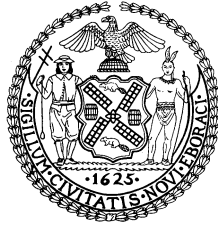


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The City of New York
Manhattan Community Board 8

Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting

Church of the Holy Trinity
316 East 88th Street (First-Second)
Draesal Hall
Thursday, June 1, 2017, 6:30PM

CB8M Members present: Gayle Baron, Susan Evans, Alexandra Harrington, Sophia James, Jane Parshall, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Barry Schneider, Tricia Shimamura.
Public Member present: Judy Schneider.

1. The Urgent Need for Funding to Repair the East River Esplanade—*a joint issue with the 197-A and Waterfront committees*

The session focused on the need to speed repairs to East River Esplanade, especially after a sizable portion of the walkway collapsed near Gracie Mansion. Meeting attendees agreed that the crumbling Esplanade in CB8M has become even more dangerous—especially since the next such collapse, when and wherever it occurs, could result in injuries.

Although some repairs are being made, the work has dragged on slowly, leading to rising repair costs, meeting attendees pointed out.

To accelerate structural repairs to the Esplanade repairs, more funding would be needed. In March, CB8M called for the City to allot another \$169 million, in addition to the \$41 million already in hand, for this purpose.

Given the increasingly dire need for Esplanade funding, meeting participants opted for two main strategies: To reiterate CB8's March resolution on the need for \$169 million of funding for the Esplanade and to ask local elected officials to hold a press conference right away, at the site of the recent sea wall collapse, to dramatize the need for full funding of Esplanade repairs on the Upper East Side.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS conditions on the decaying East River Esplanade on the Upper East Side have become increasingly dire, as highlighted by the recent collapse of a sizable portion of this walkway in CB8-M; and

WHEREAS the possibility of another such collapse along this much-used thoroughfare appears highly likely and could result in injuries; and

WHEREAS the planned patchwork of repairs is proceeding too slowly to keep pace with the worsening conditions on the Esplanade and the rising cost of its repairs; and

WHEREAS CB8-M has urged the City to allocate another \$169 million in fiscal 2018 to speed up full structural repairs to the Esplanade on the Upper East Side; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8-Manhattan reiterates its urgent request of March 2017 that the City allocate an additional \$169 million in its fiscal 2018 budget to complete urgently needed structural repairs to the East River Esplanade on Manhattan's Upper East Side.

VOTE: 10-0-0

In favor: Gayle Baron, Susan Evans, Alexandra Harrington, Sophia James, Jane Parshall, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Barry Schneider, Tricia Shimamura.
Public Member in favor: Judy Schneider.

2. Funding to Improve the Con Edison Area of the East River Esplanade—*a joint issue with the 197-A and Waterfront committees*

The discussion centered on the use of an anticipated \$500,000 state grant provided through Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright to the Friends of the East River Esplanade for improving the Esplanade between 60th and 80th streets.

The organization, Friends of the East River Esplanade, wishes to use the grant money for upgrading the Con Edison area of the Esplanade. Work would involve improvements to the upper and lower portions of this area, which runs from East 73-76th streets.

No renovation plans are yet in place for this area, and the state funding has not yet been forthcoming. However, meetings between involved parties will be taking place this summer, and the Friends organization expects to present renovation plans to the Community Board in September.

At its July 2014 meeting, the Parks Committee passed a resolution urging the City to make the Con Ed area more accessible and attractive. To widen the pathway, the committee requested narrowing the beds in the center of the walkway and planting these now-empty beds. In addition, the committee requested seating for the area. But so far, there have been no such improvements.

Thus far, Con Ed has declined to provide irrigation to the site. However, at the June 1 meeting, a Parks Committee member suggested she could contact Con Edison this fall—after renovation plans are presented to the committee—to again request supplying water to the site.

Old Business

Update on Efforts to Make the Queensboro Oval a Year-Round Public Park

The committee's co-chairs reported attending a recent meeting at the Borough President's office on discretionary funding opportunities of between \$3,500 to \$5,000. The co-chairs were particularly interested in funding to make the Queensboro Oval a year-round public park. It was learned that funding for this purpose would fall under the category of "capital funding," and that the Borough President's office would start accepting applications for it in mid-December.

In addition, the committee discussed the grossly unfair practice of renting the Queensboro Oval Park for a full 12 months to a private tennis company. CB8M had wanted the Oval returned to the public this year when the lease with Sutton East Tennis expired. Instead, the City opted to expand the rental term with Sutton East—from 9 ½ months to 12 months for at least a year. And even though several of the tennis courts will be available to the public this summer, two of them will still be used by customers of Sutton East Tennis. According to one CB8

member, this creates a “poor door” arrangement. “Those tennis players who can afford private court fees” need not “go through the process of obtaining a NYC Tennis Permit.”

She suggested that, once funds for designing a park at the Oval are in place, the Parks Dept. should tell Sutton East to vacate the site within 6 months.

In the meantime, there’s the issue of Sutton East’s below-market rental rate—for use of a publicly funded park. In his March newsletter, Council Member Kallos, chair of the Council’s government operations committee, pointed out that he’s “against anyone receiving city land below market value for 40 years without competition, raising concerns of potential corruption...”

The committee agreed to ask Council Member Kallos to hold City Council hearings about the City’s rental arrangement with Sutton East Tennis.

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