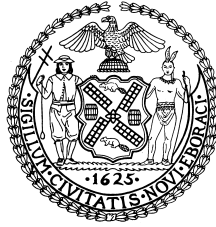


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The City of New York
Manhattan Community Board 8

Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting

Brick Presbyterian Church
62 East 92nd Street (Park-Madison
Carnegie Room
Thursday, March 3, 2016, 6:30 PM

CB8M Members Present: Michele Birnbaum, Susan Evans, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Barry Schneider

Public Members Present: Tricia Shimamura, Judy Schneider

Excused: Daniel Dornbaum, Scott Falk, Sophia James

1. Recommendations for Use of the Queensboro Oval if Deprivatized

The committee identified how it--and the community at large--would like to use the Queensboro Oval Park if it's deprivatized and opened to the public full-time next year.

Meeting attendees also set a June 22 date for a community gathering to support CB8's desire to deprivatize the Queensboro Oval.

The March meeting's focus, on how to use a deprivatized Oval, was a response to the recent *CB8 Speaks* interview with William Castro, the Parks Dept.'s Commissioner for Manhattan Parks. On that CB8 program, Mr. Castro said his department would be "asking the community and the Community Board" how they'd like to see the Queensboro Oval used.

At the March meeting, many agreed on what the response to the commissioner should be. Most attendees felt Oval should be a multi-use active and passive recreation area. It should accommodate a variety of sports, while also permitting quiet relaxation. Those present stressed the need for amenities, such as seating and water fountains, as well as plantings and landscaping.

Among other ideas for the Oval: creating an exercise area for "unsocialized" dogs; and, putting in a parking garage under the Oval to create revenue for the City. Tony Scolnick, owner of the tennis club that now occupies the Oval, recommended keeping the tennis bubble up all year, but allowing public use of it during the summer, when it's not occupied by the tennis club.

After weighing the various suggestions, the committee agreed that the Oval should be a multi-use recreational area, open to the public year-round. The resulting resolution:

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS Manhattan's populous Upper East Side has among the least parkland of any district in New York City; and

WHEREAS deprivatizing the Queensboro Oval and opening it to the public full-time would be an important step toward addressing the Upper East Side's severe shortage of public parkland; and

WHEREAS the City can soon make the Queensboro Oval a full-time public park, since its contract with a private tennis club expires in mid-2017; and

WHEREAS Community Board 8, Manhattan passed a resolution in 2015 strongly urging the City to return the Queensboro Oval park to the public full-time; and

WHEREAS CB8M, in conjunction with the Upper East Side community, has identified uses for a deprivatized Oval—such as soccer, softball, tennis and running—that would benefit a large portion of the public; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8, Manhattan, reiterates its strong desire for the City to return the Queensboro Oval to the public full-time, starting in 2017; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that CB8M wants a deprivatized Queensboro Oval Park to become a multi-use recreation area, available for such active sports as track, soccer, softball and tennis, with seating provided for passive relaxation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Board 8, Manhattan, wishes the City to create a winter ice skating rink at the Queensboro Oval to maximize year-round usage of this park.

VOTE: 9-0-0

In favor: Michele Birnbaum, Susan Evans, Sharon Pope, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Barry Schneider.

Public Members in Favor: Tricia Shimamura and Judy Schneider.

June 22 Queensboro Oval Rally:

The committee chose to hold an early summer gathering to bring together public support for deprivatizing the Oval. The gathering, which will feature entertainment as well as speakers, will be held at the Queensboro Oval on Wednesday, June 22, from 5:30-6:30. (The rain date will be June 29.) The event will be followed by a softball game at the site.

The Committee plans to reach out to local schools, hospitals and athletic groups to draw people of all ages to the event. In addition, Parks Committee members announced they have asked the organization, New Yorkers for Parks, which will be a sponsor of the June 22 rally, to help publicize the event.

New Business

CB8M member Michele Birnbaum presented information about Community Land Trusts that could help with CB8's efforts to expand parkland and open space. As explained, a Community Land Trust (CLT) is a not-for-profit community-based organization, which acquires land and leases it to a community, often for 99 years. The committee agreed that this avenue for obtaining parkland should be explored, and a spokesperson for a CLT in New York will be invited to a future Parks Committee meeting.

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