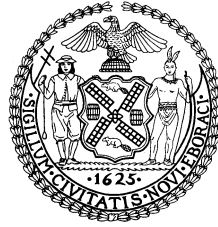


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The City of New York
Manhattan Community Board 8

Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting
Brick Presbyterian Church
62 East 92nd Street (Park-Madison)
Session Room
Thursday, December 3, 2015
6:30 PM

CB8M Members in attendance: Daniel Dornbaum, Scott Falk, Susan Evans, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder

Public Member in attendance: Trisha Shimamura

Excused: Sophia James, Sharon Pope, Rita Popper, public member Judy Schneider

1. Update on Repairs and Improvements to the East River Esplanade

City Council Member Ben Kallos gave a slide-show presentation on current and planned future work on the East River Esplanade in the CB8M district and at Andrew Haswell Green Park.

At Andrew Haswell Green Park, phase-one work is underway on the approach to the park and on its upper area. (The park's dog run has been completed.) Among the projects underway are: a ramp that's being greened, tiered plantings on the sloped area, modern fencing, and a water foundation, among other amenities. Irrigation for the plantings will be provided. Two more phases of park creation are due to follow this first portion.

On the Esplanade, construction has begun in the Rockefeller University area, from about E. 63rd St. to E. 68th St., starting with repairs to the seawall. In addition, Esplanade foundation work will be including the creation of a sound barrier, as well as such amenities as World's Fair-style benches, dot-light lighting, call boxes and trees and other plantings. Completion of final plantings is expected to begin in 2018 and it's hoped that this portion of the Esplanade will be finished by the end of that year.

The Hospital for Special Surgery is now in the early stages of planning for improvements to the Esplanade from 70th to 72nd streets. Once the Parks Dept. approves the designs for the improvements--which are due to include such amenities as an 8-foot sound barrier, new (but fewer) benches, a water-fountain with two heights, and new plantings--the proposed designs will be presented to CB8M. Once designs are approved, groundbreaking will take place, and work is expected to be done by 2018. The Hospital for Special Surgery has agreed to these Esplanade improvements in exchange for being able to build over the FDR Drive in the HSS area. If HSS decides to build a second building, the Hospital will extend its improvements of the Esplanade from E. 72nd St. to E. 78 St (excluding the Con Edison area). But it's not known if, or when, HSS will decide on the creation of a second building.

Currently, there are no plans for Esplanade improvements from E. 68th-E. 70th streets. However, Council Member Kallos noted that CIVITAS has provided a report on its vision of Esplanade improvements from E. 81st-E.84th streets.

The City has already allocated \$35 million for improvements to the Esplanade on the Upper East Side. Responding to CB8 members' question about when to propose a resolution seeking additional Esplanade funding, Council Member Kallos recommended doing so soon. Thus, the committee unanimously passed the following resolution:

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the East River Esplanade in the CB8M district is in badly deteriorated condition, making it unsafe for its many users; and

WHEREAS the City has already approved a portion of the funds--\$35 million over three years--needed to complete Esplanade improvements in the CB8M area; and

WHEREAS much more funding, last estimated at an additional \$80 million, is needed to make the Esplanade on Manhattan's Upper East Side safe and attractive for users; and

WHEREAS the need for full funding of Esplanade improvements has become urgent, given the Esplanade's ever-worsening condition on Manhattan's Upper East Side; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8, Manhattan, urges the City, as soon as possible, to allocate the remaining funds, last estimated at \$80 million, needed to complete the badly needed renovation of the East River Esplanade in the CB8M district.

VOTE: 6-0-0

CB8M Members in favor: Daniel Dornbaum, Scott Falk, Susan Evans, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder
Public Member in favor: Trisha Shimamura

2. Status of the Queensboro Oval and 1190 Second Ave. projects

The Parks Committee discussed its efforts to halt privatization of the Queensboro Oval Park with Council Member Ben Kallos. who said he supports this plan.

The Council Member suggested various ways to further this cause. Among them: he recommended creating a Queensboro Oval Park Task Force with CB6M to obtain input from all interested parties. He also agreed that a follow-up letter from all local elected officials should be sent to the Parks Dept.'s William Castro, emphasizing the need for Queensboro Oval Park to be open and accessible to the public year-round. In addition, Mr. Kallos suggested that CB8 make monthly calls to elected officials about the status of the park.

In addition, the Council Member enthusiastically backed CB8M's efforts to convert the lot at 1190 Second Ave. to a public park. He felt a letter should be sent to the Chairman of the MTA to express frustration with their unwillingness to meet with CB8M's Parks Committee to discuss making this site public open space. The letter would be co-signed by Councilmember Kallos and CB8M's Parks Committee. Ideally, next March, the committee, in conjunction with two members of the public, would also like to hold an event or meeting to raise community awareness about the 1190 Second Avenue project.

3. Candidates for the Parks Dept.'s Parks Without Borders Initiative

Through this coming February, NYC's Parks Dept. will be seeking nominations for parks that could benefit from its new initiative, Parks Without Borders (PWB). In that program, 8 NYC parks will share \$50 million of funding to improve the edges of their park--moves that could include lowering of fences, creating more visible and accessible entrances and generally improving the park's connection to adjacent spaces.

The committee would like to nominate Ruppert Park for this program. But the community group overseeing Ruppert Park so far hasn't favored changes the PWB program would bring to that park's periphery, especially lower fences. Council Member Kallos said his staff would seek a meeting with involved groups, among them the Friends of Ruppert Park, to further discuss the possibility of Ruppert Park applying to participate in the PWB initiative.

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