

Route for Pro-Putin March Determined

February 15, 2012

The  Moscow Times

A permit for a 40,000-person march in support of presidential candidate Vladimir Putin followed by a rally at the Luzhniki stadium has been approved for Feb. 23, City Hall announced Wednesday.

Putin's campaign office, which is organizing the event, accepted the terms from the mayor's office, which allowed use of the field inside the stadium.

The route is set and "all the papers are signed," Deputy Mayor Alexander Gorbenko told Kommersant.

Demonstrators will march from 54 Frunzenskaya Naberezhnaya to a rally at the Luzhniki stadium. Putin might appear at the event and make a speech, the newspaper reported.

Attendance of up to 40,000 participants was sanctioned by the city for the event, which is set to start at 11:30 a.m. on Feb. 23. Frunzenskaya Naberezhnaya will be closed from 8 a.m. in preparation for the march.

Negotiations between organizers and the city administration began Friday, but reached

an impasse when the mayor's office declined to authorize the campaign's originally planned route from Belorussky Station to Manezh Square, citing a lack of space on the square for the requested 200,000 participants. Officials suggested either Poklonnaya Gora or Luzhniki as a site for the rally.

On Monday, Putin urged his supporters to accept the city's terms in a message on his official campaign website.

"Events that require the closure of locations in the center of the city, main thoroughfares, roads and metro stations place a big load on Moscow's citizens and disrupt the normal flow of life," Putin wrote.

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