



Chicago Park District

Legislation Text

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REQUEST TO OFFICIALLY NAME PARK #570 IN HONOR OF MARGARET DONAHUE

To the Honorable Board of Commissioners of the Chicago Park District

I. Recommendation

It is recommended that an order be entered authorizing the General Superintendent or his designee to officially name Park #570 in honor of Margaret Donahue.

II. Park Naming Information

Proposed Park: Park #570

Location: 1230 W. School St., Chicago, 60657

Community Area: 6- Lakeview

Ward: #44

Proposed Name: Margaret Donahue Park

III. Park Naming Procedures

Pursuant to Chapter VII, Section E (1) of the Code of the Chicago Park District, this request to name Park #570 was forwarded to the Secretary of the Chicago Park District, who filed a copy of this request with the Committee on Programs and Recreation and initiated a notice period to solicit public input. Notices were posted in parks and sent to advisory councils located within a one-mile radius of the park site. Elected officials were also notified of the proposal, including the alderman of the ward in which the park is located.

The notice period of forty-five (45) days soliciting public input regarding the naming proposal was initiated on August 15, 2014. There has been positive support for this proposal from the School Street Park Advisory Council as well as Alderman Thomas M Tunney of the 44th Ward. Staff recommends that the Board approve the request to name Park #570 in honor of Margaret Donahue.

IV. Explanation

Margaret Donahue (1892 - 1978) was one of the first women executives in major league baseball. Born on a farm in Huntley, Illinois, she moved to Chicago at the age of 16 to find a job as a secretary. In 1919, with only one year of high school a year of secretarial training, and a brief position at a laundry, Donahue was hired as a stenographer by William Veeck, President of the Chicago Cubs (and father of longtime Cubs owner Bill Veeck). At the time, the only other woman who worked for the Cubs was the team's bookkeeper. That woman soon left, and Donahue took over, performing as both secretary and bookkeeper. She quickly took over many responsibilities including ticket sales, stock transfers, providing press passes, and handling gate receipts for other Wrigley Field events such as Chicago Bears professional football games. Before long, she was traveling with the Cubs.

In 1926, Veeck promoted Donahue to corporate secretary, an unprecedented role for a woman in the major leagues at that time. She brought many innovations to professional baseball such as season tickets, providing off-site ticket locations, and selling reduced priced tickets for children. When Donahue was promoted to vice president of the Chicago Cubs in 1950, she was the first woman in this role in the major league to have come up through the ranks. Donahue retired in 1958, prompting Phillip K. Wrigley to issue a proclamation describing her as a "nationally acknowledged authority on the intricacies of baseball rules and regulations." When Donahue died in 1978, she was eulogized by Jack Brickhouse on WGN.