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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Parks and Waterfront Committee
Thursday December 8, 2022 -6:30PM
This meeting was conducted remotely via Zoom.

MINUTES

Board Members Present: Michele Birnbaum, Felice Farber, Sahar Husain, Rita Popper Judy Schneider

Community Board Public Board Members Present: Barry Schneider

Excused Members: Sharon Pope-Marshall, Barbara Rudder

Excused Public Member: Irma Torres

Resolutions for Approval:

Item 1: Temporary Public Art at 68th Street

Item 2: One Million Trees Initiative (Unanimous)

The meeting was called to order and Chair Schneider announced that if anyone was attending this meeting to discuss Pickleball that would happen at our January or at the latest our February meeting. The chairs have been speaking with Park Commissioner Perez and Chief of staff Simon on the pickleball issue and the need for more space, rules and regulations. Everyone is welcome to stay for the meeting even though this issue will not be discussed.

Jacob Plottel, Special Assistant for Community Relations for Assembly Member Seawright spoke and said she could not be here this evening as she is in Albany for session. However, she would like to commend the co-chairs Judy Schneider and Felice Farber for working on this important issue. She is proud to support the pickleball community and all users of Carl Schurz Park. She thanks the co-chairs for meeting with the Parks Commissioner to examine all park spaces for opportunities to expand recreation and to improve signage to make parks safer. The office is ready to offer all the support we can to develop fair rules and strike a balance that works for everyone who enjoys our public spaces.

Item 1: Temporary Public Art Proposal for the Park Avenue Mall at 68th Street by Raul Mourao, a Brazilian artist. Presentation was made by Elizabeth Marsella, Public Art Coordinator of NYC Parks and Rachel Tretter of the Nara Roesler Gallery

- Pictures were shown of a steel sculpture weighing over 2,000 pounds.
- Below the soil a steel plate will be placed, and the sculpture will be attached to it.
- Funding is done by the Gallery and the artist, and they are responsible for insurance and maintenance.
- Since there is an MTA tunnel under Park Avenue, their engineers have reviewed all the drawings, which they have approved.
- The art will be installed in March 2023 and be there until September.
- The Items that the board members were concerned about are:
 - ✓ Movement of the structure. The gallery will get back to us on Tuesday to advise if it can be installed without any movement.
 - ✓ Teenagers climbing on the structure and monitoring of the structure. The presenters did not see climbing as a problem and they said the Americas Society, which is across the street will be monitoring the structure while they are open

- Therefore, the committee passed the following resolution:
WHEREAS providing there will be no movement of the structure once installed, and
WHEREAS the structure will be monitored by the Americas Society
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED Community Board 8 approves the installation of Raul Mourao sculpture, as long as there is no movement.

Member Vote: 3-0-1 (Yes--Husain, Popper, J. Schneider Abstain--Birnbaum)

Public Member Vote: 1-0-0 (Yes—B. Schneider)

Item 2: Presentation by Kyshia Smith, of the Manhattan Borough President’s Office, and Emily Maxwell, of the Nature Conservancy, on the initiative from the Borough President’s office on One Million Trees

- Kyshia Smith introduced Emily Maxwell from The Nature Conservancy, a global conservation organization.
- Emily Maxwell talked about trees in NYC, referred to as the Urban Forrest, and provided an overview of the Urban Forest Agenda and also the Manhattan BP’s million more trees campaign.
- They have a cities program focused on helping the NYC cope with the impacts of climate change.
- Emily discussed the benefit of trees on public health and presented the state of the urban forest in NYC. She discussed the urban heat island effect and explained that tree canopies clean the air, cool streets, and beautifies neighborhoods.
- Emily Maxwell explained that the tree canopy is not evenly distributed throughout NYC. She showed a chart indicating the density of the tree canopy noting that the areas in red, yellow and orange indicate loss of tree canopy between 2010 and 2017 (the period of time for which they have data)
- CB8M is in the middle of the road in terms of tree canopy coverage and has the capacity to add 3.5% to 6% of additional tree canopy. Additional tree canopy can have significant cooling and health benefits.
- The Forrest for All NYC coalition is calling for increased funding for the Parks Dept. to fund and maintain additional trees.
- The goal of the NYC Urban Forest Agenda is to increase the urban forest from the current 22% canopy cover – the goal is for the city to commit to achieving 30% canopy cover by 2035 equitably. Part of the agenda is planting 1 million more trees and maintaining the trees that we have.
- The Goal is to get all community boards throughout NYC to pass a resolution in support of 1 million more trees and the Urban Forest Agenda.
- A question was raised about available funding for the project. Emily noted two potential pots of funds include (in addition to the need for additional city funding): The Inflation Reduction Act has \$1.5 billion for urban forestry activities that NYC could apply for. The recently passed Environmental Bond Act has about \$150 million available for projects urban forestry focused.
- A discussion followed about how to request new street trees – Lori Knowles from the Parks Department followed up with the following information:
 - 311 is always a safe bet to request a new tree. They can also go onto the Parks website to fill out a request. Feel free to share this link as it’s available on the Parks website <https://www.nycgovparks.org/trees/street-tree-planting/request>
 - The next step once a request is made is to hold onto the Service Request confirmation number that they receive after making the request. They can check back in with 311 at any time for an update. Or if they submit a request with an associated email, they will receive an email as to the results of the new tree inspections.
 - If they are extremely eager and don’t want to wait, they can apply for a free permit to plant the tree themselves. That link to permit information can be found here: <https://www.nycgovparks.org/trees/street-tree-planting/permit-directions>

- The Committee passed the following resolution.
WHEREAS, trees help improve the livability of the city by cleaning the air of pollutants, reducing the impacts of climate change, cooling city streets and buildings, absorbing stormwater, serving as habitats for wildlife, adding beauty, and promoting human health and well-being, and;
WHEREAS, the majority of trees on public lands are not protected from being removed and there is no sufficient budget for their long-term care, and no coordinated vision or plan for their management and without these policies in place, our urban forest and its many benefits are at risk, and;
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board 8M Supports the five Borough Presidents' goal of planting one million more trees by 2035, with an emphasis on increasing equity in canopy distribution by expanding tree canopy in the most heat vulnerable communities, and
THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Board 8M endorses the NYC Urban Forest Agenda and supports the implementation of that agenda including: funding for education of tree stewardship programs and encouraging urban forestry careers and work force.

Member Vote: 5-0-0 (Yes—Birnbaum, Farber, Husain, Popper, J. Schneider)

Public Member Vote: 1-0-0 (Yes—B. Schneider)

Item 3: Lori Knowles filling in for Parks District Manager Shena Kaufman

- Parks held a site meeting to plan for the repaving of the multipurpose play area in John Jay Park using funds allocated by Council Member Menin. This includes an accessible ramp at the entrance on the east side and may include repaving of a portion of the central walkway.
- Parks is exploring replacing 2 handball courts at John Jay park with Pickleball Courts
- Parks is planning to replace bluestone pavement in Carl Schurz park using funds allocated by Council Member Menin.
- Commissioner Perez is working on a plan to add pickleball courts to Carl Schurz park that would balance the different users for the space including hockey players and local schools. He will be presenting the proposal to the Parks Committee of Community Board 8 in January or February.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

By Felice Farber and Judy Schneider