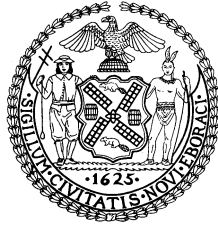


**James G. Clynes**  
Chairman

**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**

**Brick Presbyterian Church**  
**62 East 92<sup>nd</sup> St.**  
**Carnegie Room**  
**Thursday, May 7, 2015**  
**6:30 PM**

**CB8M Members Present:** Elizabeth Ashby, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, David Rosenstein, Barbara Rudder

**Public Member:** Judy Schneider

**Excused:** Sophia James, Sharon Pope

**1. The Central Park Conservancy's Plan to Restore the Ramble and the Ravine in Central Park--a joint issue with the Landmarks Committee.**

The Central Park Conservancy (CPC)'s is expanding its restoration of the park's woodlands with a plan to restore the Ravine in the North Woods and a portion of the Ramble not already being renovated.

As described by the CPC's Lane Addonizio, these sections had been neglected for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The result has been an array of problems in these areas, ranging from an explosion of invasive species, to soil erosion and sedimentation shrinking water courses to the disrepair of infrastructure, pathways and rustic features.

More recently, vegetation in these areas has been hard-hit by hurricanes and other severe weather events.

The proposed scope of the CPC's restoration: removing invasive species, replanting landscapes hurt by severe weather, rebuilding aging paths and drainage infrastructure, replacing wood and concrete benches with the historic Central Park settees, removing sediments in the Gill and Loch water areas caused by erosion, and restoring the edges of the Gill and Loch with boulders and vegetation.

In addition, the Conservancy plans to rebuild four rustic shelters in the Ramble. These include: the Log Shelter near the boathouse; the existing Summerhouse; the Umbrella structure overlooking Bow Bridge; and the Belvedere Summerhouse, near Belvedere Castle.

According to Ms. Addonizio, the proposed work would take place in phases over about a 2-to-3 year period, starting by the end of this year.

Ms. Addonizio responded to several questions. Asked about preventing such deterioration in the future, she said that the CPC's management of these areas, begun about 25 years ago, would ensure that these

areas remain healthy and vibrant. As to the safety of the Gill and Loch areas once their water levels were deepened, she expressed doubt that this would create a problem. But in any case, new signage near the sites would enhance the public's safety. In addition, she said, in response to a question, that the CPC welcomes volunteers. Information about volunteering is available on the CPC's website.

## **RESOLUTION:**

**WHEREAS** during much of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Central Park's woodland areas--designed to be an important wilderness feature of the park-- had suffered from neglect, resulting in significant deterioration of the areas; and

**WHEREAS** this long-term destruction has ranged from soil erosion and sedimentation spilling into and shrinking water ways, to disrepair of infrastructure, pathways and buildings; and

**WHEREAS** in more recent times, severe storms have significantly damaged woodland areas, among them, the Ramble and Ravine; and

**WHEREAS** the Central Park Conservancy (CPC) has a multi-year project underway to restore and maintain the park's woodland areas; and

**WHEREAS** the CPC is proposing to expand its woodland restoration efforts through a project to restore the Ravine in the park's North Woods and a portion of the Ramble that the CPC had not yet addressed; therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that Community Board 8, Manhattan approves of the Central Park Conservancy's plan for the restoration of Central Park's Ravine area and the portion of the Ramble that the CPC had not yet included in its renovations.

## **VOTE: 8-0-0**

In favor: Elizabeth Ashby, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, David Rosenstein, Barbara Rudder.

Public Member in Favor: July Schneider.

## **2. Reopening of Poses Park at Hunter College to the Public.**

Effective May 1, Hunter College has reopened its Poses Park to the public for use on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays until November 1. During those days, the park--located on 68<sup>th</sup> St. between Lexington and Third avenues-- will be open at expanded hours of 10 am to 7 pm, Hunter College's Patrick McKenna told the committee.

In addition, the college plans to install additional, and clearer, signage at the site to expand awareness of this public amenity, Mr. McKenna said.

To help spread the word about the park's re-opening, the committee recommended that Hunter contact media outlets, such as Our Town and DNAInfo, and request an email blast from the CB8M board office.

The committee also urged the college to consider long-range planning for the site. Suggestions included relocating the entrance to the park and lowering the height of the front fence to make the park more visible and inviting to the public.

## **3. Problems at Ruppert Park--Including Dogs Off Leash.**

Nancy Ploeger, of the group, Friends of Ruppert Park, described an array of problems at that park--ranging from rat infestations, to dead tree branches to dogs off leashes, destroying plantings in the park.

As good news, she reported that a 6-week rat-baiting program was about to be completed. In addition, she said the park has received \$9,000 to install big-belly trash cans and will receive \$100,000 from the City to fund a new irrigation system.

However, damage from unleashed dogs evidently remains one of the park's major problems. According to Ms. Ploeger, the Parks Dept.'s Mark Vaccaro has promised to have No Dogs Allowed signs installed at the park.

But at the last meeting of the Friends of Ruppert Park, many dog-owners pressed for the creation of a dog run in the park. As Ms. Ploeger described, dog owners suggested using the unplanted area in the park's northwest corner. (The group subsequently learned that the Parks Dept. will not allow a dog run at the identified site because of its dirt-only ground cover.)

After discussing the various issues raised, especially concerning dogs, the committee decided that the best approach would be to address the overriding problem: the need for a broad vision for the use and design of this park. Attendees agreed that the Parks Dept. should create such an encompassing plan before additional funds are spent on Ruppert Park.

#### **RESOLUTION:**

**WHEREAS** in the past, Ruppert Park underwent various restorations, many of which proved short-lived and unsuccessful; and

**WHEREAS** problems, such as rat infestations, inadequate repairs, irrigation problems, and damage by unleashed dogs, persist in this park, and in some cases, are worsening; and

**WHEREAS** the park's needs would be best addressed through the creation of a broad plan and vision for its use and design; and

**WHEREAS** such a plan would provide context and direction for Ruppert Park funding, enabling its programs and amenities to be more lasting and desirable to the community; therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that Community Board 8, Manhattan (CB8M) urges the Parks Dept. to create a plan that provides an overall vision for the usage and design of Ruppert Park-- and to present this plan to CB8M as soon as possible.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the City should put on hold any major expenditures for Ruppert Park until the requested vision plan is approved by CB8M.

#### **VOTE: 7-0-0**

In favor: Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, David Rosenstein, Barbara Rudder.  
Public Member in Favor: July Schneider.

#### **4. Status of CB8M's Proposal to Create a Park at 1190 Second Ave. at 63<sup>rd</sup> St.**

On May 1, Susan Evans and Margaret Price met with Jesus Perez, Community Liaison, Office of the Manhattan Borough President, Gale Brewer; and Cali Madia, Chief of Staff/Community Liaison, Office of State Assembly Member, Rebecca Seawright.

As explained, at the Full Board meeting on December 2014, CB8 overwhelming approved the resolution to convert the MTA-owned lot at 1190 Second Avenue to a public park once the East Side Access transportation project is completed.

Although the full East Side Access project isn't due to be completed until 2022, ESA work at 1190 Second Avenue will be finished much earlier--in 2018. So far, MTA officials have denied our requests to meet with them about converting 1190 Second Avenue to a park. Thus, as soon as possible, we need elected officials to step in and urge the MTA to support CB8's open space plan.

We asked Jesus and Cali to organize a joint letter to the MTA from as many local elected officials as possible. And we'll soon follow up with Cali and Jesus on the status of this request.

The Committee recommends that we investigate the terms and covenant for this property.

## OLD BUSINESS

The Dept. of Design and Construction (DDC) has sought approval from the Public Design Commission for the DDC's designs for a pedestrian bridge along the East River Esplanade. Barbara Rudder gave the following status report on the project:

### 1. **Access ramp from East End Avenue to John Finlay Walk**

Although the community urged the Dept. of Design and Construction (DDC) and the DOT to move the ADA-accessible access ramp farther north, the Public Design Commission (PDC) approved the DDC's plan to build the ramp at 81 St. But the PDC did suggest that the DDC explore using alternate materials for the railing and to eliminate or minimize new lighting.

### 2. **Connection from the access ramp to the existing steps leading to the Esplanade**

The DDC's design includes an 8-foot steel wall on the south end of John Finlay Walk, which would block views of the East River. The Public Design Commission urged the DDC to look into adding a viewing window at the southern end of John Finlay Walk.

### 3. **Ramp on the East River Esplanade to replace the deteriorating stairs**

Although the community urged the DDC to move the ramp north to lessen its negative impact on the Esplanade, the PDC approved its placement at 8st St.

Moreover, despite the community's strong preference for using translucent materials along the sides of the ramp, the Public Design Commission approved the DDC's choice of a steel prison-like design. However, the PDC did suggest some aesthetic improvements, such as lighting changes.

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