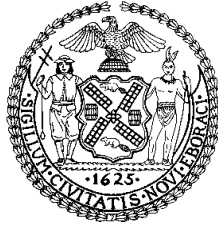


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The City of New York
Manhattan Community Board 8

Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting

Church of the Holy Trinity
316 East 88th Street (First-Second)
Draesal Hall
Thursday, July 13, 2017, 6:30PM

CB8M members in attendance: Jim Clynes, Susan Evans, Sophia James, Craig Lader, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, David Rosenstein, Barbara Rudder, Barry Schneider, Tricia Shimamura
Public member in attendance: Judy Schneider

1. Update on the Status of Phase One Repairs to the Esplanade on the Upper East Side—a joint meeting with the 197-a and Waterfront committees

Parks Dept. officials gave an update on Phase One repair work to the East River Esplanade on the Upper East Side.

While the presentation covered all four Phase One Esplanade projects—88-90th streets; 114th Street, 117th Street and 124-125th streets—the presentation focused on what has become the controversial project at 88-90th streets.

As Parks Dept. officials described, plans for the latter repair work were accelerated after the May collapse of the Esplanade's sea wall in the 89th street area. But the agency's decision to use the sledding hill at Carl Schurz Park as a construction staging area for 88-90th streets repair created a flashpoint for community objections: neighbors feared that this hill would be "flattened" during repair work, thus destroying a portion of Carl Schurz Park.

However, speaking at the July Parks Committee meeting, Parks officials, including Manhattan Commissioner Bill Castro, denied that the hill would be leveled. Instead, Parks officials said plans call for creating a temporary gravel and recycled asphalt pathway up the hill to allow construction equipment access to the Esplanade's repair site. Any resulting damage to the hill would be repaired, and the lawn re-sodded, after the project ends next May.

In addition, they announced that the sledding hill would be closed to the public during local Esplanade construction. During that time, the Esplanade will be closed from 88-90th streets for construction.

However, during the walkway's closure, the agency is providing a detour route around the construction site. The (amended since the meeting) detour, which will be especially useful to cyclists, entails:

Northbound: Exit Carl Schurz Park at 88th or 89th Street, take 89th St. to First Ave., then head north to 96th St., where it will be possible to re-enter the Esplanade. Southbound: Exit the Esplanade at 96th St., head west to the bike lane on Second Ave., take Second to 90th St. and from there, traverse Carl Schurz Park to re-enter the

Esplanade at 88th St. The Parks Dept. has promised ample signage of the detour route. The community also has asked for help with the confusing and potentially dangerous crossing at 96th St.

Among other issues raised by the public: lack of notification to the public about the use of Carl Schurz Park as part of the 88-90th streets project; additional traffic, noise and air pollution emanating from the construction; potentially dangerous conditions along detour routes; and questions about why the Parks Dept. wasn't using other ways of accessing the Esplanade repair site—such as barges—instead of the Carl Schurz Park hill.

The Parks Committee passed a resolution addressing a number of the public's issues. However, a proposal for air quality monitoring at the construction site failed to pass. Among the objections: Given the pressing need for Esplanade repairs from 88-90th streets, the full CB8M board is on record urging the Parks Dept. to accelerate the repair work. But it's feared that the cost of air quality monitoring--for a short-term project lasting only 10 months--could boost Esplanade repair costs and potentially delay work and/ or force cutbacks to the work. In addition, a CB8 member held that, because the Esplanade work area abuts the FDR Drive, it may be hard to discern whether detected air pollution would be coming from car emissions or from repairs to the Esplanade.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS urgently needed repairs to the East River Esplanade between 88th to 90th streets are now underway and expected to last until May 2018; and

WHEREAS this work entails using the sledding hill at Carl Schurz Park as the way construction equipment will access the Esplanade between 88-90th streets; and

WHEREAS many area residents have expressed deep concerns about the impact on Carl Schurz Park of using the sledding hill as an access to the Esplanade for construction equipment; and

WHEREAS additional concerns include the added traffic, noise and safety issues involved with Esplanade repairs between 88-90th streets and the lack of prior knowledge before work began about how Esplanade repairs would be carried out; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8-Manhattan appreciates the Parks Department's efforts to expedite Esplanade repairs at 88th to 90th streets. But the board urges the department to take additional steps to protect public safety during this construction, including: Providing a pedestrian manager, who would be on duty at all times that trucks access the hill at Carl Schurz Park; creating a safer detour route around the construction site, with ample signage of the detour route, and crossing guards at key locations-- especially at 96th St.; and supplying monthly status reports on the Esplanade construction work.

VOTE: 10-0-0

In favor: Jim Clynes, Susan Evans, Sophia James, Craig Lader, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Barry Schneider, Tricia Shimamura.

Public Member in favor: Judy Schneider

2. Presentation on Recent Improvements to the Ball Court at John Jay Park.

The Parks Committee heard a presentation on the recent improvements to the ball court in John Jay Park and addressed the need for additional upgrades to the area.

Recent improvements have included the repainting of three free-throw lines and three-point arcs on each section of the basketball court.

But the court still needs new fiberglass backboards with shooting squares (red lines that help with aiming the basketball) to replace those that have rusted, and new basketball rims, netting and hooks. In addition, the ball court's heavily cracked pavement needs resurfacing, and low hanging tree branches at the court's southwest and southeast areas need pruning.

Some meeting attendees asked the committee to address a range of additional upgrades needed at John Jay Park—including swimming pool improvements. The committee agreed to do so at its September meeting.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the CB8M district has among the least amount of parkland of any district in New York City and extremely limited space for ball playing; and

WHEREAS deteriorating conditions at the ball court at John Jay Park have made this area dangerous as well as visually unattractive; and

WHEREAS the array of problems at this ball court still includes deteriorated equipment, including basketball backboards and hoops, and broken, unsafe pavement; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that CB8M urges the Parks Dept. to repair and upgrade the deteriorated ball court at John Jay Park. Needed repairs include new basketball backboards and netting for hoops and a resurfacing of the ball court's extensively cracked pavement.

Vote: 11-0-0

In favor: Jim Clynes, Susan Evans, Sophia James, Craig Lader, Peggy Price, David Rosenstein, Barbara Rudder, Rita Popper, Barry Schneider, Tricia Shimamura

Public member in favor: Judy Schneider

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