

**COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8 BRONX
MINUTES OF THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE
HELD MARCH 28, 2012 AT THE BOARD OFFICE**

Attendees:

Committee and Community Board Members: Bob Bender, Laura Spalter, Bob Press, Steven Balicer, Tom Durham, Thailary Lim, Amy Moore, Marvin Goodman, Bob Fanuzzi, CB8; Christina Taylor, FVCP; Herb Barret, Memorial Grove

DPR: Margot Perron, Ben Kramer

Others: Miawling Lam, Riverdale Review; Karen Argenti, Jane Sokolow; Rich Conroy, Bike New York; Lawrence Moiatto, Memorial Grove; David Gellman, Suzanne Corber, Van Cortlandt Park Track Club; David Gellman,

Old Business:

The meeting began at 7:05PM. Minutes of the February meeting were approved.

Discussion of "It's My Park Day." Vice-chair Laura Spalter announced a site visit to Fort Four Park on Saturday, April 21 at 10 am. She will communicate with Kristin Hart of FIPNA and Al Chapman of KHNA, both of whom enthusiastically endorse the event. It was agreed that the committee should reach out to local private and public schools, whose students have to satisfy community service requirements. It was also suggested that the office publicize the event through the community board Facebook page.

Chair Bob Bender announced that a skateboard park site visit has been set for Wednesday, April 11 at 10 am at Bailey Avenue playground, proceeding afterward to Van Cortlandt Park. Commissioner Aponte and other DPR personnel will attend, as will Andrew Sandler from Councilman Koppell's office. Bob Bender and Laura Spalter will attend; other committee members are invited. It was suggested that the proprietor of Mosaic Skate Shop, who appeared before the committee when it discussed the skate park last year, be invited, which has been done.

New Business:

The committee discussed budget priorities for the coming fiscal year. Two items were removed from last year's Expense items: #2 (acquisition of a pick-up truck and related equipment) because it was acquired, and #4 (installation of a ping-pong table in VC Park) at the suggestion of DPR.

The following items were removed from last year's Capital budget requests: #3 (repair of basketball court and fences at Ewen Park) has been funded by Councilman Koppell

and work should begin this year; #7 (walkway parallel to W. 232 St south of Seton Park) because DPR will not support it; and #9 (repair of stairway at Brust Park) has been accomplished. In addition, Councilman Koppell has indicated his willingness to fund a skateboard park, so #2 may be modified. The basketball courts in Classic Playground (#8) are being re-surfaced, but the gas line has not yet been repaired. There was discussion of why the gas line remains unrepaired, and the Chair said he would ask the office to contact Con Edison to find out. *(After the meeting it was determined that DPR and not Con Edison is responsible for repairing the gas line. The Chair has asked DPR to provide a plan for repair.)*

The Chair wishes to thank temporary Parks Manager Mike Grattan for his helpful comments on last year's budget priorities.

It was suggested that re-surfacing of the tennis courts at Seton Park be considered as a new priority for the coming year, based on earlier testimony from tennis players at the park. The Chair said he would ask Councilman Koppell's office whether the funding currently allocated by the councilman to Seton Park will include re-surfacing of the tennis courts. *(Andrew Sandler indicated after the meeting that it is unclear whether the funding allocated will allow for re-surfacing of the tennis courts.)* It was suggested that the pedestrian bridge in Van Cortlandt Park be added to the committee's capital budget priorities, to which all agreed.

The committee discussed the condition of Ewen Park and whether new capital projects could be undertaken to help stabilize the hillside and prevent erosion down the slope to Riverdale Avenue.

There was discussion of whether a playground should be added to the park. Members of the committee asked whether the April meeting should be held in Kingsbridge to be sure that Kingsbridge parks are given full consideration for expense and capital budget priorities. The Chair agreed to investigate possible sites there for the April meeting. Discussion of the committee's budget priorities will resume at the April meeting.

Karen Argenti observed that while money has been allocated for repair of the Old Croton Aqueduct Trail in Van Cortlandt Park (which is underway), access to the trail is problematic. The trail is not marked south of Van Cortlandt Park along Mosholu Parkway so finding the trail in the vicinity of Mosholu Parkway and Goulden Avenue – anywhere between VCP and Aqueduct Walk – is difficult and potentially dangerous. It was agreed that new signage is necessary.

The Chair mentioned that the NYMTC study of locations for the Hudson River Greenway in Riverdale is concluding. NYMTC will make a local presentation on April 10. Because this is the same date as the CB8 monthly meeting, NYMTC will also present its findings at the April 17 T&T meeting and will discuss its findings so far as they relate to area parks at our April meeting.

Christina Young mentioned a new youth market that is to open in VCP this summer and asked the committee's support for it. The committee agreed to support the VCP youth market.

Laura Spalter said that Riverdale Temple is holding a Mitzvah day on Saturday April 22 at Endor Garden and urged committee members to participate.

The Chair reported that there is an online petition to support the VCP pedestrian bridge and provided the website, urging everyone present to vote in favor of it. He also reminded committee members that the Million Trees Project continues and that we should be diligent about reporting blocks that need street-tree plantings. The board office passed along information about Change by Us NYC mini-grants available to local groups for greening their neighborhoods (for more information: www.citizensnyc.org). Finally, the Chair reminded everyone that applications for the VCP Green Jobs for Youth program are due April 4.

Rich Conroy of Bike New York spoke about the community bicycle center in Van Cortlandt Park (on VCP South opposite Visitation Church). His group offers free bicycle lessons and wants to work with summer camps, particularly in the Bronx. Their website is www.bikenewyork.org.

Bob Press asked about a trench recently dug at the site of the ice rink and wanted to know whether in providing new electricity to the site Con Edison would be closing Broadway because the power line will have to cross Broadway from Manhattan College Parkway. The Chair responded that it was his understanding that the power line is to be installed over the summer and that no more than one lane at a time would be closed on Broadway. The Chair agreed to get a definitive answer and a schedule.

Margot Perron said that on Monday, April 23, the first community meeting for a proposed new master plan for Van Cortlandt Park will take place at the Mosholu Golf House at 7 pm. It is anticipated that the planning for the new master plan will take a year. There has not been a master plan for VCP since the mid-1980s.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

The next committee meeting will take place Wednesday, April 25 at a site to be determined.

Submitted by:

Bob Bender, Chair
Parks & Recreation Committee

