p.m., fieldhouse, 6401 S. Stony Island. Respectfully submitted, Gary M. Ossewaarde, Secretary
US Army Corp of Engineers PRESENTATION OF UPDATED PLAN—August 11, 2014 JPAC Meeting.

USACE ecologist and planner Frank Veraldi and Chicago Park District Dept. of Natural Resources ecologist Lauren Umek. Jackson Park Section 506 Great Lakes Fishery and Ecosystem Restoration Project

The ACE focus is to restore habitat-- aquatic, pond, edge, sedge meadow, and woodland and the Great Lakes wildlife (including fish) of these habitat types. The Park District focus is Olmsted’s landscape vision and vistas. The areas of the park where work is to be done are arranged in four time phases over five years- 1- (first) in and around the lagoons and Wooded Island, 2- the inner harbor (aka South Lagoon), 3- parts of the golf course, 4- certain Outer Harbor edges and south edges of the park. The plans, which were still in progress, will have much greater detail and specification than is usual in such projects in order to make sure the grading, plant palette, paths and overlooks are right and true to the mandates for both habitat and this Olmsted park.

At least some of the work will be disruptive—for example, as some of the first work (after fall bird migration), the lagoons will be separated (with a mesh) from the Columbia Basin (where game fish are stocked yearly). Now, runaway species destroy the lagoon bottoms, and plants, and water quality and prevent establishment of fish species that are both native to this Great Lakes habitat and desired by fishers. After fall bird migration, certain fish will be killed quickly and the lagoons cleaned. Fishing success will recover slowly as water quality and bottoms are improved, spawning holes and structures are installed, the lagoons stocked in stages with a diversity of native fish and the latter mature and adjust. Edges will be re-graded and planted. About 12 viewing/fishing outlooks over the lagoons will be made at historic or strategic spots, with chipped wood side paths or bow-outs to reach them. The fishing pier at 63D and Cornell will be remade (Fishing and birding groups have been consulted.)

Work will be staged to avoid interfering with migratory bird arrivals and seasons, and as much as possible of the heavy work will be done in winter to avoid soil compaction. Where possible, grading will include berms to reduce the noise to the lagoons that can disturb birds. But in some places where that has been called desirable such as along Cornell Drive there is little room. Trees and shrubs will be used to have a calming effect.

Work in other sectors will also introduce new plant communities and wildlife—marsh including reeds along, for example some of the inner harbor shores, a rough-grass hummock in the golf course turned into a sedge meadow, ponds that mudpuppies (salamander-like) will use, and some grass turf replanted to sedges that foster wildlife.

Wooded areas will be re-balanced so there can be plants of varied heights and both sun-loving and shade-tolerant low and ground plants. Some areas are overgrown and need a fair amount of removal and replanting. Parts of Wooded Island will have about 25% changeover, including removal of trees trying to grow under oaks and so won’t live long. Much of the new material will be shrubs and ground plants designed and staged so birds will have more forage, shelter. Trees will take time to grow. Attention is given to mixing and balancing the plants— botany that fits while respecting Olmsted’s look, but not over-dense, and making sure each season has interesting things to see. Questions were asked and answered; conversation and refinement will continue.

Highlights of the project
What/ where: Pond habitat including the east and west lagoons- re-grade and replant much of the edges for wetland and emergent plant and aquatic plant and animal habitat and islands (7 new) for heron habitat, renew bottom and islands and replace invasive fish population with native, separated from Columbia Basin, clean and restore habitat of edge of the South Lagoon (Inner Harbor) and parts of the Outer Harbor. Restore woodlands in and around Wooded Island. Create at various places including in and around the golf course 12 new sedge meadows and ponds to include reeds and others marsh plants for amphibians and dragonflies and 2 for mudpuppies. Clear c.300 dead or dying ash trees. Work on Wooded Island may include up to 25% replacement in places, esp. SW, and heavy along the west edge of the west lagoon to Cornell Drive (with a new path, fishing pier). 1 million wildflowers/native plants, 300,000 shrubs, 1,300 trees. Excluded: most of the north and west-edge, missile-base areas (Bobolink and golf driving range), most east lawns, golf & rec’l, lake shore.

Funds: Total $8.1M. c. 65% federal. Park District total $1.9M in money-- $700,000 in bond revenues, $700,000 from Project 120 (which also is paying for Olmsted oversight and landscaping planning by Heritage Landscapes and 3 continuing inspections), $500,000 more in private. Value of acreage is also counted.

Link to the Project website:
http://www.lrc.usace.army.mil/Missions/CivilWorksProjects/JacksonPark.aspx (including FAQs)
JPAC letter of support to Chicago Park District August 2014

Jackson Park Advisory Council, the first Chicago park advisory council founded in 1983, who has advocated for environmental stewardship in Jackson Park is writing in support of the Olmsted Natural Area Plantings as part of the Chicago Park District and US Army Corps of Engineers project. We have hosted and attended multiple public meetings on the project and have been involved in the development process. The project will create biologically diverse habitats in the park while respecting the Olmsted firm design intent. The Jackson Park Advisory Council believes that the restoration project is an important ecological investment for Jackson Park. We are grateful to the Chicago Park District and the Army Corps of Engineers for their transparency and support of community involvement in this important project.

Louise McCurry, Jackson Park Advisory Council President [More JPAC letters clarifying project pp.5, 6]

Darrow Bridge update. Chicago Department of Transportation. Luis Benitez, bridge engineer.
Funding has been secured for phases 1, design study, and 2, full design, but not yet for the construction. While the study will take only a few months (and include laser scanning the entire bridge), full design and its approval will likely take at least two years (before construction could start) following the law (which designates this bridge historic) for complete historic restoration. However, that reconstruction will nevertheless allow having both a traffic lane (max. allowed 36 tons as nominally for the present bridge) and a bike-pedestrian lane. Mr. Benitez confirmed that the bridge truly is compromised structurally and could not just be covered over for pedestrian-bike passage in the meantime. Some of the compromise is from damage done, and the access to the understructure, reopened about 12 years ago, will be permanently blocked.

A temporary foot bridge would cost at least a half million, need to be structurally sound and safe and require time also. Asked about the ugly, off-putting closure fencing, he said other funding would have to be found and replacement would also have to effectively close the bridge to passage. Members pointed out that blocked access to the Island from the parking lot east of the bridge and the cut off of east-west access through the park to the lakefront in this north half of the park are a serious, untenable burden to the park and community and that JPAC should seek a temporary solution such as a footbridge until the bridge is historically restored.

Regulations and procedures are very complex, including even putting the bridge up “for sale” and doing an environmental impact study. One of the practical problems is that this is a “small” non-traffic bridge and project, so getting fast tracking and then the interest of contractors (who have lots of projects in tow now) will not be easy. On the other hand, a 80-20 federal-state SACC match may be possible. Construction is not expected to start before some time in 2017 or 2018.

Alliance for the Great Lakes (http://www.greatlakes.org). Sarah Neville described the expertise, advocacy, beach cleanup, school outreach/curriculum, and recreational activities of The Alliance for the Great Lakes (formerly Lake Michigan Federation). She called the recent problems of Toledo a wakeup call and said AGL and allies are working on renewed commitment by the state and provincial governors and the federal governments to clean waters and shores for the Great Lakes. AGL and JPAC will hold a beach cleanup September 20, Saturday, 9-noon at 63rd St. beach, west shore of the Outer Harbor (across from La Rabida) and 57th St. beach. AGL will record conditions and trash collected. Water, bags, gloves provided.

The Hyde Park Historical Society held a Hyde Park-Kenwood Stories Share at Montgomery Place Retirement Community August 17. The many stories and successes of Jackson Park formed a major portion.

We sadly announce the passing of two giants of the parks movement in Chicago.
James Alter was a founder of Friends of the Parks, defender of open space, an early and often supporter of progressive political leaders and causes, head of a highly respected industrial wholesale firm, and a volunteer with the WITS reading program founded by his late wife. His leadership will be greatly missed.
Devereux Bowly, attorney with Legal Defense Fund, lifelong Hyde Parker and recently also of Lakeside MI was a leader in parks, open space, historic preservation, and affordable housing causes, a building restorer, past president of the Hyde Park Historical Society, involved in lawsuits to limit institutional incursions in Jackson Park, worked for and developed restoration plans for features of the South Shore Cultural Center, and was a past member and ongoing friend of JPAC who helped keep us on our toes.

ALSO Jackson Park camp and recreational programs lost one of its family, 9-year-old Antonio Smith to a brutal shooting August 20. JPAC members participated in a memorial at the fieldhouse.
JPAC letters on the ACE Project particularly as it applies to the lagoons and fish

As to the Hyde Park Herald. By Louise McCurry, President and Jackson Park Advisory Council. August 21, 2014

Thank You Jeffrey Bishku-Aykul for writing this week’s article about the restoration plan for Jackson Park, utilizing the original Olmsted Plan to create a beautiful, "democratic" park for all to enjoy. Thank you to everyone on the Hyde Park Herald Staff for the coverage over the last four years. JPAC and the Chicago Park District has put in thousands of volunteer hours partnering with the Chicago Park District to plant thousands of trees, plants, and create natural habitats in the nature preserves, build playgrounds, repair and build new recreational areas, repair the fieldhouse for community meetings, remove the years of trash and invasive species accumulations, and open up the rich and important history of Jackson Park to the community through free tours, historical feature naming, lectures, and community forums-- and the Herald covered them. We believe that every Hyde Parker and every Chicagoan should come to Jackson Park and relax in its peaceful surroundings, play in safe sports and recreation areas, and playgrounds, swim on its beautiful and safe beaches, and fish in its safe lagoons and harbors.

So it is particularly painful for JPAC members to see the community wide damage done with the inaccurate headlines that the Herald chose for the restoration plan article this week. We applaud the Park District and the Army Corp of Engineers for being completely transparent through hours of multiple open community meetings, answering every question; including the community in every step of the planning process, and incorporating the community suggestions into the plan. The Herald headlines of all species in the Jackson Park Lagoon to be exterminated with poison is inaccurate followed by the statement of "Say goodbye to the fish in the Jackson Park Lagoon" is sensational and inaccurate. It will sell newspapers, and we support the Herald for its important historic role in making Hyde Park an informed and involved community. But is just wrong! Removing unhealthy, damaging and invasive species from the waterways to protect native fish habitats is an important ecological fish management practice to maintain those habitats. It produces an abundant fish population which fishermen, women, and children can catch, use to feed their families, or simply to catch and release as practiced by many fisherman. The restoration plan is about producing more safe areas for fishing, walking, biking, and recreating, more natural areas where birds and wildlife can live successfully, more areas where teachers and school children can visit to learn about plants, animals birds, and fish here in Jackson Park.

So we really hope that this was an error that the Herald staff chose these headlines to characterize this wonderful ecological plan to restore the park utilizing the original Frederick Law Olmsted plan to restore our beautiful Jackson Park. It is a plan which is too big to cover in a couple of newspaper paragraphs. We invite anyone who would like to learn more or ask questions, to attend our JPAC educational meetings the second Monday of each month.

Sincerely,
Louise McCurry, President
JPAC: Jackson Park Advisory Council
I am the Chicago Park District volunteer steward for Wooded Island and am a member of the Jackson Park Advisory Council (JPAC). Wearing these two hats, I often weigh proposals of the Park District on a scale to balance the interests of the Park District with those of the residents around Jackson Park. Often, I then try to present, sometimes with little success, my opinions.

I have attended several meetings and met with people involved in the proposal for the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) Project 506, relating to the project in Jackson Park that includes Wooded Island and its lagoons. I attended the meeting of JPAC last Monday. I came away with a very different view of the project from that left by the Herald’s article.

The essence of the treatment of the lagoons isn’t a “fishkill,” but a program to enhance the aesthetics and quality of the water of the lagoons. While it is doubtful that the water, which now frequently looks like chocolate pudding, can be changed to look like the pristine water of Lake Michigan, what ACE plans on doing will certainly improve its appearance. As presented, the ACE is going to spend a large amount of money to improve the appearance of the water, while at the same time upgrading its quality for fish and other aquatic life. They hope to accomplish this by two separate processes.

The first and most extensive is to regrade a significant portion of the shoreline around the edge of the lagoons. This would eliminate the drop-offs and bring the shore down to the water’s edge. The result is known as a “swamp fringe.” When the shore is regraded to the level of the water, it is then planted with herbaceous native plants, sedges, and grasses. The effect would be two-fold: it would deter runoff of rainwater carrying dirt and mud into the lagoons while simultaneously limiting erosion, all of which would help clear the water. As an added benefit, it would allow fishermen and visitors access to the water’s edge.

The other process for treating the quality and aesthetics of the lagoon water is to change the fish species from bottom-diggers that churn the mud to a higher species quality that would improve the water and the attraction of fishing in the lagoons. The elimination of the existing fish would be followed by stocking the lagoons with increasing sizes of native fish, including game fish.

The “fishkill” focus of the Herald article may have been eyecatching, but, unfortunately, it put a negative spin on a program that will have a significant beneficial impact on a treasure of our community.

Jerry Levy