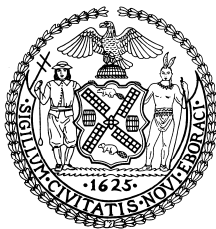


**Nicholas D. Viest**  
Chairman

**Latha Thompson**  
District Manager



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

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

**Parks Committee Meeting**

Thursday, April 4, 2013, 6:30 PM  
Lenox Hill Hospital  
Robert Carmel Conference Room  
130 E. 77<sup>th</sup> Street

CB8M Members present: Elizabeth Ashby, Michele Birnbaum, Molly Blayney, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Judy Schneider, Teri Slater, Marco Tamayo.

Excused: Barry Schneider, Helen Simon

**1. Presentations by the Central Park Conservancy of Two Improvement/Restoration Projects in Central Park**—*a joint issue with the Landmarks Committee*

**--Restoration of Grand Army Plaza:**

The Central Park Conservancy plans a \$4 million, two-phased, project to restore this plaza located at Fifth Avenue between 58<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> Streets. As described by CPC official Chris Nolan, the project's current first phase involves restoring the north plaza, including replacing the trees lost during the October 2011 snowstorm and conserving (including re-gilding) the William Tecumseh Sherman monument.

This area was originally designed as a circular traffic island. In 1903, Augustus Saint-Gaudens' Sherman monument was installed, and the area became known as Grand Army Plaza. A decade later, the entrance was redone, and since then, the site has undergone a number of small alterations. In 1989, the area was completely restored with new pavements and site furnishings, new infrastructure, including plumbing, and repairs to the Pulitzer Fountain.

But over the last nearly quarter-century, the heavily used area has deteriorated, and an October 2011 snowstorm damaged every tree in the north plaza.

Moreover, parts of the planting beds have become overgrown, pavements and curbs have become worn, and climate and other factors have affected the surface of the Sherman statue. There's also no handicapped access to the interior of the plaza.

Thus, the CPC proposes to:

--Upgrade storm drainage and irrigation infrastructure; level the ground at the plaza to make it ADA-accessible; reset bluestone pavement and replace deteriorated pavers; plant a row of London plane trees along the plaza's perimeter on the north side and behind the monument; and excavate and replace existing soil with structural soil and a sizable area for root growth, to improve the health of the trees. In addition, plans call for planting new evergreen shrubs in planting beds and replacing the wicket fence that surrounds them; replacing deteriorated benches; and re-gilding the Sherman monument, using gold leaf, and toning the gilt surface to emphasize shadow and highlight.

The CPC would like to begin restoration work in the late spring or early summer and to complete it by year's end. During construction, the CPC hopes to be able to limit pedestrian traffic in the plaza in order to finish its work as soon as possible.

Some meeting attendees expressed concern over messy conditions caused by pigeons and the need for carriage-drivers to clean up after their horses to avoid attracting more pigeons to the area. Mr. Nolan said the CPC maintains regular dialog with the carriage-drivers on the need for clean-up. Some Community Board members urged the CPC to use top-quality materials for the reconstruction to sustain durability of the pavement and other aspects of the plaza. And, in response to a CB8M member's question, Mr. Nolan said that views of the Sherman monument will be improved by the new tree plantings.

## **RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS** Central Park's Grand Army Plaza has become deteriorated, necessitating major renovations to keep the area attractive and safe; and

Whereas the Central Park Conservancy is proposing a two-phased project—beginning with renovations to the north plaza—to restore this well-known plaza, including its statute of William Tecumseh Sherman; and

**WHEREAS** the Central Park Conservancy is proposing an extensive restoration of the site that will include: leveling the ground to make it ADA-accessible; resetting bluestone pavement and replacing deteriorated pavers; planting London plane trees and creating a sizable area beneath the pavement for tree root growth; planting evergreen shrubs; replacing deteriorated benches; and re-gilding the Sherman monument; therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that Community Board 8, Manhattan approves of the Central Park Conservancy's plans for restoring the north section of the Grand Army Plaza in Central Park at Fifth Avenue between 58<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> Streets.

**VOTE: 11-0-0.** In favor: Elizabeth Ashby, Michele Birnbaum, Molly Blayney, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Judy Schneider, Teri Slater, Marco Tamayo.

### **--Reconstruction of the East 79<sup>th</sup> St. Playground:**

Newer than most Central Park playgrounds, the East 79<sup>th</sup> St. Playground was built in 1991. It was the result of a gift from the Estelle Irving Levy Foundation. The 79<sup>th</sup> St. Playground replaced the Levy Playground, which had been located just west of the current 79<sup>th</sup> St. Playground.

CPC officials say this relatively small—4,800 square foot—play area, which is divided into three sections, is easily accessible to users and is popular with parents because of its smaller size. It's also located in an attractive, verdant area filled with canopy trees and densely planted shrubs.

However, the playground is not ADA compliant. And some of its play equipment isn't suited to its intended audience—of children aged 2-5. In its central area, the playground's spiral slide and metal climbers are outdated and difficult for young children to use. Moreover, the footprint of the main play space, and location and size of some of the equipment, together have made movement around this section difficult, particularly the area closest to its entrance.

The pathway to the playground, which runs along the south side of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, is not ADA-accessible due to its excessive cross-pitch and poor drainage. While the area's plantings are generally in good condition, there has been some effect on them from compacted turf and erosion.

To address these issues, the CPC proposes to:

Provide new and additional play features, including two sandboxes, an accessible sand table, a climber/tunnel, a slide, balancers and spray bollards and replace the existing 8 swings with new ones, including two that are ADA-accessible. The CPC also plans to provide new safety surfacing through the playground and new benches and drinking fountains. It will bound the playground with a combination of treatments, including a low granite wall, steel picket fence and vegetation and it will secure the playground using a chain-link fence and a landscape fence that weaves through the plantings.

Additional plans call for reconstructing a nearby path to make it wheelchair-accessible; restoring and stabilizing adjacent laws; supplementing existing plantings around the playground; and generally, upgrading the area's infrastructure, including its storm drainage, water supply and irrigation.

In the nearby Group of Bears plaza, the CPC plans to reconstruct the paving and to add new benches and a new seating arrangement.

The CPC hopes that construction of this \$1.2 million project can begin by this summer and be completed by year's end.

One meeting attendee asked about the possibility of adding a rope disc as a play feature, while another voiced concern about the steel slide, which could become burningly hot in summer. (The CPC's Chris Nolan said that the slide will be in a well-shaded area.) Yet another attendee held that the area's "flat" appearance could be improved with more vegetation.

#### **RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS** the East 79<sup>th</sup> Street Playground in Central Park contains play equipment that, in some cases, is not suited to the very young children, aged 2-to-5, intended for this playground; and

**WHEREAS** the site is not fully ADA compliant and includes a pathway into this play space that is not wheelchair accessible; and

**WHEREAS** the Central Park Conservancy proposes a host of improvements for this playground, including an array of new and additional play features; new safety surfacing through the playground; new benches and drinking fountains; new fencing and wall treatment; reconstruction of a nearby path to make it wheelchair accessible; supplementing plantings; and upgrading the area's infrastructure; therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that Community Board 8, Manhattan, approves of the Central Park Conservancy's detailed plans for the reconstruction of the East 79<sup>th</sup> Street Playground in Central Park.

**VOTE: 11-0-0.** In favor: Elizabeth Ashby, Michele Birnbaum, Molly Blayney, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Judy Schneider, Teri Slater, Marco Tamayo

#### **2. Proposal for the Display of a Sculpture by Carole Eisner in Tramway Plaza**

Susan Eley, founder of an upper westside gallery, presented a proposal to install artist Carole Eisner's sculpture, Hosea, on the Tramway Park plaza from May 1 to December 1, 2013. Although this is a very large 5,000 pound sculpture, measuring about 15 feet high, by 16 feet wide and 20 feet in depth, it has a very airy feel, and it is resting on three feet (picture is enclosed). A 3/4 inch padding will be placed under each footing to insure the weight is distributed evenly.

Ms. Eley believes the plaza is an ideal location for this piece, with its iron railroad wheel at the top of the sculpture, which refers to the cog in the tram. The sculpture will be viewable from the ground, tram and neighboring buildings, but will not obstruct the flow of pedestrian traffic.

This project is ADA compliant and has received necessary approvals from the DOT and the City.

The committee had two concerns about the project: adequate lightening and the possible effect of placing the large sculpture over a non-activated water-feature area of the park.

On the lighting issue, CB8M members noted that the proposal does not include additional lighting around the sculpture. Members wondered if this large sculpture would cause a safety hazard or encourage graffiti if additional lighting were not included as part of its installation.

In addition, the proposal calls for sitting the sculpture above an area intended to be a fountain. Although this fountain has not yet been fully installed or activated, the area contains a below-ground vault that holds the pipes for this water feature. The committee asked for assurances from the City that the sculpture would not endanger the plumbing under the plaza. Ms. Eley promised to provide to responses to the Committee's concerns.

#### **RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS** the large sculpture, Hosea, by Carole Eisner would provide an aesthetic enhancement to the heavily used Tramway Park plaza; and

**WHEREAS** the project is ADA compliant, has the support of the Parks Department and the approval of the Dept. of Transportation; and

**WHEREAS** there are concerns that the large sculpture could cause hazardous conditions in the plaza and encourage graffiti on the artwork, since the project does not include provisions for nighttime flood lighting on the sculpture; therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that Community Board 8, Manhattan approves of the Parks Dept.'s plans to install the sculpture, Hosea, by Carole Eisner on the Tramway Park plaza from May 1 to December 1, 2013, on the conditions that the City provide assurances that the sculpture will not harm the vault under the plaza, and that nighttime lighting at the site is adequate to prevent the sculpture from creating any hazardous conditions or attracting graffiti.

**VOTE:** 11-0-0. **In favor:** Elizabeth Ashby, Molly Blayney, Michele Birnbaum, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Judy Schneider, Teri Slater, Marco Tamayo.

**Note:** Information Received from Susan Eley after the Parks Committee meeting:

"We have reviewed the weights with Parks Engineers and they have confirmed that they don't have a concern with the weight load, as it is distributed over the three footings. It ensure that it is not any greater than a group of people congregating in the plaza.

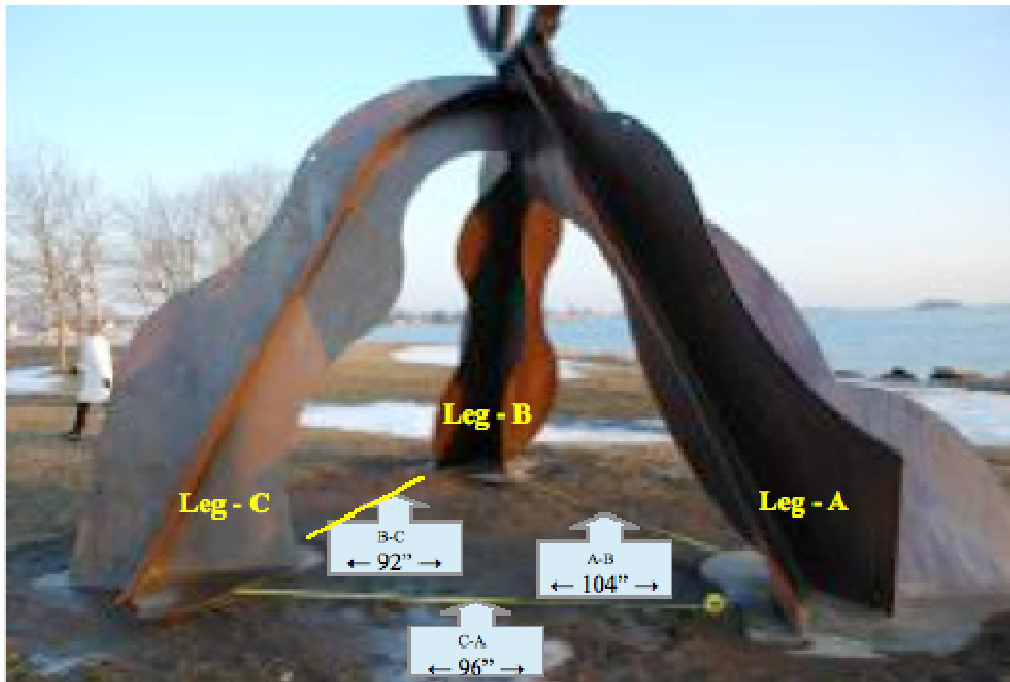
Lighting is not required by Parks. It is the exhibitors aesthetic choice to add lighting. I have discussed this with the gallery and we will determine if there is additional lighting needed once the piece is in; however, we believe there will be sufficient park and ambient light to keep the piece visible to passersby. Should any problems arise though, we will look into adding additional lighting."

### **3. Discussion of Plans for the Parks Committee's April 25 Forum**

On April 25, the Parks Committee will be co-sponsoring a public forum on the Urgent Need for More Open Space on Manhattan's Upper East Side. The event will be held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, beginning at 6:30 pm.

CB8M members are being encouraged to help publicize about this event, and the Board office will be posting and e-blasting fliers about it. Committee members will be continuing to contact area organizations, asking them to help spread the word about the event. CB8M members are strongly urged to attend the forum, which will feature a panel including Holly Leicht, executive director of New Yorkers for Parks, and co-sponsor of the forum; City Council Member Dan Garodnick; Fred Kent, founder and president, Project for Public Spaces; and Dan Barasch and James Ramsey, founders, The Lowline park project.

During their presentations, the audience will be encouraged to write their questions on index cards, which will be provided on their chairs. Members of the Parks Committee will collect and sort the cards and bring them to the moderators.



Hosea  
Welded Steel  
2005

Height: 183"  
Width: 192"  
Depth: 240"

Weight: ~5000 lbs.

Between Footpads A-B: 104"  
Between Footpads B-C: 92"  
Between Footpads C-A: 96"

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