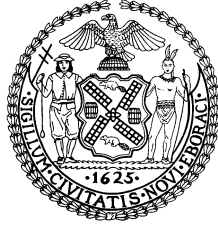


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The City of New York
Manhattan Community Board 8

Parks Committee Meeting
Brick Presbyterian Church
62 East 92nd St.
Thursday, April 2, 2015

CB8M Members Present: Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Judy Schneider.

Excused: Sophia James, Sharon Pope, Rita Popper

1. Discussion about the Parks Dept.'s Upcoming RFP for an Operator of the Loeb Boathouse Restaurant in Central Park--a joint issue with the Landmarks Committee.

The Parks Dept.'s contract with Dean Poll to operate Central Park's Boathouse Restaurant expires June 30, 2016. This May, the Parks Dept. plans to issue a request for proposals (RFP) for a subsequent restaurant and boat dock operator. As a prelude to its RFP issuance, the Parks Dept. is seeking input from CB parks committees on features to include in the RFP, the Parks Dept.'s Alexander Han told the committee.

Han, who is the Parks Dept.'s deputy director of concessions, said that the department has already identified two needed site renovations: the restaurant's restrooms and its boat dock--the latter to be replaced with a new wooden dock. (A new temporary dock will be installed prior to the creation of a new wooden dock.)

The Parks Committee offered the following additional recommendations:

- Maintain the restaurant in its current form as a stylish, high-quality dining locale;
- Continue the operation of casual indoor and outdoor cafés, as well as a take-out window;
- Expand dinner service to year-round, if economically feasible.
- Continue shuttle service to the restaurant, and ensure that it is environmentally friendly and safely operated.

Mr. Han said he expects the Parks Dept. may be able to select a new restaurant and boat dock operator by August. The chosen party will receive a 15-year contract.

2. Public Access to the Queensboro Oval Park after the City's Contract with Sutton East Tennis Club Expires.

The City's contract with Sutton East Tennis Club to operate an indoor tennis facility at the Queensboro Oval--a public park--expires in 2017. Prior to three years ago, the tennis facility had a contract to operate at the location for 8 months a year, while the public could access it for the remaining four months. (When in use, the tennis bubble absorbs most of the Oval's space.)

However, to the chagrin of many of the public, the City in 2012 extended by a six weeks the tennis facility's annual use of this public park. And to make matters worse, when Sutton East would temporarily vacate the site in the summertime, it would leave it in poor condition.

The Parks Committee believes that the public should have much greater access to the Queensboro Oval--and that any private company using this space must be required to keep and leave it in pristine condition.

In fairness to the public, the committee is requesting that the Parks Dept. significantly shorten to a maximum of six months a year the time that a private company can use the Oval. This would take effect with any new contract the City signs for Oval space on or after 2017.

RESOLUTION:

WHEREAS studies have shown that the Community Board 8-Manhattan area has among the least public open space of any district in New York City, despite the district's large and growing population; and

WHEREAS the Queensboro Oval Park is a sizable space that could be used for a multitude of recreational purposes, from team softball playing to quiet enjoyment by individuals; and

WHEREAS this public open space has been privatized for use as a tennis facility for most of the year, making it unavailable for general public use during this time; and

WHEREAS in 2012, the City further reduced the public's already limited access to this space by six weeks, despite much strong public objection to the move; and

WHEREAS a more equitable sharing of the Queensboro Oval between winter tennis players and the public at large dictates that the park should be accessible to the general public for at least six months per year; and

WHEREAS the site's current tennis club operator leaves the park in poor condition when temporarily vacating it in summertime; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8-Manhattan, urges the Parks Dept. to ensure that any new contract for private use of the Queensboro Oval limit that usage to a maximum of six months per year. For the remainder of the year--a minimum of six months--the park should be open and accessible to the general public,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any private organization using the Queensboro Oval Park be required to keep it in pristine condition--and make any needed clean-ups and repairs to the site, including when it vacates the area. Failure to comply--and/or any infringement of the organization's maximum 180-day usage of the park--should result in liquidated damages as spelled out in the City's contract with that organization.

VOTE: 5-0-0

In Favor: Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Judy Schneider.

3. East River Esplanade: Status report on a range of repairs and improvements, including planned work on bulkheads, piers, and the 81st St. Bridge project.

Alex Eng, the Parks department East River Esplanade's project manager, reported that a \$12 million contract has been awarded to begin the structural repairs along the esplanade. After the City completes its vetting process, he will give the community a schedule of the work. It was suggested that Parks posts signs describing the work in progress.

Mr. Eng gave a report on the meeting, arranged by the transportation committee, with invited community members, DDC, DOT, and Parks to discuss the design of the E. 81 St. Pedestrian Bridge along the esplanade. At this point, in spite of the urging from the community, DDC and DOT will not make any changes to the current plans.

The Friends of the East River Esplanade, is working with Parks department to open the pier on E. 91 Street to the public on a few Sundays during the summer.

Parks is putting together a contract to finish the repairs that Con Edison did not complete. Repairs are expected to begin during Spring, 2016. A community gardening group will try to do temporary plantings this year.

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