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**The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Parks and Waterfront Committee
Thursday, February 11, 2021 - 6:30 PM
This meeting was conducted via Zoom**

MINUTES:

Community Board Members Present: Brian Correia, Felice Farber, Takako Kono, Craig Lader, Valerie Mason, Rita Popper, Barbara Rudder, Barry Schneider, Tricia Shimamura

Community Board Members Excused: Lowell Barton

Community Board Public Members (Present): Judy Schneider, Irma Torres

1. Presentation by Carl Schurz Conservancy on the State of the park by Patrick McCluskey-Exec. Director & Breeana George-Horticulturist

- Patrick thanked all the supporters & volunteers present, as well as Ann Meschery in charge of public events.
- There has been an increase in park usage, which is more important at this time than ever before. However, this has caused problems such as soil compaction and more garbage. Also, the hurricane in August caused damage to the trees.
- At this time, all events have been cancelled through 2021 under the Covid circumstances. This is a problem for the Conservancy, as the Art Show was a major fund raiser.
- Breeana spoke about the stewardship of the park. How this has become a wildlife corridor for birds and insects that migrate and the best gardening practices to provide food to keep them healthy. There is no Fall cleanup which creates a critical habitat for the winter species to reside.
- Carl Schurz Conservancy partnered with the American Museum of Natural History to do a pollinating project to find out how healthy the park is and the species of bees residing in the park. Some of the species were: Bumble, Sweat, Carpenter, Mason, and others.
- Erosion control/loss of topsoil has caused hazardous conditions, particularly when walking in the park. Different kinds of large logs, all of which are bio-degradable have been put down. They eventually breakdown and help cause a healthy environment for organisms to live as well dealing with the water problem. Patrons of the park have noticed the difference and it has helped with erosion control.
- Please email questions to the website, or to arrange for a tour::
<https://www.carlschurzparknyc.org>

2. Introduction to Captain William Gallagher, Commanding Officer, NYPD Central Park Precinct (CPP)

- The Captain is the Commanding Officer of the Central Park Precinct, an attorney and has a 21-year history with the NYC police force.
- The CPP is a fully functioning police unit. It is Precinct 22. Functions 24/7/365 days of the year.
- Parks are a safe haven during the pandemic and the usage has gone up dramatically as opposed to pre-pandemic times
- Goal is to enjoy the park and see the most beautiful part of the city.

- The park has a 16% decrease in major crimes in the last calendar year.
- The most common crime is unattended larceny, such as leaving a handbag unattended. Keep your valuables close.
- Serious crime during the year: 1) on the mall there was a shooting; the shooter was apprehended 2) late at night at the Hallett Nature Sanctuary there was a stabbing, and the person apprehended. 3) three people found deceased by ending their lives.
- A 4-year-old child strayed from her mother for about 2 ½ hours—every parent’s worst nightmare. Level 1 police mobilization flooded the park with dogs and a police helicopter was employed. They were able to find the child unharmed and the child was reunited with the family. A lot of police work has nothing to do with enforcing the law.
- Bicycle accident numbers are flat—not up or down is really more of a reflection of the weather. Going forward during peak times they will put a police officer and an auxiliary officer at the key locations. Seeing an officer, people slow down.
- Electric motorcycles, Revel, if operated faster than the speed limit would result in a summons and the vehicle can also be seized. The Captain personally believes they are very dangerous. One smashed into the transverse wall and that fact that the rider survived was a miracle. They also arrested an intoxicated Revel driver.

3. Esplanade

- Friends of the East River Esplanade, Civitas, CB11, and other groups have signed on to a letter thanking the administration for proposing \$284 million for repair of the Esplanade in the budget. CB #8 has been asked if we would join the group.
- The committee recommended that the Community Board sign on to a joint letter thanking the administration for allocating \$284 million dollars for repair of the East River Esplanade.
- We will be hearing more in future meetings how this money will be spent.

4. Update from the NYC Parks Department by Wes Hamilton, District Manager

- Thank you to all the Conservancies and park groups and Captain Gallagher for all their good work.
- 24 Sycamores Park is on schedule and in progress. Extended completion to August 2021 due to Covid.
- St. Catherine’s, Honey Locust, and John Jay Parks and are out to bid/, waiting to for response.
- Greenway and Andrew Haswell Green are moving along and are on schedule.
- Special event permits are month to month and nothing much is being issued at this time due to Covid.
- Snow is the big topic. Shoveling snow and distributing salt has been exhausting. The staff has been terrific especially with the 2 feet of snow.

5. Q & A

- Thank you, Wes, and your crew, for what they are doing in the parks.
- Installed a nuisance fence in Ruppert Park to discourage people/dogs from going into those areas.
- Ruppert Park requests **better signage** inside the park where dogs are allowed or off leash with the fee for tickets and have PEP officers available to give tickets. Ruppert has so many problems the chairs decided we would have a meeting dedicated just to Ruppert Park, including the electeds.
- New benches for the E. 72nd Street cul-de-sac are needed. Parks Dept. cannot donate them. This will be followed up.

- Homeless New Yorkers on the Esplanade. Call 311 with Code Blue when temperature is below freezing, and people will be going out to help the homeless—it is another city Agency. Lower end of the Esplanade will register York Ave. on your phone, so you have to give them the exact location.
- Stephen Martin introduced a new nonprofit on Roosevelt Island “Friends of the Ruin” The goal is to see the Smallpox Memorial Hospital, also known as the Renwick Ruins, stabilized and become a memorial park with a beautiful ruin garden. It would be dedicated to the front-line workers who fought the smallpox outbreak in the 1850. It subsequently became a nursing school for 70 years. The website is: theruion.org. Tricia said she is not sure what committee this will come under.
- Status of St. Catherine’s Park repairs will be followed up.
- Barry will follow up with Colleen of DOT on the list of lights out on the Esplanade that has been submitted to them and report back.
- 81st Street Esplanade handrail has fallen off and sharp shards of metal remain. Wes will get the repair done. It has been repaired before.

There being no other Old or New business, the meeting was adjourned.

Tricia Shimamura and Barry Schneider
Co-Chairs, Parks and Waterfront Committee
Barry Schneider, Chair 197-a Committee
Judith Schneider, Scribe