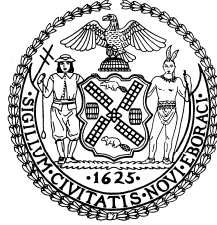


**Nicholas D. Viest**  
Chairman

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**The City of New York**  
**Manhattan Community Board 8**

**Parks Committee Meeting**

Brick Presbyterian Church  
62 East 92<sup>nd</sup> St., Living Room  
Thursday, February 27, 2014, 6:30 PM

CB8M members present: Jim Clynes, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Sophia James, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder

1. Status of the Committee's Open Space initiative

The committee reviewed recommendations on to the status of the three current Open Space projects:

Poser Park at Hunter College; 1190 Second Avenue; and Second Avenue between 62<sup>nd</sup> and 63<sup>rd</sup> streets.

--Poser Park: At the behest of the Parks Committee, the office of Assembly Member Dan Quart had contacted Hunter College's administration about providing public access to Hunter's Poser Park, on 68<sup>th</sup> St. between Third and Lexington avenues. Subsequently, Hunter officials have denied that request. However, Assembly Member Quart will continue trying to persuade Hunter to avail Poser Park to the public, according to Matt Walsh of the Assembly Member's office.

--The MTA's lot at 1190 Second Ave.: The Committee agreed that a letter should be sent to the Chairman of the MTA, expressing CB8M's interest in converting the MTA-owned site to parkland once the East Side Access Project is completed. Currently, the site serves as a construction area for the MTA's East Side Access Project. The Committee recommended that the following letter be presented to Nick Viest for his signature:

Dear Chairman Prendergast,

The Parks Committee of Community Board 8, Manhattan (CB8M) is in the process of trying to expand on open space and parkland on Manhattan's Upper East Side. This project is vital to our densely populated community, which has some of the least amount of parkland in New York City.

Through a survey of possible open space sites, CB8M has identified several Upper East Side locations that could be converted to public open space/parkland. One such site, at 1190 Second Avenue, at East

63rd Street, is owned by the MTA. That locale is now being used as a construction area for work on the MTA's East Side Access transportation project.

Once the East Side Access Project is completed, we very much hope the above-ground portion of 1190 Second Avenue site could be converted to public open space. Its location would be ideal for the area's adults and children, who now lack a nearby park.

We understand that the East Side Access is still years from completion. But by bringing this request to your attention now, we hope you will consider it in your long-range planning for the site. We also would like to meet with you, at your convenience, to discuss your preliminary thoughts on this idea.

We truly appreciate your consideration of this issue. We look forward to hearing from you about it.

Thank you very much.

--The Vacant lot on Second Ave. between 62<sup>nd</sup> and 63<sup>rd</sup> streets: A search of City records revealed that this vacant lot is owned by Moluka Enterprises, LLC. , which has a mailing address on E. 63<sup>rd</sup> St. Records also show Douglas Ellman Property Management to be the property manager of this site. The Committee agreed to follow up with a phone call to the property manager about the status of the site and the possibility of using at least some of it public open space. The Committee suggested that, after initial contact, there could be a follow-up letter to the property manager as well as Moluka Enterprises.

## 2. Update on the status of the East River Esplanade

The committee heard a report on the status of repairs and redesign of the East River Esplanade in the CB8M district.

--Con Ed: Con Edison's construction work on the Esplanade has been halted, at least temporarily, and access to that portion of the Esplanade remains closed off, as of now.

--Rockefeller University: In its recent approval of Rockefeller U.'s plans to expand over the FDR Drive, CB8M had stipulated that Rockefeller U. should seek community input on the Esplanade's design in its area.

At the Parks Committee's meeting, a report was given on the status of that stipulation: In February, a design committee was chosen and met at Rockefeller University. At that session, participants formed two groups to review Rockefeller University's plans and to make recommendations. The first group suggested design ideas that included new pavement, a fountain, lighting, special seating, art and sculpture, as well as signage. The second group focused on the usage of the Esplanade and the narrowness of portion in the CB8M district that limited the space available--a walking path of only 4 feet--available for normal uses. The group suggested ways to cut two feet from the center island, relocate benches to a wider area, and straighten undulating edges, moves that would collectively add to space to the walking path. In addition, it was suggested planting vines against the wall separating the esplanade from the FDR drive. Both groups suggested providing phone service for security purposes.

--East River Esplanade Task Force: As discussed, Congress Member Carolyn Maloney and Council Member Ben Kallos are expected soon to reconvene the Task Force. The Committee hopes this body will further CB8M's requests for a master design plan for the Esplanade.

- Presentation by the Friends of the East River Esplanade of a plan to add temporary art work to the East River Esplanade.

Savona Bailey-McClain, executive director at The West Harlem Art Fund, an organization that showcases art in public spaces, and the Friends of the East River Esplanade, jointly presented a plan to exhibit artwork along the East River Esplanade. Although the would-be sponsors held that such a show could bolster attention to the Esplanade's needs for repair, the Parks Committee expressed several concerns. Among them: whether the artwork would interfere with current and planned construction projects; whether security measures to protect the art would be provided; and whether installed art works would further compromise the Esplanade's fragile infrastructure. Moreover, given the narrow space of the Esplanade in the CB8M district, it was suggested that any possible art show on the Esplanade could begin north of E. 96<sup>th</sup> St., where the Esplanade begins to widen.

Following this informational presentation, the Committee suggested that the presenters could return to the committee once a firmed-up proposal was created.

**Margaret Price and Barbara Rudder, Parks Committee Co-Chairs**