

COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8 BRONX

MINUTES OF THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE HELD MAY 27th, 2009 AT THE BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 8 OFFICE

Attendees:

Community Board Members: Bob Bender, Tom Durham, Ari Goldman, Evelyn Tucker, James Plaza

Parks Department and Community:

Christina Taylor, Friends of Van Cortlandt Park, Michael Gary, rep. State Senator Espada, Shirley Echevarria, Parks Department, Bette Clark, Van Cortlandt Track Club, Margot Perron, Administrator, Van Cortlandt Park, Lynn Schwarz, FIPNA

Agenda

The minutes of the April 29 meeting were approved with the following change suggested by Margot Perron and approved unanimously:

The Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy has been incorporated. A 501©3 will be set up to receive funds.

There was a brief discussion of the fiscal conduit for the Conservancy. Since it doesn't have 501©3 status yet, the City Parks foundation serves that role for any parks-related non-profit start-ups and will do that for the conservancy.

The Parks Department will continue to issue sports permits as it does now.

Reference to a "council of advisers" in the minutes should be changed to "community council."

Discussion of the Putnam Trail within Van Cortlandt Park. Margot Perron reported that the project is in its schematic design phase and a designer is doing an in-depth site analysis. NYS DOT plus State DEC are involved because of protocols involving fresh water – Van Cortlandt Lake and Tibbetts Brook lie adjacent to the trail. The Parks Department's Natural Resources Group is part of the site analysis as well. The major item under review is whether any part of the trail should be paved, and what exactly "paving" might mean – permeable, semi-permeable, etc. \$3 million has been allocated for the in-park portion of the trail. The southernmost portion of the trail, below the golf house and lake, requires extensive analysis and is virtually unusable.

Tom Durham suggested crushed stone as a surface that would work for bikers and be acceptable to runners and walkers. Wheelchair accessibility is something that has to be considered. The fence adjacent to the trail must be replaced. Research will continue and there is no timetable for presentation of a design to the community.

Air-spading is taking place at the Memorial Grove to break up compacted soil around tree roots.

A design for the renovation of the Old Croton Aqueduct trail was presented at a Parks Department meeting which the chair attended on May 5. Lynn Schwarz asked what is being done with tables and benches at Washington's Walk on Reservoir Avenue between University and Claflin. Shirley Echevarria of Parks said that the tabletops were to be removed, but was surprised to learn from Ms. Schwarz that they had not been. She said she would investigate.

Budget Priorities

1. Renovation of the playground and stairs in Seton Park, including resurfacing and new playground equipment. (New)
2. Resurfacing of the basketball courts to the southwest of Classic Playground in Van Cortlandt Park, including replacement of the courts, backboards, and rims. (New)
3. Construction of a new restroom at Fort Four Park along with correction of existing drainage problems. (#3 last year)
4. Reconstruction of the pond wall at Spuyten Duyvil Pond to prevent runoff onto the roadway at parking lot at the Metro-North station. (#4 last year)
5. Reconstruction of the basketball courts and replacement of the fence at Ewen Park. (#9 last year)
6. Reconstruction of the Bailey Avenue playground, including rationalization of the space and new greenery. (#11 last year)
7. Reconstruction of the basketball courts and related work at Henry Hudson Park upper level. (#8 last year)
8. Funding of the unfunded portion (Phase III) of the Van Cortlandt Parade Grounds renovation, including construction of a new restroom at Broadway and West 251st Street. (#1 last year)
9. Reconstruction of the stairway in Brust Park. (New)
10. Renovation of Van Cortlandt Stadium. (New)

This list of priorities assumes that the work on Phase II of the Fort Four Park renovation is about to take place. The Parks Department responded to that request last year (#7 last year) by saying, "This project was funded in a prior fiscal year and the final design contract has been let." Parks representative Shirley Echevarria is checking that this information is accurate and that work is soon to begin. If this work is not about to commence, then this item must be restored on the list.

Expense Priorities

1. Personnel sufficient for maintenance and enforcement in CB8 parks, especially on weekends and times of high use. (#1 and #2 last year)
2. Acquisition of three pickup trucks with snowplows and water tanks. (#5 last year)
3. Improved in lighting in area parks. (#3 last year)
4. Repair of the Greenstreets at Broadway and Manhattan College Parkway and at Broadway and Van Cortlandt Park South. (#4 last year)

The representative of Department of Parks and Recreation, with the concurrence of the committee, believe that the #1 priority overall should be the first expense priority. Without maintenance, the parks will be overwhelmed with capital projects.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:40 PM.

Submitted by,

Bob Bender
Chairman
Parks and Recreation Committee