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**The City of New York**  
**Community Board 8 Manhattan**  
*Parks and Waterfront Committee*  
*Monday, April 10, 2023 -6:30PM*  
*Conducted remotely on Zoom*

***Information added after the meeting***

*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: Approval of Hospital for Special Surgery's proposed changes and the planned upgrades to the East River Esplanade between 72<sup>nd</sup> and 78<sup>th</sup> Streets.**

**Item 2: Approval of the installation of the proposed artist exhibit on the Park Avenue Mall in Community District 8.**

**MINUTES**

**Community Board Members Present:** Felice Farber, Craig Lader, Rita Popper, Judith Schneider.

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

**Community Board Members Excused:** Due to the change in the regularly scheduled committee meeting date to accommodate Passover and Easter, all committee members who were unable to attend the rescheduled meeting are excused.

**Item 1: Update by HSS on Renovation of the East River Esplanade from 72<sup>nd</sup> to 78<sup>th</sup> Streets and placement of the Fitness Equipment. Presentation by Andy Moore and Melissa Kiefer from HSS and Ricardo Hinkle and Steve Simon from NYC Parks. [2023-0410-HSS-Esplanade\\_CB8-Parks-and-Waterfront.pdf \(cb8m.com\)](#)**

Andy Moore of Quennell Rothschild & Partners provided an overview of the HSS East River Esplanade renovation project and an update on its current status.

- HSS originally proposed, and CB8M approved, the installation of exercise equipment between 77<sup>th</sup> and 78<sup>th</sup> Streets under the DOT Pedestrian Bridge. DOT subsequently disapproved the placement of the equipment under the bridge. HSS worked with DOT and the Parks Dept. to identify an alternative location along the Esplanade for the fitness equipment.
- Andy Moore presented to the Community Board the proposed changes to the placement of the equipment. The new location between 75<sup>th</sup> and 76<sup>th</sup> Streets provides more space for the exercise equipment, including additional spacing between the equipment, the addition of ADA accessible parallel bars, and the installation of pull-up bars at 2 heights (5'6" and 8') to accommodate users of different sizes and abilities. As originally planned, the proposal calls for using exercise equipment from KomPan, a vendor used by the Parks Dept. for exercise equipment throughout the city.

- The new location will be better lit, with 3 lights adjacent to the fitness equipment and 2 more on the Esplanade. There will also be small benches for seating and a water fountain adjacent to the fitness area that will also be accessible to the Esplanade.
- Instead of the exercise equipment, there will be plantings under the pedestrian ramp that will be maintained by HSS, including rat mitigation, and will include an irrigation system.
- HSS will clean and repaint the railing on the Esplanade.
- The comments from members of the community, committee members, and Friends of the East River Esplanade were overwhelmingly positive and supportive of the changes.
- Questions were asked about the timing of the construction. HSS expects the new section to be ready in mid-2025. They will be coordinating with the Parks Dept. and hope to have it opened earlier and will advise the Community Board when there is more information about the construction schedule and planned opening. It was noted that the Kellen Tower is under construction and should be in a position to reopen the Esplanade, or portions of it, by mid-2024.
- Other Issues:
  - Jennifer Ratner, Friends of the East River Esplanade wants to install signage on the history of the Esplanade and will pay for the signs and maintain them. Steve Simon noted that the signage was rejected by the Parks Dept.
  - A question was raised about installing a rest room in the area near the new exercise equipment or as part of the Con Ed facility. Ricardo Hinkle from Parks noted the significant challenges and cost to install a restroom along the Esplanade. For example, any new rest area would have to meet new resiliency guidelines and would have to be 14 feet above grade. Parks agreed to look into this matter further and see if facilities might be available from the Con Ed Plant.
  - Parks Dept. will be making structural repairs to the Esplanade at 62-63rd Streets, 76-80<sup>th</sup> Streets, and 90-94<sup>th</sup> Streets. Steve Simon expects the contract for the repair work will be awarded by the end of June. The CB requested that the sink hole between 76 to 80<sup>th</sup> be repaired first so that it does not interfere with the HSS project in that area.

- **RESOLUTION:**

**WHEREAS**, HSS has identified a new location for the installation of outdoor exercise equipment on the East River Esplanade that will not interfere with any future maintenance and operation issues related to the DOT-owned Pedestrian Bridge at 77<sup>th</sup> Street; and

**WHEREAS**, the new location between 75<sup>th</sup> and 76<sup>th</sup> Streets will allow for additional space for the exercise equipment including more room between each piece of equipment, the addition of ADA Accessible exercise equipment, and equipment that will meet the needs of users of differing heights and abilities; and

**WHEREAS**, HSS will install plantings approved by the Parks Department and Department of Transportation under the 77<sup>th</sup> Street Pedestrian Bridge that will beautify the area and will be maintained by HSS;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, Community Board 8 Manhattan Parks Committee approves HSS's proposed changes including moving the exercise equipment south, from under the 78<sup>th</sup> Street bridge, and the planned upgrades to the East River Esplanade between 72<sup>nd</sup> and 78<sup>th</sup> Streets.

Vote of Members: 4-0-0 (Farber, Lader, Popper, J. Schneider)

Vote of Public Members: 2-0-0 (B. Schneider, Torres)

**Item 2: Presentation by Elizabeth Masella, Senior Public Art Coordinator at the Dept. of Parks and Recreation on the installation of artwork by the Artist Sophia Vari on the Park Avenue Mall.**  
[Park-Avenue-1.pdf \(cb8m.com\)](#)

- The Project is funded by the Nohra Haime Gallery, Fund for Park Avenue, and the Grand Central Partnership.
- The sculptures along the Park Avenue Mall by the artist Sophia Vari will be presented at 59, 60, 61, 62, and 63 Streets, as well as in CB 6.
- All of the sculptures are between 8 and 10 feet tall and are 2,000 lbs. each.
- The sculptures will be bolted to a base made of steel and wood and will not damage the Mall.
- Parks Dept. is hoping the sculptures can be installed by April 29<sup>th</sup>, which is International Sculpture Day, but it may not be installed until May due to travel delays. The exhibit will be on view until November.
- The Exhibitor as well as the installer is required to have general liability insurance.
- Because the exhibit is temporary, PDC approval is not required.

• **RESOLUTION:**

**WHEREAS** Sophia Vari is a world-renowned Greek visual artist specializing in bronze sculpture;

**WHEREAS** Parks Department proposes to install 12 sculptures by Sophia Vari along the Park Avenue Mall between 53<sup>rd</sup> and 62<sup>nd</sup> Streets;

**WHEREAS** each artwork will be attached to a painted based made of wood and metal;

**WHEREAS** the project has been approved and accepted by the MTA Metro-North engineering team;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, Community Board 8 Manhattan Parks Committee approves the installation of the proposed artist exhibit on the Park Avenue Mall in Community District 8.

Vote of Members: 4-0-0 (Farber, Lader, Popper, J. Schneider)

Vote of Public Members: 2-0-0 (B. Schneider, Tores)

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

- The Ribbon Cutting ceremony for Honey Locust Park is scheduled for April 13<sup>th</sup> at 11 AM.
- One side of the Bluestone staircase in Carl Schurz Park is complete. They are working on the other side. The Bluestone staircase was paid for by the Carl Schurz Park Conservancy.
- The installation of the security bollards on East End Avenue at 87<sup>th</sup> Street in front of Gracie Mansion has not started yet. The bollards will replace the current fence. Sheena will get more info on the status.
- Parks hopes to have the installation of 3 pickleball courts in Carl Schurz Park start by the end of April. Installation should only take a few days.
- The temporary dog run in Ruppert Park has been moved from the upper level to the lower level.
  - Rita Popper complimented Sheena for her responsiveness and asked if the dog run could be moved to the South Side of the park where there are fewer residences, or, if the park hours could be shortened. Sheena indicated that the new park has already been designed and approved and will explore closing the dog run earlier – perhaps by 9 PM. **Note: After the meeting, Sheena explored closing the Park earlier. The Citywide policy of the Parks Dept. is to close all parks at 10 PM.**
  - Aliyana Traison thanked Sheena for all of her work to find space for a dog run. The community is extremely pleased with the changes. The Upper East Side Dog Collective is coordinating with

the Muslim Volunteers on the Ruppert Park clean-up and planting event schedule for May 20 – more details to follow.

- Parks Districts have been reorganized – Sheena will no longer be part of District 15 (the East River Esplanade) and will have district 6 and 8. Mark Vaccaro will no longer be assigned to Parks Districts 6 and 8. Mark is moving to the west side. Therese Flores will take over responsibility for the east side starting April 24. Esplanade Area district 15: the new Regional Manager is Robert McLean and the Park Manager is Geoff Martin.
- Earth Day events at Carl Schurz are scheduled for April 22<sup>nd</sup> from 1-3pm. The event will visit 7 topical panels which will remain up throughout the summer. The kickoff ceremony starts at 1 PM at the 86<sup>th</sup> Street Entrance.
- Friends of ERE also has Earth Day events planned. Those events include: Earth Day Cleanup with Shore Walkers on April 21<sup>st</sup>, a Spring Gardening Day on April 15<sup>th</sup> from 9:30-11:30 AM at 99<sup>th</sup> Street and the Esplanade, and a Spring Bird Walk on April 16 from 10-11 AM at 84<sup>th</sup> Street in Carl Schurz Park.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:01 PM.

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