

Jackson Park Advisory Council June 11 2012 council meeting minutes

[Correction: the referenced Highlands Fling is a private event for neighbors only.]

The meeting was initially convened by Gary Ossewaarde; Louise McCurry assumed the chair shortly thereafter, with 15 in attendance and a quorum present. The meeting was held at the Jackson Park Yacht Club, gracious hosts being Dennis Hampton, Commodore, and three others from the Club- Steve Pittman, John Paylor, and Edmund Gueringer (apologies for spellings).

Minutes of the June meeting were approved later in the meeting.

Treasurer Dwight Powell reported subtractions of \$156.44, and deposit of \$70 for an end-of-May balance of \$5,064.43.

Sports. The committee, Aaron Stephens, Chair, announced that they have collaboratively arranged for **two sports tournaments this summer- July 21 for baseball and August 4 for tennis**. [Details appear in this Newsletter's announcements.] The tennis program involves Apostolic Church of God's team and league. To facilitate the tournament, CPD will install new nets in the 59th courts. Funds have been donated for painting lines, and some equipment has been donated. The tournaments should generate funds for field hardware including **benches for the baseball field- all are encouraged to come cheer the teams- donation opp**. Separately, the committee is pursuing a retail vendor donation of back-to-school backpacks for the Park District summer camp Jackson Park kids (expenditure approved last month) [note: secured].

A soccer tournament opportunity for disabled persons was created by trimming low limbs along the LaRabida shore- thanks to Adam Schwerner, Director of CPD Natural Resources and staff for this and for a large set of other improvements. A letter of thanks was later approved.

Dennis Hansen, Jackson Park Yacht Club Commodore, and assistants welcomed JPAC, and talked about the Club and its priorities including for the harbors. Mr. Gueringer explained that a 40-foot ketch is available for expanded sailing and boating **youth programs** but that kids must first have passed swimming requirements- which few have. Water is too deep at the appropriate dock here to teach swimming. There are boating with swimming programs at couple of other PD facilities, and funding if swimming-ready students ID'd.

The club is **concerned about silting** of the entrances to the harbor. Major dredging has not been done for a while now. McCurry distributed a plan developed by the park district with many organizations and agencies a few years ago for new Jackson Harbor entrance breakwaters and for additional docks in the Outer Harbor. The upgrades would, among other things greatly reduce need for dredging. Environmentally-friendly changes would be included. JPAC will remind CPD of the plan and inquire about prospects and thoughts. Also, consensus was to proceed with drafting a request in which JPAC will lend its support for emergency dredging. [The aforementioned harbor plan is not to be confused with a proposal for an additional, outer-outer harbor, about which JPAC expressed reservations and which is withdrawn or set aside for various reasons.]

Among amenities discussed that could benefit both the park as a whole and boaters would be at least one place to eat and relax overlooking the harbor views. The former harbor station was used as such for a while, but seems unable to serve such a use sustainably, partly for lack of close parking. Opening the yacht clubs for more public participation in their activities such as brunches presents problems, but the Jackson Park club said it would explore what options may be possible for its facility. Southern Shore Yacht Club is celebrating its 100th anniversary with a public open house June 16 and 17 and advertizes it is open for dinner 2nd Tuesday evenings this summer.

Police protection is being arranged for Museum Shores club, which has suffered break ins this summer, as has the Bowling Green clubhouse.

From JPAC's side, **McCurry described the major work this year by the Park District and JPAC to clean up and make attractive the whole LaRabida peninsula** including east Outer Harbor shore—new spaces families and the public are enjoying. She distributed **a letter of thanks** to the CPD President, Supt., and Natl. Resources Director of the Chicago Park District—unanimously approved and to be sent on letterhead. **2**

Park conditions and policing. Extra, visible police presence and prompt graffiti removal have helped at the beaches and elsewhere. The attention of Ald. Hairston to police needs was appreciated and she will be thanked. Some of her suggestions in a press release invite detailed ideas for safety improvements. Additional public meetings on policing are promised. Concern was expressed about safety and park upkeep re: very large parties that might be permitted in the park this summer. McCurry said she would also seek a meeting with 3rd District Commander Lynette Helm and staff. There continues to be large amounts of glass and liquor bottles “deposited” in the parking lots on weekends—JPAC appreciates the diligence of park district/contractor crews for prompt cleanup. McCurry also distributed and JPAC approved (moved by Powell, also to be send on letterhead) a **thank you to Alonzo Williams of CPD, police and others for keeping roads and emergency access opened** and not clogged with cars during this year’s 13.1 mile Marathon June 9, which coincided with large soccer games and big public demand for park and beach use on a hot day as well as Bobolink workday. McCurry showed a printout of the **Park District website form for submitting work requests** (in “Contact Us”.) Encouraged was to use it, informing also the park supervisor. Suggested was listing the broken benches. There was consensus to submit a new ask for work on bridges. A contract for Music Court bridge work is out.

Wooded Island. Jerry Levy distributed an initial summary breakdown from the **Inventory**. 1,138 trees (excluding Osaka Garden and the lawn in front of it) were divided into 24 genus. Openlands will further divide these into species. Genus represented by at least 100 trees were Mulberries, Box Elders, Hackberries, and Maples, with Oaks at 82. Among the most rare: Gingko and Ohio Buckeye (1 each), Serviceberries (2 each), and Ironwoods and Sycamores (3 each)- a good reason to read up on trees and try to locate ours. Jerry showed a map of a **mulch trail for Wooded Island** (bounded on each side by timbers) proposed to us by the Park District (via new Natural Resources staff member Mitch Murdock), to be installed this summer by the contractor, Pizzo. The trail would amble down the spine of the Island from just south of the lawn in front of Osaka Garden to the south bridge, with a couple of side branches. It would run near, but not in the former Rose Garden (proposed to be called the “Prairie”). There would be identifying stations at the ends and other prominence to encourage people and possibly some tours to view more of the island than just Osaka Garden. This physical trail would be part of JPAC’s Interactive Nature Trail, like that already in Bobolink Meadow, and JPAC would develop and propose informational materials. Moved by Powell and 2nd by Fran Vandervoort to support. **Unanimously approved.** Trail chair Vandervoort reminded us that the next section we need is a connector around the south end of the east lagoon between the Island and emergent wetland/Bobolink trails. Signage showing the entire set of trails, with dotted lines where missing, would also be desirable she said. Noted: an increasing number of tours that include the island, including tours about the Columbian Exposition. McCurry suggested also a short similar trail for people to get down to newly fixed up meadow and shore areas near LaRabdia. **[Contact Jerry for a map of the trail- sjlevy@jeromelevylaw.com.]** Levy said volunteers need be recruited to plant a large number of plant plugs in the Prairie Saturday, June 16. Pizzo will later plant a much larger number.

Old and New Business. Proposed and endorsed was to invite PD President Traubert and others on a walk through of improvements made, new public use made of, and needs of the park.

Ossewaarde read initial draft of thanks to the organizations surveying needs for the Lakefront bike and hike trail and stating we want a plan to include ways to encourage following rules, mutual respect, separation of bike and walking paths, and main and 2ndary paths well designed, connected, lit, and maintained. Approved.

Moved by Levy and approved to make our annual website payment. Moved and approved to seek or buy and give to the fieldhouse two barbecue grills for park programs at c\$100 value.

McCurry discussed communication from a group seeking permission to put bags etc. for collecting pet excrement in parks. JPAC would be interested in that or our own placement (preferably with JPAC information). Asked was to find out what permissions and endorsements might be needed. Locations suggested were by the beaches, La Rabida, and the 59th tennis area and others where dog walking is done.3

Ossewaarde reported that Judith Green has resigned as vice president to pursue other volunteer commitments. JPAC expressed gratitude for her quality work and ideas, including with the workshops and long-range planning. The floor was opened to fill the vacancy. **Aaron Stephens was nominated, accepted, and was unanimously elected.** Stephens brings great experience with youth sports and community outreach.

Approved to explore with the Yacht Club how we can be mutual members or otherwise related.

Gail Bell said there will not be a Bobolink Workday in July. Wooded Island workdays will be June 16 and 23 and July 28th, starting at 10 am.

McCurry will attend the Park District Board Meeting June 13 when there will be a resolution thanking retiring South Region Manager Liz Millan. There will also be a retirement party July 21, 6-9 pm at the Living Room Lounge, 1100 W. Cermak.

Julia Bachrach would talk on history and splendors of Chicago Parks at the Chicago Cultural Center June 14. Esther Schechter invited all to attend the Highland Fling in the 6700 block of Euclid July 28 (charge for food for those from outside the area.) The meeting was adjourned. Next at the **Partee Golf fieldhouse 6400 S. Richards Dr. (so. of Golden Lady Republic statue) Monday July 9, 7:30 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted, Gary Ossewaarde, Secretary

Updates from the President, June 6 2012

Bobolink Meadow and **Wooded Island** look amazing and are teaming with families, birds and butterflies. Gail, Norm and Jerry and Workday volunteers have planted hundreds of new plants and trees and removed even more invasive species. They have become places of relaxation and wonder for Hyde Parkers of all stripes. The tree mapping project is complete.

The **Harbors** are filling with boats. The **Golf Driving Range** and the **Golf Course** has lines of adult golfers with classes for children. There is no new graffiti at **57th and 63rd St. Beach House**. The **Bike Path** is filling with bikers and runners, many using LaRabida as their starting point. The **Lawn Bowlers** had matches on their greens on Saturday. During soccer games (7am to 1pm) Saturday I counted 3 groups of **Guided Bird Watcher** tours and 2 guided **Bicycle tours** of Jackson Park.

The **Sports Committee** has met twice and we have two tournaments planned: July 21 (youth Baseball) and August 4 (youth Tennis) and we will use the donations from the event to buy needed player benches for the 63rd and Cornell field and needed tennis court paint and nets for the tennis courts at 59th and Lake Shore Drive. Our Kids deserve well equipped sports fields and courts they can be proud to play on.

At LaRabida, we have done a lot of work clearing the garbage, dead trees and hanging branches from the west open field, the north fence area, the east beach- lake side and the west beach harbor side area. We removed invasive species trees and plants from two overgrown beautiful lily gardens along the west harbor. Jerome Scott's foresters have kindly taken down the dead trees and ground up the dead limbs into mulch for the trees. We had a wheel chair soccer clinic Sunday on our newly cleared open field west of the hospital. Dog Trainers followed my class with an impromptu training class of five dogs in the same beautiful open space, followed by 2 elderly golfers practicing their short putts. 9 fisherman were fishing on the newly cleared west (harbor) beach. And I counted 225 people sitting or walking in the park and 150 bicyclists on the path during the 4 hours we were cleaning up there. The newly cleared path from 67th street to the beach was being used by families with kids who came to dig in the sand and a few dogs... I counted 5 folks with expensive cameras taking lake vista pictures from the north meadow and world's fair wall. There was a drummer and a saxophone player making music on the north promenade turn around area. (LaRabida is one of few areas with clearly visible lake views left and people are coming to enjoy it.) It has gone from an area that said "Stay Away" to an area that says "Welcome" where people can safely enjoy relaxing lake views under the watchful eyes of LaRabida Security. I think we have given South Shore-ites back their waterfront park/beach and I am so very grateful to all who have helped.

The next challenge is, How do we maintain it?

President McCurry also expresses thanks to CPD for clearing dead and impinging trees at the 'Iowa' building.

July workday Saturday, July 28, 10 a.m.--2 p.m. Meet at Darrow Bridge so. of MSI basin unless further notice. To be on Jerry's notice and information list, contact silevy@jeromelevylaw.com.

Bird Walks Saturdays at 8, Wednesdays at 7. From the Darrow Bridge.

*******YOUTH SPORTS TOURNAMENTS-**

JULY 21 10AM-2 PM BASEBALL TOURNAMENT—COME SUPPORT TEAMS, HELP RAISE MONEY FOR BASEBALL FIELD BLEACHERS AT NE CORNER 63RD/CORNELL. In coop w ChPkDistr, Apostolic Church. Info Aaron Stephens, 773 317-2371, prepare_2win@yahoo.com. Louise 773 844-2225. Next:

AUGUST 4 TENNIS TOURNMENT prob. at courts by 59th harbor. Check with the above for info.