

Minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting of June 26, 2019

In-Tech Academy (MS/HS 368), 2975 Tibbett Ave.

Attendees:

Committee: Bob Bender (chair), Eric Bell, Robert Fanuzzi, David Gellman, Marvin Goodman, Donnel Leverett, Tao Moran

Absent: Daris B. Jackson

Other CB8: Laura Spalter

DPR: Michael Ortiz, Peng Xu, Gustavo Frindt, Stephanie Thayer, Elizabeth Jordan, Jennifer Greenfeld, Joseph Magneri, John-Paul Catusco

Community: Patrick Hill (Councilman Cohen's office), Karen Argenti, Elizabeth Thompson, Hugh McCarey, Bob Brady, I-C Levenberg-Engel, Elizabeth Dougherty, John Dougherty, Ann Hsu, Rob Spalter, Melanie Wacker, Christopher Wacker, Caroline Clanton, Roberta Strugger

Agenda:

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm.

DPR Presentation Concerning Fitness Equipment in Ewen Park

Michael Ortiz of DPR introduced Peng Xu, who presented a design for this equipment. Mr. Xu began by explaining the topographical constraints Ewen Park presents. The equipment will be located close to the W. 232 St. entrance, across from the new tot lot playground. A new connecting path will be constructed for access to the site and the equipment will be surrounded by a retaining wall that at its highest point will be between 3 and 4 feet tall. There will be new plantings and new drains at either end of the wall. There will be 4 pieces of equipment installed. The project is funded by Councilman Cohen.

In response to questions Mr. Ortiz said that the same equipment has been used in other parks. There was discussion of whether lighting might be desirable, primarily to deter improper use of the area.

The presentation was favorably received by those in attendance. Committee members voted unanimously to approve the design. A resolution follows:

Whereas Councilman Cohen has provided funding for the installation of adult exercise equipment in Ewen Park in response to requests he received during the Participatory Budget process; and

Whereas representatives of the Department of Parks & Recreation presented a proposed design to the Parks & Recreation committee meeting of June 26, 2019, and answered questions about the design from committee members and nearby residents and park users; therefore

Be It Resolved, that the Parks & Recreation Committee endorses the proposed design as presented, requesting that DPR return to the committee in the event of any substantive changes to the design or location of the equipment.

In favor, 6: Bell, Bender, Fanuzzi, Goodman, Leverett, Moran

Opposed, 0

Abstained, 0

Discussion of maintenance issues in Ewen Park followed. Parks manager Joe Magneri explained the difficulties that Ewen's steep slope presents in lawn mowing. The condition of the dog run was also criticized. Maintenance in this park has been a challenge for several years.

There was also discussion of whether fencing installed during the tot lot construction has affected access to the park for emergency vehicles. DPR representatives acknowledged that this issue deserves further attention. Mr. Magneri pledged to follow up.

DPR Update on Putnam Trail Renovation

DPR Assistant Commissioner Jennifer Greenfeld updated the committee on the Putnam Trail renovation. The start date was pushed back to August 15 following discussions with NYC Audubon in order to allow for bird-breeding season. The contractor will decide exactly when and where to start work, but once work begins the entire trail will be closed and notices will be posted at all access points to notify trail users.

Ms. Greenfeld reviewed the personnel who will be responsible for ensuring that SWPPP and other protocols are followed during construction, including a resident engineer reporting to DPR, a naturalist who will monitor the site, and a SWPPP inspector. The committee's SWPPP Working Group will coordinate with Elizabeth Jordan of DPR. The details of the SWPPP Working Group's interaction will be worked out over the summer. Reports will be issued by the SWPPP inspector and will be available to the public, exact details still to be determined.

Old Business

Bob Bender mentioned that the new city budget allocates an additional \$43 million for parks, which will allow for more parks personnel and more community gardens. Ms. Greenfeld cautioned that this is a one-time allotment. New Yorkers for Parks, a nonprofit advocacy group, had campaigned for additional funding for parks. Bob noted that CB8 was the first (and perhaps only) community board in the city to endorse this campaign.

The community board has again been granted \$42,500 for special programming and events in the new budget. Committee members were asked to think of ways that the money could be used.

A quorum being present, the May committee meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Bob Bender brought up the subject of Greenstreets in response to a suggestion at a recent T&T committee meeting concerning the reconfiguration of the intersection at Kappock and Palisade aves. Ms. Greenfeld said that DOT constructs Greenstreets but consults with DPR. DOT can go ahead if DPR does not endorse the site, but in that case DPR is not responsible for maintenance. DPR has a list of Greenstreets in the Bronx for which it is responsible.

New Business

Karen Argenti described a BOA (Brownfield Opportunity Area) grant, administered by NYS DEC, which BCEQ (Bronx Council on Environmental Quality) has applied for. The E&S committee recently discussed this issue and passed a resolution in support.

Mr. Argenti also noted construction work underway for the Mosholu Golf House in the southeast corner of Van Cortlandt Park, near Jerome Avenue. This area is outside the zone authorized by memoranda agreed to when the filtration plant was sited in VCP. This apparent violation will be considered by CB7 and CB12 and the Croton Filtration Monitoring Committee.

Members of the Save Brust Park coalition spoke about their concerns for this park. Bob said that this issue is being discussed in the Land Use committee and that there seems at present to be no evidence that the proposed building will adversely affect Brust Park.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.

Minutes submitted by Bob Bender