

COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8 BRONX

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY
AND PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE'S
HELD MARCH 5, 2009
AT THE BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 8 OFFICE**

PRESENT

Arlene Feldmeier
Bob Bender
Anthony Creaney
Tom Durham
Ari Goldman
Maria Khury
Bridget Maybury
James Plaza
Evelyn Tucker
Robbie Bent
Henry Carmona
Joseph I. Cohen
Barbara D'Orsaneo
Shirley Echevarria
Ramon E. Fernandez
Michael Himeno
Tom O'Connor
Rebecca Patt
Det. Luis Rodriguez
Lynn Schwarz
Nathaniel Solomon
Terry Stoeth
Christina Taylor
Sheree Tallerman
Dominick Toto

AFFILIATION

Public Safety Committee Chairperson
Parks & Recreation Committee Chairman
CB #8
CB #8
CB #8
CB #8
CB #8
CB #8
Riverdale Nature Preservancy
Dubai Lounge
Mutual Housing

Parks Manager, District 8
Dubai Lounge
Ft. Independence Center
50th Pct. Council
Mutual Housing
50th Precinct
FIPNA
Mutual Housing
FIPNA
Friends of Van Cortlandt Park

The meeting began shortly after 7 pm.

The meeting began with comments from community residents about two parks, Riverdale Playground (located directly behind MS/HS 141) and Ft. Independence Park.

Dominick Toto reported that during warm weather there is frequent late-night noise at Riverdale Playground. Basketball games go on during the night. He said that the problem has existed for ten years, but it seems to be getting worse. Residents of nearby buildings said that the people congregating in the park arrive by car and seem to be mostly men in their twenties.

Det. Rodriguez said that the 50th Precinct will send a patrol car to the park and will investigate. If cars are parked illegally, they will be ticketed. Shirley Echevarria said that residents of nearby buildings should call 311 and report the noise because that way the complaints will be documented.

A question was raised about whether auxiliary police officers might patrol the park, but Det. Rodriguez said that these auxiliaries don't work past 11 pm and cannot issue summonses. One resident said that she was told that if a complaint was already received, 311 operators would not take a new complaint about the same matter. Ms. Echevarria and others said that this is not the proper procedure, and that additional complaints about the same matter from different callers are supposed to be logged and recorded.

Residents of Mutual Housing, adjacent to Ft. Independence Park, said that they have similar complaints about late-night noise in warm weather, as well as dog barking late at night. They asked for the gates to the park to be locked, and if not, for additional police patrols through the park. A suggestion was made by Mr. Cohen that police patrols occasionally drive through the park at night where they might otherwise use a local street. Det. Rodriguez seemed responsive.

There was much discussion about whether 311 can be a means for the community to identify the number of complaints reported about local parks, and therefore whether it could be a barometer of the safety and quality-of-life concerns in the parks.

Ms. Echevarria mentioned that "flash" cameras are being installed on a trial basis in some parks in Brooklyn and Manhattan. These cameras record activity in the parks and playgrounds after they are closed for the night. The cameras are expensive, and they are only being tested. There was great interest in trying to arrange for these cameras to be installed in the two parks where we have had the most complaints about illegal late-night activity. Ms. Echevarria said she would get more information about these cameras from the Parks Department.

The Parks & Recreation Committee thanks the Public Safety Committee for arranging and hosting the meeting in conjunction with the 50th Precinct.

Bob Bender, Chair
Parks & Recreation Committee

Arlene Feldmeier, Chair
Public Safety Committee