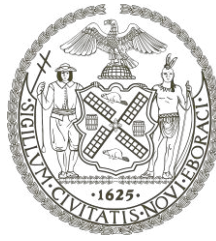


Valerie S. Mason
Chair

Ian McKnight
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, March 12, 2026 - 6:30PM
Conducted remotely on Zoom.

MINUTES

Present: Felice Farber, Miles Fink, Bradley Hershenson, Rita Popper*, Judy Schneider, and Elaine Wrightman*.

**Public Member*

Approximate Number of Public Attendees: 36

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

Item 1: Presentation on two temporary public art exhibitions on Park Avenue by artists Manolo Paz and Michele Oka Doner on Park Avenue. Presentation will be given by Elizabeth Masella, Senior Public Art Coordinator, NYC Parks' Art in the Parks program.

Elizabeth Masella presented two public art exhibitions on the Park Avenue Mall.

1. Michele Oka Doner, Talisman on Park Avenue between East 66th and East 67th Streets. This exhibit opened a few days ago and will be on view from March to October. The Talisman is hung from trees planted in a temporary “grove” of various tree species, supported by a temporary wooden platform.

The Talisman, which currently resides on Park Avenue, draws on both anthropological and mythic references to the inhabitants of our city, ancestral and current. They are Urban Fireflies, lighting up the night. They sway with breezes and move with the wind, like jazz riffs that create a rhythm of their own. Inhabiting a Scared Grove, seasonally bare in early spring, then sheltered in a leafy dome as summer ripens, Talisman will continue to change during their residency on Park Avenue Mall.

2. Manolo Paz, The Distance that Unites, will be on view from April through September on Park Avenue between East 60th and East 63rd Streets. Manolo Paz will showcase ten sculptures on Park Avenue, marking a major international milestone for the artist. This exhibition is a tribute to Paz's formative years living and working in New York and reflects his deep connection to the city. His work aims to transform inert matter into works of art, using both industrial materials like concrete and metal and natural elements like granite and wood.

Item 2: Update by Hospital for Special Surgery on Kellen Tower and Esplanade. Presented by Amy Nunziata and Jack Wong.

Jack Wong provided an update on the status of repairs and beautification in the East River Esplanade between East 70th and East 78th Streets.

He noted that the sinkholes on East 71st and East 74th Streets have been fully repaired.

East 70th–72nd Streets

- The Parks Department has completed the sinkhole repairs, and HSS has completed temporary paving and work on the ramp. A walkthrough with the Parks Department is scheduled for next week, and after the walkthrough, the area is expected to reopen to the public within the next week or two, including the East 71st Street ramp, with full turnover anticipated in May.
- A two-week shutdown is anticipated sometime in May to allow for finishing weather-dependent work such as painting.
- Signage throughout the area will be updated.

East 72nd–76th Streets

- DEP has completed repairs to the sinkhole.
- Utility lines are currently being run to the northern end of the site.
- Work includes a new coat of paint on the Con Edison building and replacement of the fence with a Department of Transportation (DOT) approved crash-resistant barrier.
- Drip irrigation lines are also being installed.

East 76th–78th Streets

- The Parks Department is working to complete sinkhole repairs and structural work on the seawall.
- Once the Parks Department contractor completes the structural repairs, the Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS) contractor will complete the above-ground beautification improvements, paver installation, and installation of gym equipment.
- The East 78th Street pedestrian bridge will be closed during HSS's work. The goal is to reopen the ramp in July after the work is completed.

Overall Project Timeline

- The full Esplanade is expected to reopen in October.

Item 3: Additional Update on the Esplanade. Presented by Aret Akbork of the Parks Department

East River Esplanade (ERE) – Phase 3 Update

- Aret Akbork of the Parks Department's Engineering Division provided an update on ERE Phase 3, which covers the sections at East 62nd–64th Streets, East 76th–81st Streets, and East 90th–94th Streets.
- The project will include inspection of all piles, with repairs performed where necessary. Work will also involve repairs to the seawall face and rehabilitation of deteriorated outfalls.

East 62nd–64th Streets and 90th–94th Streets

- These sections have similar conditions and will receive comparable repairs to the piles, seawall face, and outfalls.

East 76th–81st Streets

- This section consists of a concrete seawall.
- The granite blocks protecting the seawall have deteriorated, and Parks will repair or replace them where needed.
- Tidal movement has created voids behind the granite blocks, allowing underlying fill to wash away, which is the cause of the sinkholes.

Schedule and Construction Access

- The Order to Work date is April 13th.
- The contractor will begin work at East 76th–81st Streets to allow Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS) to follow with related improvements.
- Work in this section is expected to take 10–12 months.
- Construction access will primarily be from the water, and efforts will be made not to block public access to the esplanade.
- Work will start at East 76th Street and proceed north. Once work passes East 78th Street, HSS will be able to begin its above-grade improvements.
- HSS anticipates completing its work by October.

Project Team

- Parks Department Contractor for Structural Repairs: C.A.C. Industries
- HSS Contractor for Beautification: Padilla Construction

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

St. Catherine’s Park

- The project is expected to enter procurement in June.
- The project scope will be revised to accommodate the addition of a restroom.
- A concern was raised regarding the operation of the urinal in the park restroom. Sheena reported that a plumber will be coming to inspect and address the issue.

Ruppert Park

- The existing fence will remain the same height as per last month’s CB8 Resolution.
- The project is expected to go out to bid soon.

24 Sycamores Park

- Design is expected to be completed in June.
- Construction is anticipated to begin approximately one year later.

Item 5: Report by Robert McLean, NYC Parks, Regional Manager.

Last year, working with volunteers and interns, Robert McLean's team weeded every garden twice and the gardens by the stairs 3 times. He has an intern starting tomorrow who wants to be a horticulturist. This year, 100 volunteers will be working over 3 dates: May 21, June 2, and June 24th to weed and plant along the esplanade.

Additional groups of volunteers will be working on April 17, April 24, and mid-May.

Items 6: Old Business

No items of Old Business were discussed.

Item 7: New Business

Friends of the East River Esplanade (ERE)

- Maria Kessler has been appointed the new Executive Director of Friends of the East River Esplanade. She noted that Friends will be hosting live music events on April 19th, May 16th, and June 14th.

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

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