

(Pending Committee Approval)

Minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting
February 24, 2022, 7pm via Zoom

ATTENDEES:

Committee: Ramdat Singh, Bob Bender, Deb Travis, Robert Jacklosky, David Gellman, Courtney Dastis-Galvin

CB 8 Members: Osvaly Jimenez

Guests: Joseph Magneri, Stephanie Ehrlich, Christina Taylor, Jodie Colón, Stephanie Coggins, Abigail Martin, Michael Gabert, Ira Charles Levenberg, Jose Gamboa, Jeff Tonkin, Leona Teten, Jacqueline Hosford, Calder Orr, Noel Hefele, Araceli F., Leila May-Landy

AGENDA:

Ramdat Singh called the meeting to order at 7:06pm. Ramdat amended the agenda to add a review of FY 2023 report, committee approved of the amendment.

Approval of Minutes

A quorum being present, the minutes of the January 26th meeting, were approved, 6-0.

Chair's Report

Ramdat began his reports with some updates. Ramdat mentioned that he is deeply disturbed by the racist and anti-Semitic graffiti tagged around our parks. Ramdat thanked the two women that helped clean off PS 24 and thanked Parks for their speedy response. He recommended that if any community member sees any graffiti around the parks and on equipment, to please put in a 311 complaint and email either me or the board office the ticket number and follow up on the status of the issue.

Ramdat then thanked Jodie for keeping us in the loop on what is going in Half Moon Overlook. Ramdat mentioned that the board office did reach out Leenda Bonilla and Leenda mentioned that Victor has been uncooperative with them. Leenda is referring the complaints to Operations for next steps with this issue.

Mayor Adams has released his preliminary budget and has an allocation of nearly \$500 million for the Department of Parks & Recreation out of \$98.5 billion budget. Ramdat attended the Van Cortlandt Park Water Summit and there was a lot of great information and will pass along the recording of the presentation to the committee.

Review of FY 2023 Report from OMB

Ramdat projected the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) report and examined the response from OMB on the FY 2023 capital and expense budget requests from the Parks and Recreation Committee.

Bailey Playground is located at W 234th St and Bailey Ave. The Park has a drainage issue and the drains are backed up frequently, which impacts the Major Deegan and the Broadway corridor. The Park is not inviting and lacks greenery. Bailey serves as a central headquarters for parks staff and is not adequate for the staff.

The Van Cortlandt Park fence is partially funded. \$2.2 million was allocated for the fence, but not adequate enough because \$676,000 is needed for the fence. The brick steps are not funded and will cost more than \$6million to repair.

Discussion of Fiscal Year 2024

Henry Hudson Park is a historic park and recently funded the historic signage. The group would like a sensitive repair of the plaza. The cement area adjacent to the monument needs repair. The group is waiting for Dan Reynolds to address the issue of parks vehicles driving on the pavement.

Van Cortlandt Park

- Comfort Station at 251st and Broadway.
- Van Cortlandt Stadium is in dire need of an engineering study. The building is deteriorating and the bathrooms are now closed
- Museum House Fence - \$676,000
- Red Steps Restoration & Wetland Garden Installation -\$10 Million project
- Enslaved African Burial Ground Proper Memorial- landscape design, appropriate mosaic/monument, interpret signage, wayfinding signage - \$4million project

Brust Park would like to have a sensitive restoration of the park, with input from the community. The staircase through Brust Park does not have lampposts and is hazardous at night.

Ewen Park: Stewards of Ewen Park requested trash cans with lids, to stop the trash from blowing around and prevents critters from getting into the trash. The interior fence of the dog run needs repair and needs a fresh layer of wood chips. The Stewards of Ewen Park is interested in general maintenance of the park; benches, flower beds, etc.

Washington's Walk has not had a renovation since 1988. The Park can use a light touch, such as benches and wrought iron fence.

Ft. Four has been renovated since 1998. There is outdated Playground equipment and the basketball court needs renovation.

Ft. Independence Park is generally in good shape. Dog run is heavily used and is not ADA Compliant. There is no shade for the dog run and is not able to be used in the summer months.

Spuyten Duyvil Shorefront Park:

- Rehabilitation & restoration of natural areas, trails, wetlands, and aquatic features.
- Green Infrastructure project 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.

Riverdale Park: Green Infrastructure project to divert, absorb, and clean stormwater runoff from the Henry Hudson Parkway, apartment buildings, private parking lot, and other impervious surfaces that drains into the Alder Brook stream bed, which runs through the park and discharges directly into the Hudson River.

Expense Requests:

- Maintenance and operations funding
- Additional funding for tree work
- Playground mats at Ft. Independence

New Business

Stephanie Ehrlich mentioned she wants to share updates on the Van Cortlandt Park. There is an area of the park where there is educational programming and parks storage. Also, there is a mountain of garbage in the park for more than twenty years and the Alliance will try to remove the garbage. The soil was tested and there isn't any toxic waste. Van Cortlandt Park wants to make the area more welcoming for children's programming. There will be some tree work and pruning done by Department of Forestry

Committee approved drafting a resolution demanding a 1% city budget allocation to the Department of Parks & Recreation. Following the meeting Ramdat shared this resolution with the committee. It was unanimously approved.

Resolution on Mayor Adams' Preliminary Parks Budget

Whereas Mayor Adams' preliminary budget actually allocates 0.5% of the proposed budget to parks, reducing the budget for the Department of Parks and Recreation from its current level, which will result in the loss of personnel in city parks; and

Whereas Mayor Eric Adams campaigned on a promise to allocate 1% of the New York City budget to parks; and

Whereas, Department of Parks and Recreation needs additional funding for operations and maintenance of parks and green spaces; and

Whereas when he was Brooklyn Borough President Mr. Adams recognized how vital the parks have been to New Yorkers during the pandemic, saying, “In the moments of this pandemic our green spaces provided a place for us to gather, express ourselves, and to simply catch a breath of fresh air”; and

Whereas all five borough presidents have endorsed the principle of 1% for parks; and

Whereas the City Council is holding hearings on the Mayor’s proposed budget in March;

Therefore, Be It Resolved that Parks and Recreation Committee of the Bronx Community Board 8 calls on the City Council and our City Council Members, to hold Mayor Adams to his pledge to devote 1% of the budget to parks.

Old Business

Reservoir Trees no update from Department of Forestry yet.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:01pm