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**The City of New York**  
**Community Board 8 Manhattan**  
*Parks and Waterfront Committee*  
*Thursday, September 8, 2022 - 6:30 PM*

**MINUTES**

**Board Members Present:** Elizabeth Ashby, Lori Bores, Felice Farber, Rita Popper, Barbara Rudder, and Judy Schneider.

**Community Board Public Members Present:** Barry Schneider and Irma Torres.

**Item 1: Presentation by Deputy Inspector Gallagher, Central Park 1. Precinct Commander**

Inspector Gallagher has been the Commanding Officer of the Central Park Precinct for last 2 ½ years.

- He thanked members of the Community Board and the Community for their concern and support for Police Officer Muhammed Chowdhury who was attacked and robbed while jogging near his home in the Bronx. Officer Chowdhury is recovering and was released from the hospital today. He received fantastic medical care at Jacobi hospital in the Bronx. He has a long road of recovery and Inspector Gallagher hopes he will be back soon.
- The police recently arrested two people who were responsible for many of the robberies in Central Park and yesterday they arrested someone for the crime of forcible touching a woman who was out jogging. He noted that the incidence of crime in central park is very low.
- Inspector Gallagher advised the community if in need of emergency assistance or a victim of a crime/witness a crime to Call 911 immediately from Central Park and provide their location. He noted that every lamp post in the park has a sign with the actual street location. He also noted that that the Central Park precinct knows the park quite well and has an excellent ability to track the person quickly. He further noted that the police officers know how to canvas the park.
- There is way finder tool located on each lamppost in central park. The first two numbers signify the street you are closest too. For example, 6709 means you are at 67<sup>th</sup> Street. There may be an E, C or W as well indicating that East, Central or West. Regardless, if the last number is odd, you are on the West Side of Manhattan, if the Last number is even, you are on the East Side. 6709 would reference 67<sup>th</sup> street on the East side of the park. The last two digits increase as you move closer to the center of the park.



- Inspector Gallagher expressed concerns with the criminal justice reforms and believes the current system of bail is impacting the Police Department. “It has a profound effect in safety in New York City,” he said. He believes there needs to be dangerousness standard for bail. It is frustrating, he said, to see a revolving door of people committing serious acts and being let go. The police want the ability to make a case before a judge.
- Several questions/comments were raised about bike rider compliance with traffic lights in the park, the use of e-bikes, bicycle usage on the pedestrian pathways, and PD enforcement. Inspector Gallagher noted that the number of collisions with bikes and e-bikes declined 28% from last year. This corresponds to a doubling in the number of summonses issued by PD. The PD wrote 455 summonses over the last 56 days. Inspector Gallagher noted that there has not been a single critical injury this year in an accident with a bicycle.
- In response to a question Inspector Gallagher noted that the PD will try to pull over speeding vehicles but will not engage in a vehicle chase unless there is a serious violent crime involved. The PD use police helicopters to track groups of mopeds. Follow where the mopeds get stored for the night, then take the mopeds for the night.

## **Item 2. Presentation by Erica Sopha, Central Park Conservancy.**

Erica Sopha, Vice President Parks Use and Stewardship, introduced herself and David Saltonstall, Vice President of Government Relations and Policy. These are new positions. Erica is on the ground and oversees Community Relations working closely with the public and D. I. Gallagher and David interfaces with Parks and DOT, and reports directly to the Conservancy president, Betsy Smith.

- The conservancy just wrapped up a 10-week education campaign in Central Park educating dog owners about the leash rules for dogs. She noted that there has been an exponential increase in dogs in NYC and new dog owners who have a lack of awareness of rules.
- The education campaign redesigned signs that are in the park to educate dog owners about the leash rules. They focused on 6 landscapes where see they biggest problems (cedar hill off 5th Ave and 79th Street and Pilgrim hill at 72nd street off 5<sup>th</sup> Ave are the 2 locations in CB8).
- The Signs indicate that dogs must be leashed starting at 9am and until 9pm. The conservancy did a lot of outreach in the community and created a website for new dog owners. All the signs had QR code linking to the website. Conservancy personnel went into the landscapes every day to talk to folks about the rules. They spoke with 1150 people.
- Website [www.centralparknyc.org/activities/guides/dogs](http://www.centralparknyc.org/activities/guides/dogs)
- The end result was an improvement and reduction in dogs off leash.
- PEP joined in the planning and would write summonses following the outreach. Unfortunately, PEP was called away to help out at pools.
- The Law in NYC is that your dog must be leashed at all times. There is a privilege allowed in some parks, before 9am and after 9pm in specified landscapes, to allow your dog off leash. Dogs are never allowed off leash on the great lawn or ball fields. No dogs are allowed on sheep meadow ever, even on leash.
- Sheena noted that if there is a dog run in the park, there are no off-peak/off-leash hours. Central Park is one of the few parks that have off leash hours.
- Carl Schurz Park does not have off leash hours, since there are 2 dog runs in the park.

## **Public Comments:**

- Samantha Malone - Upper East Side Dog Collective – complimented Parks and the Conservancy and offered to work with Erica. She suggested she work with local dog groups.
- Mubeen from the Muslim Volunteers 4 New York - planted about 3000 plants/flowers in Ruppert Park and noted that none were left a few weeks after planting as a result of dogs and children trampling the flowers.
- Aliyana Traison of the Dog Collective made suggestions on how to improve the temporary dog run in the NW corner of Ruppert Park. She noted that it is important to reinstall clearer signs, to replace the ones that have been removed; it is not clear where the opening is in the fencing for temporary run. She also asked for water hose to cut down on dust and moving the dispenser for poop bags to the run.
- In response to a question Sheena noted that Ruppert Park closes at 9 or 10pm. There are only 2 people assigned to locking up all of the parks in the district and it takes time to get to all of them.

**Item 3. Update by Sheena Kaufman, Parks District Manager**

- Honey Locust Park is about 55% completed.
- Able to finish painting Street Bollards at tramway park.
- She does not know when big belly trash containers are going to arrive at Tramway.
- Parks was able to restore the steps leading to the MPP area in John Jay
- The pool season at John Jay Park went well and was wonderful
- Commissioner Castro will be leaving on September 15. The new parks borough commissioner is Anthony Perez.

**Item 4. Old Business**

- No old business was raised.

**Item 4. New Business**

- Several community members expressed support for a pickleball area in the ballfield in Carl Schurz Park. The group would like to see permanent markings for pickleball in Carl Schurz Park and noted that there was significant demand for such a facility.
- Sheena Kaufman noted that the area is currently marked for basketball and hockey and that she is receiving complaints from the people playing basketball about the pickleball players. She also noted that area schools use the area during school hours for recess and that children are allowed to ride their bicycles in the area.
- Sheena is trying to find a balance for all users. She noted that September 15<sup>th</sup> was Manhattan Borough Commissioner William Castro's last day and that Anthony Perez will be starting as the new Borough Commissioner. Sheena will raise the issue of the competing park demands with the new Commissioner.
- Judy Schneider and Felice Farber will work with Sheena Kaufman to explore the various options and report back to the committee next month.
- The October meeting will be a joint meeting with the 197-A Committee and the Parks and Waterfront Committee.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

*Felice Farber and Judy Schneider Co-Chairs*