



January 5, 2023

Billy Ocasio
President & Chief Executive Officer
National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture
3015 West Division Street
Chicago, Illinois 60622

Subject: Humboldt Park Stables/National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture

Dear Mr. Ocasio,

Thank you for our meeting on December 22nd to discuss the status of the development of a new building near the existing Humboldt Park Receptory and Stable building leased from the Park District by the National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture (NMPRAC) located in Humboldt Park. The Park District is proud to have 11 museums on Chicago Park District land and is delighted to host this one-of-a-kind national institution. The Park District further understands the desire of the NMPRAC to elevate its mission and stature by furthering its ability to attract and keep important pieces representative of Puerto Rican heritage. To this end, it is important to ensure NMPRAC is held to the same building and construction standards as other similar institutions.

As we discussed, however, a number of steps were taken by NMPRAC contrary to the terms of your lease with the Chicago Park District. These include the disregard of Park construction permit requirements and a number of regulatory codes of other agencies with authority over construction projects such as yours. While the Park District team always stands ready to assist with coordination of approvals with all the regulatory stakeholders, we will not short cut or ignore any processes related to development of any project in the parks because the preservation of property, protection of public use, and safety of park users depends on it. Nor will we allow a major project like this to go forward without community engagement as it is an existing requirement of these important projects.

Therefore, this memo is intended to summarize our discussion about the next steps that must be taken for the NMPRAC project to proceed on Park District property. *Alternatively, the current, unpermitted structure must be removed.*

I. NMPRAC representative

As discussed at our meeting, NMPRAC will immediately retain at its own expense an individual to consult on the proposed project who is knowledgeable about development of new buildings and the associated regulatory approval and permitting requirements for this particular project. There must be mutual approval by NMPRAC and the Park District of this individual. Once retained, the consultant will be the primary point of contact to the Park District on this project.

As an example of tasks, the consultant will be responsible to provide recommended treatments to meet federal and state historic standards and coordinate obtaining appropriate approvals from all relevant agencies as necessary including the Secretary of the Interior, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Commission on City Landmarks.

The consultant will also meet with Park District staff and City of Chicago staff as required to review project plans and specifications. Project plans and specifications will be revised as needed to meet all Chicago Park District Code, Access Permit and City of Chicago construction requirements, including but not limited to the Chicago Building Code, all applicable ADA codes, the Chicago Landscape Ordinance and the Chicago Energy Code.

II. Application Status to Date and Next Steps

- a. Access Permit Application and drawings - As a reminder of process, we have attached our Park District Access Permit requirements. The current plans first submitted to our office in October 2022 are incomplete and do not meet our requirements. Our staff will continue to work with your consultant, once hired, to obtain all the necessary documents required including plans such as tree protection, insurance, existing utilities and geotechnical among others.

Further, please confirm immediately if there have been any additional drawings or changes to these plans and specifications following your discussions with other regulatory agencies including to the Department of Buildings (DOB) as part of the City's review and the State of Illinois. If so, please immediately send us any updated documentation per Exhibit C of the Access Permit Terms and Conditions.

- b. Project Plan Review Meeting – Once our staff have confirmation the Park District has the most updated drawings and have an opportunity to review them, a meeting must be scheduled with your consultant for a joint review of the documents. In addition to the required review of plans, of concern is the intended use of the proposed building. Representations have been made that the purpose of the new building is solely as an archive building to hold museum works of art. However, there is some contrary documentation submitted by NMPRAC inferring this space may be used for events, including a catering storage area identified in your October plan set as well as reference in your IDNR grant application about a future phase of work to establish an event stage similar to Ravinia. The NMPRAC must fully disclose the intended use of this new building including any exterior site improvements. As the property owner, the Park District must approve any proposed use of the building, which will also be subject to community input as identified further below.

III. Public Process

As part of the Park District approval process, and as discussed, there must be an opportunity provided for the broader community and stakeholders to offer comments. Having a public input process in major park construction has been a fundamental requirement for capital projects on public land. Such input ensures the community is heard and always leads to a better project outcome. Because this important step did not take place, there is a now heightened public concern about this project because of the park and building's historic significance, the publicly owned and highly visible location of the project, and because construction began with none of the required approvals.

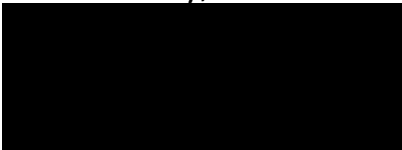
Once the Park District determines plans are ready for public review, we will work with your consultant to schedule at minimum one (1) community meeting at a time and place convenient for all relevant parties. Note that additional community meetings may also be required.

You should be aware that pending the outcome of the public meeting(s) and various reviews, there is potential for design changes to be required, including but not limited to changes to the building height and footprint, the incorporation of historically appropriate building materials and confirmation that all appropriate critical site considerations have been addressed.

As I emphasized in our meeting, the Park District welcomes development that enhances this cultural and historic public asset. There is great potential here to further NMPRAC's mission. To bring it to fruition, the importance of following established processes cannot be overstated.

My staff and I look forward to working with you in the coming months.

Sincerely,



Rosa Escareno
General Superintendent and CEO
Chicago Park District