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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
February 10, 2021

MINUTES:

Community Board Members Present: Felice Farber, Billy Freedland, Craig Lader, Rita Popper, Barbara Rudder, Barry Schneider, Lynne Strong-Shinozaki

Community Board Public Members Present: Judy Schneider, Irma Torres

Community Board Member Excused: Lowell Barton, Sharon Pope-Marshall

1. Presentation on the Clean Water, Clean Air, Green Jobs Bond Act (Joint item with the Environment Committee): Presenter Jessica Ottney Mahar, NY Director of Policy & Strategy at the Nature Conservancy speaking on the Environmental Bond Act which will be on the 2022 Ballot

- Infuse NYS government funding into protecting communities from impact of climate change, reducing pollution that is caused by climate change and protecting natural resources.
- Largest bond proposal ever brought before voters, at \$4 billion dollars and Governor Hochel hopes to enlarge her budget by an additional \$1 billion.
- 35% of funding to be dedicated to benefit front line communities who have been disproportionately affected by environmental pollution.
 - **1st Category:** Water and Resilient Infrastructure (\$650 million)
 - **2nd Category:** Open Space Conservation and Recreation (\$650 million—\$100 million for farmland preservation & \$75 million for fish hatchery creation and upgrades)
 - **3rd Category:** Climate Change Mitigation (\$1.1 billion—at least \$35 million for green building projects, projects to increase energy efficiency or install renewable energy on statewide properties)
 - **4th Category:** Restoration and Flood Risk Reduction (\$1. 2 billion for coastal rehabilitation and shoreline restoration)
- Huge job creator. They want to get support for bond act. Everyone should go to website: cleanwaterandjobs.org
- NYC Program will expand the urban forest in NYC. Website: [Forest For All NYC](http://ForestForAllNYC.org). Maps indicate where forests in NYC are and have to expand the urban forest. The bond act will be able to support this. Municipal storm-water system upgrades and green infrastructure projects on storm water retention, climate change efficiency upgrading buildings with energy efficiency.
- **Q&A:**
 - Money will go directly through State Agencies, which will work with the municipalities. There is a competitive bidding process between the municipalities.
 - Questions on RI. Jessica said she would follow up directly with Lynne Strong on issues.

2. 2022 – A review of the Committee’s activities in 2021 – EDC, NYC Parks & Central Park Conservancy and Tramway Plaza.

- **EDC – EAST MIDTOWN GREENWAY & ANDREW HASWELL GREEN PARK PHASE 2B**
 - Caisson drilling and concrete placement continued in the river near E. 54th Street.
 - Pedestrian bridge was placed on site on January 6 at E. 54th Street.
 - Demolition of the existing platform at Andrew Haswell Green continues and contractor installed new sheet piles.
 - Topside soil replacement and deck build-up has begun.
 - We have invited representatives of the EDC to join us in earl spring for a 2022 presentation—March or April.
- **NYC Parks & Recreation**
 - **Crew** reinstallation at the waterfront-- Expecting to have Army Corps of Engineers permit shortly. Construction should begin early 2023.
 - **72nd Street Cul-de-sac**—Commissioner Castro is going to visit the site this week. We should know more for the next meeting.
 - **John Jay Park** - renovation of seating area is underway and should be complete by September.
 - **Harlem Meer Center**-- Demolition of the Lasker Pool and Rink facility is complete; site work including construction of utility infrastructure and excavation to prepare the site for the new facility will progress through the spring, and construction of the new facility will be underway by summer. Construction remains on schedule for completion by the pool season of 2024.
 - **The Dairy**—the project to retore the historic Dairy building and construct an accessible route to it was completed fall 2021, and the Dairy Visitor Center and Gift Shop reopened in November.





- **Conservatory Garden**—construction began in January on the comprehensive restoration of the Garden’s hardscape and infrastructure, which will progress in phases over the next 2-3 years. Currently in construction is the English (south) Garden. This phase will continue through the fall. Work on the French (north) Garden will begin early in 2023.
- **Kinderberg / Chess & Checkers**— nearing completion of public review for the restoration of the Kinderberg and renovation of Chess & Checkers House, including the addition of public restrooms, which was presented to the committee in November. Construction anticipated this spring and completing the project around the end of the year or early 2023.
- **North Meadow Center**—we expect a presentation at the March meeting for the restoration /renovation of the operations facility, public restrooms and recreation courts.

➤ **Tramway Plaza**

- The Manhattan Aerial Tramway Station project is being constructed in two phases.
- Phase 1 (East elevator) opened to the public in October, and are now working on the second elevator (Phase 2).
- Finishing up the electrical and architectural metal work. The job site trailer is removed, and site cleanup will commence next week.
- The overall completion of the project is dependent on the regulatory sign offs, working with the Parks department to potentially open the park before the end of next month.

➤ **Q & A**

- Cul-de-sac Masonry is really in bad condition on one side. Lighting is a problem. Benches were fixed. Long term who is taking care of this space? After review, we hope to have an assessment from the Commissioner.
- Report of a new sink hole at 71st street on the Esplanade. The new pavers that were put in 5 years ago are sinking. The area has been chained off.
- Area outside of John Jay Park is not well used and could be better integrated into the park (drug use near the hedges and benches.) Also rat problem in hedges. Look for funding for this area
- 81 to 84 streets will be part of the esplanade presentation.
- There were speakers for and against dog park design for Ruppert Park, which will be discussed at the full board meeting Wednesday February 16th.

3. Parks Department update by Shena Kaufman, District Manager, NYC Parks & Recreation

- Reinstalling the fencing that was damaged in Ruppert Park, so the dogs are not roaming all over the place. Also change the existing signage outside the park and be consistent with new signage inside the park—If Plan B is approved at the full board.

- Tramway to open March 1st. Concerns about making the park whole again, such as paving and trees. Everything should be in place before Parks excepts it back over from RIOC.
- Honey Locust should be ready by early next year.

4. New/Old Business -- Jennifer Ratner of Friends of the East River Esplanade gave a report.

- This is a conservancy from 60 to 120th Streets advocating for the Esplanade.
- Pavilion at 60th Street. There was a garbage problem and Friends has purchased 2 BigBelly trash containers to help with the problem. The Lawn is a problem and needs to be resodded, which parks said will be done in in the spring. With the help of Skanska to bring up the water temporarily. Friends will start their programing for children and adults in May.
- The Dog Run Area has poor drainage and muddy conditions working on that with Council Member Menin and Parks. Repaving and new drainage is needed. Friends will be coming back on this item.
- Mockup shown for proposed signage for the esplanade at HSS location, which is interactive.
- \$300 Million for redo of esplanade north of Carl Schurz Park and start in 2024 under EDC.
- Still looking for location for Exercise Equipment location.
- Email: Eastriveresplanade@gmail.com or Esplanadefriends.org

The meeting was adjourned.

Felice Farber and Barry Schneider,
Co-Chairs, Parks and Waterfront Committee