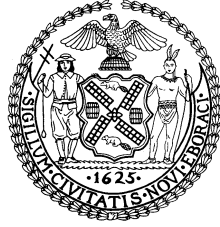


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The City of New York
Manhattan Community Board 8

PARKS COMMITTEE

Brick Presbyterian Church
62 East 92nd Street
Living Room
Thursday, July 10, 2014
6:30PM

CB8M Members present: Jim Clynes, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Sophia James, Rita Popper, Sharon Pope, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Judy Schneider, Teri Slater, Nick Viest.

Excused Parks Committee members: Barry Schneider and Lowell Barton

1. Proposal to Create a Position within the Parks Dept. to Oversee the Reconstruction of the East River Esplanade

Steve Simon, the Parks Dept.'s chief of staff to the Manhattan Borough Commissioner, announced that that the Parks Dept. would soon be creating a position of project manager for the East River Esplanade. That role will involve the preservation and reconstruction of the Esplanade from East 59th to East 125th streets and a parcel of it from East 36-38th streets.

This announcement follows a proposal by Rep. Carolyn Maloney for the hiring of an East River Esplanade Administrator—a plan advanced by Council Member Ben Kallos.

The upcoming East River Esplanade project manager will report both to the Parks Dept.'s Manhattan Borough Commissioner and to the department's Deputy Commissioner for Capital Projects. Since the NYC's budget has approved \$35 million of the needed \$115 million to repair the East River Esplanade, the new project manager will be ensuring that funded repairs occur expeditiously and "keeping up momentum for getting all the funding needed to complete the Esplanade's renovation," Steve Simon said. Acceding to the Parks Committee's request, this Esplanade project manager also will be expected to provide status reports regularly to CB8M's Parks Committee.

Discussing the timing of renovations, Mr. Simon said the Parks Dept. will start spending a portion of the allotted \$35 million for renovation work this fall. The first set of contracts, worth about \$12 million, will cover repairs at about 16 sites—at least 11 of which are located between 60th and 96th streets. The remaining \$23 million will be spent over the next two fiscal years, Mr. Simon reported.

In response to a question, Mr. Simon also said that the Parks Dept. "has no current plans to change the design of the Esplanade."

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS structural conditions are continuing to deteriorate along East River Esplanade, creating urgent public safety problems; and

WHEREAS the City's budget has allocated an initial \$35 million out of a needed \$115 million (in 2012 dollars) to begin needed repairs of the Esplanade between East 59th and East 125 streets and between East 36 and East 38th streets; and

WHEREAS the urgency of renovating and maintaining the East River Esplanade requires a point-person within the Parks Dept. who would focus on obtaining necessary funding for renovations and ensuring that funded work be completed expeditiously; and

WHEREAS Parks Dept. officials have expressed an intent to hire an East River Esplanade project manager to oversee the renovation and preservation of the East River Esplanade; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8-Manhattan urges the Parks Dept. to proceed with its expressed intent to hire an East River Esplanade project manager. This person would oversee all aspects of the reconstruction of the East River Esplanade, a substantial portion of which will take place in the Community Board 8, Manhattan district.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that, once hired, this project manager should regularly provide CB8M's Parks Committee with reports on the status of renovation and preservation work along the East River Esplanade, from East 59th to East 125th streets, and from East 36 to East 38th streets.

VOTE: 11-0-0

In favor: Jim Clynes, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Sophia James, Rita Popper, Sharon Pope, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Judy Schneider, Teri Slater, Nick Viest.

2. Review of Finished and Unfinished Work on the Con Edison portion of the East River Esplanade.

Con Edison official Laura Maseuch reported on the status of the project to reconstruct a portion of the East River Esplanade from E. 72 to E. 76 streets that Con Ed had leased from the City. Con Ed had been required to restore that area when it would be returned to public use.

Some of the desired refurbishing has included: fencing along the bulkhead with sea rail, installed new pavers on the walkway, and strengthened the bulkhead. (Con Ed has not made the repairs to the damaged bulkhead as deemed needed by the Parks Dept.'s engineering report). The large service building, which obstructs much of the walkway, will remain.

In November, 2013, CB8M passed a resolution, asking Parks Dept. to redo Con Ed's Esplanade design because of concerns that the two large median sections to the north and south of the service building, designated for plantings, would limit space for jogging, walking and cycling activities. In addition, the board requested that the plan include irrigation for the plantings.

So far, Con Ed has refused requests to provide irrigation, and the designated planting beds in the median area remain empty and fenced off.

At the Parks Committee's July meeting, the committee expressed its desire for greenery and seating in the area but stressed the need for irrigation to preserve plantings. Members expressed a preference for plants that can tolerate difficult, especially dry, weather conditions. Members also asked that the width of the planting beds be narrowed to make room for walkers and cyclists.

RESOLUTION 1

WHEREAS a section of the East River Esplanade from East 72nd to East 76th streets, previously leased by Consolidated Edison, has been returned to public use; and

WHEREAS Con Ed's required work to restore and improve this portion of the Esplanade is still unfinished, with planting beds in the middle of the walkway remaining empty and fenced-off; and

WHEREAS these sizable but inaccessible areas limit public usage and enjoyment of the Esplanade; and

WHEREAS CB8M remains committed to having plantings and seating along this portion of the Esplanade; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8M urges the Parks Dept. to review the design of the East River Esplanade from East 72nd to East 76th streets and to narrow the width of this area's two planting areas to allow more space for walking and cycling; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Board 8-Manhattan requests that the Parks Dept. include plantings and seating in this area.

VOTE: 11-0-0

In favor: Jim Clynes, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Sophia James, Rita Popper, Sharon Pope, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Judy Schneider, Teri Slater, Nick Viest.

RESOLUTION 2:

WHEREAS CB8M remains committed to its desire for plantings as well as benches along the East River Esplanade in the Con Ed area from East 72nd to East 76th streets; and

WHEREAS these plantings will require an irrigation source for survival; and

WHEREAS Con Ed, which has long intruded on the Esplanade--a public park--has so far refused to provide the irrigation needed for the desired plantings; therefore.

BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8-Manhattan strongly requests Con Ed either to provide an irrigation source between E. 72 and E. 76 streets, or funding for a water truck in this area for three consecutive years after plantings have been installed.

VOTE: 11-0-0

In favor: Jim Clynes, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Sophia James, Rita Popper, Sharon Pope, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Judy Schneider, Teri Slater, Nick Viest.

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