

Aurora opens Palace Street Park with ribbon cutting, ukulele concert, hot dogs

Culminating a five-year effort, Aurora opened Palace Street Park on Aurora's near northwest side with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Saturday, June 29th.

Sixth Ward Alderman Michael Saville used a giant scissors to snip a ribbon in a noon ceremony to open the park. The former parking lot at Palace Street and Michigan Avenue was bought from Carson Pirie Scott & Co.

The park features a playground, picnic shelter and green space. Saville said extended negotiations for the property with Carson's commercial division in Milwaukee delayed the development.



The alderman praised a partnership with the Fox Valley Park District for making the park a reality. The park district used allocated funds to design and build the facility after Saville used \$93,000 from ward funds to purchase the property.



Speakers included Fernando Castrejon, a neighborhood resident who advocated for the project. Saville said Castrejon was his "right hand" in completing the park. Other speakers included Aurora aldermen, deputy mayor Chuck Nelson and park district officials. Nelson, adapting a line from Joni Mitchell's 1970 "Big Yellow Taxi" hit song, said, "They took out a parking lot and put in a park." Jimi Allen, owner of Jimi Allen Productions recording studio in Aurora, was credited producing a video to communicate the project. Saville added, "It's so amazing to see families enjoying an area that was once underused and undesired in the community. We have revitalized the neighborhood with a useable community space for generations to come."



The celebration concluded with hot dogs courtesy of Saville and music by the Uke Club, ukulele musicians sponsored by Hix Brothers Music of Aurora.

(Al Benson – Photos)