

(Pending Committee Approval)

Minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting  
March 23, 2022, 7pm via Zoom

**ATTENDEES:**

*Committee:* Ramdat Singh, Bob Bender, Deb Travis, Robert Jacklosky, David Gellman

*Guests:* Lorenzo Manzano (Councilmember Dinowitz's office), Stephanie Ehrlich, Jodie Colon, Leona Teten

**AGENDA:**

Ramdat Singh called the meeting to order at 7:03pm.

*Approval of Minutes*

A quorum being present, the minutes of February Parks and Recreation Committee were approved unanimously.

Lorenzo Manzano mentioned that acknowledges that one of our biggest concerns is in regards to parks is the mayor's proposed budget, where obviously it so far it hasn't followed through with the 1% of the city budget promise dedicated to the Department of Parks and Recreation. so you Councilmember Eric Dinowitz is a member of the Fair Play Coalition and yesterday they held a rally on the steps of City Hall at 10:00 AM to advocate for that 1% city budget allocation. Councilmember Dinowitz is in close communication with the Committee of Parks Chair, Shekar Krishnan, at the City Council and reinforced we can count on Councilmember Dinowitz's continued advocacy towards this issue. Enzo mentioned that Councilmember Dinowitz is also on the budget negotiating team at the council and there are 12 Councilmembers out 51 on this team. This allows the Councilmember great advantage to advocate for the budget he believes the city and our district deserves and also gives the committee a stronger voice in terms of what our concerns are and the budget concerns.

Committee member Bob Bender mentioned that this committee passed a resolution asking mayor Adams to maintain to fulfill his pledge for 1% of funding from the city budget for the department of Parks and Recreation, so the committee is on board with increased funding for the Parks Department, which is you know has actually been cut from the last budget.

Jodie Colon asked about any upcoming budget hearings for Parks. Lorenzo mentioned that we can find hearing at [ericdinowitz.nyc/councilhearing](http://ericdinowitz.nyc/councilhearing) . We will also see all the committees the councilmember is on and see the hearing schedule.

Stephanie Ehrlich mentioned that there was a Parks Committee hearing yesterday and that testimony is being accepted until Friday at [council.hearing.gov](http://council.hearing.gov). There has been a \$60 million cut

to DPR and there are a 100 parks vehicles out of service in the Bronx. New Yorkers for Parks also has bullet points of the demands of the Fair Play Coalition.

Committee member Rob Jacklowsky thanked Lorenzo for helping clean up Ewen Park and there was a ton of garbage removed.

*Chair’s Report- Ramdat Singh*

- **Brust Park-** There has been some graffiti issues in Brust Park and I want to thank DPR for their rapid response and getting the graffiti removed. Stewards of Brust Park has been really great at sending us the ticket number and images, so that we can follow up and ensure the graffiti is removed. There was an issue with a parks vehicle driving on the lawn and the issue was been addressed by Joe Magneri. Joe will coordinate with the group to re-seed the lawn that was damaged by the parks vehicle.
- **Joint Committee Meeting with Environment and Sanitation- E & S Chair Fanuzzi and I** are planning another Joint Committee meeting on Daylighting in either May or June. More Details in the coming weeks.
- **Half Moon Overlook-** Our District Manager, Ciara Gannon, sent a letter on behalf of the Community Board. Commissioner Iris has sent a package of documents to the legal department, but it is essential to catch him in the act. If we see him in Half Moon Overlook, we should call 646-613-1200 and report it.
- **Ewen Park-** Joe will check on the fence and Ramdat is in the process of getting the signs replaced. The signs at the entrance of the Basketball Courts and upper Ewen Park are covered with graffiti.

*Discussion of Parks and Recreation Committee Budget Priorities FY 2024*

The committee had a great discussion on the capital and expense budget priorities for the committee and ranking those items for FY 2024. The capital and expense budget priorities are in the table below and will be voted on at the April committee meeting.

<b>FY 2024 Ranking</b>	<b>PARKS Bronx CB8 FY2024 Initial Capital Budget Requests</b>	<b>FY 2023 Ranking</b>
1	PARKS- (DPR) <u>Redesign and reconstruction of Bailey Playground:</u> Reduce paving, introduce green space, update equipment, and repair deteriorated drains. The CB recommends incorporate adjacent Tibbett's Tail area into an expanded Bailey Playground	2
2	PARKS – DPR: <u>Reconstruct Old Fort Four Park and upgrade equipment:</u> Reconstruction of Old Fort Four Park including playground equipment, basketball courts, benches, greenspace, stone walls and fencing.	12
3	PARKS – DPR: <u>Renovation of Van Cortlandt Park Stadium:</u> Renovation of Van Cortlandt Park Stadium, funding for engineering study to assess and to develop a restoration plan of Van Cortlandt Park Stadium	15
4	PARKS- DPR: Construct <u>restroom</u> at Broadway and W 251st Street in <u>Van Cortlandt Park</u> , adjacent to the parade grounds.	16

5	PARKS- DPR- <u>Spuyten Duyvil Shorefront Park Green Infrastructure</u> : Green Infrastructure; to divert, absorb, and clean stormwater runoff from catch basins, streets, and the Henry Hudson Bridge outfalls that drain into the stream bed that feeds the 2 ponds in the Park before discharging overflow into the sewer system and Harlem River. Rehabilitation and restoration of natural areas, trails, wetlands and aquatic features.	20
6	PARKS- DPR- <u>Renovations to Washington’s Walk</u> : Renovations to Washington's Walk; new benches, replacing temporary fence with a wrought-iron fence, and repair of adjacent sidewalk.	22
7	PARKS- DPR: <u>Van Cortlandt Park Mansion – Fence and Brick Stairway Restoration</u> :We are aware that this project is partially funded. CB8 is requesting additional funds to complete the restoration of the wrought iron boundary fence and exterior red brick stairway into the Van Cortlandt Park mansion.	N/A
8	PARKS- DPR: <u>Update Fort Independence Park Dog Run</u> : Upgrade dog run in Fort Independence Park_ and improve ADA accessibility, improve shade and upgrade the drinking fountain around the dog run	N/A
9	PARKS- DPR - <u>Restore Riverdale Park’s Alder Brook Stream Bed</u> : Restore the Alder Brook stream bed, which runs through the Riverdale Park and discharges directly into the Hudson River.	N/A
10	PARKS- DPR - Connection of sewer to former <u>Mosholu Golf house</u> so that the golf house can become a Parks Headquarters building. The committee urges DPR to ask DEP to provide funding for this project.	

<b>FY 2024 Ranking</b>	<b>PARKS Bronx CB8 FY2024 Initial Expense Budget Requests</b>	<b>FY 2023 Ranking</b>
1	PARKS – DPR: <u>Gardeners and other Personnel Sufficient for proper monitor CD8</u> : Gardeners and other Personnel: sufficient for proper maintenance of lawns, landscaped areas, and sidewalk <u>Greenstreets</u> .	8
2	PARKS - DPR - <u>PEP Personnel sufficient to monitor CD08 Parks</u> : PEP Personnel to properly enforce rules and regulations with assistance of NYPD: illegal use of Putnam Greenway by electric bikes, motor bikes and ATVs; Seasonal problem of unlawful BBQs in CD08 parks; chronic double-parking along Broadway adjacent to Van Cortlandt Park (VCP) Parade Grounds, and to enforce regulations in VCP and other CD08 parks, in particular by bicycle-mounted PEP officers.	10
3	PARKS - DPR <u>Van Cortlandt Park Equipment – Mini Packer and Gator</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Mini-Packer</u>: to deal with growing trash problem in VCP, particularly to reach remote and difficult areas.</li> <li>• <u>Gator for Van Cortlandt Park</u>: VCP Alliance requests a replacement Gator for use by Landscape Management and Maintenance &amp; Operations staff to maintain park; Existing Gator is in disrepair.</li> </ul>	N/A
4	PARKS - DPR <u>CD08 Parks Equipment</u> : Serious and increasing trash conditions, necessitates Parks Department needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One large garbage truck Currently equipment is shared with another district.</li> <li>• Crew Cab Pickup: to transport staff &amp; equipment/tools around CD08. Necessary to address maintenance needs of District.</li> <li>• Deere Tractor with Cutting Unit: Constantly need maintenance, especially with hilly topography, such machinery is essential for mowing.</li> </ul>	10

### *Van Cortlandt Park Updates – Stephanie Ehrlich.*

- Daylighting Tibbets Brook- There are many meeting between DPR and DEP. There will be a Conceptual Design Plan Meeting with the stakeholders on April 19<sup>th</sup>. The stakeholders meeting includes Community Board 8, BECQ, City as Lab, Van Cortlandt Park Alliance, amongst others. Negotiation with CSX is continuing and the City is moving forward.
- Van Cortlandt Park- There were some anti- semitic and racist graffiti in classic playground, which were removed. PEP initiated a meeting with NYPD to get ready for the summer and getting ready for the increased noise in parks. There's some sting operations to remove double parkers cars along and give summons. Behind Sachkerah Woods Playground, there an increased amount of homeless individuals sleeping in the park. Next week, there is a meeting with. Cross Country Directors to discuss scheduling and permits for cross country season in the fall. Water fountains are turned on April 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Commissioned Donohue- As you know Bronx Commissioner Iris Rodriguez is now the First Deputy Commissioner. Commissioner Donohue will visit Van Cotlandt Park on the Friday around 3:45pm at the Golf House.

### *New Business*

- Jerome Friends and Neighbors will host another park clean up event on April 2<sup>nd</sup> from 9am to 12 in Fort Independence Park and will have another one April 9<sup>th</sup> in Washington's Walk.
- Jerome Friends and Neighbors will host a COVID. 19 Memorial event on April 9<sup>th</sup>, from noon to 1 o'clock to honor those we have lost to COVID. Attendees are encouraged to bring the names of loved ones they lost and their names will be read and a musical performance from students at the Celia Cruz High School.
- Chair Ramdat mentioned that we will lose one member of this committee because this member has not applied for reappointment

### *Old Business*

Chair Ramdat mentioned that there is still no update on Sedgwick Trees and is actively following up.

### *Adjournment*

Meeting adjourned at 10:09 pm.