

**COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8 BRONX
MINUTES OF THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE
HELD NOVEMBER 30TH, 2011 AT THE BOARD OFFICE**

Attendees:

Committee members: Bob Bender (chair), Laura Spalter (vice chair), Anthony Piscitelli, Marvin Goodman, Steven Balicer, Robert Press, Amy Moore, Tom Durham, Thailary Lim; Herb Barret (Memorial Grove); Christina Taylor (FVCP)

Other CB8 attendees: Herb Young

DPR: Margot Perron, Alexander Smith, Davita Maboutakh

Community attendees: Lawrence Moiatto (Memorial Grove), Brendan McHugh (Riverdale Review), I-C L-Engel (BCEQ), Michael Alfano, Aaron Sherbakou, Michael Roberts, Wilfredo Suarez (Mosaic Skate Gallery)

Agenda item:

The meeting was called to order shortly after 7 pm. Minutes of the October meeting were approved.

The Chair opened discussion of a location for a skateboard park within CB8. Possible sites were mentioned but discussion focused on a site identified by Margot Perron, VCP Administrator. The site in question lies immediately south of the handball courts alongside Broadway in VCP and north of the playground at the southwest corner. There are two basketball courts (backboards and hoops), with a third located 90 degrees to the immediate south. Adjacent to this third court is a large open space that could be used for skateboarding (the third basketball backboard and hoop would not be accessible). Messrs. Alfano, Sherbakou, and Roberts urged that a location be found for a skateboard park and thought this location would attract skateboarders. Wilfredo Suarez of Mosaic Skate Gallery said that a state-of-the-art skateboard park would attract skateboarders from all over the Bronx and even elsewhere in the city. All agreed that the easy access to the #1 train stop at W. 242nd Street made this location ideal.

Mr. Suarez gave the committee a brief review of skateboard parks elsewhere. He said that the Mullally Park skateboard facility is outdated and recommended "plaza" designs that he says are now more popular. He recommended the Far Rockaway skate park, 157th Street (Bronx), Malouf (Flushing), Tribeca and Chelsea Piers parks as models for a new park.

Mr. Suarez and others observed that a concrete skate park requires little maintenance.

Several possible funding sources were identified: Tony Hawk Foundation, DC Shoes, Rob Drydek Foundation, SafeSpots Skate Parks.

The Chair said he would forward the information to local elected officials and to the Parks Department to urge that funding be identified to begin the process of establishing a skate park.

Old and New Business:

Davita Maboutakh of DPR presented a plan for a "mini" ice-skating rink that would be built by IceRink Events, the concessionaire that has been in negotiation with the Parks Department for several months over an earlier proposed skating rink. This mini rink would be built on the

same location where the full-size rink will be located if the proposal for that rink is approved. Ms. Dabourakh said that this mini rink would not have to go through the review process that the full-size rink is currently undergoing, that is, it would not have to go before the Franchise and Concessions Review Committee. Because it would be a special event similar to a circus or carnival, it would be eligible for approval by the Parks Department alone. Ms. Mabourakh supplied a schematic design in which she identified temporary chillers, a tent for storing the Zamboni machine, portable toilets, and an electrical upgrade that would be located in a permanent electrical box on site. The planned \$125,000 electrical upgrade previously identified, which would have been situated at the Stadium, will not be done. All costs for the mini rink will be borne by IceRink Events; there will be no cost to the City. In addition, the handball courts will not be used at all (in the original proposal, the two northernmost handball courts would have been used for the full-size rink). A limited snack menu will be available on site. New fencing and new gates would be constructed around the rink. The intention is to open the mini rink in January while the full-size rink continues to undergo review.

Committee members asked numerous questions, among them whether the pricing structure for public use of the rink has been established, hours of operation, public vs. private access times (Ms. Mabourakh said that the intention is to provide public access during the hours of expected high use, such as weekends), whether CB7 and CB12 will receive briefings, how the exhaust from the temporary chillers will be channeled, etc. She promised to respond to questions she could not answer via follow-up email.

Regarding the opening of the mini-rink, Ms. Mabourakh said that would depend on how long it takes to perform the electrical upgrade at the site.

Ms. Mabourakh requested that CB8 provide comments as soon as possible. The Chair observed that the new rink plan has to be discussed at the board meeting on December 13, so additional questions and comments will be sent December 14. Ms. Mabourakh said that would be acceptable.

The Chair asked whether this is a one-time event, i.e., that DPR does not intend to install the full-size rink or another rink without going through the proper procedure. Ms. Mabourakh confirmed that this is a one-time event because of the temporary nature of this rink.

The Chair provided updates on two items:

The Putnam Trail: Congressman Engel has been asked by community residents to intervene to prevent paving of the Putnam Trail. Rep. Engel's office contacted the Chair to confirm the Board's approval of the Trail.

Jerome Park Reservoir/Ft. Independence Park: As discussed at the Croton Filtration Monitoring Committee meeting in November, the number of trees to be removed from the earthen dam area of the reservoir has decreased. A final determination has yet to be made, pending discussion with the DEC. Meanwhile DPR announced that it will move ahead with the planned but stalled renovation of Ft. Independence Park, holding off only on the portion of the park that will be affected by the tree removal. The jogging path remains as proposed, only partially around the reservoir, because of objections from Lehman College representatives that parking spaces would be lost if the trail were to go through the Lehman parking lot. There was much discussion of this subject at the CFMC meeting as few observers accepted the Lehman estimate of lost spaces.

Vice-chair Laura Spalter reported on a waterfront meeting she attended. The City has identified a long-term waterfront plan called Vision 2020. The meeting discussed updates to waterfront regulations. Follow-up information will be sent to CB8 and other community boards and representatives will brief the local community boards on how the plan affects their area.

Christina Taylor reported on the FVCP event at the Bronx Ale House on December 6, 6-8 pm.

Alex Smith of DPR reported on a Van Cortlandt Park restoration project on December 3, 10-1. This is the first of what he hopes will be regular restoration events at VCP.

Herb Barret thanked local officials for their participation in the Veterans Day observance at the Memorial Grove on Nov. 13. The Chair congratulated Mr. Barret on the most impressive and moving Veterans Day ceremony to date.

Mr. Barret also suggested locating a sign for the Memorial Grove on the electrical box located just north of the maintenance/restroom building, inside the Grove itself. Ms. Perron thought it was a good suggestion and will discuss with her staff.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm. There is no December meeting. The committee will meet again the fourth Wednesday in January (January 25th) unless urgent business requires an earlier meeting.

Bob Bender
Chairman
Parks & Recreation Committee