

(Pending Committee Approval)

Minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting
October 27, 2021 -- 7pm via Zoom

ATTENDEES:

Committee: Ramdat Singh, Bob Bender, Deb Travis, Marvin Goodman, Robert Jacklosky, Herb Barrett (community committee member)

Absent: Courtney Dastis-Galvin, David Gellman

Other CB 8 members: Margaret Della

Guests: Joseph Magneri, Karen Argenti, Mike Ortiz, Marie Claude, Stephanie Ehlich, Margaret, Ray Bromley, Christina Taylor, Chauncy Taylor

AGENDA:

Ramdat Singh called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM. Ramdat introduced himself as the new chair of the committee.

Approval of Minutes

A quorum being present, the minutes of the September 29th 2021 committee meeting were approved, 6-0 (Ramdat Singh, Bob Bender, Deb Travis, Marvin Goodman, Robert Jacklosky, Herb Baret)

Chair's Report

Ramdat gave a chair's report, which he began with a Thank you! He quickly shouted out the committee members for helping him get the committee up and running under his chairpersonship.

Last week a community member sent us pictures of a dozen milk crates near Bailey playground by Tibbets Tail. We thank the parks for removing the crates in a timely manner.

Chair Spalter, CM Dinowitz, Commissioner Iris toured Ewen Park and saw the need for the renovations of the stairs. Ewen park stairs renovations have not been funded yet.

The Department of Forestry has finished inspecting all of the trees along Sedgwick ave. Zev Reuter mentioned that they are in the process of compiling a report for the board.

We will reach out and have Zev attend the December meeting to update us on the report.

Presently, the parks and recreation committee does not have a Vice Chair. Ramdat mentioned that it was recommended for him to have a Vice Chair, just in case he cannot attend a meeting or chair the committee meeting. Ramdat asked around for a committee member to serve as vice chair and there was no response. Ramdat decided that we will table this agenda item when

there's more committee members present. Bob volunteered to take minutes at the December meeting.

Mike Ortiz, Director of Bronx Capital Projects, gave a report about three upcoming capital projects. Ewen Park was funded for a set of stairs renovations by City Council Member Dinowitz, the other set of stairs, was not yet funded. Mike Ortiz has to check which set of stairs was fully funded.

Deb asked about the Erosion control project in Ewen Park. Mike Ortiz mentioned that he has walked the park numerous times and hasn't seen the erosion issue that board has brought up. Erosion control is a separate project. Joe mentioned that when they toured the park with Commissioner Iris and Council Member Dinowitz, he saw that the worst area is near the benches adjacent to the dog walk and small playground, off of w 232nd St. The borough using the nursery has decided to take it on as a project and are working on it. Friends of Ewen Park want to begin planting and when preparation is over, they will get involved.

Bonnie brought up the issue of Noah's crescent, near Kappock St as an area of needed support and has a serious rodent problem. Joe mentioned that parks can put a ticket in for exterminators to help eradicate the rodent issue. The area where the construction is, is not under the parks department.

Marvin mentioned about trash accumulation in Phyllis Post Goodman park and the garbage not getting picked up. Joe mentioned that he will make sure the garbage is picked up.

The three capital projects fully funded are:

- 44 comfort stations- BIDs were a bit over our estimate, the lowest bidder is getting vetted and will begin the procurement process. The process may start in the late winter and early spring of 2022. During COVID, we had to pause projects and there is a backlog of projects. Construction for the stations will take 18 months.
- Washington Walks Strong shout Playground
The Construction is anticipated to spring 2023. The project was slated to be completed this fall, but site investigations and budget delayed the project.
- Classic Fitness
Project in design and will finish the design in November. Parks had a review of blueprints, then procurement and process may end in the fall 2022. Construction will begin prior to next year.

Bailey playground does not have any projects at the moment. Bailey playground is a high priority for CB 8. Marie mentioned that the bathroom needs some painting. Bob mentioned that Bailey needs a total redesign. Bailey is close to Maj Deegan and the expressway has drainage issues. NYC stormwater after Ida, trust for public land focused on school playground, but may apply to general playground construction around resiliency and potential federal investments under watershed protection program. Bailey is in the flood plan; Mike mentioned the use of green infrastructure in playgrounds. Through the green infrastructure team through DEP. DEP gets capital funding and at times funds parks capital. They will only restructure for water drainage.

Margaret asked allocation about reinstating funding to NYC parks department, is that something will be made public to the CB. Kingsbridge Heights Community Center is owned by the parks department and is ongoing. Community parks initiative for parks and playgrounds for underserved communities that have not had any investments of \$250,000 or more in the last 50 years. Mike will check to see if the buildings/ recreation center falls under this funding stream. The Parks Department does not have their own capital budget and they must go to the elected officials for capital investments.

Report from Van Cortlandt Park Alliance

Stephanie Ehrlich, Director of Van Cortlandt Park Alliance and a Parks Administrator gave us updates. She thanked everyone for helping the Manhattan College invitational be successful. She thanked both David Gelman and Rob Jackowsky for volunteering. The invitational hosted about 4,500 High School Students and roughly 6,700 people were in Van Cortlandt Park on this day. There are a few more races and kids are practicing on weekdays. On November 27th, the Footlocker race is the last huge race of the season.

Van Cortlandt Park Alliance hosted a successful Hikertoberfest and Stephanie thanked everyone for participating. After Ida, Parks cleared out the debris. Yesterday, VCP area had another huge rainfall, but the park was not impacted as hard because of the clearing of the debris from previous storms. Stephanie mentioned that they are running programs and that there is a need for volunteers on Wednesdays and Fridays. An issue was raised about the hectic traffic along Broadway when there is an event at the park. Stephanie mentioned that she will work with the police department to help keep movie traffic along.

New Business

Herb Baret mentioned that there will be a Veterans day event on Nov 7th , 12pm at Memorial Grove in Van Cortlandt Park.

Old Business

Deb Travis brought up the issue of Tibbets Tail fencing, which is the fencing adjacent to the highway. Deb will follow up with the New York State Department of Transportation.

The issue of an outdoor dining structure was brought up. The issue is that water is piling up and keeps washing away the mulch away from around the tree roots. Ramdat recommended emailing the board office, so that the Economic Development committee can work with the business to prevent the mulch runoff.

Adjournment

Bob motioned; Deb seconded. Meeting ended at 8:12pm.

Prepared & Submitted by: Ramdat Singh, Chair, Parks & Recreation Committee