

(Pending Committee Approval)

**Minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting
Bronx Community Board 8
Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at 7:00pm
Board Office – 5676 Riverdale Ave, Suite 100, Bronx, NY 10471**

Attendees

Committee:

Present (4): Bob Bender, Carol Blake, Miriam Filer, Debra Travis (Chair)

Absent: none

City Agencies and Partners:

Christina Taylor (Deputy Executive Director, Van Cortlandt Park Alliance)

The meeting commenced at 7:04pm

Welcome and Introduction of Committee Members and Guests

Approval of the February 25, 2026 Minutes

The meeting minutes were approved unanimously

Chair's Report

Letter of Comment Regarding the FY27 Parks Budget – the committee is sending a letter to our city council members and the mayor regarding their lack of adequate funding for the Parks Department in the upcoming FY27 budget. The committee chair has received feedback from the committee and will be sending the final version to the board office to be distributed.

Letter of Support for Bailey Playground Reconstruction – the board will be sending a letter to our elected officials urging funding for reconstruction of this playground. The final version is just waiting the Board Chair's signature

Letter of Recognition to Van Cortlandt Park Alliance in Honor of the Spring Shindig – the Community Board Chair is drafting this for review

Request for Approval of Street Activity Permit Office (SAPO) Application

The James Baldwin Outdoor Learning Center will be hosting a native tree giveaway in partnership with the New York Restoration Project on Sunday, April 19th. Ray Pultinas, one of the founders of JBOLC, came before the committee to request approval for the closure of the plaza to allow for its use for the tree giveaway. He does not anticipate that they will be interfering with pedestrian access through the plaza, but will be using it to stage the pickup of native trees which are being distributed by the New York Restoration Project.

The committee approved the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the James Baldwin Outdoor Learning Center presented their request to close public access to James Baldwin Plaza, which is a public plaza created from a closed slip lane bordered by

Goulden Avenue, Sedgwick Avenue and West Mosholu Parkway South on Sunday, April 19, 2026 between the hours of 1:00pm and 3:30pm including setup and breakdown time;

WHEREAS, Raymond Pultinas, one of the founders of the James Baldwin Outdoor Learning Center, appeared before the Parks and Recreation Committee on March 25, 2026 to provide details of their request which would facilitate a native tree giveaway in partnership with the New York Restoration Project;

WHEREAS, trees will be loaded into vehicles on West Mosholu Parkway South and will not interrupt the flow of traffic on Sedgwick Avenue or around DeWitt Clinton High School and the public will have access to sidewalk areas to circulate through the area;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Bronx Community Board 8 Parks and Recreation Committee supports the street activity permit for the full closure of the James Baldwin Plaza as requested by the James Baldwin Outdoor Learning Center for a tree giveaway.

Committee Vote

In favor: Bender, Blake, Filer, Travis

Opposed: None

FY28 Committee Capital and Expense Budget Priorities

The committee reviewed their previously highlighted park needs and put them in an order. Priorities were voted on and are as follows subject to some tweaks of language:

Parks & Recreation Committee - Capital Budget Priorities for FY28

FY 2028 Ranking		FY 2027 Ranking
1	<u>PARKS – DPR - Redesign and Reconstruction of Bailey Playground</u> Reconstruction of play equipment and safety surfacing. Incorporate adjacent Tibbett's Tail area as an expanded green space with paths and benches. Reduce asphalt and add green space overall. Study for use as headquarters for District 8 Parks operations	1
2	<u>PARKS – DPR – Reconstruction of Old Fort Four Park</u> Reconstruction of northern end of Old Fort Four Park including reconstruction of iron fencing and gates, benches and playground equipment and reconfiguring green space. Add basketball court lighting	2
3	<u>PARKS – DPR - Restoration of Lower Brust Park Staircase</u> Restoration of flagstone, pavers, steps and handrails	3
4	<u>PARKS – DPR – Van Cortlandt Park Pathway Lighting</u>	New

	Installation of park-style lighting from the Parade Ground to the Golf House parking lot	
5	<u>PARKS – DPR – Sid Field Lighting Ballfield Lighting</u> Install ballpark lighting following International Dark Sky Association standards for sports fields on Sid Augarten Ballfield	New

Parks & Recreation Committee - Expense Budget Priorities for FY28

FY 2028 Ranking		FY 2027 Ranking
1	<u>PARKS – DPR – Baseline Year-Round 1st/2nd Shift</u> Baseline funding to extend existing seasonal second shift to year-round positions to enable the regular locking/unlocking of playgrounds, ball courts and restrooms and predictable and consistent year-round maintenance such as snow removal, leaf removal and litter pickup for all park users regardless of time of day	New
2	<u>PARKS – DPR - Swimming Lessons For Children/Teens</u> Support swimming lessons for children at community pools by providing instructors and lifeguards to community partners and include in swimming lesson lottery	2
3	<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, Day Spring Park and local Community District 7, 8 and 12 parks	1
4	<u>PARKS – DPR - Replacement Gator-Type Utility Vehicles for Landscape Management, Maintenance and Operations Staff Within Van Cortlandt Park</u>	3

	Replace three existing utility gator-type vehicles due to age and maintenance issues	
5	<u>PARKS – DPR – Bruckner Box Repair in Henry Hudson Park</u> Connect the Bruckner Box Connection in Upper Henry Hudson Park to the main sewer and re-activate the water connection	4

Committee Vote

In favor: Bender, Blake, Filer, Travis

Opposed: None

Old Business

Seton Park Dog Run Group – the group is in the process of organizing their first event. The Community Board office has created a poster to get more interest and will be posting them at the dog run.

New Business

Paul’s Playground Sand – Rachel Miller Margolin informed the committee that the sandbox in Paul’s Playground is low on sand and needs to be refilled. The chair will reach out to the community board office to find out if more sand is possible. In the past, Parks has requested assistance with sweeping sand off of the walkways and play areas.

Riverdale Playground Pickleball Courts – Lew Wunderlich informed the committee that the pickleball courts which were installed in Riverdale Playground are in poor condition. The paint is faded, the net is torn, the court has seams and an overhead tree which are interfering with play. The Board Office has reached out to Parks to provide this feedback and will get back to Lew once we have a response. Lew also requested an update on the pickleball court installation in Seton Park. How many courts will there be? How many tennis courts are being converted? What is the timeline? Chair will reach out to Parks for additional information.

Spuyten Duyvil Shorefront Park – Jodie Colon informed the committee that three trails have been closed in the park due to erosion from Edsall Avenue. The Friends of Spuyten Duyvil Shorefront Park are working with the Natural Areas Conservancy to install water bars. The next Shorefront Park event will be Sunday, March 29th at 2pm.

Henry Hudson Park Event – Stewards of Henry Hudson Park will have their next work day on April 11th from 10:00am-12:30pm. Meet at the statue.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10pm

Minutes submitted by Deb Travis

Recording Link: <https://youtu.be/D2nziOeZLKY?si=BSR93wpXmazEhD2v>