

**COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8 BRONX
MINUTES OF THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE
HELD MARCH 23RD, 2011 AT RIVERDALE MENTAL HEALTH**

Attendees:

Bob Bender, Laura Spalter, Rosemary Ginty, Brendan Contant, Tom Durham, Amy Moore, Yael Levy, Steven Balicer, Robert Press, Damian McShane, Robert Fanuzzi, CB8; Lawrence Moiatto, Herb Barret, Don Tannen, Lillian Tannen, VCP Memorial Grove; Mike Lau, Charles Kloth, Davita Maboutakh, Margot Perron, Gal Lavid, Fiorella Trimble, Ben Kramer, Claudette Richards, DPR; Daniel Johnson, Assemblyman Dinowitz's office; Andrew Sandler, Councilman Koppell's office; Brendan McHugh, Riverdale Review; Graham Kutes, Riverdale Press; I-C L'Engel, BCEQ; James Harvey, Pat Porters, Manhattan College; Mrs. Edie Davis

Agenda:

The meeting began at 7:05 pm. The minutes of the February meeting were approved.

Fiorella Trimble from DPR discussed the Million Trees program. She reported that 40 plantings took place in CB8 last fall and that 46 sites have been surveyed for Spring 2011 (not all sites surveyed will be planted). Since the program began 487 trees have been planted in CB8. Anyone who wants a tree planted on public property should call 311 and make a request.

There was a brief discussion of the Greenblock program. This program identifies blocks that lack trees and could benefit from three to four new trees. Ms. Trimble said that the Board should supply addresses for these blocks and request trees through 311.

The Friends of Van Cortlandt Park will give away trees to homeowners on May 15. The giveaway will take place at the demonstration compost site in VCP near the stables on Broadway and Mosholu.

Charles Kloth, Director of Concessions for DPR, and Davita Maboutakh of DPR discussed the proposed ice-skating rink in VCP. Mr. Kloth said that CB8 comments on the initial proposal will be included in the RFP wherever feasible. The expectation is that the rink will be situated on the unused tennis courts and support trailers will be located on the two northernmost handball courts.

The RFP is being drafted and is expected to be issued in the next couple of weeks. It will be sent to operators of other rinks and others chosen by internet research for concessionaires. A copy of the RFP will be supplied to CB8. The process is expected to take 6-8 weeks. A site tour will be arranged for interested parties and CB8 is welcome to attend. A DPR selection committee will rate the proposals that are received according to various categories (e.g., admission price) and will then select

the concessionaire. A public hearing will take place. These hearings are scheduled on a monthly basis. CB8 will be notified when the RFP is issued, when the site visit is scheduled, when the public hearing is held, and when the concessionaire makes a presentation to DPR.

In response to questions, Mr. Kloth said that the City Comptroller sits on the Franchise and Review Commission so he will review the proposal in that capacity. Margot Perron, VCP Administrator, said that putting a rink in the Orchard Beach parking lot is not a good idea because of lack of public transportation to this location. Mr. Kloth said he was not certain who was paying for the electrical upgrade to the site and would report back on this question. He said that there is no comparable temporary ice-skating rink in the outer boroughs; only the Bryant Park rink is similar. He said that the concessionaire will be responsible for maintenance, sanitation, and security. Ms. Perron said that there will be refinements to the operation even after the rink begins operating. Mrs. Davis, who lives across Broadway from the proposed rink location, said that she thought the rink should be located on VCP South across from Visitation Church. Ms. Perron said that that area has been designated for wheelchair sports. (BikeNY is going to be giving bicycle-riding lessons in this location in May.) Money from the concession goes to the city's general fund; however the concessionaire could make voluntary contributions to VCP.

Robert Press said that he thought the project ought to be reviewed by the CB8 Economic Development Committee. Damian McShane urged that everyone focus on the proposal and judge it on its merits, not on unrelated issues such as who proposed it. (*Note: after the meeting Economic Development chair Maria Khury declined to review the proposal, saying that she felt it properly belonged in the jurisdiction of the Parks & Recreation Committee.*)

The committee discussed the Greenstreets proposal from Assemblyman Dinowitz. Various committee members – Rosemary Ginty, Yael Levy, Steve Balicer, Brendan Contant, Tom Durham, and Amy Moore – reported on locations they had visited. All seemed appropriate for the Greenstreets program. Mr. Contant said he was surprised that merchants on Riverdale Avenue expressed concerns about the location at W. 236th, Riverdale, and Fieldston Road. The major concern was that no parking spaces be lost at that location.

There was a request to add the location of Riverdale Ave. and W. 254 Street for consideration.

Committee chair Bob Bender read the list of committee budget priorities for 2012 and asked committee members to inspect local parks and identify needs in those parks. The committee will discuss its FY 2013 budget priorities in detail at the April meeting.

The Chair discussed a project for "It's My Park" Day on May 21 at Vinmont Park in North Riverdale. New Parks liaison Gal Lavid introduced himself and explained what sort of support DPR would provide. The ideal turnout would be 40 to 50 people. Various chores such as cleaning of swales and drains, removal of debris, etc. could be accomplished. Although trees cannot be planted, planting of shrubs and bushes could take place. If there are sufficient people, some work might be done in Hackett Park across the street. The CB8 office will coordinate through DPR. Amy Moore said she would speak to the Parents' Association of PS 81 about co-sponsoring the event.

The Chair mentioned the new Vision 2020 Waterfront Plan announced by Mayor Bloomberg and Council Speaker Quinn. He observed that the draft proposal identified no locations in CB8 but following communications from CB8, several sites were added. Notable among them was public access to the Hudson River via the Hudson River Greenway, and a proposed "daylighting" of Tibbetts Brook south of VCP to the Harlem River Ship Canal.

Yael Levy reported that Riverdale Riverfest will take place on Sunday, June 12, from 1-6 PM.

The Chair mentioned a recent op-ed in *The Riverdale Press* complaining about problems in holding a track event in VCP. Margot Perron and Claudette Richards of DPR, who handles permits in VCP, said that the person who wrote the op-ed had not requested a permit. Since the story appeared, the author of the article has been informed of permitting procedures and the problem should now be resolved.

There will be a discussion of access to the Jerome Park Reservoir at the March 31 Croton Filtration Monitoring Committee (CFMC) meeting.

Herb Barret reported that Memorial Grove work should commence on April 11, and he hopes to have a small celebration at the site to commemorate the long-awaited event.

A gentleman (unidentified) complained about lack of access to the VCP tennis courts by public schools, specifically DeWitt Clinton, and asked whether private schools were given preference. Margot Perron said that Clinton had failed to apply for a permit this year, and that the private schools were not given priority.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20. The next meeting will take place on April 27.

Submitted by,

Bob Bender
Chairman
Parks & Recreation Committee