



Friends of the Parks Advocate

Fall 2002

Friends of the Parks and Friends of the Forest Preserves Document Cook County Forest Preserve Deficits and Decay

In October 2002, Friends of the Parks and Friends of the Forest Preserves released the second part of a major study of the operations and management of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County.

"Our forest preserves are in serious trouble," said John Sheerin, speaking for the board of Friends of the Forest Preserves. "In Part I of our study, released last March, we found that the District had neglected its core mission to acquire and care for its natural lands."

"Now we find that the District is hemorrhaging money, its employees are demoralized, the board has not asked for accountability, and there is a glaring leadership gap. Every decision has to 'go downtown' where bottlenecks are strangling the District. The 'jewel of Cook County' is mired in inefficiency and choked by red tape."

"We don't want to shuffle more taxpayer money into a failing organization," said Friends of the Parks' President Erma Tranter. "We call for leadership by the board, by the General Superintendent and by the President. We call on the new Board that will take office in December to step in and make changes that are long overdue."

Executive Summary

This report, nearly two years in the making, has been issued in two phases. In the first phase, issued in March 2002, we examined the history of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County ("the District"), users' perceptions, land

acquisition and land management. In this phase, we have reviewed:

- The Board: How do the Commissioners of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County see the District - its mission, opportunities and problems?
- Staff and operations: How is the staff organized, and what do they see as the accomplishments and problems of the District?
- Public outreach: How well is the District doing in communicating with its owners, the public?
- Budget: Where does money come from and go? What have been the trends, and how well does the budget reflect the District's mission?

Key Findings

- The board has not been effective in guiding the District in a positive direction. The board has structured

itself to leave little role for most of its members or for public input. Essentially all authority resides in the hands of the president. The president is also responsible for the entire Cook County government, an operation vastly larger than the District. Although some board members are keenly interested in the District and its mission, the current system leaves little opportunity for them to contribute.

- The staff showed deep frustration and poor morale. The general superintendent has ceded policy decisions to the president. Dedicated employees see no connection between performance and reward. In fact, the opposite is often true: under-performing employees are ignored, while those who work find themselves with more and more

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The Forest Preserve District of Cook County maintains 68,000 acres of forest preserves.

Forest Preserve (cont'd)

responsibilities but no additional resources.

- Operations are focused primarily on maintenance: grass mowing, garbage collection and facility repair. The Maintenance Department makes up well over half the District staff. Law Enforcement is the second largest department. The third-largest department, Recreation, runs the golf courses, swimming pools and toboggan slides. Very few jobs in the District are focused on the core mission of restoring and protecting natural lands.
- Public outreach is nearly nonexistent. Unlike all the surrounding counties, Cook receives almost exclusively negative press. While all the surrounding counties make use of a wide range of tools to inform and involve the public, Cook County has few programs for public information and does not look to the public as a resource for advancing its mission.
- The budget lacks detailed information, such as a balance sheet, needed for useful analysis. It does not always reflect the true costs of operation. The District has for years ignored repeated requests from civic groups - and from its own auditors - for clarity, timeliness and transparency in its budget.

Our key recommendations include the following:

Develop an active board of commissioners.

- Commissioners need to educate themselves and be more involved in District policy-making and performance reviews.
- Commissioners should activate committees, hold regular meetings and use the committees to interact more with staff and the public.

Select a separate president of the Forest Preserve District.

- The current format provides the same president for both the County and the Forest Preserve District. With its

enormous responsibilities for health care, prisons, roads and courts, not only is the County a full-time job for its president, but it also requires an expertise different from that of the Forest Preserve District.

Develop and reorganize the staff.

- Decentralize the District and hire professional, qualified staff. Provide the staff with the power to make its day-to-day decisions and be responsible for them.
- Combine some departments and refocus the District on its core mission - the acquisition and care of its lands.
- Restructure the Law Enforcement Department to focus more on conservation goals and forest preserve needs. Cooperate with other police agencies in cases of general criminal activity.
- Turn over recreation pursuits (such as swimming pools) not central to the District's mission to local governments.
- Establish clear performance standards for all District jobs. Train staff in necessary skills, and hold staff accountable for meeting approved standards.

Start taking care of the District's most precious asset, its land.

- Create a new Land Management department out of the existing Forestry and Conservation departments, and greatly increase its staffing.
- Map all of the District's natural communities, and prepare and implement management plans for them.
- Engage the efforts of volunteers and Chicago Wilderness (a coalition of more than 140 public and private organizations working together to protect, restore and study Chicagoland's natural ecosystems) to restore these areas.
- Increase public education and outreach about land management.

Open the District to public involvement.

- Restructure and reinvigorate the Department of Public Information.
- Revise the rules of the board to allow citizens to comment on agenda items before the board acts on the items.

- Welcome and work closely with "friends" and advocacy groups.

Improve both the format and the specific allocations in the Forest Preserve budget.

- Produce budgets that include the prior year's actual figures and a comparative balance sheet showing surplus (deficit) from the previous year. The budget should provide more realistic projections of revenue and expenses, as well as comparisons to the previous year.
- Allocate more budget dollars to the departments of Forestry and Conservation to fulfill the core mission of the District.
- Take immediate steps to control financial losses and initiate systems to improve financial controls.
- Work to increase public participation in the budget review process by releasing each year's budget in sufficient time to enable public review.

In its 90-year history, the District has faced many difficult problems. Good leadership has always emerged. But in recent years, there has been a breakdown in leadership. Though the District's administrative headquarters are in River Forest, a location that for decades helped to insulate the District from undue political influence, today even the most routine and minor decisions are made 'downtown.'

We hope that this study will inform the President, the board, the staff and the public of fundamental changes urgently needed to restore health to the institution responsible for a cherished and priceless heritage - Cook County's forest preserves.

We are happy to report that on October 7th we met with John Stroger, President of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, to discuss these concerns. He indicated he would take steps to restore public confidence in the preserve system.

As we released the study's findings, the county's major conservation policy organizations pledged their support to reform efforts. These groups included Sierra Club, Openlands Project and National Audubon Society. 🌿

Friends of the Parks Undertakes Park Concessions Study

A great park in a great city is a wondrous thing, and many regard Chicago's parks and lakefront as important treasures. Beautifully crafted out of a flat prairie landscape, they not only allow for recreational activities but in the words of the great designer of Washington and Jackson Parks, Frederick Law Olmsted, "refresh and delight the eye, and through the eye, the mind and spirit."

Questions and concerns from park advisory councils and citizens over the last few years about the type, location and operation of concessions, as well as the overall benefits of the private management of these concessions, prompted Friends of the Parks to survey and evaluate the Chicago Park District's current concession program. In addition, the study looked at recent efforts to expand commercial lakefront concession activities, asking whether or not these concessions significantly compromised the main function of our park system: to provide beautiful, varied recreational spaces that allow Chicagoans to step outside the hustle and bustle and congestion of the city and enjoy a variety of activities from baseball to bird-watching.

Friends of the Parks surveyed 70 concessions or three-fourths of the concessions listed in the Chicago Park District 2002 concession plan. Concessions run along the lakefront from Loyola Beach (7000 N. Sheridan) on the north to Rainbow Beach (75th Street) on the south. The survey involved site visits during moderate to high-volume business hours, such as weekday lunchtime for downtown concessions and weekend afternoons for concessions further to the north and south. For each park, Friends of the



This trailer selling concessions on Solidarity Drive in Burnham Park detracts from the park setting and represents a poorly-designed concession.

Parks completed a survey form using five criteria developed from Park District stated regulations:

- 1) type, condition and operation of facility
- 2) storage of materials
- 3) waste disposal
- 4) maintenance and graffiti
- 5) location and appropriateness of concession facility design



This is one of two kiosks recently added to Buckingham Fountain Plaza. The kiosks do not conform to the Chicago Plan Commission design specifications.

The report analyzed the results of the individual survey forms, which we supplemented with photographs taken of each concession. Friends of the Parks' study found that:

- 1) Concessions in permanent facilities are better maintained and are better designed for their park location. Concessions in permanent facilities present fewer operational and safety issues.
- 2) Trailers, trucks, tents and poorly-designed wooden kiosks are unsuitable for a park setting.
- 3) Concession stands have proliferated in highly-congested areas of Lincoln Park, Grant Park and the Museum Campus. For example, a row of six concession vehicles was found at Oak Street Beach completely rimming the beach and selling everything from food and beverages to toys and sunglasses.
- 4) The design and location of concession facilities bear little relationship to plans approved by the Park District and Plan Commission such as the Grant Park Framework Plan, the Museum Campus concession pavilion, or the Lincoln Park Framework Plan.

Friends of the Parks' Concession Report recommends the following:

- 1) Develop a full concession plan documenting the needs of park users and the aesthetics and safety of the concessions in the specific park location.
- 2) Develop a concession plan that adheres to existing park framework plans and Chicago Plan Commission approvals for facility development, such as those covering Buckingham Fountain, the Museum Campus and North Avenue Beach.
- 3) Develop standards for placing concessions where they will not impede pedestrians, runners, bikers, skaters and strollers who use park paths. Concessions should not sit at congested intersections or create hazards by requiring patrons to cross high-use paths.
- 4) Require both the Research & Planning Department and the Natural Resources Department of the Chicago Park District to review concession designs and locations.
- 5) Enforce existing standards for concession sanitation, site choice, and site maintenance to insure that vendors act responsibly to maintain a clean and safe park environment.
- 6) Develop a uniform standard for concession facilities, including type and design of concession vehicle, colors of umbrellas, and types of outdoor furniture.
- 7) Rely on permanent facilities with well-designed materials and appropriate colors for food services and for concession carts stored in permanent facilities.
- 8) Continue to make public the selection of concessions in a timely fashion to allow for review by the community and other park district departments before approval of such concessions. 🌱

The City To Release Draft of South Lakefront Access Study

The City of Chicago's Department of Transportation is completing a study focused on improving access over Lake Shore Drive to Chicago's south lakefront from McCormick Place on the north to the Indiana Border on the south.

City planners and park advocates recognize that Lake Shore Drive and the Illinois Central Railroad tracks create a major barrier for pedestrians, cyclists and park users who wish to access south

lakefront parks.

The South Lake Shore Drive reconstruction project that is currently underway already includes substantial park access improvements, including four new underpasses in Jackson Park. To address remaining accessibility goals, however, the City hired a consulting team to complete a thorough Pedestrian Access Study to identify improvements to existing access points, as well as additional locations

where access may be needed. The draft plan seeks to identify underpasses or overpasses every quarter mile.

In addition, the draft plan looks at creating new parkland between the South Shore Cultural Center and Rainbow Beach Park, from 71st to 75th Streets.

Officials plan to release the South Lakefront Access Report for public comment later this fall. 🌱

Friends of the Parks and Chicago Park District Host Reception to Welcome New Park Commissioners

The Chicago Park District and Friends of the Parks hosted a reception to recognize newly-appointed and ongoing members of the Chicago Park District Board of Commissioners. The new commissioners include María Saldaña, President of the Board, Cindy Mitchell, Rouhy Shalabi and Daniel Matos-Real.

More than 100 people attended the reception on Wednesday, October 9th in Millennium Park. The event brought together local park advisory council members and advocates to meet the commissioners and staff at the Park District.



Park advocates mingle with Chicago Park District commissioners and staff in the Millennium Park Tent.



María Saldaña, President of the Chicago Park District Board of Commissioners; Alberta Johnson, Friends of the Parks Board member; and Erna Tranter, Friends of the Parks President, enjoy the reception.

David Doig, General Superintendent of the Chicago Park District, praised Chicago's park advocates and thanked both hard-working citizens and Friends of the Parks for working to improve Chicago's parks.

Tom Sanberg, Chairman of Friends of the Parks, in turn, praised the Park District for the improvements made to parks and park activists for their years of involvement in beautifying their local parks. 🌱



Alberta Johnson; María Saldaña; David Doig, General Superintendent of the Chicago Park District; and Eleaza Peterson, President of the Lake Meadows Advisory Council, mingle at the reception in Millennium Park.

DuSable Park Comes Into View

Neglected for nearly 15 years after its 1988 dedication by the late Mayor Harold Washington, DuSable Park is now receiving much-needed attention.

The U.S. EPA recently approved a clean-up plan for the park. In just two days this September, crews removed eighteen inches of dirt from a few "hot spots" on the three-acre site, located on the north side of the Chicago River and Lake Michigan. The environmental clean-up, which removed traces of radioactive thorium left from a former business on the site, was remarkably less difficult than officials originally expected.

During the 1930s, Lindsey Light Company used thorium in the manufacturing process of incandescent light bulbs. Kerr-McGee, an Oklahoma-based energy company, later purchased the business. Kerr-McGee also paid for the recent environmental remediation.

In late October, the DuSable Park Coalition, which includes Friends of the Parks, made a presentation to the Chicago Park District Board of Commissioners to request the establishment of a steering committee to create a park design. The Board took the request under advisement. As a next step, the Chicago Park District should establish a steering committee to complete a park design. Only with a final park plan will funding for construction be found. ♻️



Photo: Lawrence Okrent

This picture shows an aerial view of DuSable Park, located where the Chicago River meets Lake Michigan.

Friends Indeed

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National Public Lands Day Attracts Volunteers Around City

Volunteers nationwide and locally gathered on Saturday, September 28th to help restore and improve our natural areas during National Public Lands Day. This annual event brings volunteers together to improve our public lands.

Three natural area sites operated by the Chicago Park District received attention on National Public Lands Day.

At Gompers Park (4222 W. Foster), restoration volunteers - including several



Volunteers spread mulch at the base of a tree in Gompers Park.



Tree Keeper prunes trees and removes weeds at Gompers Park.

trained Tree Keepers — mulched and pruned trees, removed invasive species and worked on improving the park's walking trail.

At the Bill Jarvis Bird Sanctuary in Lincoln Park, volunteers helped restore

the ecosystem in the bird sanctuary.

In Jackson Park (6401 S. Stony Island Avenue), volunteers removed invasive species, mulched and pruned trees and cleaned up the lagoon. 🌿

High School Students to Become Park Stewards

Earlier this year, Chicago Public Schools approached Friends of the Parks to become a partner in an environmental service learning program for high school students. This represented an exciting opportunity to get high school students involved in their local park and encourage them to learn about and appreciate the importance of green space in our city.

This fall, Friends of the Parks began work with three schools to develop this pilot program for school year 2002-03. We chose the three schools based on their interest in participating in the service learning program and their proximity to a

local park. The schools include Bowen High School, across from Bessemer Park (8930 S. Muskegon); Northside College Prep, near Legion Park (W. Peterson Avenue. to W. Foster Avenue at the Chicago River) and River Park (5100 N. Francisco); and Prosser High School, next to Hansen Stadium (2148 N. Long) and near Riis Park (6100 W. Fullerton).

Friends of the Parks has been working with teachers and service learning coaches at the three schools to introduce park-related activities. In addition, we are working on developing an activities packet that teachers can use to incorpo-

rate park-related projects into their curriculum.

Students in each classroom will be expected, at a minimum, to complete a park survey and "get to know" their local park. Other activities include an adopt-a-park program, clean-up and beautification, creation of a photo journal of their local park, park mapping, and park advocacy. The goal of the park stewardship project is to get students interested in and concerned about the welfare and condition of their local park, and to work with the local park advisory council to advocate for their park. 🌿

“Nature is a Classroom” Project Off to a Great Start

Searching for zebra mussels, catching blue gills, adopting trees and collecting water samples represent just a few of the activities taking place in October and November as part of Friends of the Parks’ new environmental education program.

The program, “Nature is a Classroom”, has been up and running at Montrose Harbor for the past five years, and has just recently been adopted by Friends of the Parks. The Lincoln Park Advisory Council, the Chicago Park District, and the USDA Forest Service originally created the program.

Using the Montrose area as nature’s classroom, twenty classes from eight schools will experience hands-on, interdisciplinary lessons under the guidance of educator Nadine Zelle, who serves as program coordinator. To prepare school groups for the outdoor educational experience, Ms. Zelle meets with teachers before each visit to coordinate lakefront activities with classroom curriculum. She also provides resources for the classroom teacher to prepare students for their trips to Montrose. The Corinthian Yacht Club donates space for the field trips, so students begin their adventure amidst anchors and flags. Throughout the day, students learn about the lakefront ecosystem not only through scientific methods, but also by incorporating music,



Students get a lesson in birding.

drama, scavenger hunts, reading, poetry and art. Most classrooms visit at least three times throughout the year, which gives students a chance to experience seasonal changes at Montrose.

When the students adopt a tree, they gain a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the need to protect the environment. When students collect zebra mussels, the concepts of invasive species and biodiversity take on a deeper meaning. When students learn about the environment through multiple disciplines, they see the whole picture of how the world functions. “Nature is a Classroom” will bring this holistic learning to hundreds of Chicago students this year and beyond. 🌱



Students investigate the beach at Montrose Harbor.



Nadine Zelle, program coordinator for “Nature is a Classroom,” talks to students about ecology.

Soldier Field Gets Its Day in Court

The Illinois Supreme Court announced a date of November 21 for oral arguments in Springfield. Attorneys for Friends of the Parks and Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois, standing up for Chicago’s lakefront, will demonstrate that the Bears’ commercial sports stadium deal violates the Illinois Constitution, as well as the public trust doctrine. 🌱

Visitors Experience Tranquility of Japanese Wonder in Jackson Park During Annual Osaka Garden Festival

On September 14th and 15th, Chicagoans and other visitors experienced the sights, sounds and taste of Japan at the sixth annual Osaka Garden Festival in Jackson Park. This two-day event - hosted by the Osaka Committee of the Chicago Sister Cities International Program, the City of Osaka, Japan, the Chicago Park District, the Mayor's Office of Special Events, Consulate General of Japan, Japan National Tourist Organization, Friends of the Parks and the Chicago Transit Authority - featured Japanese cuisine, art and crafts, music, dance and children's activities.

The Osaka Garden's roots were planted more than 100 years ago when the Japanese government built a traditional building called a Ho-o-den for Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. In 1934, Chicago moved the Nippon Tea House from the site of the 1933 Century of Progress World's Fair to Jackson Park and built a garden. But the Ho-o-den burned in 1946, and the garden grew over.

Interest in the garden revived in the 1970s, with the development of a nature sanctuary on Wooded Island. Then, for



On September 14 and 15, visitors experienced the sights, sounds and taste of Japan during the Osaka Garden Festival in Jackson Park.

three decades, the garden saw modest renovations, but endured periods of neglect. In 1981, a renewed garden opened with a small pavilion. City officials renamed it Osaka Garden in 1993 to honor Chicago's sister city, Osaka, Japan, and in 1995 a new cedar entrance gate was constructed, a gift from the City of Osaka.

Today, visitors continue to enjoy the

peaceful lagoons, wildlife, lush trees and verdant plants throughout the year. The Osaka Garden organizing committee works year-round to host this wonderful annual event. Special thanks to Co-Chairs Robert Karr, Robert Takagi, Amy Hamilton and Jeffrey Sriver for their dedication and commitment to this wonderful event. 🌿

Edgewater To Get New Lakefront Park For Its Residents

After more than 15 years of controversy, a small strip of land - the only remaining undeveloped lakefront on the North Side - will become a city park.

On September 10th, the Chicago Park District acquired this lakefront property, at 6151 N. Sheridan Road, from the City of Chicago for a public park.

In a congested area heavily populated with elderly people and where sidewalk traffic has become a hot-button issue, this park will become a great addition, particularly in an area underserved by green space. The small lakefront park has a rocky shoreline and will not have a beach.

For more than a decade, community residents and Friends of the Parks sought out the property for a public park. The first policy of the Lakefront Protection Ordinance states that Chicago should "complete the publicly-owned and locally-controlled park system along the entire lakefront."

More than ten years ago, a developer proposed to construct a high-rise condominium on the property. The community, Friends of the Parks and Alderwoman Mary Ann Smith organized against construction of a high-rise on Lake Michigan's shoreline. The Chicago Plan Commission rejected the

developer's plan and the land remained vacant for ten years. Recently another developer looked at the property to construct a high-rise, but two years ago Alderwoman Smith had the property down-zoned from a designation that allowed high-rise condos. In the ensuing legal tangle, the City of Chicago acquired the land in September and immediately transferred it to the Park District for a future park.

Edgewater residents and Friends of the Parks are grateful for the work of Alderwoman Mary Ann Smith, the City of Chicago and the Chicago Park District to acquire this lakefront property for a park. 🌿

Culinary Institute Approved for South Shore Cultural Center

The City Colleges of Chicago and its partner, Washburne Culinary Institute, will construct a training center for chefs on the top two floors of the South Shore Cultural Center (7059 South Shore Drive). The two groups will pay the costs of this \$10 million project.

Putting aside initial reservations regarding a plan to lease space at the South Shore Cultural Center to the Washburne Culinary Institute, the park advisory council voted to accept the proposal of the City Colleges of Chicago concerning the culinary school, with several conditions that included:

- the replacement of any space used for current programs will be developed concurrently with the development of the Culinary Institute's space on the 4th floor;
- the Park District will undertake a comprehensive plan for the entire building, including the safety, environmental and programmatic impact of the Washburne proposal;
- any alteration of the structure will follow requirements for protecting the historic nature and integrity of the South Shore Cultural Center facility;
- recognizing the increased use of the facility, the Chicago Park District will budget appropriately for increased maintenance and upkeep of the facility;
- the Chicago Park District will develop an alternate exit and emergency entrance for the facility;
- the Chicago Park District will work with the South Shore Cultural Center advisory council to pursue funding for maintenance and expansion of cultural programming. 🌱

Playground Safety – How to Evaluate Your Playground

Playgrounds are wonderful places to take our children to play, run, swing, jump and have fun. But do you know about the dangers that exist at many playgrounds? According to the National Program for

Playground Safety, more than 200,000 children each year suffer injuries on America's playgrounds—that is one child injured every 2.5 minutes. You can take simple steps to ensure our public play-

grounds are S.A.F.E. (adapted from the National Program for Playground Safety web site).

A Quick Checklist for Parents

S is for Supervision. Adults need to be present to watch for potential hazards, observe and intercede and facilitate play when necessary. Strings on clothing or ropes used for play can cause accidental strangulation if caught on equipment.

A is for Age-Appropriate Equipment. Children at different ages are developmentally different and need different equipment located in separate areas to keep the playground safe and fun for all.

F is for Falls. Nearly 70 percent of playground injuries are related to falls to the surface. Acceptable surfaces include hardwood fiber/mulch, pea gravel, sand and synthetic materials such as poured-in-place rubber mats or tiles. Playground surfaces should not be concrete, asphalt, grass, blacktop, packed dirt or rocks.

E is for Equipment. Check to make sure the equipment is anchored safely in the ground, all equipment pieces are in good working order, S-hooks are entirely closed, bolts are not protruding, there are no exposed footings, etc.

For more information about playground safety, visit the NPPS website at: www.uni.edu/playground. 🌱



Information about playground safety can be found on the National Program for Playground Safety website at www.uni.edu/playground.

Neighborhood Park Updates: Activities Flourish Around City

Abbott Park (49 E. 95th Street)

Friends of the Parks is currently working with the Abbott Park advisory council on a variety of issues, including constructing a new senior center at the park, advocating for a fieldhouse, and working to find additional space for programs and advisory council meetings. Friends of the Parks would like to see the establishment of a steering committee for this park since there are several agencies involved with park issues and programming.



The Berger Park advisory council seeks to renovate its children's playground.

Berger Park (6205 N. Sheridan Road)

The Berger Park advisory council is working with Friends of the Parks, the Park District and the local alderman to advocate for the complete renovation of their children's playground. Built more than twelve years ago, the playlot sees heavy usage both on weekdays and weekends and is in need of renovation. The advisory council warns that deteriorating conditions could lead to injuries to children playing there.

Burnham Harbor's New Bird Sanctuary (900 S. Columbus Drive)

On September 10th, the Park District Board of Commissioners authorized an intergovernmental agreement with the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority to fund and construct a bird sanctuary in Burnham Park. The District will develop the new bird sanctuary above the underground garage on the south side of McCormick Place. The Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority will fund the \$500,000 project.

Carver Park (Altgeld Gardens Homes, 939 E. 132nd Street)

Friends of the Parks has worked with the recently re-established advisory council to advocate for immediate maintenance of the fieldhouse, including rotting and moldy lockers, broken windows, washrooms that need repairing, and an exercise room lacking ventilation. About twenty members of the advisory council appeared at the Park District's Board meeting in September to testify about the poor condition of the fieldhouse and demanded a response from District officials. David Doig, General Superintendent of the Park District, said the fieldhouse is the responsibility of the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), which owns the land. Friends of the Parks is working to obtain the intergovernmental agreement between the CHA and Park District, and will testify at CHA hearings on behalf of the advisory council.

Claremont Park (2334 W. Flournoy)

The Claremont Park Advisory Council, under the auspices of the Tri-Taylor Community Association, sponsored a large community hearing on September 10th to discuss ideas for improving the only neighborhood park in the Tri-Taylor neighborhood. Claremont Park covers only an acre in size and contains a children's playground and an open field. The community wants the Park District to completely renovate the playground and to create a soccer field in the green area.

Harold Washington Playlot (7710 N. Paulina)

Alderman Joe Moore (48th Ward) has been working on securing the donation of a parcel of land, located at 7710 N. Paulina, to the Chicago Park District by a local bank. Working with Alderman Moore, and other partner groups such as KaBoom and Children's Memorial Hospital, the park coalition has built momentum for a new park in the community. Friends of the Parks and the community organizations are meeting with elected officials in this region about possible funding sources for the new children's playground. Architect Josephine Bellalta recently completed a playground design.

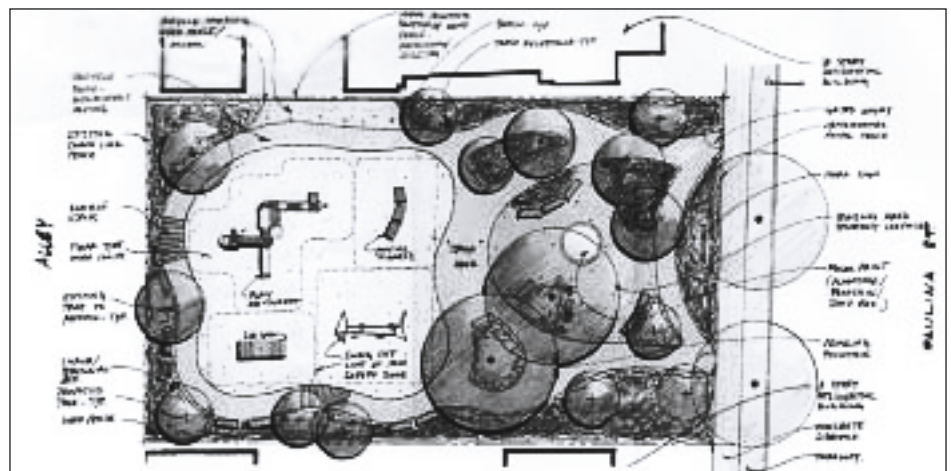
Kelly Park (3800-4000 N. Seminary)

The Kelly Park Advisory Council sponsored a rededication of the Kelly memorial on September 29th. Kelly Park was named after John Kelly, a young man born and raised in the East Lakeview neighborhood and killed in action in Vietnam. The park's memorial plaque was damaged and later replaced. The rededication included unveiling a new memorial plaque. Julie Osborn, President of the Kelly Park Advisory Council, organized the event. Alderman Bernie Hansen, among other dignitaries, attended.

Lake Meadows (3117 S. Rhodes)

Friends of the Parks is working with the Lake Meadows Park Advisory Council

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Architect Josephine Bellalta prepared a new playground design (above) for Harold Washington Playlot in the Rogers Park neighborhood. The plan includes play equipment, a "stage" area, swing set and landscaping, among other amenities.

Newsbriefs (cont'd)

to help them find a fieldhouse space at the park. The current facility, a small trailer installed in the mid-1980s, cannot accommodate programs the community needs. The adjacent Pershing Elementary School also needs a gymnasium. We have facilitated a discussion between the Advisory Council, the Board of Education, Park District planning staff, and Pershing Elementary (adjacent to the park site) about a new gym for the school. The Lake Meadows Park advisory council recently appeared before the Board of Commissioners of the Chicago Park District. The Park District responded by setting up a meeting to discuss options for gym space. The Park District will research some nearby buildings that are underutilized. We are also working with the advisory

council on fundraising efforts.

Midway Plaisance

The Park District entered into a license agreement with the University of Chicago for the construction of the Midway Plaisance North Winter Garden and Reader's Garden. The Garden will be located at the west end of the Midway Plaisance at 57th Street.

New Parks for Fast-Developing Roscoe Village Area

The Chicago Park District recently approved the acquisition of a parcel of land at the corner of Ravenswood Avenue, Lincoln Avenue and Addison Street for a future park in the Roscoe Village community. This fast-developing neighborhood lacks park space.

Under the advocacy and leadership of

(continued on page 12)

Friends of the Parks Seeks Nominations For Park Steward Awards

Each year, Friends of the Parks recognizes individuals, community groups, park advisory councils, businesses and foundations that have made a significant impact on Chicago's parks. If you wish to nominate an individual, group or business, please complete the

nomination form below. The deadline for submissions is Friday, December 6th.

If you wish to describe the contributions made by the individual, business or group you have nominated, please limit your description to one page per nomination and attach it to this form. ♻️

AWARD NOMINATION FORM

I wish to make a nomination(s) in the following categories:

INDIVIDUAL

PARK ADVISORY COUNCIL / COMMUNITY GROUP

CORPORATION

ADVOCACY

PARK BEAUTIFICATION

Your Name _____ Daytime Telephone Number _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Send your nominations to: Friends of the Parks, Annual Awards, 55 E. Washington, Suite 1911, Chicago, IL 60602.

Events calendar

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2002

5:30 PM - 7:00 PM

Friends of the Parks, the Chicago Area Runners Association, the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation and the Grant Park Advisory Council will co-sponsor a member forum entitled "Park Amenities: Or Where Do We Find a Bathroom?" The free event will be held in Grant Park at Daley Bicentennial Plaza (Randolph Street between Michigan Avenue and Columbus Drive) from 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2002

5:30PM - 8:30PM

Earth Share of Illinois, a not-for-profit organization that raises funds for environmental work through workplace giving, will host its 10th anniversary celebration at the Chicago Cultural Center (78 E. Washington, 5th floor east meeting room). Tickets for the event, which features hors d'oeuvres and drinks, are \$30. Earth Share of Illinois supports local and national environmental groups, including Friends of the Parks. For more information, call (312) 922-9040.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2002

6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

The North Pond Conservation Council, a Friends of Lincoln Park council, will host its 3rd annual Winter Solstice Benefit and Art Sale at the Palette and Chisel Academy of Fine Arts (1012 N. Dearborn). Tickets for the event - featuring hors d'oeuvres, wine and dessert - are \$85 in advance and \$100 at the door. Proceeds benefit North Pond. For more information, call (773) 883-7275.

SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 2003

9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Friends of the Parks' annual Earth Day Citywide Parks Clean-Up will take place on April 26th. Volunteers will help beautify Chicago parks by mulching trees, removing litter, repairing equipment and much more. If you wish to serve as a captain to lead a clean-up at your neighborhood park, please contact Friends of the Parks' Director of Volunteers, Renee Chester, at (312) 857-2757 ext. 13.

SPRING 2003

Friends of the Parks will host its 14th annual Parks Ball black tie gala in Spring 2003. If you would like more information or wish to join the planning committee for this exciting event, contact Nancy Minster Swabb at (312) 857-2757 ext. 11.

SATURDAY NIGHT/SUNDAY MORNING July 13, 2003

Midnight to Sunrise

Get set for Friends of the Parks' L.A.T.E. Ride. The 15th annual after-midnight bicycle ride - which attracted 9,097 participants in 2002 - takes riders along a 25-mile course through Chicago's downtown and north side neighborhoods and along the beautiful lakefront path. Log onto www.lateride.org for more information.



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Friends of the Parks Mourns Passing of Park Advocate and Board Member Isaac Wright

A strong park advocate and Friends of the Parks' board member, Isaac Wright, died in June. Isaac joined the board in 1998. For years prior to this, he championed park causes in the South Shore neighborhood where he and his family lived. As president of the South Shore Advisory Council, we knew him as a dedicated leader who advocated for improved programming at South Shore Cultural Center Park. As a result of his efforts, the park featured art exhibits, theater presentations, gospel concerts and innovative programming for children.

As a board member of Friends of the Parks, Isaac was knowledgeable about parks and environmental issues. He listened carefully and respected others' opinions. After listening to all sides, Isaac was known to state his position softly, yet clearly. If an issue was controversial, Isaac

was steely in maintaining his position, and always with perfect grace.

During the last several years, Isaac lent his professional expertise in human resources to Friends of the Parks. Prior to his retirement, he headed up the human relations department at R.R. Donnelley & Sons Co.

Friends of the Parks mourns the loss of Isaac Wright, a champion and dear friend of Chicago's citizens and parks. 🌿

Newsbriefs (cont'd)

Alderman Ted Matlak, the community acquired several parcels of land in the last year for park development. The community also acquired land at Leavitt and Wabansia and Wolfram and Paulina for parks. In addition, the community recently acquired a playground on North Honore for a public park.

Friends of the Parks applauds Alderman Matlak and the Chicago Park District for their work.

Wicker Park (1425 N. Damen)

The Wicker Park advisory council recently secured two grants to construct a sculpture commemorating the late Charles Wicker for his community efforts. Sculptor Nancy Wicker, great-granddaughter of Charles Wicker, will design the sculpture, and students at nearby A.N. Pritzker School will learn about Mr. Wicker and the park. Friends of the Parks serves as their fiscal agent. 🌿

We'd Like to Hear From You!

Friends of the Parks often helps residents with questions, problems and issues concerning their neighborhood parks. If you have concerns you wish to discuss or help solve, you may contact us in one of the following ways:

PHONE: (312) 857-2757 / (312) 85-PARKS
FAX: (312) 857-0656
WEB SITE: www.fotp.org
ADDRESS: 55 E. Washington, Suite 1911, Chicago, IL 60602-2174