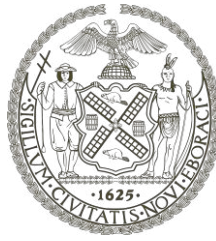


Valerie S. Mason
Chair

Ian McKnight
District Manager



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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Parks and Waterfront Committee
Thursday, February 12, 2026 - 6:30PM
Conducted remotely on Zoom.

MINUTES

Present: Bradley Hershenson, Rita Popper*, Judy Schneider, and Elaine Wrightman*.

**Public Member*

Approximate Number of Public Attendees: 18

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

Update regarding the “Resolution recommending that the Parks Department maintain the existing fence height of Ruppert Park”:

The best piece of news is that our resolution from last month was approved by the Parks Department, and the existing fencing will remain at Ruppert Park.

Item 1: Presentation on Seneca Village Commemoration located in Central Park by John Reddrick, Director of Community Engagement Projects, Central Park Conservancy.

- The Conservancy’s exploration and public engagement towards establishing a framework for permanent commemoration in Seneca Village is being funded through a grant from the Mellon Foundation.
- Seneca Village predates Central Park. It ran from East 82nd to 89th Streets on the west side from 8th Avenue (Central Park West) to 7th Avenue, aligning approximately where the current reservoir is located to the east side. Landowners and residents were displaced in 1857 when Central Park was built.
- There were approximately 250 residents, 52 structures, which included 3 churches, and a school, with 11 Black male voters derived based on their landownership.
- The 200th Anniversary was celebrated last year, at one of the village’s serving churches, Mother AME Zion Church in Harlem.
- Currently, there are no charge tours of Seneca Village available to educators. Just go to the Conservancy’s website to sign up at: <https://www.centralparknyc.org/activities/tours/seneca-village-educators-tour>

Item 2: Presentation on the NYC Central Park Reservoir Rehabilitation Project presented by NYC DEP Manhattan Borough Commissioner Marty Fatooh, Humberto Galarza, and James Carlese.

- Manhattan Borough Commissioner Martin Fatooh reported on Mayor Mamdani's announcement today that Lisa Garcia was named the new NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner.
- Humberto Galarza gave us some history of the Reservoir, which was constructed from 1858 to 1862 to store and provide potable water.
- It was decommissioned in 1993, but is still operated and owned by DEP. It is regulated by the State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).
- This project will rehabilitate the reservoir to meet DEC's dam safety regulations, including safe and reliable means of emergency drawdown.
- This project is a faithful restoration of the reservoir and the 3 gatehouses, which are all Landmarked. James Carlese, Account Manager, continued with a summary of the work around the reservoir and on the embankment wall, and 3 Gatehouses.
- They have been working with the Parks Department, Central Park Conservancy, and the Landmarks Preservation Commission.
- They can't get a formal letter of Permit from the Parks Department until there is a contractor on board.
- They will be working around the embankment to remove the tree roots, vegetation, stones, and concrete, which have seeped into the reservoir. They will reset the concrete and keep all of the concrete from gathering in the reservoir again. They will be lowering the water level by 5 feet while they are working.
- The gatehouses control the flow of the water in and out of the reservoir. Although the reservoir is not in use, it remains operational for safety and the mechanical systems that will be upgraded. The Landmark Architecture will be replaced.
- We were shown architectural drawings of Gate houses 1, 2, and 3. Windows, doors, balconies, and fencing, which are being replaced, and the work will meet code.
- There will be staging areas, but there will always be 3 feet along the bridal path for runners and cars to pass. The contractors will have 2 trailers further down.
- At gate house 3, the sewer line is being decommissioned, which leads to East 74 Street and 5th Avenue. The work will go through the ball field and will be at night, from November to February.
- The cost of the project is \$54 Million dollars. It will start at the end of 2026 or early 2027 and go through the fall of 2030. Most of the work will be from 7 am to 4 pm.
- Some of the Q &A:
 - Workers will be mindful of birds and wildlife, and they will not be working for more than 30 to 50 feet at a stretch.
 - If there is garbage in the reservoir, it should be reported to 311. DEP will be mindful of this issue.
 - Gate houses are for raising and lowering water. No one is on duty at the gate houses 24 hours a day. Although they are checked regularly.

- Gatehouse stonework will remain, but it will be cleaned.

Item 3: Report by Shena Kaufman, NYC Parks, District Manager 8 & 15.

- Shena's best piece of news is that last month's resolution to keep the existing fencing of 6' & 7' has been approved by the Parks Department. Everyone is overjoyed.
- St. Catherine's Park will have a new restroom when it is redone.
- 24 Sycamores Park bathrooms still are not working. Porter Potties are in place. Parks is working hard to get additional funding. Preliminary design should be done in June.
- Parks worked with Sanitation on cleaning the snow on the sidewalk, intersections, and hydrants.

Item 4: Report by Robert McLean, NYC Parks, Regional Manager.

- Reported on the Esplanade. There were 25 to 50 volunteers every other week from April to November.
- They worked from the East Midtown Greenway (EMG) at East 54th Street up to Andrew Haswell Green (AHG), with workers putting in 766 hours, and collecting 280 Bags of weeds and garbage.
- Worked on getting snow out of AHG.
- People asked about the Parks Enforcement Patrol Officers, who cover the Esplanade late at night. They are also at John Jay and Carl Schurz Parks during the day, dealing with dog issues.
- Additional Q & A:
 - Dogs barking late at night, call 311. There is a form that can be filled out, which can be obtained from the CB8 Office.
 - Lo van der Volk, President of Carnegie Hill Neighbors, told us how their group helped clean the snow off the upper Park Avenue Malls. We are very appreciative and offer our many thanks.

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 7:45 PM.

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