

For Immediate Release

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Chicago's Little Italy – Where have you gone Joe DiMaggio?

TAYLOR STREET, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS: After 20 years of being in the center of Chicago's Little Italy community, the statue of Joe DiMaggio located in the Piazza DiMaggio was abruptly removed on January 18, 2019. Some claim it is owned by the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame (NIASHF) and others claim it was donated to the City of Chicago when it was dedicated on September 18, 1999.

Little Italy Chicago Neighborhood Association (LICNA) has made inquiries for proof from both NIASHF and the city for determination on this issue.

Joe Esposito, President of LICNA said, "Should NIASHF prove ownership of the statue, then it is their right to remove it, although their method of removal was inconsiderate to the community that has been its home for 20 years. If in fact the city received the statue as a donation, then the city will determine the course of action. As with any door that closes, there is usually one that opens. Practically the same week that the statue was removed, a brand-new Little Italy Branch of The Chicago Public Library opened. It is all part of an exciting revitalization of Taylor Street and retaining its branding of Chicago's Little Italy."

LICNA is awaiting comment from the city and NIASHF and is meeting regularly to decide on the next phase of the Piazza.

"This is a generations-old community with so much to be proud of. It was the center of the wave immigration from Italy, and so many families have begun their American roots here, and has endured decades of development," said Esposito. "This is an exciting time for us. Should Joe DiMaggio not return, our biggest problem will be to select just one of the many wonderful elements in Little Italy's colorful history to be showcased at the Piazza.

LICNA welcomes input from the three Aldermen representing Little Italy, business leaders and any other members of the community. For more information log onto www.LICNA.org or email chicagolittleitaly@gmail.com