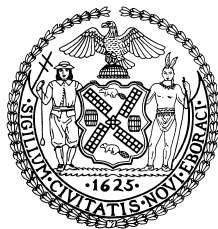


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The City of New York
Manhattan Community Board 8

Parks Committee Meeting
Brick Presbyterian Church
62 East 92nd St., Carnegie Room
Thursday, September 26, 2013, 6:30 pm

CB8M Members present: Elizabeth Ashby, Lowell Barton, Michele Birnbaum, Molly Blayney, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Lorraine Johnson, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Abraham Salcedo, Judy Schneider, Marco Tamayo. Excused: Rita Popper, Barry Schneider, Helene Simon

1. Review of Plans to Reconstruct the Fort Clinton and Nutter's Battery Overlooks in Central Park—a joint issue with the Landmarks Committee.

Chris Nolan, the Central Park Conservancy's (CPC) vice president, design and construction, presented the CPC's plans to reconstruct Central Park's Fort Clinton and Nutter's Battery areas near 106th St. and Fifth Ave.

These rocky areas overlooking the Harlem Meer had been fortifications during the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 and were part of the areas added to Central Park in 1863. But by the early 20th Century, little remained of the historic forts; and by mid-century, these rustic areas had been urbanized, with remodeling including two playgrounds, a boathouse, a smoothed out shoreline, pavement and other changes.

As part of its broad Met-to-Meer reconstruction, the CPC now plans to restore the historic and rustic character of Ft. Clinton and Nutter's Battery areas.

Currently, the rectangular-shaped Fort Clinton area includes an asphalt semi-circular open area, edged with a concrete curb and steel picket fencing and has settees facing inward, instead of outward to the Meer. At the center of the area is a base designed for two cannons, which were removed in the 1980s and are now undergoing restoration, according to the CPC. All that remains of the flagpole is its original concrete base.

At Fort Clinton, the CPC plans to:

Repave the overlook with stone screenings contained by boulders at steep slopes and rustic cribbing at flatter grades; replace the existing benches with backless rustic benches; replace the metal picket fence with a rustic wood fence; restore the stone monument base, replace its missing plaque and place the restored cannons on the base; install a new flagpole at its original site; and stabilize the surrounding slopes with perennials and groundcovers.

Today, the Nutter's Battery area consists of a circular area of asphalt pavement—in poor condition--surrounded by a rustic stone wall. The site includes six World's Fair benches and has a rock outcrop at its northern edge.

Although it's the site's focal point, the rock outcrop area includes a visually disruptive light directly in front of it.

At Nutter's Battery, the CPC plans to:

Reconstruct the existing stone wall to a lower 18 inches to accommodate seating; remove asphalt pavement to expose more of the existing rock outcrop and repave with stone screenings; reconstruct the asphalt path leading to the overlook with asphalt and granite block curbs; and add new plantings along the edges of the overlook.

The CPC said it hopes to begin the \$265,000 projects in the latter part of the winter and complete them in late spring, in time for plantings. During Q&A, Community Board members asked the CPC for on-site plaques that would explain the history of the two sites and asked the Conservancy to explore whether the paths leading up to the sites contain adequate lighting.

RESOLUTION:

WHEREAS the Central Park Conservancy plans to restore the former rustic character to the Fort Clinton and Nutter's Battery areas of Central Park, which contain impressive views overlooking the Harlem Meer; and

WHEREAS restoration work will take into account the role Ft. Clinton and Nutter's Battery played in the American Revolution and War of 1812 by such moves as restoring the stone monument base at Ft. Clinton, replacing its missing plaque and reinstalling two restored cannons on the base; and

WHEREAS Community Board 8 wishes to emphasize the attractiveness and importance of Ft. Clinton and Nutter's Battery areas of Central Park by including bronze plaques at the sites that describe their history and by ensuring that the paths leading to the sites have adequate lighting; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8, Manhattan approves of the Central Park Conservancy's plans to restore the Fort Clinton and Nutter's Battery areas of Central Park.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Board 8, Manhattan urges the Conservancy to include bronze plaques at Central Park's Fort Clinton and Nutter's Battery areas that describe their historical importance and asks the Conservancy to examine whether paths leading to these sites have adequate lighting.

VOTE: 9-0-3

In favor: Elizabeth Ashby, Lowell Barton, Michele Birnbaum, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Abraham Salcedo, Judy Schneider.

Abstaining: Molly Blayney, Lorraine Johnson, Marco Tamayo.

2. Discussion of desires/needs for improving the East River Esplanade specifically in the CB8M district.

RESOLUTION:

The East River Esplanade Task Force, charred by Council member Jessica Lappin, Assembly member Micah Kellner and Congress member Carolyn Maloney met last May. At the meeting, Parks department announced the result of an engineering study to determine the needs and costs to repair the esplanade's crumbling infrastructure. The report suggested that approximately \$11.5 million should be allocated each year for 10 years to complete the necessary repairs. At this time, the City has not included this year's repairs in its budget, and therefore the Parks committee passed the following resolution:

WHEREAS the Parks Department announced the results of an engineering study that determined the needs and costs associated with the repair of the decaying and crumbling East River Esplanade infrastructure; and

WHEREAS that engineering study concluded that it would cost about \$11.5 million per year, or about \$115 million over 10 years, to repair the Esplanade; and

WHEREAS if Esplanade repairs are not undertaken as prescribed in the engineering report, costs to repair the Esplanade ultimately could climb as high as \$400 million; and

WHEREAS New York City's budget does not include funding to repair the East River Esplanade; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that CB8M urges the City to allocate \$11.5 million annually for the renovation of the East River Esplanade.

VOTE: 12-0-0

In favor: Elizabeth Ashby, Lowell Barton, Michele Birnbaum, Molly Blayney, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Lorraine Johnson, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Abraham Salcedo, Judy Schneider, Marco Tamayo.

At the Task Force meeting, a wish list of specific improvements was presented by CIVITAS and several other Park groups. However, most addressed areas above 96th Street. The committee agreed it was important to begin wish list of improvements for below 96 Street, and to ask the City to use our suggestions to create a master plan for the esplanade.

Marco Tamayo presented a plan to construct an upper level along the esplanade. A 6 to 7 foot gravity wall will be built along the lower level to protect against storms. The lower level which can be dedicated for bicycle riders, and the upper for pedestrians.

There were many suggestions to add to a master plan. The committee passed the following resolution:

RESOLUTION:

WHEREAS the East River Esplanade in the CB8M district is in a potentially dangerous state of disrepair; and

WHEREAS in the CB8M area, the Parks Dept. has been limiting its Esplanade repair work to piecemeal repairs of small dangerous and decaying areas; and

WHEREAS the Parks Dept. has still not created a comprehensive master plan for the East River Esplanade that would address the full range of renovation and re-design needs for the Esplanade in CB8M; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that CB8M urges the Parks Dept. develop a master plan for the East River Esplanade that would incorporate the suggestions made by the public at the September 26, 2013 CB8M Parks Committee meeting. These suggestions include:

- Installing an irrigation system throughout the Esplanade to maintain area plantings;
- Repairing existing faulty lighting and increasing area illumination as much as possible;
- Expanding the width of the Esplanade to enable it to better serve pedestrians, bicyclists, etc. One specific suggestion entails adding an upper level to the Esplanade, along all or a portion of it, similar in height John Finlay Walk, to separate pedestrian from bicycle use;
- Using pilings in the East River as a foundation for expanding the Esplanade out over that portion of the East River;
- Redesigning the 91st St. pier to accommodate cultural uses and popular activities, such as fishing;
- Converting the Marine Transfer Station site to parkland if it isn't used as a MTS;
- Addressing the noise and air pollution caused by the Esplanade's proximity to the FDR drive;
- Creating initiatives to prevent destructive flooding caused by climate change and rising seas;
- Creating an attractive and unified design scheme that would enhance the Esplanade's stature as a destination park.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that CB8M encourages the City to pursue public-private partnerships to help finance the urgently needed repair and re-design of the East River Esplanade in the CB8M district.

VOTE: 8-0-3

In favor: Elizabeth Ashby, Molly Blayney, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Abraham Salcedo, Marco Tamayo.

Abstain: Lowell Barton, Michele Birnbaum, Judy Schneider.

3. Follow-Up on CB8M's Open Space Initiatives

The Parks Committee has been exploring several ways to follow up on last spring's forum on the Need for More Open Space in the CB8M District. As one avenue, the committee has been considering ways to survey locations that may present opportunities to obtain open space and parkland. In addition, the committee expects to invite elected officials to one of its meetings to discuss any legal/regulatory changes that would aid the open space initiative.

During the meeting, a committee member raised the issue of pedestrian plazas. In response, one member suggested airing this topic at a future joint meeting between CB8's Transportation, Zoning and Development and Parks committees.

Margaret Price and Barbara Rudder, Parks Committee Co-Chairs