

**CB No. 8, the Bronx
Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting
May 30, 2007**

PRESENT

Nicole Stent
Robert Bender
Karen Green
Here Rarret
Arturo Guzman
Bill Johnson
Charles Reich
Margot Perron
Eileen Connolly
Ray Acosta
Gloria Hildebrand
James A. Donaldson
Roger Montelbano
Mary Fofidio
Howard Schoffel
Sidney Sass
Doris Sass
Minnie Muniz
Albert Spekman
Rebecca Patt
Peter J. Dolan
Stephanie London
Sandra London
Susan Dolon
Sally Feldman
Brian Sedin
Lynn Schwarz
Lisa Peet
Don Tannen

AFFILIATION

CB#8, Committee Chair
CB#8

Committee Member
Committee Member
Van Cortlandt Park, Admin.
DPR
DPR

VCP-Stadium

1. Parks & Recreation FY 2009 Budget Submission

Each capital and expense item on the FY 2008 budget was reviewed, discussed and modified, if necessary. The parks department gave an update on several of the items. Two items were modified, they were:

- Construction of a fence at Ft. Independence park to prevent vandalism of property at 3850 Sedgewick Avenue. This was modified to add “taller and sturdier” fence...
- Van Cortlandt Park: The reconstruction of the Caryl Field ballfield along Broadway to include irrigation and backstop – 1080507. Deleted were the words “and backstop”. This was completed by the Parks Department in 2007.

Three items were removed because updates were received from the Parks Department indicating the objective had been accomplished. They were:

- Funding for the acquisition of the Putnam Line to West 225 Street to extend greenway – 1089704A. This was acquired by the Parks Department in 2007.
- Van Cortlandt Park: Reconstruction of Park entrance at southeast corner of the Park near lake. This was completed and will be announced in June 2007

- Under Expense, Resod the two north soccer fields in Van Cortlandt Park. This was removed because the soccer field is included in the Croton mitigation funds project.

The Committee approved the Parks and Recreation Budget priorities for FY 2009.

2. North Riverdale Baseball League Letters

Bob Bender reported that letters were sent from the Parks Committee Chair to elected officials regarding additional funding for renovations to Caryl, Sid Augerton and Kelly fields.

3. Van Cortlandt Park Update

The Parks Department provided an update on the Van Cortland stadium (VCS). \$100,000 of federal monies has been allocated for a feasibility study on the stadium. This study will include reviewing the structure, mechanical systems, plumbing, heating, etc. and the estimated cost to renovate the stadium.

The stadium is currently undergoing a spring cleaning that includes recaulking of the bleachers, building and windows clean up, exterior painting, interior prepping for painting. The elected officials, Senator Eliot Engel, Borough President Adolfo Carrion and City Councilman Oliver Koppel, have all visited the site and are interested in funding a renovation project. No funds will be committed until after the completion of the feasibility study.

The community members at the meeting discussed the lights at the stadium that are turned on at 5:00 pm. The community felt it was not needed during the spring/summer hours and monies could be saved by delaying this for 2 hours. The Parks Department will review this suggestion.

4. Parks Department: Fort Independence Dog Run

Ms. Eileen Connolly of the Parks Department presented the Parks Commissioners message on the dog run. In summary, the dog run was officially established this year by the Parks Department and signs were installed to inform the dog owners of the rules. Ms. Connolly has also visited the site and spoken with many of the dog owners about the rules.

There has been a long history of people using the park who are both dog owners and those who are not dog owners. The Parks Department has received many calls in support of the dog run. There has also been letters to CB8 *not* in support of the dog run. The community was concerned as to the process involved in the creation of the dog run and whether the community's involvement was included in the process.

After much discussion by local community groups in the Fort Independence area presenting both pro and con positions on the issue, it was agreed that the main concern was barking dogs in the morning hours especially on Saturday and Sundays. This was considered the biggest problem of the newly established dog run.

A suggestion by the community was to **delay** opening the run for two hours on the weekends. The Parks Department will consider this suggestion.

5. New Business

a. Van Cortlandt Park Memorial Grove

Mr. Herb Barrett presented to the Committee the condition of the Memorial Grove. "Memorial Grove honors the American desire for freedom. Planted in 1949, the 30 pin oaks and Norway maples commemorate Bronx citizens killed in World War II. A plaque bearing the name of a slain soldier was

placed at the base of each tree. Some of these plaques still remain.” The site has fallen into disrepair. Many of the Veteran’s plaques have been buried and or are missing due to weather, tree growth, earth movement, tree roots, plant and shrubbery growth and damaged by the public walking over the area.

The Parks Department head of Arts & Antiquities will be reviewing the sight in the summer. One of the suggestions was to place all the names on one plaque to ensure recognition and also prevent further damage of the plaques.

6. Old Business

a. Fort Independence Vandalism

There have been several repeated acts of vandalism in the Fort Independence Park area. Rocks and stones have been thrown onto cars and fences damaged. Most of these incidences have occurred in the evening hours and after dark.

Local community groups were well represented at the meeting and were concerned about public safety and property safety. Currently there are three 311 reports on the incidences and another act of vandalism occurred recently. The community had pictures of the existing fence and recommended it be made higher and possibly curved to reduce the incidence of breakage, entering and heaving rocks over the top.

The Parks department recommended that the pictures and a letter be sent to the Commissioner indicating the concern of the community and requesting a review of the fence.

Additionally, the Park Enforcement Patrol (PEP) had been specifically told to remove any loose rocks immediately and to increase patrolling of this site between the hours of 6:00pm and 7:00pm and well as after 9:00pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 26, 2007 at 7:30 PM in the Board office.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole Stent, Chair
Parks & Recreation Committee