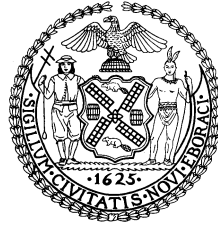


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**The City of New York**  
**Manhattan Community Board 8**

**Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting**

**Brick Presbyterian Church**  
**62 East 92<sup>nd</sup> Street (Park-Madison)**  
**Carnegie Room**  
**Thursday, July 14, 2016, 6:30 PM**

CB8M Members in attendance: Michele Birnbaum, Daniel Dornbaum, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Sophia James, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Trisha Shimamura.  
Excused: Sharon Pope, Judy Schneider

**1. Review of a Proposal for a Sculpture by Yasumitsu Morito to be Displayed Temporarily in Carl Schurz Park, Starting This October.**

Artist Yasumitsu Morito and a Parks Dept. official presented a plan to display one of Mr. Morito's works—a sculpture of a human figure—in Carl Schurz Park from October 2016 to April 2017. As proposed, the artwork would sit on the landing above the park's Hoop Garden on the stairway to the promenade.

The terracotta sculpture, entitled "Spirit of New York City," has dimensions of 6' high, 5' wide, and 4' deep, and weighs 600 pounds. It consists of a human figure sitting on a vessel that symbolizes New York as a melting pot.

Mr. Morito is an artist who teaches ceramics at the Art Students League of New York.

**RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS** the NYC Parks Dept. and artist Yasumitsu Morito are proposing to display a Morito sculpture in Carl Schurz Park that reflects the spirit of New York City; and

**WHEREAS** this project is being privately funded by the artist himself and through grants; and

**WHEREAS** the project has the support of the Parks Department and The Carl Schurz Park Conservancy; and

**WHEREAS** the art installation will have residual light only and will be safely installed on the landing above Carl Schurz Park's Hoop Garden on the stairway to the Promenade; therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that Community Board 8, Manhattan, approves of the Parks Department's plan to display a sculpture by artist Yasumitsu Morito entitled, "The Spirit of New York City," in Carl Schurz Park from October 2016 through April 2017.

**VOTE: 9-0-0**

In favor: Michele Birnbaum, Daniel Dornbaum, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Sophia James, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Trisha Shimamura.

**2. Public Meeting on the Esplanade’s East 81<sup>st</sup> St. Bridge Project**—*a joint issue with the Transportation Committee*

CB8M’s Parks and Recreation (PRC) and Transportation committees jointly discussed with the public issues relating to the planned creation of the East River Esplanade’s East 81<sup>st</sup> St. bridge and ramp and Esplanade access ramp.

The discussion was a follow-up on an informal discussion of this area during the Old Business portion of PRC’s June meeting.

Representatives of several local elected officials were invited to, and attended, this July session. They had been invited to share any knowledge they had about the status of the E. 81<sup>st</sup> St. bridge project, and to hear comments from area residents.

A Parks Committee member updated the audience and CB8 members with her knowledge of the project. But she and others—especially members of the public—pointed to the overall lack of information about the project, both about the materials to be used on the bridge and ramp, and the planned location of the access ramp onto the Esplanade. As the committees heard, the recent lack of public meetings has fueled concerns and frustration. One attendee mentioned that, apparently, some work on the project has stopped for now. And unconfirmed rumors have been spreading, some said, about changes to the project—including talk that the planned access ramp at E. 81<sup>st</sup> St. might be moved to E. 82<sup>nd</sup> or E. 83<sup>rd</sup> St.

Apparently, that issue--the location of the Esplanade ramp access—was particularly troubling to many of the meeting’s attendees. Thus, a show of hands was held to gauge, *informally*, which Esplanade access street most attendees preferred. The result: An overwhelming majority of those at the meeting preferred E. 81<sup>st</sup> St. for the Esplanade access ramp.

Asked to explain her preference, one member of the public said she considered E. 82<sup>nd</sup> St. to be too dangerous a site for the ramp.

Discussion also centered on why no public meetings on the E. 81 St. Bridge project had recently taken place. The joint committees decided to address this and the other various contentious issues—including the lack of information available at this meeting—by tabling this issue and passing a resolution that calls for holding a public meeting on this issue in September. CB8M’s Parks and Transportation committees will jointly host this publicized session. And the invited list will include elected officials and officials of the various City agencies linked to the Esplanade’s E. 81<sup>st</sup> St. bridge project.

**RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS** Community Board 8-Manhattan and the public are increasingly concerned about the lack of information on the project to create an ADA- accessible ramp and a bridge on the East River Esplanade at East 81<sup>st</sup> St.—work that includes creating an access ramp to the Esplanade; and

**WHEREAS** concerns center both on the materials to be used for the siding of the bridge and ramp running from John Finley Walk to the lower Esplanade and the location of an access ramp onto the Esplanade; and

**WHEREAS** in December 2015, Community Board 8-Manhattan passed a resolution requesting the City to emphasize the use of glass (instead of wire mesh) on the Esplanade's 81<sup>st</sup> St. bridge and ramp—an request that the City has not yet publicly responded to; therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that Community Board 8-Manhattan will sponsor a public meeting to be held on a date in September, hosted by CB8M's Transportation and Parks & Recreation committees, to bring together elected officials and officials of various City agencies involved with the Esplanade's East 81<sup>st</sup> St. project. As intended, this meeting will seek to provide all involved CB8M committees, elected officials and area residents with a status report on work on the Esplanade's E. 81<sup>st</sup> St. project. The session will be the basis for continuing public meetings on this issue.

**VOTE: 9-0-0**

In favor: Michele Birnbaum, Daniel Dornbaum, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Sophia James, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Tricia Shimamura.

### **3. Continuing Efforts to Make the Queensboro Oval a Year-Round Public Park**

The Parks & Recreation Committee will be continuing CB8's drive to make the now-largely privatized Queensboro Oval a year-round public park in 2017.

Elected officials' support for CB8's campaign has been growing, as demonstrated by the 6 elected officials who attended and spoke at the June 25 Queensboro Oval rally. Public knowledge of, and support for, this effort has also jumped, and many members of the public have signed CB8's petition calling for the Oval to become a full-time public park. Over the next two weeks, these petitions will be sent to the Parks Dept. and elected officials. Additionally, through his web site, Council Member Kallos is providing a petition for the public to sign.

But committee members agreed that an array of continuing efforts will be needed to get the Oval deprivatized. At the meeting, Parks Committee members cited such steps as: continuing the petitioning drive, and sending a steady stream of signed petitions to the Parks Dept. and elected officials; creating a visual campaign, using photos of what the Oval field could look like; obtaining more media coverage, possibly through additional events; and finding information, such as the percent of tax dollars our community contributes to the City's coffers, that could further CB8's case for needing and deserving this park.

In addition, the committee plans to soon contact CB6—a co-sponsor of the June 25 Oval rally—to see what promotional efforts can undertake jointly by CB8 and CB6.

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