



5529 South Lake Park Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637 + 773.493.1893

August 30, 2019

Ms. Abby Monroe
Coordinating Planner City of Chicago, Department of Planning and Development
121 N. LaSalle, Room 1000
Chicago, Illinois 60602

RE: Historic Preservation in Jackson Park and the Current Section 106 Review

Dear Ms. Monroe:

Thank you for yet another opportunity to comment on the 106 Review process following the August 5, 2019 meeting regarding the draft Assessment of Effect (AOE) report. As we said in our previous letter to you, "The Hyde Park Historical Society takes very seriously the preservation of the important historic resources in Jackson Park." We continue to be concerned about the Obama Presidential Center (OPC) plans for entirely removing a section of historic Cornell Drive and are distressed about the OPC's intentions to demolish the historic Women's Garden. In addition, we urge more diligent attention be paid to remaining archaeological evidence, especially regarding Louis Sullivan's World's Columbian Exposition Transportation Building. (For the details of our concerns see our April 17, 2018 letter which is attached).

These are among the many clear and significant 'adverse effects' noted in the draft AOE presented on August 5th. The Section 106 Review process enacted as part of the National Historic Preservation Act is designed to prevent the needless destruction of historic public resources. The Section 106 review process provides clear review criteria and procedural requirements to ensure the public that protection would be provided. The recent August 5th meeting failed to address these review criteria or the specific findings in the report. We find that only superficial attempts were made in the AOE draft and the city's presentation to avoid or minimize these adverse effects. Instead the emphasis was on mitigation that has little direct bearing on the adverse effects. The superficial and cursory nature of the draft AOE indicates a lack of good faith that compromises the 106 process. This is regrettable and poses a threat both to Jackson Park and to historic cultural landscapes across the nation.

As this process goes forward, we are concerned about the continuation of genuine public and democratic discourse. Until now the debate about the Obama Presidential Center and its potential effects on historic Jackson Park has been marked by articulate, civil and reasoned arguments from all sides. Contributing parties have been passionate but always serious, respectful and thoughtful. For

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its part, the City has professed a commitment to transparency and thoroughness of the process. This is the kind of civic behavior that makes democratic participation worthwhile. The presentation at the August 5th meeting left the impression that the City is no longer fully engaged in this process and will pursue a predetermined path regardless of the validity of the public response to the Section 106 draft report. However, your email dated August 28, 2019 reaffirming the importance of the role of the Consulting Parties is evidence to the contrary.

The Hyde Park Historical Society looks forward to continued positive dialog on this important subject. Thank you very much for your time and attention.

Respectfully,

Michal Safar

Michal Safar, President
Hyde Park Historical Society, Section 106 Consulting Party