



August 14, 2008

Commissioner Arnold Randall
Department of Planning and Development
1000 City Hall, 121 N. LaSalle
Chicago, IL 60602

Dear Commissioner Randall,

Lincoln Park Advisory Council met on Wednesday, July 9, 2008 at its regular meeting and heard a presentation from Jack Guthman, attorney with Shefsky & Frolich representing the Chicago Park District on the South Fields Soccer Field project. Bob Foster, Project Manager, attended the meeting, as well.

Less than 10 days notice was given to LPAC's President that Mr. Guthman wanted to be on the program agenda and his request for a letter of support for the soccer field was urgent in that he needed the letter before LPAC's next scheduled meeting on September 10.

Additionally, neither Mr. Guthman nor the Project Manager could answer questions about the cost of the field saying only 'about 60% of the cost had been incurred' or how it's location was selected (normally community meetings are held to discuss new uses in Lincoln Park because of the density of activities.)

The Lincoln Park Advisory Council discussed the request made by Mr. Guthman for a letter supporting finishing the soccer field. The motion, which passed by 8 to 6 with 50 people in attendance but not qualified to vote, was

“The Lincoln Park Advisory Council re-affirms the position it took on March 12, 2008, when it voted to oppose the construction of an artificial turf soccer facility on the North Meadow of the South Field of Lincoln Park. At this time, we affirm our opposition to building an artificial turf soccer field on that site. The site should be returned to an open, grassy meadow.”

Lincoln Park is the region's largest park with a diverse constituency of user groups. We have striven for 15 years to provide a voice for users and to reach compromises that encourage park use for many interests. This issue is controversial as well as complex. Rather than completing the project now, many LPAC members believe that proper hearings should be scheduled, publicized and held to fully educate the community on costs, location, use of artificial turf, and traffic created by a potential soccer field. Our membership includes active leaders in Protect Our Parks who believe strongly that the field should not be completed and should be returned to open space. It is important to hear their views as well as user groups and the Chicago Park District.

We urge the Chicago Plan Commission to support LPAC's position of not finishing the soccer field at this time. Our close vote should encourage the Chicago Plan Commission to request that the Chicago Park District hold proper community meetings and to build consensus either in favor of returning the field to green space (as LPAC has voted) or to finish the field with a better educated public (and probably a better project).

Respectfully,

Vickie Matthews
President

Cc: Jack Guthman
Alderman Vi Daley
Alderman Brendan Reilly
Superintendent Tim Mitchell
Chicago Plan Commission
Friends of the Parks