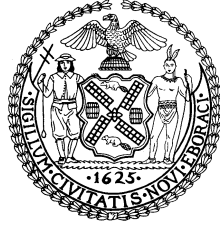


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**The City of New York
Manhattan Community Board 8**

**Parks Committee Meeting
Brick Presbyterian Church**

62 East 92nd St.

Living Room

Thursday, December 4, 2014, 6:30 PM

CB8 Members present: Matt Bondy, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Sophia James, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Judy Schneider.

Excused: Lowell Barton, Sharon Pope

1. Status of Tree Planting as Park of Second Ave. Subway Restitution

Annie Weinmayr, the Parks Dept.'s tree project manager for the Second Ave. Subway restitution project, presented the Parks Dept.'s plans to date for replacing trees removed for Second Ave. Subway construction.

As of now, plans call for planting some 1,117 trees. Of that total, the MTA responsible for planting 883 trees--targeting sites along Second Ave. and part way into side streets--and the Parks Dept., will fill in, with 244 trees planted at additional sites in the SAS area. The new trees will have a maximum caliper of 5 inches. Small 18-inch high tree guards will be installed at tree beds along Second Ave., but not necessarily at side street tree beds.

Among the Parks Dept.'s street tree planting guidelines, new trees will be planted 20-to-30 feet apart, depending on the species, and will not be planted a bus stop curb. Tree trunks will be at least 5 feet from a hydrant, at least 6 feet from a street sign, at least 25 feet from a street light and 7 feet for more from a curb cut. On sidewalks, planting sites will need to be at least 39 inches from the back of a tree bed to a wall or fence. In addition, tree trunks will need to be at least 40 feet from the curb of an intersection.

Ms. Weinmayr said that tree planting by the Parks Dept. will begin in March. However, the department is still identifying specific planting sites in the area, mainly between First Ave. and Third Ave. Parks Committee members asked her to provide more detail on planting sites as soon as possible. Among other requests, Committee members asked for more information on species of trees to be selected, and requested that plantings include a variety of species with differing characteristics.

Some Committee members stressed the need for a coordinated approach to the overall redesign of the Second Ave. streetscape. To ensure adequate uniformity to the SAS area being reconstructed, City agencies should work closely with each other and the community on this important project.

2. Discussion of the possibility for expanding public access to the Queensboro Oval at 59th St.

For 10 months per year, the Parks Dept. leases space at the Queensboro Oval Park to a private tennis club, which erects a tennis bubble at this site. But the tennis operators vacate the site during the summer, they leave it in such disrepair that it's become unattractive to the public and underused.

The Parks Committee agreed to take steps to improve this situation. Suggestions ranged from demanding that the City better maintain this public space, to urging that the park remain open to the public during more months of the year, to stressing the need for a citizen-created conservancy to help protect the park. As a first step, the Committee decided to seek a copy of the Parks Dept.'s contract with the tennis club to determine when the club's lease expires. After the Committee reviews that document, it will decide how to proceed further.

3. Proposal to Create a Public Park at 1190 Second Avenue

In its 2013 survey of open space possibilities, CB8's Parks Committee found 10 Upper East Side sites that could be converted to parkland. Among the most attractive of the locales was the lot at 1190 Second Ave. at 63rd St.

The MTA is now using that large lot as a construction staging area for its East Side Access transportation project. It's expected to be completed in roughly 2022-2023.

To ensure that the site doesn't become earmarked for other purposes, the Parks Committee and CB8 Chair Nick Viest have been notifying public officials, including those at the MTA, of its desire to convert the site to parkland.

This March, Nick Viest wrote to the MTA's CEO Thomas Prendergast asking for a meeting to discuss this possibility—once the East Side Access is completed. He pointed out that the locale would be ideal for the area's adults and children, who now lack a nearby park.

However, MTA officials did not grant this meeting request.

In pursuing the matter, CB8's Parks Committee co-chairs conferred with officials of Rep. Carolyn Maloney, who favors converting the property to parkland. The Congress Member suggested that CB8 pass a resolution that would formalize its desire to create a park at 1190 Second Ave. after completion of the East Side Access project.

The following resolution passed unanimously at the December Parks Committee meeting:

WHEREAS the densely populated Upper East Side of Manhattan has among the least public parkland of any district of New York City; and

WHEREAS that lack of public open space prevents the community, including many children and older adults, from enjoying basic quality-of-life opportunities available elsewhere in New York City; and

WHEREAS CB8M's Parks Committee has identified the large lot at 1190 Second Ave. at 63rd St. as a potential site for a future park, since it currently contains no major permanent buildings; and

WHEREAS residents of that area have no other nearby public parkland; and

WHEREAS that Second Ave. site, now being used by the MTA as a construction staging area for its East Side Access (ESA) transportation project, conceivably could become available for parkland once the MTA completes its ESA project in approximately 2022; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that CB8M strongly favors converting the MTA-owned lot at 1190 Second Avenue at 63rd Street to a public park once the East Side Access transportation project is completed. The board also urges the City and the MTA to support this plan for new parkland, since Manhattan's Community Board 8 district has among the least amount of parkland of any New York City area.

VOTE: 7-0-0

In favor: Matt Bondy, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Judy Schneider.

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