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Chair

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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Parks and Waterfront Committee
Via Zoom with Will Brightbill, District Manager Hosting
September 9, 2021, at 6:30 PM

MINUTES:

Community Board Members Present: Lowell Barton, Craig Lader, Sharon Pope-Marshall, Rita Popper, Barbara Rudder, Barry Schneider, Tricia Shimamura, Rami Sigal

Community Board Public Members Present: Judy Schneider

Excused Community Board Members Excused: Felice Farber

Community Board Public Members Excused: Irma Torres

1. Updates on the Esplanade from Friends of the East River Esplanade by Stacy Papas and Q&A.

- The 2 Big Belly 50-gallon Trash Cans Friends has purchased have been delayed and are expected next month. Friends will work with Wes and Parks on the placement. It is important for them to be able to gain access to remove the large bags of garbage. Plus there will be 2 more from another site that Wes will be able to place on the Esplanade.
- Friends will be sponsoring concerts-with-food events at the Alice Aycock Pavilion of Andrew Haswell Park on the following days from 1 to 4 pm. The delicious treats are provided by La Newyorkina
 - 9/18 “Bash the Trash” – listen to recycled trash turn into everyday musical instruments.
 - 10/2 “The Tomtown Ramblers” – back by popular demand to perform their beautiful bluegrass.
 - 10/16 “NOIZ entertainment” – they will get you up and dancing.
 - 10/30 Eddy Michaels// Project D feat. Calista//Myoka” – award winning artists who made their debut during the pandemic and are ready to be heard live.
- Friends will sponsor Photoville Festival from 9/18 to 12/1/202 at 102nd street and the Esplanade in East Harlem to view “Syzygy, the vision” by Lola Flash.
All the above events are free and open to the public.
- Bait Station at 100th Street is permanent with a few repairs, in accordance with Parks.
- 100th to 102nd Street chain link fencing closed off the area and a stretch of the dirt path unpassable particularly in the winter when the weather is bad. Stacy said the \$184 million the City designated for the Esplanade repairs is being managed by EDC. Friends are meeting with EDC and Assistant Park Commissioner Liam Kavanaugh to discuss the project. Meanwhile Wes Hamilton said Parks would be responsible for keeping the paths passable.
- Homeless encampment at 96th Street was mentioned. This should be reported to Will Brightbill, District Manager of Community Board 8 at info@cb8m.com. He will follow up.
- Parks Department was complemented for cleaning up quickly after Storm IDA. John Jay Park and Carl Schurz Park had some flooding of drains.
- 103rd Street Foot Bridge—the garbage can closest to the Manhattan side needs to be emptied more often.

- 81st Street railing on the ramp was repaired and then damaged again. Workers are tied up due to the storm. A work ticket has been put in for the repair.
- There is still concern about the sinkholes at 79th Street and at the Con Ed Building. Tricia suggested a joint letter to Parks with Friends of the Esplanade and CB8, as it would be stronger. Everyone agreed.
- Friends is still looking into other locations for fitness equipment and will come back to us.

2. Ruppert Park (90/91 Street at 2nd Ave.) Updates and Q&A

- Rita Popper gave updates of what some of the parents want to see in the park. The number one issue was a unisex, ADA bathroom. Barry will draft a letter from CB8 on this issue to the Parks department from CB8.
- There is a very serious problem with mosquitos and rodents in the park.
- Many parents concerned about a dog run and the dogs relieving themselves where the children play.
- Many people want a dog run.
- There is now \$9 million plus for redoing of the park.
- Parks will come back to us with the first draft after the scoping session for the park, sometime in the fall—hopefully.

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

- Parks are being used more for exercise and birthday parties.
- Crews are out working very hard after the storm.
- This is the last weekend before the pools close.
- Starting September 20, the seating area in John Jay Park will be renovated. Expected to take at least a year before completion.
- 24 Sycamores Park upper lever came out beautifully. Everyone should take a look at the park house.
- Why are there so many barriers in Carl Schurz Park near Gracie Mansion, which makes it difficult for handicap people. Wes believes it is an NYPD issue of security for the mayor. Barry said he will raise the question Monday night at the 19th Precinct Council meeting, which is free to all to attend via Zoom.
- It would be helpful to have signs to walk your bikes (particularly motorized) on paths in Carl Schurz Park. Wes says enforcement is a challenge to the PEP officer and NYPD officers.
- **BIG NEWS:** Wes will be leaving us towards the end of September and be going to Riverside Park. Wes' replacement will be Sheena Kaufman who grew up in this neighborhood. She is currently working in the Northern Part of Manhattan.

4. Old Business

- **Tramway Park**—the Manhattan Aerial Tramway Station project is being constructed in two phases.
 - Phase 1 of the project, the east elevator, is underway and, after a long Covid -19 delay in receiving the glass, great progress is now being made.. The project advanced steadily over the summer, bringing Phase 1 of the project to about 95% completion as ROPC awaits regulatory approvals that would allow this part of the project to be opened to the public.
 - The existing west elevator will be demolished in Phase 2 of the project. A new platform for the west elevator and remaining cab work will then be completed during Phase 2. This phase is anticipated to be complete by the end of the year.

5. New Business

- **Groundbreaking for the Harlem Meer in Central Park's North End was held on 9/9, as pictured below.**



- Tricia suggested we put together a **CB8 Parks Calendar** with all the different events that are going on in the various Parks between now and the end of the year. Tricia will work with Rita and Barry will reach out to the Muslim volunteers & Council Member Kallos' Office.
- Several people spoke about another **dog run** in the CB, possible at John Jay Park, as the dog population has increased since Covid-19. The chairs said they would schedule a separate meeting to discuss this issue and it would have to be posted around the community stating time, date and location. Everyone was advised to follow the CB8 Calendar of Meetings to see when this would occur.

There being no other old or new business, the meeting was adjourned.

Tricia Shimamura and Barry Schneider
Co-Chairs, Parks and Waterfront Committee

Attached: Parks list from Ruppert Park Scoping meeting.

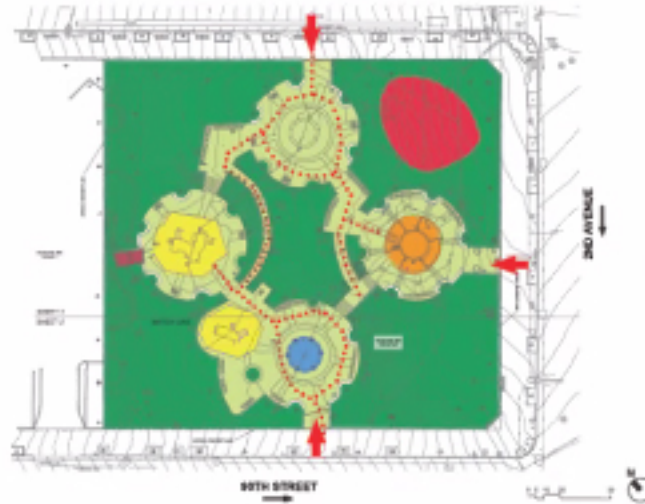
PLAY

- include a playground ✓✓✓✓✓
- use areas to the west for play area
- very little kids should feel welcome
- kids sled in this park, keep this opportunity ✓✓
- digging area or sandbox
- safe space for children to play
- play for all ages
- can we have a mini pool instead of water play?

DOG RUN

- include a dog run ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
- new dog owner in area need a dog run
- dogs should be allowed in some portion of the park even if it's a small portion ✓✓
- dogs currently cause some unsanitary conditions
- people need to clean up after dogs
- dog area should be confined, and cleaned ✓
- include good/prominent signage
- dog owners don't have a nearby alternative
- if we can't have a dog run here, identify where we can have one nearby
- there are dogruns in Carl Schurz park, this should be for humans
- there is data to support need for dog run ✓

Additional comments to be collected via online survey at nyc.gov/parks/input



SEATING AREAS

- include benches for seating ✓✓
- tables where people can eat
- beautiful passive areas
- picnic area
- places to relax

FITNESS and SPORTS

- basketball court
- there are a few bball courts within a few blocks
- grass area to through a ball around on
- fitness equipment would be great

PLANTING

- plantings ✓✓✓✓✓
- an area for pollinator plantings, habitat for birds butterflies and bees, learning experience for kids
- grassy area for picnicking
- shrubs, bushes, grass, flowers and trees! An urban oasis ✓
- community garden? There are none in the area ✓
- less pavement, what we need is greenery and grass ✓
- the trees are too dense, it is too shady and dark ✓
- shrubs may invite rats, prefer grass
- can trees be pruned?
- keep all the trees

OTHER TOPICS

- open up closed sections of park, half is unused ✓✓✓✓✓
- park needs better sight lines for safety and ability to watch children in a different area of the park there are problematic hidden spaces ✓
- rats are a problem ✓✓✓✓
- clean up the park
- close/lock the park at night, keep drugs out
- park should be accessible and elder-friendly ✓
- site needs to be more flat to be more usable ✓✓
- can adjacent open street have a relationship to the park?
- involve a world-class designer to handle challenges
- reconstructed park in phases to keep some open space all the time
- would like to show movies here but sight it too sloped
- with all the improvements we may not need to lock the park
- black metal rails are too prominent, can we eliminate or change these?

