

COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8 BRONX

MINUTES OF THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD OCTOBER 29TH, 2008
AT THE COMMUNITY BOARD 8 OFFICE

PRESENT

Robert Bender
Thomas Durham
Ari Goldman
James Plaza
Evelyn Tossas Tucker
Herb Barret
Joseph Cohen
Eileen Connolly
Emilio Llopiz
Rebecca Patt
Margot Perron
Patsy Smyth

AFFILIATION

CB #8 Committee Chair
CB #8
CB #8
CB #8
CB #8 Committee Vice Chair
Memorial Grove
Department of Parks and Recreation
Department of Parks and Recreation
Administrator, Van Cortlandt Park

Committee Chair Bob Bender called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.
The minutes of the September meeting were approved.

Old Business

The gates are now in place at McLaughlin Park. The Chair thanked the Parks Department for its rapid response to requests to install the gates.

Restoration of the Henry Hudson Monument. Because a complete inspection would be so costly, the inspection and repair work will proceed simultaneously, beginning around February or March. Work is expected to be completed before the September 400th anniversary celebrations. A scope meeting should be announced in early November.

VCP Memorial Grove. A scope meeting is expected to be announced in early November. Parks Department wants to do one scope meeting for the Memorial Grove and the Henry Hudson monument because of overlap in personnel involved in both projects. The Chair is urging Parks to announce the scope meeting prior to the November 9 Veterans' Day commemoration in the Memorial Grove.

Independence Avenue tree complaint. Eileen Connolly reported that there are no longer any "tree cards." Street tree information has been computerized. The Chair will contact Mr. Joram Aris and tell him that Parks advises him to call 311 or to consult the Parks Department website for information about the street tree that caused damage to his car.

Phyllis Post Goodman Park. Eileen Connolly reported that restoration of this park will take place when the construction work on the Kappock Street underpass has concluded. The pathways in the park in particular need complete reconstruction. Perhaps new benches can be added, perhaps the soil can be amended.

Fort Independence Park. Rebecca Patt reported that 3850 Sedgwick representatives and FIPNA representatives have so far been unable to find a meeting time, but will continue their efforts to meet to discuss the locking of the gates to this park. Ms. Patt reported that efforts to locate people willing to lock the gates with Parks Department approval have so far proved unsuccessful.

The Chair reported that the committee's budget priorities were slightly altered after discussion with the District Manager. The Fort Four Park restroom now tops the list of capital projects.

Van Cortlandt Park Manager Emilio Llopiz reported on complaints made by James Donaldson and Neil Iodice at the September committee meeting. He said that the timing of the Van Cortlandt Park Stadium lights has been altered to accommodate the diminished daylight, that the Shea Stadium lights cannot be installed at Van Cortlandt Stadium because of engineering problems and lack of funds to address these problems, that the soap dispensers in the stadium men's room have been re-stocked and will be replaced.

The Chair reported that Traffic & Transportation Committee Chair Tony Cassino has contacted DOT about the meters that run until 10 pm adjacent to the park on the east side of Broadway south of the bus stop. It is our intention to make the hours of operation consistent with those at meters elsewhere on Broadway.

Mr. Llopiz asked that handball players not cut the fence surrounding the construction site in the stadium to retrieve handballs. This opens the site to anyone and is potentially dangerous. The Chair will ask Messrs. Donaldson and Iodice to tell handball players not to do this.

Margot Perron reported that the engineering study of Van Cortlandt Park Stadium has been completed and should be available to CB8 by the end of the week of November

New Business

Patsy Smyth asked about repairing the brick-faced wall on the perimeter of Brust Park on Greystone Avenue. Eileen Connolly said that the wall was inspected and found to be structurally sound although it needs cosmetic repair. She recommended replacing the wall with decorative bollards. This, however, would be a capital expense and would require funding. Eileen Connolly will get an estimate for the cost of the bollards, and the Committee Chair will discuss with CB8.

Ms. Smyth would like to add flowers to the playground in Brust Park but there is no water source in the park. She volunteered to bring water from her apartment building on 3900 Greystone. She says that a group of nearby residents would volunteer to plant and care for the flowers. Committee members expressed support for Ms. Smyth's proposal.

Herb Barret reminded everyone of the November 9 ceremony in the Memorial Grove. He expressed his concern about the budget problems in NYC and what effect they might have on the restoration project.

Margot Perron replied that there is now a citywide hiring freeze imposed by OMB. Further, any project that lacks a certificate of progress (CP) and full funding, will be frozen and may not proceed. This includes the Memorial Grove and other Parks projects such as the park headquarters/restroom renovation at 242 Street. It may include other capital projects as well.

Margot Perron reported that the Mosholu Golf House construction project was presented to Bronx Community Board 7 by DEP. Committee Chair reported that arrangements are being made for DEP to make a presentation to BronxCommunity Board No. 8 as well, most likely to the Environment & Sanitation Committee.

Ms. Perron also reported that the Van Cortlandt Golf Course concessioner wants to expand the golf house maintenance building considerably, to 8,000 square feet with an additional 5,000 square feet of new asphalt. This will require a presentation to Community Board No. 8 and our approval.

Herb Barret mentioned difficulties in leaving the Allen Pavilion by public transportation, specifically, by bus. Committee Chair said he would bring this matter to the attention of the Traffic and Transportation Chair Tony Cassino. Because it lies outside CB8, it is unclear what we might be able to do.

Ms. Perron and Mr. Llopiz reported that new ADA ramps are being added to the Van Cortlandt pool. Last year lifts were installed. Once ramps are installed the pool will be handicapped accessible. This work is expected to be completed by summer 2009.

The committee thanked Eileen Connolly for her outstanding work in the community and expressed its best wishes to her in her new position in Queens.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.

The Chair thanks Ari Goldman for his assistance with this month's minutes.

Submitted by,

Bob Bender
Chairman
Parks and Recreation Committee

BB:db