

Valerie S. Mason  
Chair

Will Brightbill  
District Manager



505 Park Avenue, Suite 620  
New York, N.Y. 10022-1106  
(212) 758-4340  
(212) 758-4616 (Fax)  
www.cb8m.com – Website  
info@cb8m.com – E-Mail

**The City of New York**  
**Community Board 8 Manhattan**  
*Parks and Waterfront Committee*  
*Thursday, September 11, 2025 - 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: Approval of the plan for the reconstruction of 24 Sycamores Park with a set of conditions

Item 2A: Approval to renovate the Bethesda Fountain and Sculpture

Item 2B: Approval for the installation of new lights at Grand Army Plaza North and South

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Felice Farber, Miles Fink, Bradley Hershenson, Barbara Rudder, Barry Schneider\*, Judy Schneider

**Excused:** Irma Torres\*

*\*Public Member*

**Approximate Number of Public Attendees: 22**

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

**Item 1: Presentation of the plan for the reconstruction of 24 Sycamores Park – Jon Ernsberger, Deputy Director of Landscape Architecture (Manhattan), NYC Parks Capital Division**

Jon Ernsberger described the current condition of 24 Sycamores Park and the surrounding sidewalks. He described the community priorities on which the design is based, which include sports/fitness, play, passive use/senior seating, and safety & accessibility.

He noted that Andrew Haswell Green Park is located nearby, and it is being looked at for design precedent, such as finding a way of addressing grade changes.

Jon then described the proposed design changes, including items such as senior seating, accessibility, spray area, pickleball courts, a half basketball court, play units, adult fitness equipment, and a seating area, as well as a pickleball/kitchen skills practice area.

The proposed changes also expand the permeability of the site to reduce stormwater. Planting will include catmints and wild gingers, which are hoped to be a rat deterrent. Additional trees will be added to return the park to having twenty-four sycamore trees, coinciding with the name of the park.

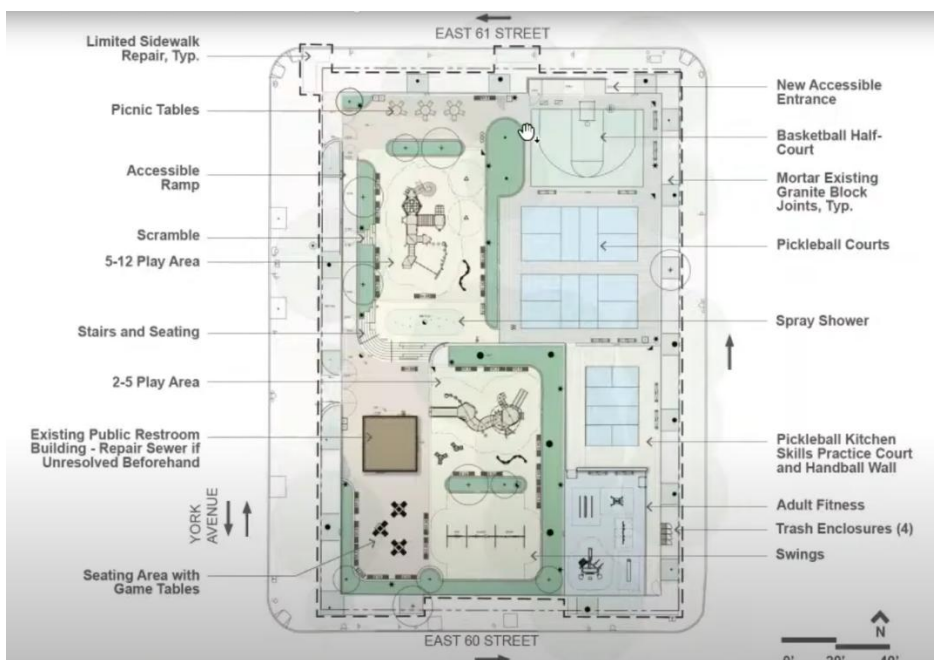
The park is located on York Avenue between East 60th and East 61st Streets, with a total funding availability for the project of \$4.34 million.

A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) is not required because the project falls under the disturbance threshold required to trigger a SWPPP.

The public restroom building in 24 Sycamore Park was reconstructed back in 2021. However, it has been closed for some time due to a sewer issue, which is a major concern to the community.

Community questions/comments:

- Request permanent nets or a storage bin for a net.
- Handball court – draw pickleball line on the court (Sheena thinks it will discourage other users of the handball court).
- Increase the height of the low fences near the pickleball courts.
- Add something on the fence for people to place their rackets to reserve their court space, and suggest a space for a total of 20 people waiting.
- Put hooks or wire baskets on the fence near the pickleball court for bags.
- In response to a question about construction duration, construction will take a year, and the park will be closed during that time. Construction on the park is expected to start in a year and 6 months.
- Tree beds along York Avenue are not included in the design, Jon will explore what can be done for the tree beds.
- The handball court wall is on one side, and the other side is the adult exercise equipment area.
- Opposition was raised to the installation of permanent pickleball courts and the reduction in the number of basketball courts, which was seconded by additional members of the public. The concern is that the design takes away space for children to play and replaces it with pickleball courts used mainly by adults.



**WHEREAS** the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation presented a restoration of 24 Sycamore Park; and

**WHEREAS** the presentation covered many areas for all ages: new climbing equipment for children, all types of swings, basketball, handball, pickleball, adult fitness equipment, seating areas, game tables, better handicap access to the park, and restoration of trees and greenery;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, Community Board 8 supports the presentation of the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation on their restoration of 24 Sycamores Park, if the following items are included in this work:

- That the two main pickleball courts should be included as permanent nets.
- Hooks should be installed with wire baskets on the 16-foot fence to hold players' paddles and equipment.
- Nets should be provided for the practice pickleball courts and stored in a wire basket and hooked on the fence when not in use.
- To consider changing the height of the interior fencing from 4 feet to 6 feet.

**THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Community Board 8 is very concerned about the repair of the plumbing lines for the park house, which have been out of use for over a year, and that the Parks Department make this a priority and report back to Community Board 8 its status on this issue, as soon as possible.

**Board Member Vote:** 6-0-0 Farber, Fink, Hershenson, Rudder, B. Schneider\*, J. Schneider

**Item 2: Central Park Conservancy (CPC) on restoration of Bethesda Fountain & Resolution, as well as the Grand Army North & South Plaza Lighting & Resolution and the Concert ground Benches near band shell, by Diane Jackier and Nick Koster of the CPC**

Nick Koster presented the first issue: restoration of the Concert Ground Benches near the Band Shell. The seats and backs will be restored as they currently are, with their historical flower pattern, and the metal posts will be redone. The work will start in the fall, two at a time, and is expected to be completed in twelve months.

Nick Koster then presented the work of the Central Park Conservancy to restore the Bethesda Fountain and Sculpture. The restoration work includes addressing water leakage, concrete restoration of the base and retaining walls, and bronze restoration of the statue, among other items.

#### **A) Approval to renovate the Bethesda Fountain and Sculpture**

**WHEREAS** Central Park Conservancy is planning on addressing the deterioration of the Bethesda Fountain and Sculpture; and

**WHEREAS** the following goals are to be met:

- Modernize the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.
- Improve the performance of water quality and maintenance of the fountain.
- Lost bronze pieces to be restored, where possible, to the fountain and Statue
- Adding a reduced pressure zone (RPZ) that meets code.
- Current vault will have 3 new structures: RPZ at ground level, below-grade filter equipment, and a new door and an electrical panel to control elements.
- These elements will be hidden by new landscaping and will have no visual impact on the public.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, Community Board 8 supports Central Park Conservancy's repairs to the Bethesda Fountain and Sculpture.

**Board Member Vote:** 6-0-0 Farber, Fink, Hershenson, Rudder, B. Schneider\*, J. Schneider

Diane Jackier then presented the need to address the lighting at Grand Army Plaza in the southern section of the park and immediately across from the park (Grand Army Plaza North and South). Grand Army Plaza is

currently under construction. The light poles need to be replaced, and the current historical light poles, which are maintained by the New York City Department of Transportation, are not approved by the New York City Department of Transportation (NYC DOT) due to maintenance issues with the photocells. As a result, CPC had to find different light poles to the greatest extent possible, while meeting the historic design considerations. The alternative lighting will provide improved illumination of the area and will spotlight the statues in Grand Army Plaza North and South.

**B) Approval for the installation of new lights at Grand Army Plaza North and South**

**WHEREAS** Central Park Conservancy presented new lighting poles for Grand Army Plaza North to light the statue of General Sherman; and

**WHEREAS** Central Park Conservancy presented new lighting poles for Grand Army Plaza South to light the Pulitzer Fountain and statue of Paloma on top; and

**WHEREAS** the lighting poles will be black powder-coated finish, 25 feet high, with a photocell at the top and a small control box; and

**WHEREAS** this change is required by NYC DOT, as they can no longer maintain the photocells on the existing poles;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, Community Board 8 supports the Central Park Conservancy's change in the lighting.

**Board Member Vote:** 6-0-0 Farber, Fink, Hershenson, Rudder, B. Schneider\*, J. Schneider

**Item 3: Report by Robert Mclean, NYC Parks, Regional Manager**

The Parks Department is working closely with the Hospital for Special Surgery to reopen the section of the East River Esplanade along East 71st to East 79th Streets. The Parks Department's Contractor completed work on the sinkholes at East 70th and East 71st Streets, and, in the course of doing the work, found another sinkhole. The additional sinkhole was also repaired.

Phase 3 work has been awarded to the low bidder, with a total construction duration of 4 years. The work will be done in increments to allow sections of the East River Esplanade to reopen when the work is completed.

**Item 4: Report by Shena Kaufman, NYC Parks, District Manager 8 & 15**

The Parks Department has completed the proposed design for the MPPA (multi-purpose play area) in Carl Schurz Park and will present the plan to the Community Board before the end of the year. Work is expected to begin next fall or winter of this year.

The SWPPP has been approved for Ruppert Park, and Bids for the construction are expected to be solicited by the end of this year or early next year. Construction is projected to begin at the end of next year (2026). The Parks Department is doing the design for the public restroom building. The design will take one year.

The Parks Department is in the process of obtaining the New York City Department of Buildings (DOB) approvals for St. Catherine's Park. This is a necessary step before procurement for construction can start. Construction of this project could begin at the end of next year, in 2026.

Council Member Menin provided additional funding to the Parks Department. Some of the funding was used to purchase a small power washer. Additional funding will be used for park beautification.

**Items 5 & 6: Old and New Business**

No items of Old Business or New Business were discussed.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:51 PM.

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