

Minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting, May 24, 2017

Community Board 8, 5676 Riverdale Avenue

(pending committee approval)

Attendees

Committee: Bob Bender (chair), Sylvia Alexander, Eric Bell, David Gellman, Marvin Goodman, Laura Spalter (CB8); Herb Barret, Christina Taylor (Community Committee Members)

Absent: Robert Fanuzzi, Tao Moran, Amy Joy Robateau

DPR: Margot Perron

Community: David Burg

Agenda

The meeting began at 7:10 pm. Minutes of the April meeting were unanimously approved.

Review Capital and Expense Budget Priorities

Committee members discussed revisions to last year's budget priorities with the assistance of VCP Administrator Margot Perron. The following priorities were identified for the next fiscal year:

Capital:

1. Construction of a new restroom and related plumbing repairs in Fort Four Park, plus required maintenance. DPR estimates the cost as somewhat in excess of \$3 million. This has been the committee's top priority for several years. The restroom is partly funded with \$1 million from Councilman Cabrera and \$500,000 from Borough President Diaz.
2. Redesign and reconstruction of Bailey Avenue playground. The drains at the southeast end of the playground require immediate repair to eliminate pools of standing water, which are a health hazard. DPR estimates the cost at \$5.36 million.
3. Construction of a restroom at Broadway and W. 251st in Van Cortlandt Park, adjacent to the Parade Grounds.
4. Construction of a pond wall at Spuyten Duyvil Park to prevent water runoff from the pond onto the roadway of the parking lot at the adjacent Metro-North station.

5. Erosion control measures in Ewen Park to prevent runoff downhill toward Riverdale Avenue. It was noted that the slope is used for sledding in the winter and that this should be considered when erosion-control measures are undertaken.
6. Repair of the “birding bridge” over Tibbetts Brook outside the fence around the golf course in Van Cortlandt Park. (This item is new this year.)
7. Reconstruction of the steps on the historic south side entrance to the Van Cortlandt Mansion.
8. Renovation of Van Cortlandt Park stadium.
9. Renovation of the Strong Street playground.

Expense:

1. Personnel to alleviate the chronic double parking on Broadway, whether through issuance of summonses or other means. (This item is new this year.)
2. Personnel sufficient for maintenance, especially of lawn, landscaped areas, and Greenstreets, and enforcement in CB8 parks, especially on weekends and times of high use.
3. Purchase of a tractor and accompanying trailer to aid in regular maintenance of CB8 parks.
4. One large replacement tractor for Van Cortlandt Park.

These priorities were unanimously approved by the committee.

Review Parks Inspection Reports

The chair thanked committee members who turned in evaluations for local parks. Only two parks remain un-inspected. This second batch of parks inspection reports will be forwarded to parks manager Tony Rosa. Sometime later this year, we will discuss with him problems identified in these and how to address them.

Discussion of Parks Resource Guide

Prior to the meeting committee members Bob Fanuzzi and Christina Taylor circulated a draft of the parks resource guide. At the meeting several suggestions were made by committee members. Christina said that she would incorporate them into the final document, which will then be submitted by the chair to the officers of the board for further action. The chair thanked Bob and Christina for their hard work.

Old Business

The chair thanked Laura Spalter, David Gellman, and Herb Barret for their participation at the committee's "It's My Park" Day event at Tibbetts Tail. Volunteers cleared invasives and planted ornamental plants at the south end of the park.

New Business

David Burg asked why the oaks in the Wallenberg Forest appear to be in decline. The chair will refer this question to the Bronx Parks forestry division.

Margot Perron told the committee that there is a problem with lighting around the VC Golf House. The source of the lights in that area of the park is an electrical box located at the Major Deegan Expressway. There is a problem with repair of the electrical box that has caused DPR to have to rent a generator to provide electricity to the golf house area, at considerable expense. DPR is trying to resolve the issue with State DOT. Assistance from CB8 would be appreciated by DPR.

DPR will not be ready to present its Tibbetts Brook plans at the June meeting. In the absence of other business, the June meeting will be canceled.

It is anticipated that DDC will present to the committee a design for the pedestrian bridge over the Major Deegan Expressway in Van Cortlandt Park sometime this fall. More information will be forthcoming when it is available.

The chair proposed a forum sometime in the fall on how to establish a "friends of" group for local parks. Councilman Cohen has indicated his interest in participating. Further planning will take place at the committee's September meeting. Committee members thought the forum was a good idea.

The chair reminded everyone about Riverdale Riverfest on Sunday, June 11.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.