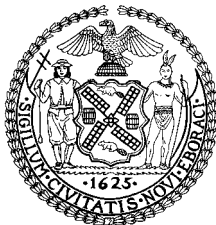


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**The City of New York**  
**Manhattan Community Board 8**

**Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting**

**Brick Presbyterian Church**  
**62 East 92<sup>nd</sup> Street (Park-Madison)**  
**Carnegie Room**  
**Thursday, April 6, 2017, 6:30 PM**

**CB8 Members in attendance:** Susan Evans, Jane Parshall, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Barry Schneider, Tricia Shimamura.

**Public Member in attendance:** Judy Schneider

**1. Three Central Park Reconstruction Projects Proposed by the Central Park Conservancy: the East 67<sup>th</sup> Street/Billy Johnson Playground; the East 108<sup>th</sup> Street/Bernard Playground; and the Renovation of the Belvedere Castle—a joint issue with the Landmarks Committee.**

**a) Reconstruction of the East 67<sup>th</sup> St./Billy Johnson Playground**

With its rustic theme, the Billy Johnson Playground at East 67th Street is a popular destination playground. Among its prominent features are a granite slide set in a rocky hill and a miniature stone bridge at the playground's center.

However, the playground lacks certain desirable play equipment, and in some aspects, fails to comply with current ADA and safety standards.

The Central Park Conservancy is proposing to:

- Establish a water feature at the amphitheater as originally intended and install spray jets throughout the amphitheater stage and area around the bridge, replacing the existing spray bollard with a user-active spray feature.
- Introduce a net-climbing experience in the sand area.
- Create a second granite embankment slide that is ADA accessible and accommodates younger children.
- Replace current bucket swings to comply with current safety standards, and introduce a tire swing.
- Create a more extensive rustic pergola.
- Replace deteriorated timber-lined edges of paths.
- Regrade and repave the playground for accessibility and improve on the area's plantings.

The Conservancy hopes this \$2.5 million renovation project could begin by late this summer. Construction would take about 9 months, and during that time, the playground would be closed.

**RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS** the Central Park Conservancy is proposing a \$2.5 million program to reconstruct the East 67 Street/Billy Johnson Playground in Central Park; and

**WHEREAS** proposed improvements would upgrade and expand the playground's existing play features, while also making site fully compliant with current safety standards; and

**WHEREAS** specific changes would include: establishing a water feature at the amphitheater; replacing the existing spray bollard with a user-active spray feature; introducing a net-climbing experience in the sand area; creating a second granite embankment slide that is ADA accessible and accommodates younger children; replacing current bucket swings to comply with current safety standards; replacing deteriorated timber-lined edges of paths; and repaving the playground for ADA-accessibility; therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that Community Board 8-Manhattan approves of the Central Park Conservancy's proposed plans for the renovation of the East 67 Street/Billy Johnson Playground in Central Park.

**VOTE: 8-0-0**

**In favor:** Susan Evans, Jane Parshall; Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Barry Schneider, Tricia Shimamura.

**Public Member in favor:** Judy Schneider.

**b) Reconstruction of the East 108<sup>th</sup> St./Bernard Playground**

The Bernard Family Playground is located just inside Fifth Avenue at 108th Street. This playground is most suitable for children under age 5.

The smallest of Central Park's playgrounds, it comprises three interconnected ellipses that function as independent play areas. A sandbox and small composite play structure stand in the central area. The northern section contains a water-spray bollard; bucket swings occupy the southern area.

The CPC is proposing to improve certain play elements and to make the site fully compliant with current safety and accessibility standards. Proposed improvements include:

- Reconfiguring the swings area and replacing existing swings to comply with current safety standards;
- Replacing the existing post-and-platform climber / composite play equipment with a version that complies with current clear-zone requirements and is less visible from outside the playground;
- Replacing the current sandbox, incorporating an accessible sand table and introducing a water source for additional play value.
- Replacing the existing spray bollard with a user-activated spray feature.
- Repaving the playground for ADA accessibility.
- Replacing the four-foot steel panel fence and installing new benches.
- Improving the plantings between the playground and the perimeter wall.

The CPC hopes this \$650,000 renovation project can begin this summer. Construction would take 6-to-9 months, and during that time, the playground would be closed.

**RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS** the Central Park Conservancy is proposing a \$650,000 program to renovate the East 108<sup>th</sup> St./Bernard Playground in Central Park; and

**WHEREAS** proposed improvements would upgrade and expand the playground's existing play features, while also making site fully compliant with current safety standards; and

**WHEREAS** specific changes would include: Reconfiguring the swings area and replacing existing swings to comply with current safety standards; replacing the existing post-and-platform climber / composite play equipment with one that meets current safety standards; replacing the current sandbox, incorporating an accessible sand table and adding a water source for additional play value; replacing the spray bollard with a spray feature that is user-activated and saves water; and repaving the playground for ADA accessibility; therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that Community Board 8-Manhattan approves of the Central Park Conservancy's proposals for the renovation of the East 108<sup>th</sup> St./Bernard Playground in Central Park.

**VOTE: 8-0-0**

**In favor:** Susan Evans, Jane Parshall; Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Barry Schneider, Tricia Shimamura.

**Public Member in favor:** Judy Schneider.

**c) Renovation of the Belvedere Castle in Central Park**

Located on Central Park's west side, just north of the 79<sup>th</sup> St. transverse, the picturesque Belvedere Castle is one of the park's most visited sites. This structure, which sits on high ground, was designed to provide broad views of the reservoirs and lower park.

Today, however, the castle is in need of renovation, and the access to it needs to be made ADA-accessible. To correct problems, the CPC aims to carry out a comprehensive restoration of the core and shell of the castle and to correct the problem of accessibility to the castle.

The proposed work will include:

- Restoring the castle's parapet walls and terraces with effective drainage and waterproofing systems.
- Replacing missing portion of original coping on parapet of second floor terrace.
- Cleaning and repointing exterior masonry.
- Restoring the wood pavilions, and recreating the decorative wood tower at the northwest corner.
- Replacing existing pavements in esplanade and upper terrace and restore stairs.
- Replacing windows, main entrance door, and upper terrace doors with clear glass.
- Replacing interior finishes, including bluestone ceiling and floor panels, modernizing mechanical systems, and upgrading utility services.
- Regrading and realigning existing paths between the park's East Drive and the Belvedere to create a linear accessible route that involves an elevation change of 25 feet.
- Using a retaining wall and parapet on the path south of Turtle Pond order to accomplish the required elevation change.

The CPC is proposing that this extensive \$10 million project be done in phases, beginning with the castle. Once underway, the project should take about 18 months. The castle will be closed during its renovation.

## **RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS** the Central Park Conservancy is proposing an approximately \$10 million restoration of Belvedere Castle, which is one of Central Park's most visited sites; and

**WHEREAS** the proposed project involves comprehensively restoring the core and shell of the castle as well as creating an ADA-accessible route to the site; and

**WHEREAS** the extensive work on the castle would include: restoring the castle's parapet walls and terraces with effective drainage and waterproofing systems; cleaning and repointing the water damaged exterior masonry; restoring the wood pavilions, and recreating the decorative wood tower at the northwest corner; replacing windows, main entrance door, and upper terrace doors with clear glass; and refinishing the interior, modernizing mechanical systems, and upgrading utility services; and

**WHEREAS** the CPC is proposing to create an ADA-accessible route from the park's East Drive to the castle that involves regrading and realigning existing paths over an elevation change of 25 feet; and

**WHEREAS** the CPC proposes requiring the path south of Turtle Pond to have a retaining wall and parapet to accomplish the grade change, therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that Community Board 8-Manhattan approves of the Central Park Conservancy's extensive \$10 million plans for the restoration of Central Park's Belvedere Castle, including plans for an ADA-accessible path to this site.

### **VOTE: 8-0-0**

**In favor:** Susan Evans, Jane Parshall; Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Barry Schneider, Tricia Shimamura.

**Public Member in favor:** Judy Schneider.

## **2) Proposal for a Public Art Installation by artist William Logan**

The Parks Dept. is proposing to display a sculpture by artist William Logan at Tramway Plaza Park for a six-month period, beginning in May or June 2017.

The sculpture, entitled, "Flame, is a 37 foot high (and six-foot wide) welded aluminum open-lattice design, weighing 575 lbs. The piece is supported on a square base—approximately 7 feet by 7 feet—and is ballasted with almost 1,000 pounds of concrete pavers to give the sculpture strength and stability in high winds.

The lowest branch of the tall piece is more than 8 feet from the ground, which will prevent climbing it, assured a Parks Dept. official.

But if the art work needs any maintenance while on display, the Parks Dept. will handle it, she said. The official added that the Parks Dept. chose Tramway Plaza for the art display due to the park's small size but frequent use by tram riders.

## **RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS** the Parks Dept. is proposing to display a sculpture by artist William Logan at Tramway Plaza Park for a six-month period, beginning in May or June 2017; and

**WHEREAS** this art work entitled, "The Flame" is a tall open-lattice sculpture that captures light in a variety of ways; and

**WHEREAS** the Parks Department will ensure that the sculpture will be safely installed and maintained during its display at Tramway Plaza; therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that Community Board 8-Manhattan approves of the Parks Dept.'s plan to install a work of art by William Logan in Tramway Plaza Park this year from late May to early November.

### **VOTE: 8-0-0**

**In favor:** Susan Evans, Jane Parshall, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Barry Schneider, Tricia Shimamura.

**Public member in favor:** Judy Schneider.

## **3. The Rising Costs of Repairing and Upgrading the East River Esplanade on the Upper East Side**

At the Parks Committee's March meeting, the committee passed a resolution seeking an additional \$169 million of City funding for urgently needed repairs to the East River Esplanade, a much-used park that is increasingly crumbling.

At that meeting, it was pointed out that Esplanade repair costs have jumped to an estimated \$210 million—of which only \$41million has been allocated.

At the April meeting, members discussed various ideas for helping reduce the cost escalation. Suggestions included: finding ways to speed up repair work; asking City officials to hold more frequent meetings on the status of Esplanade repairs; asking for regular reports on the status of work on the Esplanade; forming public/private partnerships to help finance Esplanade repairs; and asking for a Parks Dept. official (or someone from another

organization highly involved with Esplanade issues) to speak at an upcoming Parks Committee meeting. In an email to the committee's co-chairs—which was distributed and discussed at the committee's meeting--a Parks Dept. official identified various reasons behind the run-up in Esplanade costs. He cited: inflation, especially among construction costs in NYC; the need to address unexpected emergency repairs on the Esplanade; additional knowledge that's been obtained about Esplanade conditions; and changes in accounting methods and assumptions relating to costs.

At the Parks Committee's meeting, another Parks Dept. official also cited NYC's "complex legal framework." He suggested it slows the process of approving capital projects.

A representative of Cong. Carolyn Maloney—who is co-head of the East River Esplanade Task Force—pointed to the current difficulty in obtaining public funds. However, he said that elected officials are committed to "getting (more) funding" for Esplanade repairs. He added that Rep. Maloney is "committed to holding regular quarterly meetings" about the Esplanade.

The committee passed the following resolution:

#### **RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS** The East River Esplanade continues to deteriorate, creating a dangerous, unsightly and disruptive situation for its many users; and

**WHEREAS** recent Parks Dept. information shows a jump in expected Esplanade repair costs, now cited as \$210 million for engineering and design work, and projected to rise further; and

**WHEREAS** Community Board 8-Manhattan recently passed a resolution asking for a \$169 million of public funding to add to the existing \$41 million already allocated for the Esplanade to cover known repair expenses; and

**WHEREAS** CB8-M and other groups concerned about the Esplanade's rising costs wish to obtain more frequent City reports on Esplanade work and repair costs; and

**WHEREAS** CB8-M hopes that at least quarterly meetings can be re-established between the Parks Dept. and the East River Esplanade Task force, or at least the Parks Dept. and CB8-M, on the status of Esplanade repairs; therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that Community Board 8-Manhattan asks the Parks Dept. to re-establish at least quarterly meetings with the East River Esplanade Task Force about the status of East River Esplanade repairs. The Community Board also asks the Parks Dept. to provide CB8-M with at least quarterly reports on current repairs to the East River Esplanade and projections for future Esplanade work and its expected cost.

#### **VOTE: 7-0-0**

**In favor:** Susan Evans, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Barry Schneider, Tricia Shimamura.

**Public Member in favor:** Judy Schneider.

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