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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Parks and Waterfront Committee
Thursday, January 9, 2025 - 6:30PM
Conducted remotely on Zoom.

MINUTES

Present: Felice Farber, Bradley Hershenson, Rita Popper, Judy Schneider, Barry Schneider*, Irma Torres*

Excused: Barbara Rudder

**Public Member*

Approximate Number of Public Attendees: 15

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

Felice announced at the beginning of the meeting the following notice from the Parks Dept.:

The East River Esplanade will be closed from E. 96th Street to E. 103rd Street starting on Monday, Jan. 6. Construction work on an asphalt path detour for pedestrians at E. 99th Street, around a sinkhole that has been filled in, is anticipated to start on that date and last approximately 15 business days.

Item 1: Presentation by Committee Co-Chairs on Open Park Issues to be Resolved in 2025

Felice Farber and Judy Schneider discussed the open issues and priorities for 2025.

Ruppert: Reconstruction of Ruppert Park is a community priority. The Committee would like an update on the status of the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) approval and the ability of the city to finally put the project out to bid. In addition, we would like an update on the status of the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) design-build procurement for several new restrooms, including one in Ruppert Park.

Carl Schurz: When does Parks plan to implement the Pilot Program for Pickleball fencing & nets in the multi-purpose play area (MPPA)?

John Jay: Does Parks plan on converting a handball court to pickleball, and if so, is the funding in place, and what is the time period for starting the project?

Is there funding in place to redo the park house and related infrastructure? If so, when will it start? If there is not sufficient funding, what is the estimated cost?

Has the work in the MPPA and central walkway been completed? Is there additional work to be done?

Stanley Isaacs: What is the status of funding for the Lighting/Scoreboard for the Hockey Rink?

Samuel Seabury: Is the funding in place for the necessary repairs or redo?

Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS): Has a contractor been selected to perform the sinkhole repairs on the Esplanade? When will the Esplanade work on the sinkholes start and will HSS provide financial support if additional funding is needed? How will the work be divided; what is the time frame for work to start, and what is the construction duration?

72nd Street Cul-de-sac: What are the New York City Department of Transportation's (NYC DOT) plans for the repair, maintenance, and upkeep?

St. Catherine's Park: When will SWPPP be complete, and when will work begin—will there be a final presentation before work begins?

24 Sycamores Park: Is a SWPPP necessary? Will upper and lower parts be done separately, & if so, which is first?

Queensboro Oval: When does the lease end, and is there renewal written into the lease? When will the Oval be cleaned?

Tramway Park: When will funding for the fountain be available?

Esplanade:

- NYC DOT to provide an update on 81st to 90th Streets (John Finley Walk) now that a consultant is on board. Brearley School (83rd Street) to make a presentation once NYC DOT approves their drawings.
- Andrew Haswell Green Park (AHG) Phase 2B: when will pile encapsulation be complete?
- AHG Phase 3: when will funding be available?
- 94th Street to 114th Street final plan will be heard by the Parks Committee in February.

Central Park Conservancy (CPC):

- **Public Restrooms:** Felice noted that CPC has a detailed website showing the location of all the restrooms in the park, including the hours, accessibility, and whether there are all gender options. <https://www.centralparknyc.org/restrooms>. There are a total of **20 public restrooms** in Central Park, **only 4 are closed for construction** work: The Davis Center, Conservatory Garden, North Meadow Center, and Delacorte Theater.
- **Conservancy Gardens:** what is the completion date?
- **The Davis Center** (formerly the Lasker ring & pool) will be heard at the February meeting.

The Parks & Waterfront Committee will hear updates on the following during this year:

- CB6M on FDR Drive improvements for our support;
- Vital Parks Program for All;
- District Needs Statement Budget Request in July;
- Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) presentation on CP Reservoir; which will be a joint meeting with the Sanitation & Environment Committee;
- Partnership for Parks to tell us about their activities;
- Update from Carl Schurz Park Conservancy; Friends of the East River Esplanade; Asphalt Green; Muslim Volunteers for New York for their activities;
- Captain Lavino of Central Park Precinct.

Item 2: Update by Shena Kaufman, Parks District Manager, NYC Dept. P&R

- **24 Sycamores** – Parks is planning on redoing the basketball court and handball court. The restrooms are closed due to infrastructure issues that must be repaired (broken or collapsed sewer pipe, which is very deep, leading into the street). Until the work is done to repair the sewer, Parks will install two port-a-potties in the park, one of which will be accessible. The port-a-potty will be serviced three times per

week. Parks is exploring turning the handball court in the park into a pickleball court. **Parks Dept. will be scheduling a public meeting to discuss this matter.**

- **Ruppert Park** – No update on the status of the SWPPP. Shena hopes to see movement in the next couple of months on the SWPPP and hopes to have a better answer by the summer.
- **East 66th Street Greenstreets** – installed wrought iron fencing and will do some planting in the spring.
- **Complaints were received about feeding the birds in Carl Schurz Park** along the Esplanade. Feeding the birds is against the rules. Shena is trying to see if there are ways to help speak with the people who are feeding the birds in the park.
- Shena would like support for **Samuel Seabury Playground** – the restroom is closed in the winter because there is no heat in the building. Need support for funding to heat the restroom in order to keep the restroom open year-round. The restroom has been closed for about 10 years in the winter.
- **Stanley Isaacs** – Need funding for spray showers and other improvements to the playground area to make it inviting for the community. Also need funding to redo the basketball courts at Stanley Isaacs and to convert handball courts to pickleball.
- **Queensboro Bubble** – Shena will check on getting the bubble cleaned.
- **John Jay Park** – Parks Dept. needs funding to redo the small playground and address the location of the sandbox, which is too close to the play shower drains, resulting in sand clogging the drains. Cannot turn on the spray shower as a result.

Item 3: Update by Robert McLean, Parks District Manager District 15, NYC Dept. P&R

- **The Sink Hole at 99th Street has been filled.** The contractors are pouring asphalt around the sinkhole, as per the comment at the beginning of the minutes.
- NYC DOT has **replaced 35 of the broken lights** along the Esplanade. Will need some repairs to the conduit before they can install the balance of new lights at the upper part of the Esplanade.
- There is a section of the **Esplanade at 78th Street** where the concrete barrier is broken and needs to be repaired because there is direct access to the FDR Drive.
- Community member Phillis Wallach requested a **camera be installed on the Esplanade by 84th Street** to prevent vandalism of the pickleball equipment. Phillis Wallach offered to help raise money for a camera. Shena responded that Parks does not install cameras, NYPD does.

Item 4: Old and New Business

- Amy Paul presented ideas for installing senior fitness parks in several locations in the core of the district. She explained that this is an idea adopted by a number of other countries including England, Japan, Finland, Spain, and Germany. The public space designed for seniors that includes fitness equipment for seniors addresses a need in the community for fitness and social gathering spots for our neighborhood seniors. She is requesting that this be located in the core of the district, as seniors may find it too far to walk to the parks located on the east side of the district. Shena requested photos of examples of the equipment and senior parks.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM.

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