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The City of New York
Manhattan Community Board 8

Parks and Recreation Committee

Brick Presbyterian Church
62 East 92nd Street (Park-Madison)
Carnegie Room
Thursday, February 4, 2016, 6:30 PM

CB8M members in attendance: Michele Birnbaum, Daniel Dornbaum, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Sophia James, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Judy Schneider, Tricia Shimamura
Excused: Sharon Pope, Barbara Rudder

1. Launch of a Working Group to Further the 1190 Second Ave. Park Project

The Parks committee launched an internal working group focused on advancing the plan for a park at 1190 Second Avenue at 63rd St.

Although the site is now a staging area for work on the MTA's East Side Access transportation project, the Authority is expected to vacate it in 2018.

The new 1190 working group is part of the Parks and Recreation Committee. Headed by Tricia Shimamura, the group consists of Parks Committee members, members of the public and elected officials and their representatives. Together, participants will be stepping up the committee's efforts to convert the lot at 1190 Second Ave to parkland.

At the group's inaugural session, Ms. Shimamura described the purpose for this focus group and outlined its future plans. As discussed, work to promote the park idea—formalized in a Dec. 2014 CB8M resolution-- had already begun, most recently with the drafting of a letter by Council Member Ben Kallos to MTA Chairman Prendergast. That letter, which was read to the working group, urged the MTA to turn the 1190 lot over to the Parks Dept. for conversion to a park. Meeting attendees suggested expanding the letter to request a meeting with MTA officials.

At the session, representatives of elected officials were asked to sign on to Council Member Kallos' letter to the MTA. They were also asked to provide additional support for the park plan.

As discussed, the working group's future moves will include:

- Exploring any terms and covenants attached to the 1190 property;
- Planning a conference or rally—attended by local officials, CB8M members and the public;
- Establishing a social media presence to publicize the 1190 park plan;
- Creating an informational flyer about 1190 for distribution to community residents, community businesses and community groups.

2. Efforts to De-Privatize the Queensboro Oval Park

As described, the committee has been stepping up efforts to open the Queensboro Oval Park to the public full-time, starting in mid-2017. That's when the City's contract with Sutton East Tennis, which now occupies the Oval most of the year, is due to expire.

Among the de-privatization efforts now underway: Council Member Ben Kallos has written a letter to be sent to the Parks Dept., seeking to have the Oval opened to the public full-time, starting next year. The Council Member is asking other elected officials to sign onto the letter, which is expected to reach the Parks Dept. within a month.

Among its own actions, the committee has launched a letter-writing campaign among members and the public, in support of de-privatizing the Oval. In addition, efforts to interest the press are underway. And soon, committee members will be visiting the Queensboro Oval area, seeking to inform area residents about the campaign and requesting their support for it.

At the February meeting, attendees also decided to hold an event at the Oval site this coming June—when the tennis bubble is removed for the summer. The committee expects to finalize plans for this June event at its March meeting.

**Susan Evans and Margaret Price
Co-Chairs, Parks Committee**