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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  
November 4, 2021, at 6:30 PM

*Please note: The resolutions contained in the committee minutes are recommendations submitted by the committee chair to the Community Board. At the monthly full board meeting, the resolutions are discussed and voted upon by all members of Community Board 8 Manhattan.*

**MINUTES:**

**Resolutions for Approval:**

**Item 1** – Improvements to the East River Esplanade from E.72 – E. 78 Streets

**Item 2** – Asphalt Green cooling tower replacement\*

**Item 3** – Central Park Conservancy regarding the restoration of the Kinderberg / Chess and Checkers House\*

**Item 4** – UES for BLM Vigil Vandalism\*

\*unanimous

**Community Board Members Present:** Lowell Barton, Saundra Coleman, Felice Farber, Craig Lader, Barry Schneider, Tricia Shimamura, Rami Sigal

**Community Board Public Members Present:** Judy Schneider, Irma Torres

**Excused Community Board Members Excused:** Rita Popper, Barbara Rudder

**1. Discussion with the Hospital for Special Surgery on the Kellen Tower project over the FDR Drive and the improvements planned for the East River Esplanade from E. 72 – E.78th (Joint with Transportation)**

Members of the HSS team (Jenn Rentas, Michael Rawlings) presented on plans for the Kellen Tower.

- No start dates and time frames were made available
- Will come back to give us this information
- Presented a quick video presentation of the project
  - o Summer: grounds will be prepped
  - o Groundbreaking took place in October 2021, with a projected “Topping Off” date of Q3 of 2023, and projected opening at the end of 2024
- This project will not result in any increases to patient capacity
- Will likely have increases in staffing as programs grow
- There will also be an enclosed pedestrian bridge to connect to the main hospital on the third floor

***On Transportation Impacts:***

- Construction requires Exit 13 E 71<sup>st</sup> Street southbound to be closed and northbound lane closures during off-hours and weekends for site mobilization, excavations, and foundations. This is likely to take place during the Spring 2022
  - o Closures will be scheduled for “Off hours” 11:30PM – 6:30AM
  - o Weekend shutdowns on Friday evenings to Sunday afternoons
    - To deliver steel platforms

- Will last 2-3 weekends – one to install steel deck and another weekend to erect the first few floors
- The north lane of East 71<sup>st</sup> St in front of HSS Pavilion and Belaire buildings will be closed for storage

*On the Esplanade Impacts:*

- The 71<sup>st</sup> Street pedestrian bridge will be closed for a time during the construction
- Once the NYC Parks has completed the 70<sup>th</sup>-68<sup>th</sup> Street esplanade repairs (expected to be done in May 2022), HSS will construct a temporary ramp to connect from 71<sup>st</sup> Street and allow users to head south towards the Aycock Pavilion
- Sections of the Esplanade from 70-78<sup>th</sup> Street will be closed at different times during construction
  - \*Note – HSS was not able to inform us as to when this would take place, or for how long.
  - HSS noted that the closures would be limited to the “foundations and building supports” phases of the project
  - There are currently no plans to provide a detour route on the Esplanade through the construction area– users will have to exit at the 78<sup>th</sup> Street Pedestrian bridge and then go along York Avenue to the 71<sup>st</sup> Street temporary pedestrian bridge
- HSS will continue esplanade beautification efforts from 70-78<sup>th</sup> Streets, consistent with what has been done between 70<sup>th</sup> to 72<sup>nd</sup> Street
  - This totals to approximately \$6.65 million dollars
- HSS reported on-going communications between HSS and NYC Parks for repairs of the two existing sink holes south of 71<sup>st</sup> Street
  - \*NOTE: HSS and Parks have not come to an agreement on who will be paying for these repairs. Parks later stated that there is no money in their budget to do these repairs.

Andrew Moore from Quennell Rothschild & Partners presented on the plans for beautification from 72<sup>nd</sup> to 78<sup>th</sup> Street on the Esplanade

- Plan has been reviewed by Parks Capital team, but hasn't been edited in a year
- Extend consistency along the Esplanade, with continued hexagonal pavers, increased seating with world's fair benches, lounge chairs, and light and dark hexagonal pavers
- Improvements will be coordinated with NYC Parks
- Increased plantings with durable, native plants and grasses
  - NOTE: HSS did not clarify about who will maintain this area after it's completed.
- Movable barriers for the Con-Ed entrance points on the FDR
- The overall budget from 72<sup>nd</sup>-78<sup>th</sup> Street is budgeted at \$6.65 million dollars
- Additional signage for the pinch point
- This plan is set to go to the Public Design Commission based on the Community Board's approval.
- The Committee discussed the need for more trashcans (and possibly higher capacity trashcans) due to the use from hospital visitors
- A Committee member also requested the increased use of sound-walls along the Esplanade, which can make for a more pleasant experience on the Esplanade.
- Another committee member inquired about the plan for maintenance of the area

Following the HSS presentation, Leslie Peoples, from the NYC Parks Department, requested that the Committee consider a resolution on the Esplanade repair in order to move these repairs along. After discussing concerns about the tower being constructed, the Committee passed the following:

**WHEREAS** Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS) has committed to improving the East River Esplanade from 72<sup>st</sup> to 78<sup>th</sup> Streets, and

**WHEREAS** the proposed design was consistent with the notable and distinct features of the rest of the Esplanade, including the hexagonal pavers, bow railing, native, durable plantings and World's Fair benches, and

**WHEREAS** both HSS and the Parks Department have agreed to include additional garbage receptacles in their final design and

**WHEREAS** Manhattan Community Board 8 recognizes the importance of connectivity along the Esplanade and urges HSS to do everything possible to conduct these beautification efforts as expeditiously as possible in order to return access to the public, and

**WHEREAS** Manhattan Community Board 8 recognizes the critical role our parks and open spaces play in the City's overall resiliency and therefore urges HSS to utilize the best practices to increase resiliency along the Esplanade, and

**WHEREAS** this approval is granted on the stipulation that HSS works with the Parks Department to permanently repair the two existing sinkholes at 71<sup>st</sup> Street, and

**WHEREAS** this approval is granted on the stipulation that HSS come back to Manhattan Community Board 8 with a plan for continued maintenance for the section between 72<sup>nd</sup> and 78<sup>th</sup> street; and

**WHEREAS** this approval is granted on the stipulation that HSS provides periodic updates on the entire project; and

**BE IT RESOLVED: Manhattan Community Board 8 approves the proposed design of the Esplanade beautification efforts as presented by Hospital for Special Surgery**

**Opposed: Barton**

**In Favor: Coleman, Dangoor, Farber, Lader, Sigal, Schneider, Shimamura, Torres (Public Member), J. Schneider (public member)**

**2. Presentation of plan for the Asphalt Green cooling tower replacement – Jason Popkin, Zaskorski & Associates Architects**

- Asphalt Green is trying to replace its cooling tower and will be adding a visual screen to hide the machinery
- Planned to sit on the 2-story building next to DaKovats Playground
- It is currently not functional and not energy efficient
- The material around the cooling tower will be perforated metal that is almost the exact the color of the brick building
- Will be trying to camouflage this structure as much as possible.
- Asphalt Green needs to get a resolution from CB8 in order for Parks to support the project, which will then get send to the Department of Buildings.
- The Committee passed the following resolution:

**WHEREAS** Asphalt Green is working with Zaskorski & Associates Architects to replace its cooling tower with a more energy efficient, functioning cooling machinery, and

**WHEREAS** Asphalt Green has used materials that help camouflage the machinery to not distract from the neighboring DaKovats playground, and

**WHEREAS** Asphalt Green plans to install the new cooling tower completely internally without disrupting traffic on the FDR or surrounding streets, therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED: Manhattan Community Board 8 approves of the planned cooling tower replacement at Asphalt Green.**

**Opposed: 0**

**In Favor: Barton, Coleman, Dangoor, Farber, Lader, Sigal, Schneider, Shimamura, Torres (Public Member), J. Schneider (public member)**

**3. Presentation by Lane Addonizio and Chris Nolan from the Central Park Conservancy regarding the restoration of the Kinderberg / Chess and Checkers House**

- The Kinderberg/ Chess and Checkers House is the largest rustic structure in Central Park, in an area historically known as the children's district
  - o Creating public restroom
  - o Building accessibility

- Currently serves as a place for public programming for chess, checkers and other board games, but there is not a bathroom in the space
- Most people don't go inside but rather play outside on the tables
- Project is expected to be completed by the next calendar year
- The Committee passed the following resolution:

**WHEREAS The Central Park Conservancy will restore the Kinderberg/Chess and Checkers House to improve accessibility and create a public restroom, and**

**WHEREAS** the rustic structure will maintain the mature trees currently at the site, and

**WHEREAS** the project will increase the amount of seating inside the structure, and

**WHEREAS** A public restroom will meet the strong demand for a restroom in this portion of the park, and

**WHEREAS** the project will increase accessibility both for the Chess and Checkers House as well as the Dairy, therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED: Manhattan Community Board 8 approves the proposed restoration of the Kinderberg/Chess & Checkers House as presented.**

**Opposed: 0**

**In Favor: Barton, Coleman, Dangoor, Farber, Lader, Sigal, Schneider, Shimamura, Torres (Public Member), J. Schneider (Public Member)**

#### **4. Report from Shena Kaufman, Park Manager, Department of Parks and Recreation**

Shena Kaufman was unable to attend this meeting. However, the Committee Chairs welcomed CB8 Member and Social Justice Committee Co-Chair Saundra Coleman to raise an issue with Leslie Peoples from the NYC Parks Department regarding vandalism at the UES for BLM vigil at Carl Schurz Park.

- The vigil has gone for over 400 days, since the Summer of 2020
- The vigil offers all community members a place to reflect on the violent attacks against people of color
- There have been several instances of vandalism at the site, including spray-painting, ripped signs, and the smearing of feces on the posters
- Saundra has highlighted these acts of hate to the community board on several occasions.
- The Committee passed the following resolution:

**WHEREAS** the UES for BLM Vigil has continued in Carl Schurz Park since the Summer of 2020, and

**WHEREAS** the UES for BLM Vigil offers all visitors a place to reflect on the violent attacks on people of color and has been a place for education and community, and

**WHEREAS** there continues to be vandalism at this site, including spray-painting, ripped signs, and the smearing of feces on the posters, posing significant health risks and safety concerns for those who have continued to visit and care for the Vigil, and

**WHEREAS** members of the UES for BLM Vigil have continued to raise concerns about the vandalism taking place at the Vigil, therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED** Community Board 8 Manhattan strongly condemns the vandalism in the Carl Schurz Park and calls on the Parks Department and the NYPD to do everything they can, including sharing any available video footage of this vandalism broadly, to stop these acts of hate.

**Opposed: 0**

**In Favor: Barton, Coleman, Dangoor, Farber, Lader, Sigal, Schneider, Shimamura, Torres (Public Member), J. Schneider (Public Member)**

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

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