

Minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting
February 22, 2023
Via Zoom

Attendees

Committee:

Present: Robert Fanuzzi, David Gellman, Ramdat Singh, Leona Teten, Debra Travis (Chair),

Absent: Bob Bender, Rob Jacklosky,

Other Board: Rosemary Ginty, Camelia Tepelus

Department of Parks and Recreation: Katerine Borrrome (DPR); Joe Magneri (District Parks Manager, DPR); Mike Ortiz (Chief of Staff, Bronx Borough Commissioner's Office, DPR)

The meeting commenced at 7:05pm

Approval of the January 25, 2023 Minutes

The meeting minutes were not distributed ahead of the meeting. Chair will investigate. Approval of minutes tabled until the March committee meeting.

Chair's Report

Parks Enforcement Patrol Update

Community Board 8 approved the Parks Committee resolution at the February 14 board meeting. A copy of the resolution was sent to Community Boards 7 and 12 for discussion in their committees.

Croton Filtration Monitoring Committee Meeting

On January 31st at 6:30pm via Zoom, Community Boards 7, 8, and 12 led a Filtration Monitoring Committee meeting with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection and the New York City Parks Department after several years of the committee not convening due to the pandemic. Items of note were:

- **The Croton Water Filtration Plant is fully operational.** DEP confirmed that the filtration plant they have constructed in Van Cortlandt Park at the Jerome Avenue and East 213th Street intersection is fully operational. Construction is now focused on finishing the new golf house. The filtration plant filters the water coming into NYC from the New Croton Aqueduct.
- **Croton Above Ground Structure (New Mosholu Golf House & Driving Range)** - A presentation was made of the new 11.6 acre club house and driving range that will sit on top of the Croton Water Filtration Plant. This is in its fourth and final phase with work expected to be completed by the end of the year. The clubhouse will have bathrooms, showers, a kitchen and locker room. All of these facilities will be connected to the sewer. The new structure will have a moat that collects ground water pumped up from around the plant. This is not water that has been transported within the New Croton Aqueduct, but is ground water. DEP currently expects these wetland cells to be maintained by the concessionaire.

Matt Rauvitzer from First Tee, the current concessionaire, is interested in renewing their concession agreement and DEP and Parks are coordinating with him to develop a plan for moat maintenance.

- **Park Sewer Connection** - We raised our request to have DEP connect the structure which was built as part of the construction project to temporarily serve as the Mosholu Golf Course club house and the adjacent comfort station to the sewer so that it can be used without the city incurring ongoing pumping fees. This has been a long standing Parks request. DEP and Parks is reviewing.
- **JPR Access** – the community continues to ask DEP for access to the walking path around the Jerome Park Reservoir. The Community Board 8 Environment and Sanitation Committee will follow-up on a request for a feasibility study

Pedestrian Bridge Over the Major Deegan in Van Cortlandt Park – a presentation was made by Ellen Macnow, a Capital Projects Coordinator with DPR, regarding this bridge which the committee has seen past presentations on. The cost of the bridge has increased from a \$23 million project to a \$39 million project due to pandemic related price increases and inflation. There is also a concern about the impact to very large, old trees that would need to be removed to build the bridge. The Parks Department is considering an alternative route which would connect the pathway along Shandler Field to the west side of the Major Deegan via the existing vehicular overpass at East 233rd Street. This pathway would go north into the Croton Woods where it would intersect with the existing Croton Aqueduct Trail. There was a discussion of connections further south that would also help knit the two sides of the park together, concerns about the 233rd Street intersection and the need to make it more pedestrian friendly and what would be done with the rest of the money. The current allocation for the bridge is \$9.5million from Parks; \$9.9million from DEP and \$4 million from elected officials. We invited the Parks Department to present this plan for the Van Cortlandt Park Bridge at the March Parks Committee meeting for community input. Mike Ortiz agreed to the presentation pending reviewing schedules

Bronx Parks Speak-Up

The 29th Annual Bronx Parks Speak-Up is this Saturday from 11am to 5pm at Lehman College. The theme this year is Connecting the Bronx, One Greenway at a Time. There will be presentations on parks advocacy and on all of the work being done on the city's greenways. For more information and to register, visit www.bronxspeakup.org

Presentation by Katerine Borrome, Project Development Officer, NYC Parks, Installation of a Pickleball Court in Riverdale Playground

Parks presented their plan to install a pickleball court in Riverdale Playground. The work will be done in-house and not as part of a larger capital project. Riverdale Playground was chosen because it has four handball courts that are currently underutilized. They propose converting two of these handball courts to a pickleball court and painting a mural on the adjacent handball wall. The installation would take place in the spring in time for early summer play. A community member expressed concern that one court may not be adequate for demand. The Parks Department is open to adding additional pickleball facilities if this court is highly utilized. There was concern about whether there would be an adequate perimeter around the pickleball court. Parks stated that they

have standard dimensions and that they have chosen this site and configuration to make sure there is enough space.

The Parks Department has also inspected the pickleball court in Van Cortlandt Park and will be adding a four foot fence around it to make play easier and prevent the ball from rolling away. They are considering adding a second pickleball court adjacent to the existing court in Van Cortlandt Park. The committee voted to approve the plan as presented.

Parks and Recreation Committee
Bronx Community Board No. 8
Resolution in Support of Pickleball Court Installation in Riverdale Playground
from February 22, 2023 Meeting

WHEREAS, representatives from the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) met with the Parks & Recreation Committee of Bronx Community Board 8 on February 22, 2023, and presented plans for installing a single pickleball court on the site of two existing handball courts in Riverdale Playground;

WHEREAS, the new configuration would leave two remaining handball courts for community use;

WHEREAS, DPR representatives answered questions from committee members and from members of the public who attended the meeting to the general satisfaction of the committee members;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Parks & Recreation Committee approves the plan for installing the pickleball court as presented to the committee, with the understanding that DPR will return to the committee for further discussion if there are any substantive alterations to the plan that was presented.

In Favor: Fanuzzi, Gellman, Singh, Teten, Travis

Opposed: none

Abstain: none

2023 Season Update from Jacqueline Hosford of Stewards of Brust Park

Stewards of Brust Park has been caring for Upper and Lower Brust Park since 2019. They were unable to make their presentation as planned, so they summarized concerns they have with the stairs in the lower park, dead grass in the upper park and a fence which is leaning. Parks has attempted to repair the flagstone with asphalt which looks haphazard. There is a safety issue with the stairs,

handrail and raised flagstone that should be addressed. The committee added reconstruction of the Lower Brust stairs to its capital budget priorities.

The lawn in the upper park is dead. In 2019, they aerated it and re-seeded it but it died last summer and is now compacted dirt and weeds. They receive complaints about this frequently. Parks is working with Karl Vetter at Partnership for Parks to coordinate repairing this. Jacqueline asked Joe Magneri to meet with her when they are on site.

The chain link fence of concern is between Fieldston School parking lot and Upper Brust Park and is falling over. The ownership of the fence is not clear. The committee will follow-up to see whether the fence is on Parks property or school property. Jacqueline will send the presentation to the board office to be sent to the committee.

Discussion of Budget Priorities for FY25

The committee reviewed budget priorities from the worksheet which was previously distributed.

Pond in Shorefront Park has been silted in due to the construction and because the stream no longer runs through the park. There are two items that have been funded for Shorefront Park. Committee will follow-up to confirm what the work is.

We will try to have the Natural Resources Unit advise us on whether the Alder Brook Stream in Riverdale Park can be addressed as an expense or maintenance issue.

Ewen Park erosion - Parks has installed cribbing and think they have addressed the run-off. The committee will follow-up with the Stewards of Ewen Park to confirm their concerns have been addressed.

Charging infrastructure was removed from the list since it's a DCAS priority. They have a program to install electric vehicle chargers in public parking lots around the city. This is not a Parks priority because it is not funded in their budget.

Marsha Heinman, noted that Seton Park shrubbery is not in good condition. The Chair encouraged her to contact the community board office in order to get the necessary support to care for the shrubbery more effectively. Friends of Spuyten Duyvil offered to support her in organizing a planting or clean-up event.

The lighting at the Marble Hill Playground was raised as a priority because there is no interior lighting in that playground. Only perimeter lighting. The center is desolate and dark. This was added as a capital budget priority.

Stewards of Henry Hudson Park reported that there is a Bruckner box in the southern end of the Upper Henry Hudson Park which is not working. It seems to be broken under the street and occurred approximately two years ago after street construction. The stewards don't have water during the summer and would like to get this repaired. Parks is aware and the District Manager, Joe Magneri, has been investigating. The Supervisor of Mechanics thinks the issue must be under the street as well and that it will need to be dug up to find the problem. Joe Magneri will meet with him and do a site visit and work with DEP to get it addressed. The stewards asked them to turn on the hydrant to confirm that it also doesn't work, which would indicate that this is a DEP problem.

Old Business

None

New Business

234th Street and Palisade Avenue Pumping Station is nearing the landscaping phase. Parks will be doing the landscaping and restoring the pathway in June. David Gellman requested to see the design. This has been referred to the Environment and Sanitation Committee to reach out to DEP for their presentation.

Tibbetts Brook Daylighting Project – Rosemary Ginty highlighted that it’s been nine months since the community board had a presentation on the design of the Tibbett’s Brook daylighting project. The Community Board did a resolution last June to meet the Public Design Presentation deadline, but has not had a presentation since. Would like an update on what has happened since the PDC hearing.

Spuyten Duyvil Library Tree Bed Trial Program has selected tree beds in front of the library for their pilot. Friends of Spuyten Duyvil will be participating in the pilot with Jodie Colon as a tree care captain. They will be planting natives plants as part of this program and documenting their health in order to study which native plants perform well in tree beds.

Jodie Colon also completed Super Steward Trail Maintainer Corridor Keeper training which will be very valuable as she continues to act as a steward in our Forever Wild parks. Next volunteer day in Shorefront Park will be Tuesday, February 28th from 10am to noon at the Spuyten Duyil Metro North Station under the pedestrian overpass.

The meeting adjourned at 9:39pm

Minutes submitted by Deb Travis

Recording Link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/6vT1fqM2Uhfk-yINBfwfx8x-G6WBjkfSYG0A391MI1ACL_QktO46jxGEdi86FZnF.jEZw-3VIUmi9av7a?startTime=1677110694000