

**Jackson Park Advisory Council: Obama Presidential Center Committee
Meeting Minutes for 27 September 2023**

Meeting called to order at 7 pm and adjourned at 8 pm

Attendance List: S.Avila (co-chair), R.Pike (co-chair); M.Anton, C.Felder, R.Felder, J.Franke, M.Hoffman-Zoller, K.Jones, M. Jones, Y.Jones, R.Kaufman, B.Koenen, Laura (no last name), R.Lodato, C.Miller, J.Misurell-Mitchell, W.J.T.Mitchell, R.Morris, A.Munson, B.Nelms, G.Ossevaarde, K.Rawson, AM.Sokovic, J.Spicer, G.Stone, D.W.Whitaker

Co-Chairman Susan Avila called the meeting to order with a reminder that the purpose of this committee is to “protect, preserve, and enhance Jackson Park.” Following her remarks, first-time attendees were introduced and asked to briefly state their reasons for attending.

At the last meeting, the attendees discussed how this committee should relate to the Obama Presidential Center (OPC) in relation to the committee’s stated purpose. Two key questions to be addressed were identified in that discussion: how does the OPC add to that focus and how does the OPC detract from that focus? Committee members were encouraged to submit their thoughts in writing. Three responses were received and circulated to the committee prior to the meeting. The three authors were invited to speak to the statements they submitted as the opening of a broader group discussion about the Jackson Park-Obama Presidential Center relationship.

Subsequent discussion focused on opening a permanent line of communication between the committee and Obama Foundation to better understand the agreements under which the OPC will operate and how said agreements will affect the park. Areas of interest identified include, but are not limited to, the status of commitments such as the replacement of the Women’s Garden and other park features, and the shared ownership relationships of Obama Foundation, City, and Park District relating to safety, maintenance, and public access to the site.

It was also suggested that the communication network be expanded to include the Museum of Science and Industry. The positioning of the OPC and MSI will create a new south side Museum Campus. It was suggested that while the OPC is currently the major focus of this committee, it should also consider discussion with MSI regarding its plans and potential impacts on the park. It was agreed to start discussion with the Obama Foundation first and then invite MSI to join the discussion.

In the course of the discussion, the Obama Foundation’s representative on this committee identified herself and stated that the Foundation is willing to participate in this conversation. As the committee rep for the Foundation, she will be the conduit to carry back information and manage responses and discussion arrangements. She requested that suggested topics be provided in writing. Written documentation was generally agreed to, and some time was taken to discuss what topics and how to compile and convey them. It was decided that Co-Chair Susan Avila would serve as the organizing center. All committee attendees were encouraged to send brief questions or statements they wish submitted to the Obama Foundation to Susan with a copy to Russell.

Final topic, briefly discussed, was creating the document reference file discussed at the last meeting. Given time limits, the topic will be taken up at the next meeting. **Next meeting date is set for Thursday, October 26, 7pm.**