

Minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting, March 25, 2020
Via Conference Call

Attendees

Committee: Bob Bender (chair), Robert Fanuzzi (vice chair), Eric Bell, David Gellman, Robert Jacklosky, Donnel Leverett, Laura Spalter, Debra Travis (all CB8); Herb Barret (CCM)

Absent: Eider Garcia, Marvin Goodman, Daris B. Jackson

DPR: Michael Ortiz, Joseph Magneri, Stephanie Thayer

Community: Karen Argenti, IC L'Engel, Elvis Machuca, Ciara Gannon (CB8 District Manager)

Agenda

Strong Street Playground Design

This item was postponed until such time as the community adjacent to the playground can participate in a discussion that will lead to a design.

Review Status of Fort Four Playground Restroom and Maintenance and Improvements at Washington's Walk

Michael Ortiz of DPR explained that the restroom design, which the committee approved in September 2018, went through the normal process but a new city law required DPR to explain why the project should follow a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) rather than Wick's Law. In PLA a general contractor is hired who then sub-contracts, whereas following Wick's Law, multiple contractors must be hired for various aspects of the project. After review OMB allowed the project to proceed under PLA. Procurement started

in January 2020 and the project is now out to bid. It is expected that a contractor will be on board in the late fall. Work will likely begin in spring 2021

Mr. Ortiz noted that this may happen again but only with DPR projects that involved a new building, such as a restroom.

Park manager Joseph Magneri reported that at Washington's Walk "No BBQ" signs have now been placed in concrete footings to prevent their removal. DPR hopes to restore the lawn. New equipment in the area will help with maintenance here and at Fort Four park. Power washing of graffiti on buildings will continue.

Committee Budget Requests

The committee discussed the previous year's capital and expense items as well as new items that were proposed. Van Cortlandt Park deputy administrator Stephanie Thayer asked the committee to support installation of a sewer line connecting the old Mosholu Golf House to the street sewer so that the former golf house can become a VC park headquarters. Debra Travis urged that the committee include improvements at Washington's Walk such as new benches, replacement of a temporary fence with a permanent fence, and re-paving the sidewalk. Both Ms. Thayer and Mr. Magneri asked that the committee support DPR requests for a new packer (garbage truck) for VCP and a new mini-packer for neighborhood parks. The committee approved all these items in the order that follows:

CAPITAL

1. Purchase of a new packer for Van Cortlandt Park and a new mini-packer for Community Board 8 neighborhood parks.

2. Construction of a restroom at Broadway and W. 251st St. in Van Cortlandt Park adjacent to the Parade Grounds.
3. Redesign and reconstruction of Bailey Avenue playground to reduce paving and introduce green space, update equipment, and repair deteriorated drains. Incorporating the adjacent Tibbett's Tail into an expanded Bailey park and playground is recommended.
4. Renovation of the Van Cortlandt House Museum in Van Cortlandt Park to bring it into code compliance, provide handicapped accessibility, make repairs associated with waterproofing the structure, paint the exterior fence, and repair the dilapidated stairs on the historic south side entrance.
5. Erosion control measures in Ewen Park to prevent runoff downhill toward Riverdale Avenue.
6. Construction of a pond wall at Spuyten Duyvil Shorefront Park to prevent runoff from the pond onto the parking lot at the adjacent Metro-North station.
7. Repair of the footbridge over Tibbetts Brook outside the fence around the golf course in Van Cortlandt Park.
8. Improvements to Washington's Walk including new benches, replacing the temporary fence with a wrought-iron fence, and repair of the sidewalk.
9. Installation of a sewer connection from the former Mosholu Golf House in Van Cortlandt Park to the street sewer so that the golf house can become a park headquarters building. The committee urges DPR to ask DEP to provide funding for this project.
10. Repair of Van Cortlandt stadium, particularly the restrooms.

EXPENSE

1. Gardeners and other personnel sufficient for proper maintenance, especially of lawns, landscaped areas, and sidewalk Greenstreets in Community Board 8.
2. PEP personnel sufficient to alleviate with the assistance of NYPD the chronic double-parking along Broadway adjacent to the Parade Grounds, especially on weekends and other times of high use, and to enforce regulations in other CB8 parks, in particular bicycle-mounted PEP officers in both Van Cortlandt Park and neighborhood parks.
3. Purchase of a crew cab pickup with a lift gate for use in CB8 neighborhood parks.
4. Purchase of a Tool Cat with a plow and cutting attachments.
5. Purchase of a tractor and accompanying trailer and a lawnmower to aid in maintenance of CB8 parks.

The committee thanks Ms. Thayer and Mr. Magneri for their advice in helping the committee to formulate its budget requests.

It's My Park Day Project

The committee agreed to postpone its annual "It's My Park" day project to fall.

Old Business

The committee's public outreach project, "Living History Day" at the Van Cortlandt House Museum, intended to bring the Enslaved Peoples Project to the attention of fourth- and fifth-grade students will not take place because of school closings.

New Business

Mr. Elvis Machuca spoke about his proposal for DPR to buy some property across the street from PS 307. The chair asked that he send an email to the board office detailing his proposal.

The minutes of the February 2020 committee meeting were unanimously approved.

The meeting, which began at 7:05 pm, adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Minutes submitted by Bob Bender