

COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8 BRONX
Minutes of the Joint Parks & Recreation and Traffic & Transportation Meeting
January 26, 2012 at the Riverdale YM-YWHA

Attendees

Community Board Members. Robert Press, Pedro Reyes, Tom C. Durham, Steven Balicer, Georgia Santiago, Laura Spalter, Joyce Pilsner, Mike Heller, Robert Fanuzzi, Thailary Lim, Bob Bender, Dan Padernacht, Marvin Goodman

NYS DOT. Adam Levine, Tatiano Moiro, Heinz Joachim, Roger Weld

NYC DOT. Connie Moran

DPR. Margot Perron

Others. Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz; I-C Levenberg-Engel, BCEQ; Adam Wisniewski, Riverdale Press; Hilary Kitasei, HHP Task Force; Miawling Lam, Riverdale Review; Dan Michaeli; Gur Roslwalb; Arthur Bloom; William Rivera, Cross Bronx Initiative; Donald Tannen, Lillian Tannen, Herb Barret, Lawrence Moiatto, VC Memorial Grove; Andrew Sandler, George Diaz, Councilman Koppell's office; Ted Hollenberg; Tomako Lee; Robert Spalter

Presentation of Plans for the Henry Hudson Parkway by NYS DOT.

Parks & Recreation Committee Old Business

Minutes of the November 30 Parks & Recreation Committee meeting were approved.

Margot Perron, VCP Administrator, explained the current status of the Holiday Marathons. She observed that DPR doesn't issue permits for events held on major holidays because of reduced staff on holidays. This year Holiday Marathons was granted a permit for its Halloween and Thanksgiving runs, but not for its Christmas run. DPR will accommodate Holiday Marathons for certain events, but not for Thanksgiving, Christmas or Easter events unless these runs are held just prior to or following the holidays. Holiday Marathons did not realize that there would be higher fees required for events attracting more than 500 participants. DPR puts a limit on advertising and advertisers' fees for events in parks.

Ms. Perron said that going forward the Van Cortlandt Track Club, which has a long record with DPR, will operate a modified version of the Holiday Marathons. Events will not be run on the Putnam Trail or the Old Croton Aqueduct trails, only on the cross country course.

DPR and Holiday Marathons have agreed on these procedures for the future.

Chair Bob Bender expressed dismay that the Memorial Grove restoration is incomplete even as the contract for restoration has expired. Ms. Perron explained that there have been problems with the contractor, notably improper replacement plaques and the contractor's failure to provide the proper pipe for the pipe-rail fence surrounding the Memorial Grove. The contractor is presently in "pre-default" mode and DPR is working with the contractor to try to resolve the outstanding problems. There was general agreement that CB8 and Councilman Koppell's office should try to contact the Arts & Antiquities department at DPR to determine how best to proceed with the plaque restoration.

Ms. Perron suggested that it would be helpful to have someone from the Parks Capital Projects Group at the next committee meeting to explain DPR's plan to complete the work at the Memorial Grove. The Chair enthusiastically agreed.

The Chair observed that in the Bronx Wellness survey distributed by the Borough President's office to Board members, only 48% of respondents indicated that they thought the condition of Bronx parks was satisfactory or better. In the opinion of the Chair, inadequate maintenance has left the parks in unsatisfactory condition. There is a greater need for regular maintenance than for new capital projects; indeed, with better maintenance, there would be less need for new capital projects.

The Chair observed that a recent audit of the Riverdale Equestrian Center showed that the concession was \$100,000 in arrears on payments to the City for the period 2007-2009. DPR allowed the Equestrian Center to substitute paving of the entrance to VCP at Broadway and Mosholu to the Equestrian Center parking lot in place of paying the overdue amount. The Chair observed that perhaps more regular audits of this and other concessions might reveal other sums of money owed to the City, and that it might be cost effective for DPR to hire additional auditors.

Mr. Sandler said that Councilman Koppell wants more public access to the Equestrian Center.

There was discussion of the most recent Croton Filtration Monitoring Committee (CFMC) meeting. The CFMC confirmed the planned renovation of Ft. Independence Park that will include a partial jogging trail around the Jerome Park Reservoir. It also passed a resolution affirming that a pedestrian bridge over the Major Deegan Expressway was feasible (as stipulated in the original memo of understanding regarding the filtration plant) and urging the mayor and the city council to fund the bridge, estimated at around \$7 million.

Robert Press observed that the CFMC also questioned whether the \$243 million pledged to the Bronx in additional capital spending on parks had been properly allocated. The city comptroller's office is investigating this question, and the CFMC has put off further action pending the comptroller's report.

The Bell Tower Memorial a/k/a the Monument was given recognition on the National Register of Historic Places.

Thailary Lim reported on a Harlem River Working Group meeting that she attended. There is at present no access to the Harlem River in CB8 because of the Metro-North tracks. There are long-term plans to try to make access possible, but Ms. Lim stressed that this sort of thing will take a long time.

The Chair urged committee members to identify a park, preferably in Kingsbridge or Kingsbridge Heights, that would be appropriate for a May "It's My Park Day" community project similar to the one carried out last May at Vinmont Park. The Chair suggested Fort Four Park, which some committee members thought was a good choice. Further discussion of this subject will take place at the next committee meeting, February 22nd.

The Chair urged everyone to attend the ice rink public hearing on Feb. 2.

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 pm.

Bob Bender
Chairman
Parks & Recreation Committee