

**Minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting  
October 25, 2023**

**Attendees**

Committee:

Present: Debra Travis (Chair), Bob Bender, Robert Fanuzzi, Rashida Hilliard

Absent: Margaret Della, David Gellman (via Zoom), Rob Jacklosky, Ramdat Singh

Other Board:

Common Names: Rosemary Ginty

Agencies:

Joe Magneri (District Parks Manager, DPR); Stephanie Ehrlich (Van Cortlandt Park Administrator, DPR), Captain Ryan Pierce (NYPD), Christina Taylor (Van Cortlandt Park Alliance)

Community:

Jacqueline Hosford, Abigail Martin, Belinda Hancock, Calder Orr, Jodie Colon, Karen Argenti, Christopher Hosford, Jeff Torkin, Toni Butler, Robin Butler

The meeting commenced at 7:07pm

**1. Welcome and Introduction of Committee Members and Guests**

**2. Approval of the September 27, 2023 Minutes**

Due to the lack of quorum, the approval of the minutes was tabled until the November meeting

**3. Chair's Report**

No report

**4. Discussion of restoration of unbuilt portion of West 242<sup>nd</sup> Street adjacent to Lower Brust Park and follow-up to Community Board 8 resolution regarding vehicle access on this street**

Prior to the meeting Chair Travis circulated to committee members images of W. 242 St adjacent to Brust Park to the north and 3875 Waldo Ave. to the south. This is not a through street and has been used as a driveway by the occupants of the private house recently demolished and replaced by 55 Dash Place. Chair Travis showed these images and provided background on the unbuilt, mapped, "paper" street W. 242 St. during and after construction of 55 Dash Place. The Stewards of Brust Park complained about run off of water, sand and gravel in the portion of the park adjacent to the paper street, and construction debris left in the park. They noted that the paper street had been repaved by the developer but DOT did not grant permission for any work on the street.

Bob Fanuzzi asked whether stormwater mitigation efforts had been undertaken during construction and whether mitigation can be done to prevent future flooding.

Jeff Torkin, the developer of 55 Dash Place, said that the street had previously been paved and he simply restored the street following damage caused by construction. In a discussion of the varying

widths of the street, Mr. Torkin stated that 3875 Waldo had taken 15 feet of the paper street to use for parking prior to his purchase of the single-family home at the site.

Atmosphere Academy, a local charter school, will be a tenant of 55 Dash Place with their entrance onto Waldo Avenue. Questions were asked about how students will enter the school. Mr. Torkin said that they will come via public transportation or on foot. There will be no new parking on the site. Mr. Torkin said he will discuss the matter further with Atmosphere Academy and report back to the community board.

Questions were asked about adding planters to discourage any parking on the paper street. Mr. Torkin said that DOT has instructed him not to alter the street in any way. In response to whether remediation of the steep slope alongside the new building can be undertaken, specifically in the form of green infrastructure, Mr. Torkin said that DOT told him not to touch this steep slope.

Mr. Torkin said that he plans to remove the construction fence and would be open to considering the removal of the park fence by Parks to soften the edge of the park and improve the sightline for the residents of 55 Dash Place.

Rosemary Ginty recommended that the matter of W. 242 St be transferred to the Traffic and Transportation Committee because it is a DOT issue. Chair Travis explained that since this street will not be developed by DOT and that all of the concerns regarding access and maintenance are tied to Brust Park, it is appropriate for the matter to stay with the Parks Committee which is already staying in communication with the Traffic & Transportation Committee Chair.

## **5. Discussion of Traffic and Double Parking at Fall Parade Grounds Events**

Ms. Toni Butler complained about illegal parking in front of her garage on Broadway across from Van Cortlandt Park during the cross-country season. She said that buses transporting the runners are double-parked on Broadway, blocking traffic and creating a hazardous condition. Drivers dropping off and picking up the runners also double-park along Broadway.

Stephanie Ehrlich, Administrator of Van Cortlandt Park, said that the bus drivers have been less cooperative this year than in past years. The problem is worse on weekday afternoons than on weekends. There has also been less enforcement.

Capt. Pierce of the 50<sup>th</sup> Precinct said that the solution is to issue summonses for double-parking. He will request that traffic agents be assigned to the location to do this ASAP.

Robin Stevenson asked if it would help to note the license plates of the buses and send that information to the Van Cortlandt Park Alliance. Capt. Pierce said that it is possible to trace the license plates to the bus companies and it would be possible to find out who hired the buses.

Belinda Hancock noted that another effect of the double-parked cross-country related buses is that disabled bus passengers are unable to access MTA buses safely or even at all.

Capt. Pierce discouraged a suggestion to institute a “no parking” zone on Broadway during weekdays but said that for major weekend meets, it might be possible to institute temporary no

parking zones. A better solution, he believes, is for traffic agents and the precinct's traffic control officers to issue summonses when necessary.

It was also suggested that meet organizers and school athletic directors be advised that if the problem persists for their meets or their schools, their permits will be jeopardized. This had been past practice and had been largely effective.

Chair Travis summarized the discussion: issue summonses when needed; make sure that bus drivers are instructed to park along Jerome Avenue on the other side of the park, and make clear that repeat violations will jeopardize permits.

Stephanie Ehrlich promised to report back to the committee on further action, and Capt. Pierce said he would update the committee on whether tickets are being issued to drivers.

## **6. Old Business**

### **Stables comments for the Concession Unit**

David Gellman commented on a draft letter regarding the Van Cortlandt stables concession that Chair Travis had circulated to committee members. It was agreed that some modifications to the letter would be made.

## **7. New Business**

### **Upcoming Events**

Bulbapalooza – November 18<sup>th</sup> in Henry Hudson Park

Shorefront Park Invasive Removal – November 18<sup>th</sup> in Shorefront Park

Van Cortlandt Park PupParade – Noon, October 28<sup>th</sup> in Van Cortlandt Park

The meeting adjourned at 9:10pm

Minutes submitted by Bob Bender / Deb Travis

Recording Link: [https://youtu.be/QTCa9cnfjWI?si=xNGu\\_Wp6lsdXFHP2](https://youtu.be/QTCa9cnfjWI?si=xNGu_Wp6lsdXFHP2)