

MINUTES OF THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING

March 22, 2017 at the Manhattan College School of Engineering

(pending committee approval)

Attendees:

Committee: Bob Bender (chair), Eric Bell, Robert Fanuzzi, David Gellman, Marvin Goodman, Tao Moran, Laura Spalter (CB8); Herb Barret, Christina Taylor (community committee members)

Absent: Sylvia Alexander, David Kornbluh, Amy Joy Robateau

DPR: Margot Perron, Dennis Burton, William Harris, Jennifer Nemecek, Renata Sokolowski, Michael Ortiz

Community: Arelis Morillo, Carroll Singer, Elizabeth Pimentel, Anthony Delorbe, Deb Travis, Sara Fisher, Karen Argenti

Agenda:

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 pm. Minutes of the February meeting were unanimously approved.

Proposed new community garden at West 252 St. and Post Road

The chair introduced Arelis Morillo, who proposes a community garden at West 252 St and Post Road. W. 252 St. dead-ends just before it reaches Post Road and according to Ms. Morillo there is city-owned property there that can be used for the proposed garden. Adjacent to the city-owned property is property that she reports is owned by IMI Enterprises. Ms. Morillo has been unable to speak to anyone at this company about this property. She proposes a garden that will be maintained by the neighbors, of whom she is one. Ms. Morillo is affiliated with the CUNY School of Public Health and spoke about the health benefits of gardening. She has contacted Green Thumb, the citywide public gardening program, and has been advised that she needs approval from the community board.

Committee members expressed admiration for her efforts but advised that no further action can be taken until the owner of the adjacent property is contacted.

Parks without Borders

Will Harris, Jennifer Nemecek, and Renata Sokolowski of DPR presented a final design for the Parks without Borders project in Van Cortlandt Park. They had visited the committee in January with a preliminary design and incorporated comments from those in attendance at that meeting in creating this design. (The design will be sent to all CB8 members.)

The goal is to create a welcoming entrance at West 242 St and Broadway. Fences would be lowered and made more uniform; staircases would be widened, benches would be installed, and a central

plaza created. Trees would be planted to screen the pool, a new pathway introduced to make the barbecue area ADA compliant, and additional lighting in this area would be included. There would be misting water jets that would be operated by park users. Most significantly, the disused tennis courts/ice rink would be turned into a lawn area.

The area in question runs from the entrance to the stadium north to the parks headquarters/rest room.

There were numerous questions and comments from committee members and those in attendance.

The DPR presenters said that they were looking for committee approval. Committee members were polled and agreed to endorse the design with the following conditions:

- *designers will incorporate features to slow cyclists who use a pathway through this area between Broadway and the Putnam Trail;
- *at least two cameras will be installed, at least one each in the barbecue area and the central plaza;
- *the amount of new pavement proposed in the barbecue area will be reduced to the minimum that will still permit ADA accessibility;
- *the designers will consider installing enhanced tree pits on Broadway;
- *the designers will investigate the feasibility of adding a fountain in addition to the water mists;
- *any significant changes to the design at any point during the approval process will be reported to the committee for further consideration.

It was agreed that this matter would be brought before the April CB8 board meeting for approval, allowing time for a formal resolution to be circulated along with the design to all board members.

The design was unanimously approved with these conditions, 9-0-0 (see attendees for names).

“It’s My Park” Day

The chair reported a positive response from the Tibbetts Tail group. Committee members were polled and it was agreed that May 20 is the best day for most committee members. More details regarding logistics and activities will follow at the next committee meeting.

Agenda for April Joint Committee Meeting

The agenda previously outlined was confirmed at the meeting. However, subsequent to the meeting DEP reported that it will not send a representative to the meeting to discuss bioswales because CB8 is not yet in the Long-Term Control Plan, which is a condition for the installation of bioswales.

Also subsequent to the meeting, Christina Taylor reported on a water-quality problem in Van Cortlandt Lake that seems to be originating in the highways adjacent to and bisecting the park. This matter will be discussed further at the E&S meeting on March 29 and then committee members will be notified by email of the altered agenda, and asked for their approval.

Old Business

The chair reported on some outstanding items as follows.

The Putnam Trail revised SWPPP is reported to be nearing completion. It will be sent to the SWPPP Working Group once it is completed.

Community Service Awards are under consideration. Historically this committee has nominated candidates. It was suggested that those responsible for the volunteer work in Henry Hudson Park should be considered and all agreed.

Bob Fanuzzi and Christina Taylor will present their final recommendations for a Parks Resource Guide at the May meeting.

The chair urged those who have not yet turned in their Parks Evaluation Forms to please do so.

It was noted that Participatory Budgeting is about to begin and that there are parks items proposed.

The chair shared some findings from the 2015 New Yorkers for Parks evaluation of the parks in Council District 11, which includes nearly all of CB8. He promised to send this information to committee members.

There was no new business.

The meeting adjourned at 9 pm. Thanks to BCEQ for allowing the committee to use space it had reserved for its annual meeting.