

Renaming: Black Partridge Park?

Fioretti's support needed for new park name

By HAYLEY GRAHAM
Editor

The Chicago Park District's decision to name a small park at 18th and Calumet after Pottawatomie Indian Black Partridge hinges on the backing of newly-elected 2nd Ward Alderman Bob Fioretti.

"The request has been submitted; however, a letter of support from the alderman's office is required," said Michelle Jones, spokesperson for the Chicago Park District. "That letter is being sought at this point."

The name, Black Partridge, refers to the Fort Dearborn Massacre battle in 1812 between Pottawatomie Indians and U.S. soldiers and their families. Near the site of the park, Pottawatomie Chief Black Partridge saved a woman and her child from being killed during the bloody fight.

If the Park District's board of commissioners approves the name, the city will accept public comments for 45 days. If there are not many objections to the name during that time, it will then go back to the board for final approval.

"We've flooded their offices with letters of support for the name," said Mark Kieras, of the Prairie District Neighborhood Alliance, which came up with the name Black Partridge. "We're hoping and anticipating that [Fioretti] will give support for the name."

Fioretti aide Hanah Jubeh said the alderman has not received notice from the Park District about the name change, but he plans to inquire into the proposal.

"Obviously, we are going to support if that's the naming [the community] is looking for..." Jubeh said.

The Prairie District Neighborhood Alliance submitted the request to change the park's name to Black Partridge in March, after deciding the proposed name did not appropriately reflect the history behind the area.

The park was installed last fall and originally called Columbia Park. Kieras, founder of Preservation Chicago, said Park District representatives later told him they planned to name the park after the founder of Poetry Magazine, Harriet Monroe, who lived at 22nd and Michigan.

Chicago parks are usually named after an event or person that reflects the history of its community. Jones said the Park District said naming decisions are often requested by community organizations.

"The glaring history of the site was pretty obvious," Kieras said.

After holding several committee meetings to determine which historical reference would be most appropriate for the space, the Prairie District Neighborhood Alliance settled on Black Partridge.

Kieras said if the park does become named Black Partridge, he would eventually like to see the statue of Chief Black Partridge restored and reinstalled in the park, along with a plaque stating the details of the location's history.

"The first step is just the name and hopefully telling the story," Kieras said.

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