

**Minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting
Bronx Community Board 8
Wednesday, March 26, 2025 at 7:00pm
Board Office – 5676 Riverdale Ave, Suite 100, Bronx, NY 10471**

Attendees

Committee:

Present: (3) Bob Bender, Carol Blake, Debra Travis (Chair)

Absent: (2) Johanna Edmondson, Ramdat Singh

Department of Parks and Recreation:

Stephanie Ehrlich (Van Cortlandt Park Administrator); Valerie Davis-O’Neal (Special Assistant to the Bronx Borough Commissioner)

Community Members:

Cathy Deutsch, Director of Horticulture, Wave Hill

Kathleen Gordon, Director of Marketing & Communications, Wave Hill

Ray Pultinas, Founder, James Baldwin Outdoor Learning Center

The meeting commenced at 7:04pm

1. Welcome and Introduction of Committee Members and Guests

2. Approval of the February 26, 2025 Minutes

The meeting minutes were approved unanimously

3. Chair’s Report

Spuyten Duyvil Shorefront Park Update – Katerine Borrone Director of Capital Projects for the Parks Department has confirmed that the phragmites which were removed from the pond in Shorefront Park were part of the surveying and tree tagging as part of site analysis for future capital work. Construction for this project is expected to start in 2027. The engineer will be looking at the entire tributary drainage area for the pond to help influence the design of the pond and the earthen berm along the edge of the pond. The slopes and trail work for the upland and surrounding area are not part of this project’s scope.

Parks Enforcement Patrol is Hiring – The Parks Enforcement Patrol is responsible for enforcing park rules and assisting park goers to keep them safe. PEP is hiring. The Job Vacancy Notice is attached.

Power Washer for the District – At the February parks committee meeting, it was proposed that the board office request funds for the purchase of a pressure washer to enable the Parks Maintenance and Operations crew to pressure wash graffiti and grime from park retaining walls, equipment and benches in our district. Joe Magneri, the Parks District Manager supports the idea as does the Parks Borough Commissioner's office. The board office has followed through and included this request with other community board requests to our council members for possible funding. We are waiting for a decision sometime this spring.

Public Programming in Our Parks – The Parks Department has announced dates for upcoming events in our parks:

May 23, 3-6pm: Skate Party, Spuyten Duyvil Playground

May 24, sunset: Movies Under the Stars, Seton Park

June 6, sunset: Movies Under the Stars, Vinmont Veterans Park

June 21, sunset: Movies Under the Stars, Ewen Park

June 26, sunset: Movies Under the Stars, Spuyten Duyvil Playground

Chair noted that some areas in the district seemed under represented. Upon receiving the list, the board office reached out to Parks and Council Member Dinowitz to understand the selection process better and how to advocate for parks that have not hosted movies previously. Parks informed us that these events were selected by Council Member Dinowitz whose office clarified that they choose locations based on historical success, community input and logistical considerations. Chair to follow up with Parks Department on logistical requirements and costs to determine feasibility of Movies Under the Stars at Bailey Playground and/or Fort Independence Playground.

4. PRESENTATION – Presentation on Wave Hill New Meadow Project

Wave Hill is celebrating its 60th anniversary. As part of this celebration, they are highlighting ten heritage tree species that are on their property for over 100 years along with several important capital projects. Horticultural projects in the works include: creating a storm water management plan; re-imagining an existing meadow and constructing a rainwater garden to the west of the meadow.

The native meadow will sit in the same area as an existing 20,000 square foot meadow area between their woodland border and Glyndoor Terrace. This meadow currently contains many invasives and presents an opportunity for a new design that will expand its overall coverage to 30,000 square feet of native plantings and reduce the amount of grass to be mowed. The meadow will take approximately two years to come to fruition and when it is complete, will provide important habitat for pollinators and birds. This project will be overseen by the Director of Horticulture

Cathy Deutsch with designer Tom de Witte. Piet Oudolf and NYC based landscape architect Signe Nielson, Founding Principal of NMLA, will also be working on this project.

Wave Hill is developing the storm water management plan to remediate damage caused by severe storms. As part of creating their storm management plan they have engaged with a contractor to survey the storm drains on Independence Avenue, Spaulding Lane and West 252nd Street. Many or all of these streets are private and so part of their survey is to determine a plan for repair that will have the greatest impact at mitigating stormwater runoff.

Wave Hill will be developing a rainwater garden to the west of the meadow which will include restoring and elongating an old boulder wall and using bluestone to direct water as needed. The goal of this work is to create additional habitat, to prevent water runoff and capture it for on-site uses.

They will also be adding pathways to make the primary gardens more accessible to people with limits on their mobility and adding site-wide lighting to enable evening events while not impacting natural cycles.

See the attached presentation for more details on these projects.

Upcoming Events at Wave Hill

- Earth Day Weekend – April 26-27, Woodland Volunteer Workday Sat 1-3:30pm
- 60th Anniversary Celebration – 4 day celebration in June 5 – June 8
- Juneteeth – June 12 FREE
- Fabulosity – June 22
- Carnegie Hall Citywide Concert – June 26 FREE
- Sunset Wednesdays – July 9 – August 6th
- Wild at Night: Summer Nature Evenings – July 11 – August 1

5. SAPO APPLICATION – Car Free Earth Day Spring Jubilee for the James Baldwin Outdoor Learning Center Garden Community Farmers Market

Committee reviewed plan for a one day preview of the James Baldwin Outdoor Learning Center Garden Community Farmers Market which will include a formal acknowledgement of the naming the plaza for James Baldwin and a celebration of Earth Day. The plaza is bordered by Goulden Avenue, Sedgwick Avenue and Paul Avenue and was officially selected by the NYC Department of Transportation to

participate in their plaza program. This has led to the repaving of the plaza and a commitment by the New York Horticultural Society to maintain and seasonally refresh the planters which prevent vehicular access. The committee unanimously approved the resolution.

6. SAPO APPLICATION – For a Partial Sidewalk Closure for the James Baldwin Outdoor Learning Center Garden Community Farmers Market

Committee reviewed the plan for the fifth season of the JBOLC Garden Community Farmers Market. The committee approved the street activity request unanimously.

7. DISCUSSION & VOTE – Finalize FY27 Committee Capital and Expense

Budget Priorities

The committee reviewed the list of budget priorities which had been identified at previous committee meetings. The committee finalized the rankings and voted unanimously in favor of the FY27 budget priorities

Final Capital Budget Priorities for FY27

FY 2027 Ranking		FY 2026 Ranking
1	<u>PARKS – DPR - Redesign and reconstruction of Bailey Playground</u> Reconstruction of play equipment, safety surfacing and fencing along the Major Deegan. Incorporate adjacent Tibbett's Tail area into an expanded Bailey Playground. Reduce asphalt and add green space. Add space for District 8 operations	1
2	<u>PARKS – DPR - Reconstruction of Old Fort Four Park</u> Reconstruction of Old Fort Four Park including replacing existing playground equipment, spray area, benches and fencing, repairing the stone walls, updating the greenspace and improving lighting for the basketball courts (current capital improvement includes construction of restroom, replacing the swing sets and resurfacing basketball courts). <i>This neighborhood does not have a dog run within a 10 minute walk and so this park should be considered for this amenity.</i>	2
3	<u>PARKS – DPR - Restoration of Lower Brust Park Staircase</u>	4

	Restoration of flagstone, pavers, steps and handrails	
4	<u>PARKS – DPR - Marble Hill Playground Lighting</u> Install park lighting to light the pathways and activity areas within the interior of Marble Hill Playground	3
5	<u>PARKS – DPR - Equipment for Litter Collection</u> Additional mini-packer vehicle to reach remote areas for litter collection in Van Cortlandt Park and one packer vehicle to be assigned in District 8	5

Final Expense Budget Priorities for FY27

FY 2027 Ranking		FY 2026 Ranking
1	<u>PARKS – DPR - Parks Enforcement Patrol Command within Van Cortlandt Park</u> Create a new Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP) command and station it in Van Cortlandt Park sufficient to properly enforce DPR regulations so that public safety and order is maintained and to enable regular and consistent patrolling of Van Cortlandt Park and other Community District 7, 8 and 12 parks	1
2	<u>PARKS – DPR - Swimming Lessons For Children</u> To support swimming lessons for children at Van Cortlandt Park Pool and/or at other New York City owned pools.	New
3	<u>PARKS – DPR - Replacement Gator-Type Utility Vehicles for Landscape Management, Maintenance and Operations Staff Within Van Cortlandt Park</u> Replace three existing utility gator-type vehicles due to age and maintenance issues	4
4	<u>PARKS – DPR/DEP - Repair Bruckner Box Connection in Upper Henry Hudson Park</u> Connect the Bruckner Box Connection in Upper Henry Hudson Park to the main sewer and install an RPZ (DEP) to complete the water connection	2
5	<u>PARKS – DPR - Crushed Stone and Boulders for Maintenance</u> Crushed stone and boulders to enable repairs of tracks, walkways and dog runs within District 8 and Van Cortlandt Park	3

8. Old Business

Parks Committee page on the Bronx Community Board 8 website –

Committee member, Carol Blake, has assembled a list of district parks to help raise awareness of the rich diversity of parks in our district. This list, once finalized, will be added to the Parks Committee page on the Bronx Community Board 8 website. The committee will review it for further discussion at the April meeting.

9. New Business

Building Housing on Municipal Golf Courses – The committee chair was made aware of public discussion regarding converting four municipal (Parks owned) golf courses for housing. Van Cortlandt Golf Course and Mosholu Golf Course are on the list for consideration. The committee discussed its concerns which include:

- Park land is not undeveloped land and is a vital resource for recreation, mental health, stormwater management and biodiversity
- If golf is not popular enough to justify the park land it occupies, the Parks Department is empowered to use those areas of the park for other park uses, such as public lawns, sports fields or trail systems
- There are dozens of other viable proposals to address the need for housing which do not involve taking from the public good by alienating park land

The committee strongly disagrees with any proposal to develop or privatize vital public green space.

The meeting adjourned at 8:36pm

Minutes submitted by Deb Travis

Approved Resolutions or Presentations Attached:

- Parks Enforcement Patrol Job Vacancy Notice
- Wave Hill Presentation
- JBOLC SAPO for Car Free Jubilee
- JBOLC SAPO for Farmers Market