

COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8 BRONX  
MINUTES OF THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE  
HELD OCTOBER 27, 2010 AT BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

**Attendees:**

Community Board committee members:

Bob Bender, Chair  
Laura Spalter  
Rosemary Ginty  
T.C. Durham  
Brendan Contant  
Yael Levy, Vice-chair

Other Community Board attendee:

Herbert Young

Committee members:

Andrew Sandler, Councilman Koppell's office  
Lawrence Moiatto, Memorial Grove  
Herb Barret, Memorial Grove  
Don Tannen, Memorial Grove  
Christina Taylor, Friends of Van Cortlandt Park

Other community residents:

Brian Seitz  
Michael Tafet, Van Cortlandt Golf Course

DPR:

Margot Perron  
Chris Farnum

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

The minutes of the September meeting were unanimously approved.

**Old Business**

The Chair gave a report on the October 20 Hudson River Greenway meeting at the Church of the Mediator. Several CB8 members attended. The study organizers reported on Task 7, identifying two routes for the Greenway. There was much discussion and a consensus that routes closest to the river are most desirable. Most people at the meeting want to see a route selected and implemented in the next 3 to 5 years, but want to continue to try to find an all-river route even if that takes much longer to identify and develop. The Henry Hudson Bridge has emerged as the most likely route across the Harlem River ship canal. Amtrak will not permit the railroad swing bridge to be used.

Next step will be the selection of a preferred route (Task 8) and an implementation plan for that route (Task 9, the final task). The study is expected to be completed in about 3 months.

The Chair also reported on an October 25 meeting at the Kingsbridge Little League field (Cooney Grauer field). KLL president Chris Navarro has requested that the height of the left field fence be raised because storms caused the loss of a tree that acted as a shield against foul balls rising over the fence and possibly landing on the Major Deegan Expressway below. Councilman Koppell allocated \$150,000 for the project, but the Parks Department's initial estimate is that several times that amount will be needed because new footings and a new retaining wall must be constructed. DPR will study in more detail and provide a new cost estimate for the new fence.

The Chair updated the committee on the Sid Augarten (Vinmont) ballfield. Multiple bids were received, and DPR is now examining the bidders' qualifications. At least one bidder is known to be qualified so the work could begin early in 2011.

The Memorial Grove project may be delayed because two bidders have been rejected and there are questions about the third bidder that are as yet unresolved. We will know more soon. Herb Barret reported that the Manhattan College Air Force ROTC will again clean up the Memorial Grove. They will coordinate their effort with DPR.

Christina Taylor of FVCP reported that more than 2,000 trees were planted in VCP during "It's My Park" day activities, mostly in Indian Fields and Sackerah Woods areas.

Christina Taylor described the work of FVCP for the benefit of new members of the committee. She explained that FVCP was founded in 1992 and that the high school internship program is the flagship program. Originally it consisted of trash clean-up but has evolved into forest and natural area restoration, trail restoration, etc. More than 1300 volunteers have participated in FVCP programs so far in 2010, and more than 2800 people have been served. Teachers as well as students participate, and there are volunteer opportunities for the general public. The demonstration garden program donated more than 200 lbs. of vegetables to the POTS soup kitchen. Most FVCP money comes from foundations, but individual contributions are valuable and always welcome. Visit [www.vancortlandt.org](http://www.vancortlandt.org) for further information.

Andrew Sandler spoke about the city's Green Block program, which works with block associations, BIDs, and other groups to plant trees on city streets. Perhaps there are opportunities for more planting in CB8?

The Chair circulated DPR's response to the committee's budget requests, which arrived just prior to the meeting. DPR endorsed all the committee's requests but said that funding was not available for any expense or capital item and would have to be requested from elected officials.

Yael Levy announced that the 2011 Riverfest will be held on Sunday, June 12 from noon to 6 pm, again at the College of Mt. St. Vincent. Volunteers have already begun planning the Riverfest.

Herb Barret announced that the Memorial Grove Veterans Day observance will be held on Sunday, November 14.

Rosemary Ginty reported on her meeting with Ray Acosta at Spuyten Duyvil park. Ray said that he would call a meeting of relevant city agencies with the contractor to restore the site that is being used as a staging area for the HH Bridge renovation. RG reported that there is activity at the site and that Ray Acosta assured her that the contractor must return the site to its previous condition.

The Chair reported to those who did not attend the October Land Use committee meeting that the Putnam Line south of VCP to W. 230<sup>th</sup> St. was discussed. The DPR representative was urged to speak to local businesses and promised to report back to CB8 about these conversations.

### **New Business**

Chris Farnum of DPR's revenue division, presented a plan for renovation of the Van Cortlandt Golf Course clubhouse and adjacent areas.

The concessionaire is required by contract to make \$5 million in improvements to the golf course. The clubhouse renovation is Phase Two of these improvements. The clubhouse will be remodeled, a maintenance shed and storage area and container will be removed, and a new maintenance shed will be constructed. A new "halfway house" will be built to replace an existing tented area on the course itself. The halfway house will be small in dimension, serving snacks.

The clubhouse will be completely renovated although no significant exterior alteration will be made except for a new chimney on the north side to match that on the south and to replace current kitchen exhaust pipes. Shingles, paint, and other exterior features will be restored. The first floor interior will be reconfigured to provide a better entryway and direct access to an enlarged rear deck on the lake. The food area will now include an exterior service window where snacks can be purchased without walking into the clubhouse. Bathrooms will be renovated and made easily accessible from the exterior. The first floor areas will be ADA accessible. The rear deck will be made accessible from outside via steps. (It is currently accessible only from inside the clubhouse.) The second floor, where the historic wooden lockers are located, will be restored but not altered.

The new maintenance building will be constructed on the sloping area directly across from the clubhouse. It will be 4000 square feet total. It will be a steel shed, screened by shrubs and trees, partly underground (due to slope). No significant trees will be removed to build the shed, although some small-caliper trees may have to be removed.

There was much discussion of the plan, particularly of the size of the maintenance shed and the amount of paved surface surrounding the shed.

Mr. Farnum indicated that DPR hopes to submit the plan to the Public Design Commission for its Nov. 16 application and a December 7 hearing date. He indicated that there is no construction schedule as of yet. All staging would be done on the site. In response to a question he reported that the concessionaire is in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of a 20-year license.

The meeting was adjourned at 9 pm.

The Chair thanks Rosemary Ginty for assistance with the minutes.