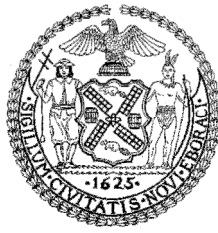


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The City of New York
Manhattan Community Board 8

Parks Committee Meeting
Thursday, January 5, 2012 at 6:30 PM
New York Blood Center, 310 East 67th St., Conference Room 1

Members in Attendance: Elizabeth Ashby, Michele Birnbaum, Molly Blayney, Sarah Chu, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, David Rosenstein, Barbara Rudder, Barry Schneider, Judy Schneider, Teri Slater, Marco Tamayo.

Excused: Helene Simon

1. Plans for an Older Adults Recreation Area in John Jay Park

Bradley Romaker, a capital projects official of the Parks Dept., presented design plans for the upcoming Older Adults Recreation Area in John Jay Park. This facility will be located in the back area of John Jay Park, adjacent to the bath house.

The area already contains rows of benches and three pieces of exercise equipment. The new design calls for adding: two concrete game tables, two picnic tables, three pieces of exercise equipment for adults—including a stationary bike, an arm-flexing machine and a body flexing machine—safety surfacing under the equipment, a rubber exercise mat at the southern end of the site and additional plantings in the existing tree pits, near the entrance to the area and at the southern end of the site.

The plan calls for removing a few semi-circular benches near the ball fields. And a gate will be installed between the ball fields and the adult recreation area.

Mr. Romaker reported that, following the Community Board's approval of the plan, the Parks Dept. will next seek the Public Design Commission's go-ahead—a process that can take at least several months. However, Jane Swanson, chief of staff for City Council Member Jessica Lappin, said that her office would help expedite that approval process.

Questions arose concerning ways to limit bike-riding and other children's play activities in the older adult's area. Suggestions included installing signage spelling out of the use of the area or putting in some kind of a gate.

Mr. Romaker maintained that, because "kids don't pay attention to signs, the real policing will have to be done by the users" of the facility.

Once begun, construction work on the project should take six-to-eight weeks, Mr. Romaker said.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the creation of an Older Adults Recreation Area in John Jay Park will expand the free outdoor activities available to older adults, which is a growing segment of the community; and WHEREAS plans for the recreation area include adding game tables, picnic benches, adult exercise equipment, with safety surfacing underneath, an exercise mat and new plantings; and WHEREAS these new facilities should increase the usage of this area of John Jay Park; therefore, BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8, Manhattan approves of the Parks Department's plans for an Older Adults Area in John Jay Park.

VOTE: 14-0-0.

In favor: Elizabeth Ashby, Michele Birnbaum, Molly Blayney, Sarah Chu, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, David Rosenstein, Barbara Rudder, Barry Schneider, Judy Schneider, Teri Slater, Marco Tamayo.

2. Proposed Exhibition of Sculptures by Rafael Barrios in the Park Avenue Malls

Jennifer Lantzes, the Parks Dept.'s public arts coordinator, presented plans for an exhibition of 10 sculptures by Venezuelan artist, Rafael Barrios, in the Park Avenue Mall from March 1 until June 30, 2012. The exhibit will run from East 55th to 67 streets. Four of the 10 sculptures will be located in the Community Board 8 district at 61st, 65th, 67th and 68th streets.

The Fund for Park Avenue has expressed its support for the project, which is being sponsored by Miami's Art Nouveau gallery.

The sculptures to be displayed represent the artist's forty years of work in the Op Art style. The two-dimensional works appear three-dimensional when viewed from a distance.

In size, the steel sculptures are about 8 feet wide, 3-4 inches in depth, are up to 11 feet high and weigh about 2,000 pounds. (See photo attached to the minutes.) They will be anchored in their site to avoid damage to the Mall. Installation of the works will be completed overnight and the DOT will ensure that the sculptures do not obstruct motorists' views. A gardener with the Fund for Park Avenue will oversee the positioning of the art works to ensure that they do not harm Mall plantings.

The exhibit will include small signs that will identify the artist.

RESOLUTION:

WHEREAS the Art Nouveau gallery in conjunction with the NYC Parks Dept. has proposed a four-month exhibit of sculptures by prominent artist, Rafael Barrios, in the Park Avenue Mall; and

WHEREAS the project has the support of the NYC Parks Dept., the Fund for Park Avenue and the Dept. of Transportation; and

WHEREAS the Parks Dept. ensures that the structure will not interfere with plantings in the Park Avenue Mall; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8, Manhattan, approves of plans to install 10 sculptures—4 of which would be located in the Community Board 8M district—by Rafael Barrios in the Park Avenue Mall from March 1 to June 30, 2012.

VOTE: 13-0-1.

In favor: Michele Birnbaum, Molly Blayney, Sarah Chu, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, David Rosenstein, Barbara Rudder, Barry Schneider, Judy Schneider, Teri Slater, Marco Tamayo.

Abstain: Elizabeth Ashby

3. Date Change of the Next Joint Meeting of the Parks and Landmarks Committees

The February Parks Committee meeting, scheduled for February 2, would have been held on the same evening as Borough President Scott Stringer's State of the Borough address. As a result, CB8M members present at the January Parks Committee meeting requested rescheduling the February meeting to Jan 31. That date has since been changed to January 25th to accommodate the schedule of a representative of the Dept. of Design and Construction, who will be presenting plans for the redesign of Central Park's Tavern on the Green.

4. Plans for a Forum on Ways to Expand Parkland in the CB8M District

The Parks Committee is planning a forum this year on ways to expand and preserve parkland in CB8M. Manhattan's Upper East Side already suffers from limited open space and parkland. But the problem has been worsened by the loss of Ruppert Playground, which comes amid a growing population needing more—not fewer—recreational facilities and open space.

In this initial planning session for the forum, attendees proposed topics and speakers/panelists for the event. Among the issues raised: the need for public-private partnerships to fund park creation and preservation; the creation of additional vest-pocket parks; the possibility of creating a high-line park; the need for additional plantings, especially along sidewalks, to help clean the air and possibly limit vendors; the need for better use of rear-yard spaces; and the need to encourage facilities, such as hospitals, to create more public open space on their campuses.

Some attendees also stressed the need to address the limited free public use of Asphalt Green.

Meeting attendees agreed that the forum should include participation by building developers, including those now planning development projects.

Suggested forum panelists included: officials of CIVITAS and the Rudin organization, City Council Member Dan Garodnick, who has advocated for public access to undeveloped open spaces, and Evan Mason, an Upper West Side urban planner and preservationist.

A CB8M member offered to obtain a copy of Borough President Scott Stringer's survey report on open spaces.

The Parks Committee will refine plans for the forum at an upcoming meeting.

Margaret Price and Barbara Rudder, Co-Chairs Parks Committee