

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

**MINUTES OF THE LIBRARIES & CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON MARCH 10, 2016
AT WAVE HILL, 675 WEST 252 STREET**

Present

Marvin Goodman
Sylvia Alexander
Philip Friedman
Martin Wolpoff
Amy Joy Robateau
Rosemary Ginty
Lisa Daub
Tim Tureski
Peter Pamphile
Rebecca Barbier
Deirdre La Porte
Avigdor Gargy

Affiliation

CB8 Committee Chair
CB8 Committee Member
CB8 Committee Member
CB8 Committee Member
CB8 Committee Member
CB8, Vice-Chair
CB8, Chair Aging Committee
Branch Manager, Spuyten Duyvil Library
Branch Manager, Van Cortlandt Library
Branch Manager, Riverdale Branch Library
Wave Hill Garden Guide
Community Resident

Absent

None

The meeting was held at Wave Hill and began at 3:30PM.

Our group assembled at the Perkins Visitor Center, where we met our tour guide, Deidre La Porte. She pointed out that the Wave Hill Estate encompasses two family mansions, one at each end of the estate and an extensive garden plot between the two mansions. The estate overlooks the Hudson River and faces the New Jersey Palisades. At the early part of the 20th century, the estate owners, the Perkins Family, worked tirelessly with the Rockefellers, among others, to ensure that the Jersey Palisades would retain its current forestry appearance. The Palisades Parkway help ensure this. We noted that as recently as 2015, a large business company wanted to build a tall business building in this area which would rise significantly above the scenic tree line of the Palisades and destroy this bucolic view of the Palisades. Thanks to the efforts of many civic groups, including our own Community Board 8, this company effort was defeated. Our committee chair noted that the Perkins family was so determined to preserve its countrified view of the Hudson River and the Palisades, that the father built all the children's extensive play areas underground into the hillside, so the scenic view was unobstructed.

The grounds demonstrate a variety of botanical features and seasonal floral growth all initiated in the glass greenhouse near the Perkins Visitor Center. The chief gardener for this estate is Marco Polo Stuffano. Many visitors tour the seasonal plantings.

Diedre La Porte gave us an extensive history of the estate, whose history can be traced back to the time of the Dutch. The current history of the estate dates back to 1843 when William Lewis Morris moved his family into the newly completed main section of the Wave Hill House, built in Greek Revival style and covered in gray fieldstone. (We noted that the Lewis Morris family was part of Bronx history from the time of the American Revolution.) The house was acquired later on by the

well-known publisher, William Henry Appleton. Amon his visiting friends were Thomas Huxley and Charles Darwin.

The house was leased in 1870 to the family of the young Theodore Roosevelt. In 1901-1903, Mark Twain and his family resided at Wave Hill House and Arturo Toscanani lived in Wave Hill House from 1943 to 1945. After World War II, Queen Elizabeth stayed at Wave Hill when she visited New York City. The Perkins' daughter had moved into the house in the 1930's and had an architect remove much of the Victorian era details of the building. The Gothic Style Armour Hall, completed in 1927 to house the armour collection of Bashford Dean, remains, but all the suits of armour lining the walls are now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Glyndor House, located near Wave Hill House, was acquired by the Perkins family in 1895, and the family lived there also. Today the Glyndor House is home to the art gallery exhibits of Wave Hill.

Our tourist guide led us on a short tour of the grounds between the two estates, where we could note the roofing of the underground playground of the Perkins' children. The meeting ended at the point, and because of their need to close the facilities, no other committee business was conducted.

The next meeting of the Libraries and Cultural Affairs Committee will be Thursday, April 14, 2016 at 5:00PM at the Board Office, 5676 Riverdale Avenue, Suite 100.

Respectfully submitted,

Marvin Goodman
Chair, Libraries and Cultural Affairs Committee