



August 26, 2017

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On the heels of planned remediation of DuSable Park, Coalition holds celebration of Chicago's founder, Jean Baptiste Point DuSable

Urges Chicago Park District to Complete Remediation and Park Development in Timely Fashion

The DuSable Park Coalition will host its annual memorial ceremony marking the death of Jean Baptiste Point DuSable, Chicago's first non-native settler, at 400 North Michigan Avenue, August 26, 2017 from 11:30 am – 1:00 pm. This year's event has special significance as it will also celebrate the progress toward actualization of DuSable Park in the form environmental remediation of park site scheduled to begin this month.

There will be a wreath-laying, remarks from the Consul General of Haiti in Chicago, and a public celebration at the bust of DuSable now located on the west side of Michigan Avenue by the Wrigley Building and the stairs to the Chicago River. After the ceremony, the group will depart and walk over to 401 North Lake Shore Drive for a quick view of the DuSable Park site.

DuSable Park, an undeveloped, contaminated parcel at the confluence of the Chicago River and Lake Michigan, was dedicated in 1987 by Mayor Harold Washington to the first non-native settler of Chicago, Jean Baptiste Point DuSable. Plans to develop it gained some momentum under Mayor Richard M. Daley, and some initial remediation was completed, along with a park Framework Plan, developed with many stakeholders. Thirty years later, we are still waiting.

In 2016, Friends of the Parks became aware that a successful, national US EPA lawsuit against the former owner of the DuSable Park site would bring \$3 million to Chicago for thorium remediation of the site, to begin this past fall. In July 2017, the Chicago Park District signed a contract to begin thorium remediation on the site. It was announced that this critical first step in the development of the park would begin in August.

“This is an important milestone and a marked first step toward appropriately honoring the founder of Chicago and his legacy,” said Juanita Irizarry, Executive Director of Friends of the Parks. **“These developments represent a revived opportunity to complete the development of the long-awaited DuSable Park—a key site that is in view of the brand new Polk Bros. Park at Navy Pier. It should match the grandeur of the rest of the scene as tourists and boaters marvel at the Pier and our beautiful skyline at the confluence of the Chicago River and Lake Michigan. The site also has great potential for connectivity with the exciting new Riverwalk and is a great opportunity to draw Chicagoans and tourists alike to learn more about the history of Chicago's first non-native settler. Friends of the Parks will be leading the charge to ensure that finally happens.”**

Over the years, the DuSable Park Coalition Committee has included representatives from several local organizations and elected officials including Alderman Brendan Reilly, American Indian Center, Bronzeville Children's Museum, Chicago River Rowing and Paddling Center, Congressman Danny Davis, DuSable Heritage Association, DuSable Museum of African American History, Haitian Consulate of Chicago, Floating Museum, Friends of DuSable, Friends of the Parks, Streeterville Organization of Active Residents and the Sustainable Englewood Initiative. The group has relaunched its efforts to galvanize support for and to encourage the Chicago Park District to move ahead with construction of DuSable Park, under the leadership of Friends of the Parks.

Friends of the Parks is a forty-two year old nonprofit parks advocacy group whose mission is to preserve, protect, improve and promote the use of parks and open space in Chicago for the enjoyment of all residents and visitors. We advance our programmatic, educational, and advocacy work with the support of our members, donors and volunteers, and through our governmental, community and environmental partnerships.

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