

(Pending Committee Approvals)

Minutes of Joint Parks & Recreation and Environment & Sanitation Committee Meeting
May 25, 2022, 7pm via Zoom

ATTENDEES:

Parks & Recreation Committee: Ramdat Singh (Chair), Deb Travis, David Gellman, Bob Bender, Robert Jacklosky

Environment & Sanitation Committee: Robert Fanuzzi (Chair), Deb Travis, Karen Argenti (CCM), Rob Spalter (CCM)

CB8: Laura Spalter, Dan Padernacht, Rosemary Ginty, Sylvia Alexander, Omar Murray, Nick Fazio

City Agencies and Consultants: Mitchel Loring (DPR), Joseph Magneri (DPR), Michael Ortiz (DPR), Kristin Ricigliano (DEP), Effie (DEP), Alicia West (DEP), Pinar Balci (DEP), Ropesh Joshi (DEP), Stephanie Ehrlich (DPR), Rafael Roger (Bronx BP), Lorenzo Manzano (Council Member Dinowitz), Eric Dinowitz (Council Member), Pinar Balci (DEP); Sandeep Mehrotra (Hazen & Sawyer), Dahlia Thompson (Hazen & Sawyer), Aber Momen (Hazen & Sawyer), Stephanie Ehrlich (DPRa and VCPA); Christina Taylor (Van Cortlandt Park Alliance)

Guests: Ira Charles Levenberg, Leona Teten, Araceli F, Mary Claud Vuille, Maryam Yaghoubi, Mohammed Yaghoubi, Lucy Mercado, Mark Lipton, Herb Countryman, Jodie Colón, Julie Horn, Neeva Heep, Herb Bharret, Daniel O'Shaughnessy

AGENDA:

Meeting called to order at 7:0

Approval of Minutes

- Environment & Sanitation Committee quorum being present, the minutes of the April 5th meeting were approved, 4-0
- Parks & Recreation Committee quorum being present, the minutes of the April 27th meeting were approved, 5-0.

NYC Department of Parks and Department of Environmental Protection presentation of Daylighting of Tibbett's Brook and Putnam Greenway

NYC DEP and DPR seek preliminary approval from the Public Design Commission for its joint Daylighting and Greenway project at its July 11, 2021 meeting. Environment and Sanitation and

Parks and Recreation Committees will pass a joint resolution on the design as submitted to the PDC at its next joint meeting on June 22, 2022.

Councilman Eric Dinowitz supports agency and Community Board efforts to bring Daylighting and Greenway project to fruition.

According to DEP, the city is “very very close” to closing the deal with CSX. Finalization is expected this summer.

As reported by DEP Assistant Commissioner Pinar Balci, Daylighting of Tibbett’s Brook is the first daylighting project and the largest Green Infrastructure project ever built in NYC. In compliance with the Open Waters Long Term Control Plan, the project removes 25% of Combined Sewer Overflow into the Harlem River. Tibbett’s Brook will be daylighted within VCP and continue on its original route within a new park, Putnam Greenway South. The stream will enter a buried pipe at 230th street and reach the Harlem River through its Wards Island 056 filtration system at 190th street.

Within VCP, DEP will build a second, “side” weir to direct the water from Hester and Piero Mill Pond and provide baseflow for the stream along the Greenway. Tibbett’s Brook will continue south of the existing weir in an open channel with “pocket wetlands.” Two pedestrian bridges 15 feet wide will cross the stream/wetlands to allow continuous access to the Greenway and connect with existing park pathways. Access under the “Blue Bridge” will end, and new access points with viewing platforms will be created within the parking lot. Access to the Greenway within the park from Van Cortlandt Park South is also planned.

DEP will also build a diversion channel from the Jerome Park Reservoir to allow DEP to draw down the water from the reservoir in anticipation of a rain event. The “blow-off connection” will direct fresh water from the reservoir into the open channel during dry weather so that it does not enter the wastewater treatment plant at Ward Island 056, reducing load.

Answers to questions from CB members and the public on the Daylighting/Greenway project within VCP:

- “Side weir” will not undermine the historic dam
- Trails will be paved within the park.
- Platforms will utilize planks, matching existing boardwalks
- Remnants of the former train station are not being removed and could be incorporated into future designs, pending restoration goals
- Parking lot fencing will be removed to allow access to platforms, with no gating

- Fencing design and materials on the historic dam will match modern design elements introduced for Putnam Trail but are not finalized
- Access from Van Cortlandt Park South is not finalized, with preference stated for ramps
- DEP valve will have a manhole structure above ground but incorporate plant screens

South of VCP, DEP, and DPR are reviewing access points at 239th Street, where Greenway is at its widest, within the BJ's parking lot (private property), at 236th street (private property), north and south of 234th Street bridge (north side includes private property), 230th Street, and Verveelen Place. Greenway will have retaining wall screening from the Deegan throughout. Porous asphalt will be utilized where feasible. Green space with native plants will run along the greenway in wider locations. In narrower locations, Greenway will be cantilevered, 234th Street.

Higher elevations at access points create the need for larger infrastructure to reach grade, removing space for Greenway and green space.

Answers to questions from CB8 board members and the public:

- Daylighting should incorporate flood mitigation and stormwater management, as per Hurricane Ida
- DPR and DOT are seeking safety improvements at Van Cortlandt Park South and along Bailey Avenue
- Greenway will incorporate citywide design language
- Gating and access decisions are not finalized, with site-by-site consideration
- DOT is reviewing DPR Greenway plan for the continuation south of terminus and parallel routes to Putnam Greenway
- DOT and DPR are studying upland access for bikeways and sidewalks east of Major Deegan
- Safety, access, and lighting sought for underpass of Van Cortlandt Park South
- The width of CSX varies from 25 to 63 feet. Concerns about the feasibility of shared-use paths plus Tibbetts Brook were raised.
- Trees will be removed, and replaced, to accommodate Greenway and Tibbetts Brook within the CSX corridor.
- Traffic calming does not include bumps or ballards; S-curve is recommended.
- Recreational amenities and water fountains recommended at access points
- DEP is taking the lead inquiring about the use of MTA property south of 230th to 225th Street
- In-house DEP Green Infrastructure team and DPR Natural Resource Group will design native plants along Greenway

DEP and DPR will work with CB8 to incorporate feedback and priorities into the design.

Chairs' Reports

Environment and Sanitation;

- NYC DEP will be presenting its new MS4 permit plan, which determines the impact of outfalls, on June 2
- NYC DSNY thanks Bronx CB8 for helping to secure capital funding for the restoration of the Kingsbridge Depot on 218th Street and Broadway.

New Business:

- Pickleball Court at Seton Park- There was a short discussion on creating a pickleball court in Seton Park. It was mentioned that the pickleball court at Van Cortlandt Park was dirty and damaged. Ramdat asked Stephanie from Van Cortlandt Park, to check on the conditions of the courts and she will take care of any damages. The committee expressed their support for the creation of the pickleball courts and will need to study the feasibility of this. The committee recommended scheduling a walk-through of seton park and inviting tennis and pickleball players to work on the feasibility of this project. To learn more about pickleball visit <https://usapickleball.org/what-is-pickleball/>

Old Business:

Updates on Parks Capital Projects: Michael Ortiz updated the board on some of the Capital projects that were funded

- Ewen Park Adult Fitness Equipment Construction: Bids were received and are under review, Procurement is expected to be complete in Summer 2022.
- Ewen Park Staircase Reconstruction: Project is fully funded in the Fiscal Year 22 budget and design is anticipated to begin in Spring 2022.
- Classic Playground Fitness Equipment: Construction is in the pre-bid phases and procurement completion is expected in Fall 2022.
- Washington's Walk Strong Street Playground Reconstruction: Design completion is expected in Spring 2022, due to site investigations.
- Washington's Walk Fort Four Playground Comfort Station: Bids were received and under review and procurement completion is expected in Fall 2022.
- Seton Park Adult Fitness and Skate Park: the contract is in pre-bid and procurement completion is expected in Fall 2022

Meeting adjourned at 11:02pm

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Fanuzzi
Chair, Environment and Sanitation Committee

Ramdat Singh,
Chair, Parks and Recreation Committee