

## ***Dog PAC Community Meeting 3 – Minutes*** ***June 23, 2003 – Chicago Police Department***

### *Introduction – Gail Merritt*

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Brief history of Dog P.A.C. and dog park efforts  
Started 4 years ago with a community meeting  
3 years ago Gail discussed and progressed dog park efforts by working with CPD  
The provided requirements and after a series of trials to find a place, ultimately picked NE corner of Roosevelt and Michigan site  
Many lessons learned from 1<sup>st</sup> DFA – “Wiggly Field” effort originator, Stacy Hawk  
Up until a year ago, CPD funded 100% of dog park efforts but now the cost is equally split with the community. Therefore, we are required to raise 50% of the total estimated funds (or, about \$75,000).

### *Introduction of Guest Panel*

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Cynthia Young – Legislative Assistant, Alderman Haithcock’s office  
Mike Kelly – President, HPRN  
Bob O’Neil – President, Grant Park Advisory Council  
Bonnie Sanchez-Carlson – Director, Near South Planning Board

### *Panel Discussion Session*

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#### *Self Introductions*

*Cynthia Young* – Alderman Haithcock supports dog park efforts. She wanted to be at the meeting tonight but was not available. She has no issues and is in full support. In fact, she is working with the department of planning on it.

*Mike Kelly* – Our organization supports and represents a diverse and historic community. Focuses on growing and improving quality of life in South Loop and tries to attract entities that are desirable. Promotes South Loop as a great place to live. Meetings are held 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month except summer. Sponsors and promotes programs such as 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Photography Exhibit and the Loft Walk.

*Bob O’Neil* – there are actually 2 arms: Grant Park Advisory Council that handles community outreach while the Grant Park Conservancy that facilitates fundraising. Monthly, public meetings are held on issues relating to Grant Park’s renovations and improvements. The Council is currently following a framework plan or “blue print” of working documents for all planned actions. The goal is to create excitement and energy in Grant Park. Therefore, the Council is dog friendly.

*Bonnie Sanchez-Carlton* – Near South Planning Board members are institutions, schools, businesses, etc., in the South Loop area. Our dog park position is positive. We have pushed for ordinances with the City of Chicago to ensure that developers consider dogs (and all pets) in their developments. We are a pet friendly organization.

### *Panel Discussion Session: Q&A*

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Does the Alderman's office receive calls re: dogs?

CY: About 2 per day; mostly dealing with dogs being off-leash and request for signs. This is not considered a lot of calls. Most of the calls lately have been regarding the Museum Campus and Central Stations areas.

MK: As a community, we need to find a balance between 2 and 4 legged beings

Is the Coliseum Park Dog Run adequate?

No! What was planned did not happen. It's dark, too narrow, access if difficult, noisy due to proximity to El trains. Cannot utilize as a viable dog park.

The plans approved by the community were changed without the community's knowledge or approval. There was great community involvement in the project but in the end what was planned and what was built was entirely different. Therefore, the community abandoned it.

Should it (Coliseum Park dog area) be converted with the Grant Park DFA becoming the replacement DFA for the South Loop?

Yes! But it needs to be done the right way this time. Utilizing all that we have learned and are learning so that it becomes the standard for Chicago.

The framework plan for Grant Park eventually calls for the selected site to be leveled out/filled in. What if this happens? What does this mean for your DFA down the road? People will be hesitant to donate money to a cause or project that is not permanent.

If it were to be leveled out, perhaps it would be advisable to do so before building the DFA so that it is not longer an issue. Build the dog park upon the leveled/filled in area. (Bob passed around proposed graphic depiction of the area and what it will eventually look like. He also provided an example (CTA bus turn around) of where the framework plan is being reconsidered in favor of a better idea.)

This DFA should be the standard in Chicago. The framework plan is less than 1 year old and yet many projects and plans are already being implemented. This area is the entrance to other larger projects. Therefore, the site will not be left vacant much longer.

This area is already being established as a dog park now.

BO: Get landscape architect to design this now. How do people use the space? Do we know?

Yes. We have been surveying the site as is required by the CPD.

Will dogs be a treat to the area? Its green area. Will this be an issue?

This can be resolved with proper planning and consideration of all the elements. This DFA does not have to be like the others. Do not let past versions be the only way to consider the outcome. There are a lot of design options that can make this an attractive and integrated area that happens to function as a dog park. I can be created to be functional and aesthetically appropriate for all park users.

The point of the dog park is to promote socialization and responsible dog ownership not hide it.

BSC: The issue is can we get a firm commitment? Get the city involved, not just the CPD.

CY: Yes. Alderman Haithcock will have to go to the city on this matter. She is close to Mayor Daley as he lives in the 2<sup>nd</sup> ward.

*(Question directed to Bonnie Sanchez-Carlton)*

Since there is so much development in the South Loop, how does your organization deal with dog issues?

Legacy Development (and others) working south of 14<sup>th</sup> are making dog specific areas as part of their developments.

BO: You'll need balance between tourist, visitors and the community. I can help to sponsor a meeting with regard to the dog park as it related to Grant Park.

Haven't we done this already? This is our 3<sup>rd</sup> community meeting with regard to establishing a dog park in the South Loop.

BO: This is a strategy to prevent latter derailment. It is not meant to be despairing but rather advice. Since Grant Park is the location, it would be beneficial to consider that fact as a means to promote your cause, garner support and gather relevant information/feedback.

Before going to this level, we need to know what the Mayor thinks. Past DFA were easier to get in comparison.

BO: The city people will want an understanding of the project.

Is the Grant Park location a deterrent because of its status? Is there an area that can be utilized?

BO: Invite the Mayor and Ms. Donald (?) to a meeting. Just allow public input on the idea.

There is great frustration on this issue. We are constantly being redirected.

Let's show design drawings to help sway efforts.

MK: South Loop Community Center is a good example for your efforts. Be clear; be organized in your approach.

*Closing Comments – Gail Merritt*

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We have a plan. We have an architect, who is "green" certified, working on drawings. If we have a Grant Park Community Meeting we will learn more and that will ultimately assist in achieving our goal of bringing a DFA to the South Loop

This could be a state-of-the-art, exciting part of the plan as both a neighborhood and a working city

BO: Green architecture is big with the city. Mayor Daley has a vision/plan to be the "green capital" of the world. There are new technologies surfacing that will help.

Thank you all for coming. Thank you to our panel of guest for helping us tonight.