



Permit delay forces Lovefest to reschedule

By [Windy City Media Group](#)

Chicago, IL - The Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus' (CBGMC) annual Lovefest has been rescheduled because of a delay in being issued a permit allowing HIV testing on Chicago Park District grounds.

The event has been pushed to Sunday, Sept. 7. It was supposed to take place Aug. 24 in Jackson Park, the same location where it was held last year.

According to an e-mail sent by Chicago Public Health Department's (CDPH) Simone Koehlinger, the festival was rescheduled because of permit delays related to HIV testing on park grounds. CPHD is a sponsor of the event. CBGMC put in the request to obtain a permit.

CBGMC outreach committee chair Dana Powell told Windy City Times that the permit was delayed because of "testing and risk management issues." Each year, HIV testing is available at Lovefest. Although the Lovefest event has been held in Jackson Park before, the Chicago Park District was leery of giving the festival the green light because it wanted to offer HIV testing to festival attendees.

"Their concern was syringes and swabs on the ground, and people becoming infected with HIV," Powell said.

Powell said he was genuinely surprised that it was a concern, especially because Lovefest is not a new event. He said that the next step, for certain, is educating the city agency about HIV testing.

"There is no way that would happen," Powell said about the agency's concern. "These questions shouldn't even be brought up."

Powell said that CBGMC is working hard at getting some answers about what exactly occurred.

As of press time, Windy City Times hadn't heard back from the Chicago Park District as to why they delayed the permit, and if a permit has been officially issued for the Sept. 7 event.

As of right before press time, Powell said that he was very optimistic that a permit would be granted to hold the event Sept. 7. However, the event won't be held in the same grove, but Grove 14W, which is on the other side of the parking lot. He is still pushing for the event to take place in the original grove, but has not yet heard back from the agency.

Although the situation seems to be nearing a resolution, many are upset that the community event was rescheduled. Powell said that the surrounding community has expressed its outrage.

"The community is really upset," Powell said. "They were really looking forward to it. They already had their tents set up. This is a very important event."

Lovefest, featuring host Ms. Ruff n' Stuff and the Heavy Diva Otis Mack, was supposed to take place Aug. 24 in Jackson Park. Jackson Park is located near 63rd and Cornell Drive.

Powell said that CBGMC will issue new fliers and alerts to the community as soon as the location and permit are official. See www.lovelybrotha.com.

Written by Amy Wooten

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