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**The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Parks and Waterfront Committee
Thursday July 14, 2022 – 6:30pm**

MINUTES

Board Members Present: Felice Farber, Barbara Rudder, Rita Popper, Judy Schneider, Marco Tamayo.

Community Board Public Members Present: Barry Schneider, Irma Torres

**Item 1: Discussion of Parks and Waterfront Capital and Expense Budget Request with Steve Simon
Chief of Staff to the Manhattan Borough Commissioner for the Department of Parks and Recreation**

The Parks and Waterfront Committee reviewed the FY 2023 District Needs Statement for Community Board 8 and discussed the capital and expenses priorities for FY 2024

Steve Simon, Chief of Staff to the Manhattan Borough Commissioner for the Department of Parks and Recreation and Parks and Waterfront Committee Chairs Felice Farber and Judy Schneider thanked City Council Member Julie Menin for securing significant funding in the recently passed City budget for park repairs. Council Member Menin secured \$4 million to install a comfort station in Ruppert Park, \$1 million to repave the central walkway in John Jay Park and \$300,000 to repair the path in Carl Schurz Park.

Committee Co-Chairs Felice Farber and Judy Schneider indicated that they will be sending a letter to Council Member Menin and City Council Speaker Adam's thanking them for the impactful investment in CB 8 Parks.

Review of FY 2023 Capital Request in District Needs Statement and Additional Capital Needs

Trees and Tree Guards: Steve Simon explained that the installation of Trees is a capital expense. Tree Guards can also be funded with capital dollars for trees that are up to 2 years old. For older trees, tree guards could be funded with expense dollars. Tree guards can also be funded with allocations from council members, block associations, and other community groups. Steve Simon indicated that he would forward information on the Parks Dept Tree Guard program, the different styles of tree guards and the costs.

Ruppert Park: The reconstruction of Ruppert Park is now fully funded. It should now be listed in the District Needs Statement (DNS) as CS for continuing support. The reconstruction of Ruppert Park is still in the design process and Parks is scheduled to complete the documents in October. The Comfort station must still be designed. Felice Farber and Judy Schneider asked if the subsurface utility and foundation work for the comfort station was in the design for the park, as requested in a prior CB8 resolution. Steve believed that it was but stated that he would confirm.

John Jay Park: Areas in need of capital investment include the central walkway where there is cracked pavement and the need for an accessible entrance to the multi-purpose play area. This will be listed in the DNS under CS for continuing support. Steve does not see a need to rebuild the playground area or bath house. He will look at the multi-purpose play area to see if capital investment is needed.

Andrew Haswell Green Park Phase 3: Once the funds are raised, Steve noted if like other projects, the funding for the project will originate with Parks and then be transferred to EDC to manage the construction.

East River Esplanade: Steve believes the Esplanade is now well funded. In the last budget he believes Parks got \$250 million more for the Esplanade. EDC still must hire a design consultant. Steve does not know yet how much more Money will be needed, if any for the Esplanade.

Queensboro Oval: The City entered into a 10+ year concession agreement with the Queensboro oval and secured more free time for community use. Steve does not believe there are any additional community issues related to the Oval. Judy Schneider requested that the Tennis Bubble be cleaned. Barbara Rudder made a similar request.

Seabury Park: There are no current plans for work on the park but the area on the North side where play area is located is due for renovation and has fallen on hard times. It should be added to capital request. Steve noted the need to renovate the park house as well. He noted that the large open area is in pretty good condition.

24 Sycamore Playground: The Parks Dept redid the upper portion of the park. The lower portion of the park with the play equipment and basketball area, needs renovation.

Stanley Isaacs Playground: The hockey rink and play equipment needs renovation.

Carl Schurz Park: The basketball court needs capital funding for repairs.

St. Catherine's Park: The park will be getting a lot of money as part of the Blood Center deal but will likely need additional funding for the comfort station, depending on the outcome of the current litigation. The Parks Dept is committed to renovating the playground and large open area, but Steve is concerned that there may not be enough money left to rehabilitate the comfort station.

Tramway plaza: The plantings require an irrigation system. Also. the fountain, which was part of the original design has never been installed.

Review of FY 2023 Expense Needs in District Needs Statement

Steve noted his appreciation for the Community Board's emphasis on the need for year-round workers. He noted that the request for year-round workers and additional park maintenance staff overlapped, and he recommended combining the two requests.

He noted that new trees are a capital request not an expense item and should be moved to the capital list.

Questions and comments:

Rita Popper asked for the total funding available for the reconstruction of Ruppert Park. Steve stated that he will go back and double check the total funding and report back. She thanked Steve for all his efforts. Steve noted that construction of the park is expected to start in the Fall of 2023.

Marco Tamayo expressed concern about the impact of inflation on the available budget for Ruppert Park. He also noted the need for a lot of trees along the Avenues in the community. Steve said the Parks Dept plans to plant more trees in the fall planting and will send us a list.

Barbara Rudder wants bathrooms in Central Park opened. She also asked about the Esplanade. Steve noted that Parks Dept. have been waiting a long time to get permits from Army Corp to do the next phase of the Esplanade work. Parks will proceed towards the procurement process in anticipation of getting the permits.

She asked about the status of funding for the Brearley School to fix their play area. Steve noted that it is part of a major DOT project to rebuild John Finley walk. She also noted that the Friends of East River Esplanade got more garbage pails installed along the Esplanade and asked if the garbage could be picked up more frequently especially along John Finley walk by Gracie Mansion. Steve noted that there was a crew there this morning. The litter should be picked up daily in that park.

Boaz noted that there has been a lot of “good noise” about public bathrooms in NYC. He hopes the community board will fully support Mark Levine’s proposal on public bathrooms.

Will Brightbill noted that DeKoviats Playground needs work. The playground is located where new ramp for the marine transfer station is to be built. The project should be list under capital funding.

Item 2: Update by Lori Knowles, Parks Supervisor Level 2.

She will look into the overflowing garbage cans on John Finley Walk.

Rita Popper expressed concerns about tree stumps left behind when trees are cut down. Steve suggested the Community Board request additional funds for tree stump removal. He said it used to be a regular City Council add-on. He also suggested calling 311 for complaints about tree stumps.

Item 3: Old Business/New Business

Judy Schneider provided an update on local events and developments.

- The Temporary Pedestrian Ramp at East 71st Street was finished by Kellen Tower and pedestrians can now pass on 71st.
- In the fall the East Midtown partnership will get a group together to start a “Friends of” group for tramway park.
- The Friends of East River Esplanade sent a notice about a live music event at Alice Aycock Pavilion at Andrew Haswell Green Park, on August 15th from 6-8pm. The Nick Green Jazz quartet will be playing.
- St. Catherine’s Park now through August 31 from 4-7 pm will have a day of play - the youth coordinating officer and other Police Officers of the 19th Precinct NYPD will be out in the park with games and sports.
- The Parks Dept. has agreed to make a temporary dog run at Ruppert Park.
- Felice and Judy will send a thank you letter to Julie Menin for her support of community parks from Community Board 8.
- The Guest Speaker in September will be Police Department Deputy Inspector Gallagher.

Mubeen/Muslim Volunteers - Thanked the Community Board for their support of the recent Muslim Volunteers Event. She noted that the next event will be held in October.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

***Felice Farber and Judy Schneider,
Co-Chairs, Parks and Waterfront Committee***