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**The City of New York**  
**Community Board 8 Manhattan**  
*Parks and Waterfront Committee*  
Thursday, February 9, 2023 -6:30PM  
*Conducted remotely on Zoom*

*Please note: The resolutions contained in the committee minutes are recommendations submitted by the committee co-chairs 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.*

**Resolutions for Approval:**

Item 1: **Pickleball Courts at Carl Schulz Park**

**MINUTES**

**Board Members Present:** Felice Farber, Sahar Husain, Rita Popper, Sharon Pope-Marshall, Barbara Rudder, Judy Schneider

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

We were pleased to have the following elected officials join us tonight:

- Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright is an avid pickleball player. She thanked the commissioner for balancing all the needs and interests of the community in the park, as well as the pickleball players.
- City Council Member Julie Menin received a lot of comments and passed them along to Commissioner Perez. Council Member Menin's council district ranks 47th out of 51 for lack of open space. The Council Member appreciates Commissioner Perez's thoughtful evaluation and consideration of all of the needs of the District.

**Item 1: Presentation by Manhattan Parks Commissioner Anthony Perez on Pickleball at Carl Schurz Park and to hear from the community**

- The Commissioner introduced himself and said he has only been in the position for 5 months and is enjoying getting to know the community. He then introduced other Parks people who were in attendance: Steve Simon—Chief of Staff; Ken Conyers—Chief of Recreation; Orlando Tulloch—Manhattan Permits Coordinator; and Shena Kaufman—Park District Manager.
- The Commissioner said the goal is to get community input and buy-in for next steps. He wants to be inclusive and thoughtful.
- He also wants comments and feedback from the community. The goal is to find additional pickleball spaces not only in Carl Schurz but in the rest of the community.
- There are over 68 pickleball courts across NYC; there are 12 pickleball courts in the pipeline, and there are 3 in Manhattan in different parks.
- **Policy:** Organized sports should only be played in designated areas, and the spaces should be spaced equitably.
- One of the problems with pickleball is that it is co-located in multipurpose play areas (MPPA). Pickleball courts can be co-located in MPPA with handball courts when that area is underutilized.
- Pickleball courts should not be co-located with tennis. They should be separate courts. A separate entrance for pickleball courts should be provided if the area is fenced.

- **Permits:** Permitted activities take precedence over pickleball. Permits are required for tournaments. No fees are charged for pickleball permits. A permitting system does not exist in every park.
- **Currently:** There are 3 unofficial pickleball courts. The courts are poorly spaced apart, as much as 16 feet, thus creating a lot of dead space. There is a very active group with over 1,000 members. This leads to overcrowding and there can be a 1.5 hour wait time for a court. This leads to people painting additional lines for more court space.
- **Reminder:** There are other activities in the MPPA area at Carl Schurz Park such as: basketball, roller hockey, recess during school days, acrobatics and movie nights.
- **Proposal:** Safely fit 3 official pickleball courts in less space than what is used now. Reduce space between courts to 8 feet.
- This will be officially painted by Parks.
- Move pickleball courts to the south side of MPPA with an open play area for kids in the middle and organized sports on the other side of the open area.
- Expand the open play area to 107 feet from 88-90 feet in current layout.
- Use the existing permitting system to carve out existing systems — including the three local schools. Parks has reached out to the schools for a formal request.
- Parks wants to purposely block out youth community time for open play areas, such as after-school hours and weekend morning hours.
- **Funding:** Commissioner Perez is in conversation with elected officials about capital funding for fixing surface area in the MPPA. Timing depends on when funds are available.
- **Drop Box:** These are used for storage of equipment, and Parks is open to engaging with leaders in the pickleball community and completing an agreement.
- **Search:** Parks is actively looking for other space for pickleball in Community District 8 that is underutilized. For example: hand ball courts at John Jay Park, 24 Sycamore Park, Stanley Isaacs Playground - the northern part works, Samuel Seabury playground and maybe even Ruppert Park.
- **Contact Info:** Anthony Perez; 212-408- 0201; Anthony.perez@parks.nyc.gov
- **Public Comments:**
  - Bradley Hershenson: It is a shared space for everyone, and we all want to be sure it is safe; also, the space needs to be repaired where tree roots are coming up, and 96<sup>th</sup> across from FDR would be good, if it is resurfaced.
  - Elaine Wrightman – A question about what is the timing and summer vs. winter. Response – The existing 3 courts would be used at all times when there is a permit and no changes in the rules for seasons. North Meadow of Central Park is temporary closed for repaving; when reopened, there will be 5 courts.
  - Ann Matthiessen - Asked for contact info (see above.)
  - Gary Schechter - Concerned that the left end of the MPPA is curved and will impact available space. Response: There is a buffer space.
  - Joel - Opposed to pickleball - It has become a deterrent for kids to play in the park. A lot of the pickleball players have a bad attitude. Suggests a maximum of 2 courts and for them to be put on the South Side with monitoring.
  - Andy Lachlan - David Sparrow – Jeanine B - all support pickleball. “Albert the Pickleball Doctor” deserves recognition and commendation.
  - Clara Vazquez – Complained that dogs are unleashed and urinate on her. Response: Steve Simon will get a PEP officer out to see about unleashed dogs.
  - Bo Wholey - His kids come to Carl Schurz to play pickleball. The North Meadow in Central Park does not allow kids to play there. Asked for signage that allows children to play there.
  - Eric – I am pickleball player in Brooklyn – I used to travel to Manhattan to play and there is a lack of permanent nets.
  - Phillis W. – Asked a question about the maintenance of the lines.

- John Jay Park - Sandra Jackman - Matt Goldberg - Anthony Friedman - Yangguang - Luca Melchionna - Cheryl all play against the wall, either tennis or handball and would NOT like to see it torn down.
- Ruppert Park
  - ✓ Rita Popper - Would be thrilled with a PB court in Ruppert Park - it abuts a closed street
  - ✓ Mubeen asked about timing. Response: The design is to be completed at the end of June; it then enters the procurement phase that takes 9 months. Earliest to breakdown is spring of next year.
  - ✓ Steve Simon said the comfort station is a separate project and will be presented in the coming months.

**RESOLUTION:**

**Therefore be it Resolved Community Board 8 approves the following resolution for Pickleball Courts at Carl Schurz Park:**

- **There should be 3 Pickleball Courts located on the South Side of the Park’s Multi-Purpose Play Area opposite the basketball courts.**
- **The pickleball courts should be laid out with even spacing between the courts and use less space between the courts than currently exists now.**
- **The hours pickleball can be played would be limited if there were other permitted uses occupying the park at that time.**
- **Community Board 8 urges the Parks Department to look for additional space to install pickleball courts in Community District 8.**

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

Public Member Vote: 2-0-0 (Yes—B. Schneider, Torres)

**Item 2: Parks District Manager Shena Kaufman gave the following report:**

- The Honey Locust Park ribbon cutting ceremony will be on Tuesday, February 28th at 1 PM. Everyone is invited. It is located on the north side of 59<sup>th</sup> Street between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, next to the 59<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge.
- The Ruppert Park Temporary Dog Run is going to be moved towards the street on the same side. It has not happened yet, as Parks is still waiting for fencing materials for the area. It is being moved as there have been a lot of noise complaints. Also, this is the part of the park the dog run will be located when it is rebuilt.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

*By Felice Farber and Judy Schneider*