

## Jackson Park Watch Statement

### To the Meeting of the Chicago Park District Board of Commissioners

*Wednesday, July 13, 2016*

*Margaret Schmid, JPW coordinator*

Good afternoon Superintendent Kelly, President Ruiz, and Commissioners. I am happy to have the opportunity to address you this afternoon once again.

At your last meeting, I concluded my brief comments with two requests, one of which was to delay the installation of the Yoko Ono Sky Landing sculpture on Wooded Island until the Darrow Bridge is reopened. It is that request that I want to reiterate and amplify today.

Shortly after your meeting last month, my Jackson Park Watch co-coordinator Brenda Nelms and I met with the CDOT engineering personnel responsible for the restoration work on the Darrow Bridge. We learned in detail of the process that must be followed before that Bridge can be reopened, and the news was as bleak as we had feared: the Bridge is not likely to be reopened for three to five years. Installing Sky Landing (photo attached) in a location that will be without accessible parking or public restrooms for multiple years appears to us to be guaranteed to attract bad publicity for Sky Landing, the Wooded Island, and the Park District planning process itself.

Further, knowledgeable persons familiar with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers GLFER project on Wooded Island have indicated that the exterior fencing surrounding Wooded Island and the lagoon will be up for the duration of this calendar year, if not longer, until the new plantings have a chance to become established. Park District personnel offer hopeful reassurances that that is not the case, but their optimism conflicts with the realities of the GLFER contractual guarantees. This is yet another major reason to delay installation of the Yoko Ono Sky Landing piece until the site is fully accessible and welcoming.

On a related note, there are indications of plans to reconfigure the fence surrounding the Osaka Garden so as to enclose the Yoko Ono piece and utilize this newly expanded space as a revenue-

generating event venue. In a recent meeting with Department of Cultural and Natural Resources Director Cathy Breitenbach and Operations Manager Karen Szyjka we were told that no such plans exist. We were happy to hear that, and hope that is indeed the case. We expect that if any such changes were to be considered, there would be notification to the community so that questions and concerns could be resolved in advance.

Thanks again for the opportunity to address you today. I would be happy to answer any questions.

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