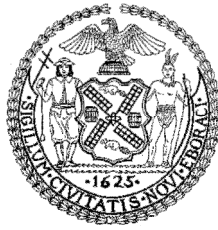


Nicholas Viest
Chairman

Latha Thompson
District Manager



505 Park Avenue
Suite 620
New York, N.Y. 10022
(212) 758-4340
(212) 758-4616 (Fax)
www.cb8m.com Website
info@cb8m.com - E-Mail

The City of New York
Manhattan Community Board 8

Parks Committee Meeting

Wednesday, January 25, 2012, 6:30 PM
Hunter College, 695 Park Ave., Room 714W
Auditorium

CB8M members present: Elizabeth Ashby, Michele Birnbaum, Molly Blayney, Jim Clynes, Christina Davis, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, David Helpern, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Barry Schneider, Helene Simon, Teri Slater

Excused: Rita Popper, Judy Schneider

1. Presentation by the NYC Dept. of Design and Construction of plans for the redesign of the exterior of Central Park's Tavern on the Green--a joint issue with the Parks and Landmarks committees.

Representatives from the Parks Department, Department of Design and Construction, Central Park Conservancy, and the architectural firm of Swanke Hayden Connell Architects, discussed plans for restoring Central Park's Tavern on the Green restaurant to its 1934-to-1940 appearance.

As described by architect Elizabeth Moss, of Swanke, Hayden Connell, the building known as Tavern on the Green had been a sheepfold until it was converted to a restaurant in 1934. Over the subsequent years, the building underwent a variety of changes and additions to meet the needs of its restaurant operators.

However, the restaurant has been closed since the end of 2009. Subsequently, the City dismantled the Crystal Room, built a public bathroom, and created a Visitor's Center managed by the Central Park Conservancy.

Recently, the City decided to restore Tavern on the Green as a restaurant and fund \$8 million of proposed renovations to the exterior of the building. Overall, plans call for sharply reducing the building's size while restoring many of its architectural features from 1934.

Construction is slated to begin this summer, and the City hopes to reopen Tavern on the Green as a "casual" restaurant in mid-2013.

Proposed renovations to the building include:

- Removing post-1934 additions throughout the building, reducing its overall size from about 29,000 square feet to about 12,000 square feet.
- Replacing the damaged slate roofing with new slate roofing.
- Moving mechanical equipment from the roof into the attic.
- Restoring the circular driveway at the rear of the building to allow service trucks to enter and exit without disturbing traffic.
- Restoring the arch (near the kitchen area), which had been hidden by post-1934 additions.
- Creating an ADA-accessible entrance next to the main entranceway.

- Removing about 300 square feet of corners at the back of the terrace to recreate the building’s original design and restoring original dormers in that section of the building.
- On the terrace, adding a contemporary glass structure with doors that will protrude about 8 feet from the building into the terrace.
- Restoring many of the doors and windows, including the windows now at the visitors’ center, to their 1934 appearance.

Community Board members questioned the need for creating a glass structure that extends 8 feet from the building onto the terrace. Ms. Moss said that the structure could be used in some fashion by the restaurant operator.

A CB8M member inquired about the type of restaurant Tavern on the Green will become. According to a Parks Dept. official, the department will finalize that decision after reviewing responses to its RFP, which are due back by the end of March.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS The City of New York is proposing to restore Central Park’s Tavern on the Green to its 1934 design, when it was converted to a restaurant; and

WHEREAS proposed renovations include reducing the overall size of the building; restoring original features, such as dormers, an arch at the western end of the building and 1934-style windows and doors; adding an ADA-compliant entranceway; adding a glass structure that extends into the terrace; and restoring the circular driveway in the rear of the building; and

WHEREAS the proposed changes aim to better blend Tavern on the Green into its overall park environment; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan approves of the City’s plans for renovating Central Park’s Tavern on the Green.

VOTE: 11-0-1

In favor: Elizabeth Ashby, Michele Birnbaum, Molly Blayney, Christina Davis, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, David Helpern, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Barry Schneider, Helene Simon.

Abstaining: Teri Slater.

2. Presentation of final plans for the reconstruction of Central Park’s North Harlem Meer Landscape, Shoreline and Playground—*a joint issue with the Landmarks Committee.*

The Central Park Conservancy presented final plans for a \$3 million reconstruction of the landscape, shoreline and playground at Central Park’s North Harlem Meer—an upper-park aralong East 110th St., between 5th Avenue and Lenox Avenue.

At its November full board meeting, CB8M had approved the CPC’s preliminary plans for this project.

This project entails: restoring and enhancing the landscape on the north side of the Meer; providing traditional play equipment and features within a landscape setting that blurs the boundary between the playground and the park, and affording opportunities for landscape play within a safe, contained space.

Specific landscaping plans call for realigning and re-grading the paths—some of which are quite steep or dangerously close to the water’s edge--reconstructing the drainage system, restoring the lawn and undertaking planting along the shoreline.

Within the playground, the deteriorated equipment will be replaced with such items as swings, climbers and a water spray. The design will include a series of distinct play spaces connected by a meandering path. New drainage and irrigation, and connections to water service and electrical utilities, will support the playground’s water feature. A new, lighter, 4.5 foot, “very transparent” fence will enclose the playground.

Play will be encouraged outside of the playground in a “transitional zone,” which will be defined by the use of plantings and other materials.

Changes to the plan since November include: the addition of steps leading down to the water’s edge at the Meer; and new details for the playground’s fence, which include steel pipe railings and stainless steel cable mesh as infill.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS The Central Park Conservancy has presented final plans for restoring the Harlem Meer landscape, shoreline and playground that calls for enhancing the safety, accessibility and overall usability of the area; and WHEREAS these plans call for reconstructing area paths to make them safer; upgrading the scenic quality of the area through additional and improved planting; making open space more usable; and replacing deteriorated equipment in the East 110th St. Playground with new and more diverse forms of play equipment; and WHEREAS the project’s final plans add two new elements: steps leading down to the water’s edge at the Meer to make the area more accessible; and, the use of stainless steel mesh materials for play area’s fence to make it more transparent; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan approves of the Central Park Conservancy’s final plans for the reconstruction of the North Harlem Meer landscape, shoreline and playground.

VOTE: 10-0-1

In favor: Elizabeth Ashby, Michele Birnbaum, Molly Blayney, Christina Davis, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, David Helpen, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Helene Simon.

Abstaining: Teri Slater.

3.Preliminary Proposal to Reconstruct the Tots’ Playground in Central Park—a joint issue with the Landmarks Committee

The Central Park Conservancy presented preliminary plans for the reconstruction of the Tots Playground in Central Park, near Central Park West, between West 67th and 68th streets.

Constructed in 1956, the Tots Playground is an outgrowth of a battle between area residents and the City over the City’s desire to create a new parking lot for Tavern on the Green at the site. Ultimately, area residents prevailed, and the City turned the space into a playground for very young children instead of making it a parking lot.

The small Tots Playground is about one-third the size of most Central Park play areas and is rectilinear in shape, compared with the rounder designs of other Central Park playgrounds. The playground was last renovated in 1987, and its play equipment is now worn and outdated, and in some cases, (such as the 6-foot slide) inappropriate for very young children. The playground’s bright red and yellow colors have also proved jarring and incongruent.

Current renovation plans call for: redesigning the space to a circular shape from the present rectilinear design—a move that will expand the area by 400 square feet; installing a range of age-appropriate play equipment, such as swings, a sandbox, a slide, and low climbing equipment; adding a water spray feature; bounding the playground by a low seat wall, and further out, a fence that will weave through the landscaping; reconstructing area paths to reduce their steep grade; and adding to the plantings that surround the playground.

Plans also call for reconstructing the storm drainage system and constructing a water supply that will service the water-spray feature.

Central Park Conservancy officials said that, when they recently presented this plan at a Community Board 7, Manhattan, meeting, they received questions about parking for strollers, whether this crowded playground could be enlarged, and whether more cars and paving could be removed from the area.

The CPC’s Gary Dearborn told the CB8 Parks-Landmarks meeting that the CPC will be exploring all those issues.

RESOLUTION:

WHEREAS the Central Park Conservancy has presented preliminary plans for renovating Central Park’s Tots’ Playground, which would improve the area’s accessibility, attractiveness and usefulness to parents and children; and,

WHEREAS specific changes include: reconfiguring the area to a more circular design; reducing the steep grade on area paths; creating a low seat wall to bound the playground; adding to the plantings surrounding the playground; and installing play equipment appropriate for young children in suitable colors and textures; and

WHEREAS the existing play equipment is worn, outdated and in need of replacement; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8, Manhattan, approves of the Central Park Conservancy’s preliminary plans for the renovation of the Tots’ Playground in Central Park.

VOTE: 11-0-0

In favor: Elizabeth Ashby, Michele Birnbaum, Molly Blayney, Christina Davis, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, David Helpern, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Helene Simon, Teri Slater.

NEW BUSINESS

In response to a question, Central Park Conservancy officials acknowledged that an east-west bike path in Central Park has been created as a 6-month pilot project. This bike path, which is being called a “greenway,” runs just south of the 97th St. transverse and overlaps with a pedestrian path.

The Parks Dept., in conjunction with the DOT, will be monitoring use of this bicycle route. The City is due to complete this assessment in June, and CB8M will be apprised of its findings.

Margaret Price and Barbara Rudder, Co-Chairs Parks Committee