

MINUTES OF THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING

February 22, 2017 at the Riverdale Jewish Center, 3700 Independence Avenue

Attendees:

Committee: Bob Bender (chair), Sylvia Alexander, Eric Bell, Robert Fanuzzi, David Gellman, Marvin Goodman, Tao Moran, Amy Joy Robateau, Laura Spalter (CB8); Herb Barret, Christina Taylor (community committee members)

Absent: David Kornbluh

DPR: Iris Rodriguez-Rosa, Bronx Commissioner; David McConnell, Danny Su, Tim Rowe, Michelle Martell, Tony Rosa, Leenda Bonilla (Partnership for Parks)

Community: Valou Cohen; Peter Gauss, Pat Kenny, South Riverdale Little League; Daniel Johnson, Councilman Cohen's office; Karen Argenti, BCEQ; Cristina Lang, Sen. Klein's office; Debra Travis

Agenda:

The meeting began at 7:15. Minutes of the January 2017 meeting were approved unanimously.

The chair introduced Commissioner Rodriguez, who explained the purpose of the presentation that would be made at the meeting. She also said that DPR is embarking on a campaign to discourage littering in local parks. She then introduced David McConnell from Parks Capital Projects.

Renovation of Basketball Courts in Seton Park

David McConnell presented a proposal for renovating the basketball courts in Seton Park. There are one full court and one half-court, located in the back of the park, accessible via ramps or staircases. The staircases require repair. The courts require resurfacing. In addition, the water line to the fountain and the DPR maintenance office adjacent to the basketball court needs repair. Mr. McConnell presented a PowerPoint showing the current conditions.

A complete renovation would cost \$1.2 million. Currently DPR has \$210,000 from DASNY for the repairs. Elected officials would have to supply the additional \$1 million.

There was discussion about whether the half-court ought to be renovated or whether the space might be better used for some other purpose. The DPR representatives agreed to survey park users and study the way the half court is used before proceeding further with the renovation plans.

In related matters regarding Seton Park, Mr. McConnell reported that the ballfield renovation project is in procurement and construction could begin this fall. There was also discussion of the poor condition of the Seton Park dog run.

Discussion of Parks Resource Guide

Bob Fanuzzi and Christina Taylor offered an interim report on a possible parks resource guide. They suggested that the guide could list the location of local parks; identify user groups and contacts, such as “Friends of” groups or Green Thumb, Capacity Fund grants, and other DPR programs; identify local sports leagues, with the help of DPR’s Sports Licensing contact; and identify programs in local parks, such as tennis lessons, bicycle lessons, horseback riding, track clubs, and so forth. Bob and Christina thanked Leenda Bonilla of the Partnership for Parks for her assistance, and the committee members thanked Bob and Christina for their efforts. A final report on the parks resource guide will be forthcoming this spring.

Topics for the Joint Committee Meeting of Parks & Recreation and Environment & Sanitation

The chair circulated suggestions from the recent E&S meeting on this topic prior the committee meeting. Committee members discussed these topics at the meeting and decided on these three, which had also been identified by E&S committee members:

Bioswales and green infrastructure. Bob Bender and Laura Spalter will reach out to, respectively, DPR and DEC to find out what the criteria are for establishing green infrastructure projects such as bioswales in the community and will invite the proper representatives from these agencies to the April joint committee meeting to advise on installing green infrastructure.

Daylighting of Tibbetts Brook. What role does the DEP play with regard to daylighting in Van Cortlandt Park. Can anything be done to prepare for daylighting outside the park prior to the sale of the CSX property south of Van Cortlandt Park?

Jerome Park Reservoir perimeter. Where exactly is the line between DEP property and DPR property? What role does the Department of Sanitation play in cleaning and maintaining the area around the reservoir? There is an opportunity to establish community gardens on Sedgwick Avenue between Giles Place and Reservoir Avenue. Who is the right contact person for such an initiative?

Karen Argenti and Bob Fanuzzi offered to advise on these topics based on previous research.

Old Business

The chair reported that DPR hopes to have its revised SWPPP by the end of February.

DPR will return with a revised and possibly final design for the Parks without Borders project in VCP at the March meeting.

The committee will have to choose its May “It’s My Park” day project at the March meeting. After discussion, the two main candidates were identified, Tibbetts Tail and Fort Four playground. We will need a strong partner for whichever park we choose. Date and location will be determined at the March meeting.

Committee members were urged to try to attend the Bronx Parks Speak-Up on Saturday, Feb. 25.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.