



Press Release

November 10, 2011

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“Visualize the Dream” Festival Scheduled For Emancipation Park Renovation

First Step in Capital Campaign for Redevelopment of Houston’s Oldest Park

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department invites Houstonians to “Visualize the Dream” at Emancipation Park, 3018 Dowling Street 77004, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Saturday, November 12, 2011. Attendees will have the opportunity to view plans for upcoming improvements to the park. The redevelopment of the park is driven by three goals: 1) To create a beautiful and functional park for the residents of the Third Ward, 2) To spark redevelopment within the Third Ward Community, and 3) To make the park a destination point for national and international visitors to Houston. Emancipation Park is the oldest and one of the most historic parks in the department’s inventory. It dates back to before the department’s creation on March 15, 1916. The redevelopment is designed to create a greenspace befitting the park’s history and the vision of its founders.

Who: Joe Turner, Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department

The Honorable Annise Parker, Mayor, City of Houston

The Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee, U.S. House of Representatives, 18th Congressional District

Wanda Adams, Council Member, City of Houston, District D

James Rodriguez, Council Member, City of Houston, District I

Jolanda Jones, Council Member, City of Houston, At-Large Position 5

Theola Petteway, Executive Director, OST/Almeda Corridors Redevelopment Authority

Dorris Ellis, President, Friends of Emancipation Park

Deloyd Parker, Executive Director, S.H.A.P.E. Community Center

What: “Visualize the Dream of Emancipation Park” Festival

When: Saturday, November 12, 2011

11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Festival

12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Program

Where: Emancipation Park

3018 Dowling Street, Houston, Texas 77004

Why: To Visualize the Dream of Emancipation Park and view plans for improvement to park

About Emancipation Park

Emancipation Park, located in Houston's Third Ward, is the oldest park site in the City of Houston. The 10-acre parcel of land was purchased in 1872 for \$800 by a group of black community leaders to serve as a site for celebrating Juneteenth, the anniversary of the emancipation of African-Americans in Texas on June 19, 1865. The purchase of the land was organized by members of local churches led by Richard Allen, Reverend Jack Yates of Antioch Baptist Church and Reverend Elias Dibble of Trinity Methodist Episcopal, all former slaves. In 1916 the land was donated to the City of Houston. In 1938-39, the Public Works Administration constructed on the park site: a recreation center, swimming pool and bathhouse, designed by Houston architect William Ward Watkin. The buildings are examples of PWA construction in Houston. HPARD Partners in this project include: OST/Alameda Corridors Redevelopment Authority and the Friends of Emancipation Park.

About Houston Parks and Recreation Department

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards and maintains over 38,992 acres of parkland and greenspace for the City of Houston and develops and implements recreational programming for citizens of all abilities. For more information on the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, call (832) 395-7022 or visit www.houstonparks.org.