

**Minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting  
Bronx Community Board 8  
Wednesday, April 23, 2025 at 7:00pm  
Board Office – 5676 Riverdale Ave, Suite 100, Bronx, NY 10471**

**Attendees**

Committee:

Present (3): Bob Bender, Carol Blake, Deb Travis

Absent (2): Johanna Edmondson, Ramdat Singh

Stephanie Ehrlich (Van Cortlandt Park Administrator); Christina Taylor (Deputy Executive Director, Van Cortlandt Park Alliance)

The meeting commenced at 7:07pm

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

**Approval of the March 26, 2025 Minutes**

The meeting minutes were approved unanimously

**Chair's Report**

**Movies Under the Stars** – After advocacy from our committee, the Parks Department has added August 16<sup>th</sup> in Bailey Playground to their list of Movies Under the Stars locations for this summer. The board office will distribute a flyer with more information when we receive it.

**Street Tree Removal at 3811 Orloff** – The community board office received a concerned email from a resident about the planned removal of an elm tree in front of 3811 Orloff. The office reached out to Forestry and they responded that they had conducted a Level 3 inspection of this tree utilizing a Resistograph and found that there was not enough structural wood to responsibly leave this tree standing.

**Street Activity Permit Office (SAPO) Application – Concert in the Parks: New York Philharmonic at Van Cortlandt Park on June 5, 2025**

Nathan Cabana, Production Coordinator, Concert in the Parks for the New York Philharmonic discussed their request for a Street Activity Permit to reserve parking spots on the east side of Broadway from 180 feet south of Mansion Road to the Turtle and Hare statue on June 5, 2025 from 11am to 11pm. There will be no impact to the bike lane. Their security team will hold the spaces to prevent others from parking there. They have done this more informally in prior years and so this does not represent a net new loss of spaces on the day of the New York Philharmonic performance in Van Cortlandt Park.

The following resolution was approved unanimously:

WHEREAS, the New York Philharmonic has requested to reserve the parking lane on the east side of Broadway, adjacent to Van Cortlandt Park from 180 feet south of Mansion Road to the Turtle and Hare statue on June 5, 2025 from 11am to 11pm to provide parking for local musicians performing in the concert;

WHEREAS, Nathan Cabana, a representative from the New York Philharmonic attended the April 23, 2025 Parks and Recreation Committee meeting and presented the details of their request and satisfactorily answered questions;

WHEREAS, the New York Philharmonic has previously used the same location for the same purpose during previous performances, including in 2024;

WHEREAS, the New York City 50<sup>th</sup> police precinct has not had any issues in the past with traffic caused by the restricted use of the parking lanes during previous New York Philharmonic performances and supports this SAPO;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Parks and Recreation Committee of Bronx Community Board 8 recommends approval for this street activity permit.

#### **Committee Vote**

In favor: (3) Bob Bender, Carol Blake, Deb Travis

Opposed: None

#### **DISCUSSION AND VOTE: Bronx-wide Initiative to Support the Expansion and Maintenance of the Borough Tree Canopy**

The committee received the attached letter from the Bronx Borough President's office asking for support for additional funding in the New York City FY26 budget for new street trees and street tree maintenance in the Bronx. The committee has long supported 1% for Parks initiatives and the planting of street trees.

The following resolution was approved unanimously:

WHEREAS, there is clear scientific evidence that plentiful, healthy street tree canopies reduce heat retention during the summer and improve air quality which both lead to improved health outcomes;

WHEREAS, the City Council passed Local Law 148 which required the creation of a citywide urban forest plan and Mayor Eric Adams has since developed the Urban Forest Plan which aims to increase the city's tree canopy to 30% with additional plantings on city, state, federal and private property through collaboration with stakeholders and community groups;

WHEREAS, the average tree cover in the NYC is 22% and some Bronx neighborhoods have less than 8% tree canopy;

WHEREAS, Borough President Vanessa Gibson has called on all Bronx community boards to support increased funding and the urgent realization of the goals of the Urban Forest Plan in the Bronx;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Parks and Recreation Committee of Bronx Community Board 8 calls on the Mayor and the City Council to provide at least 1% of the annual budget for FY26 to the Department of Parks and Recreation for planting and maintenance of street trees to make the Urban Forest Plan a reality in the Bronx.

### **Committee Vote**

In favor: (3) Bob Bender, Carol Blake, Deb Travis

Opposed: None

### **Old Business**

**Parks Committee Website** – Committee reviewed additional links proposed by committee Vice Chair, Carol Blake, which would raise awareness of the location, hours and amenities of our district parks. The committee also decided to allocate time in the next board year to updating the Parks Resource Guide.

### **New Business**

**Community Service** - Luke Tappan, with Boy Scout Troup 240, is working on his Citizenship in the Community merit badge which requires that he speak to an official from his community about an issue. He asked the committee to provide information about what can be done to better maintain the stone structure on the south end of Seton Park behind the tennis courts. It has graffiti and broken bottles, some stones have fallen out and the lintel is broken. It is a remnant from a tuberculosis hospital, Seton Hospital, which used to be in the footprint of the park. He was advised to reach out to Partnership for Parks if he wanted to host a volunteer event to paint over the graffiti. Stewards of Spuyten Duyvil also offered to provide bags and gloves if he would like to host a litter pickup instead. The board office can connect Luke with Partnership for Parks if he would like to organize an event. It was also proposed that the Municipal Arts Society, who were responsible for the restoration of the Grand Central stones in Van Cortlandt Park might be interested. Chair will reach out to them. Luke was also encouraged to reach out to them as well.

**Litter and Dumping Around the Jerome Park Reservoir** - Rhashida Hilliard, a resident near the Jerome Park Reservoir, is requesting help from the community board regarding the trash and litter which have accumulated around the reservoir. The Environment and Sanitation Committee is the best committee for litter issues, but Chair Travis will raise this as a Parks Department issue with the District Manager since the Parks Department has historically picked up litter around the reservoir. Our request is for the District Manager to work with Parks, Sanitation and DEP via the District Service Cabinet meetings to arrange for a weekly litter pickup around the reservoir.

**Seton Park Dog Run In Poor Condition** – Resident Joel Zive reports the dog run in Seton Park is very muddy when it rains. Parks has addressed this problem by putting down wood chips, but they are getting washed out and making the pooling of water worse. Joel is a member of a group who regularly use the dog run and the Parks Department have provided them with wood chips, shovels and wheelbarrows to address the problem short term. He would like to see a reconstruction of the dog run to address the drainage issues. He was advised to more formally create a dog run group and for that group to advocate with our local city council member, Eric Dinowitz, for funding for improvements. Chair will also let the Parks Department know of the current need and add it for consideration for future budget priorities.

**Events with Van Cortlandt Park Alliance**

**May 3** – Pinkster noon-4pm, music, dance, crafts, food

**May 15** – Shindig – Honoring Herb Barret and James Hendon

Everyone is invited to purchase a journal ad to celebrate these two local heroes

The meeting adjourned at 8:34pm

Minutes submitted by Deb Travis

Meeting Recording: <https://youtu.be/TvALXqduTAI?si=CokrD62LZFnrhNIM>