

## Minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting, October 25, 2017

Fort Independence Community Center, 3350 Bailey Avenue

### Attendees:

Committee: Bob Bender (chair), Eric Bell, David Gellman, Daris Jackson, Tao Moran, Laura Spalter, CB8; Herb Barret, Christina Taylor, Community Committee Members

Absent: Robert Fanuzzi, Marvin Goodman

DPR: Bronx Commissioner Iris Rodriguez-Rosa, Margot Perron, Patricia Ferguson, Tony Rosa, David Calderon, Constantinos Mitsotakis

Community: Chris Rizzo (FVCP), David Kornbluh (Sen. Klein's office), Daniel Ranells (Transportation Alternatives), Roxanne Parets, L.R. Stevens, Patricia Lasko, Flo Baldasare, Toni Butler, Barbara Velez, Stacey Wieder, Belinda Hauck, Trevor Welsh, Michele March, Joanne Snack, Edward Maldì, Susan Brenner

### Agenda:

The meeting began at approximately 7:10 pm. Minutes of the September meeting were unanimously approved.

#### Discussion of Proposed Entrance to VCP at W. 261<sup>st</sup> St.

Commissioner Rodriguez-Rosa returned to the committee to show a design for the proposed new entrance to Van Cortlandt Park. It features formal plantings and three benches. Residents again complained about current conditions in this area, specifically late-night noise, barbecuing, drinking and drug use, and in one instance, a large gathering with a tent. FVCP chair Chris Rizzo argued that attracting people to the new entrance will help with these problems, based on the proven principle that good uses of a park drive out bad uses. There was general agreement that the NYPD needs to do more to monitor this area.

After much discussion it was agreed that DPR should go ahead with its proposed new entrance but that the area will be monitored both for ongoing problems and also to see whether the introduction of the new benches causes additional problems. The committee passed the following resolution:

Whereas representatives of the Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR) appeared before the Parks & Recreation Committee of Bronx Community Board 8 at its September and October meetings to present a plan for a new entrance to Van Cortlandt Park at Broadway and West 261st Street, which will consist of formal plantings and new benches, and will offer better access to trails in the northern portion of the park; and

Whereas those representatives responded to questions from nearby residents concerning potential improper and illegal uses of the area and possible excessive noise; and

Whereas City Council member Andrew Cohen and the Friends of Van Cortlandt Park support the proposed entrance; and

Whereas the entrance is identified in the Van Cortlandt Park Master Plan 2034, which has been endorsed by the committee and the community board;

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Parks & Recreation Committee of Bronx Community Board 8 supports the proposed entrance to the park as presented to the committee and will review with DPR and nearby residents the success of the design after a reasonable period of time has passed.

In favor: 8 (Bell, Bender, Gellman, Jackson, Moran, Spalter, CB8; Barret, Taylor, Community Committee Members)

Opposed: 0

Abstain: 0

#### Discussion of Parks Inspection Reports

Prior to the meeting the chair sent Parks Manager Tony Rosa a copy of the 2016-2017 parks inspection reports turned in by committee members. Mr. Rosa will read them and send his response to the committee. There was brief discussion of outstanding items from the previous year's inspections.

#### Discussion of Parks Resource Guide

The chair passed along comments from CB8 officers and Lisa Daub, who is overseeing the resource guides on behalf of the board. The committee agreed that these comments were helpful. The chair will follow up with Ms. Daub.

#### Reports on the Borough Budget Consultation Meeting

The chair reported briefly on the borough budget consultation meeting with DPR in late September. The chair, budget chair David Gellman, and board chair Rosemary Ginty attended. A report was sent to the board after the meeting, which the chair will forward to committee members.

#### Discussion of Parks Department's Street Planting Initiative

Pursuant to Local Law 1112-A, DPR is required to report on tree maintenance work throughout the city. It will be possible to learn about upcoming and recently completed tree work done by DPR's forestry division at a new Forestry Tracker link on the DPR website. That link is expected to become active sometime in November.

#### Topics for Future Meetings

The chair encouraged committee members to propose topics for discussion at future meetings.

The November meeting date has been moved from Nov. 22 to Nov. 29 to avoid the Thanksgiving holiday. This meeting will be devoted to the topic of "How to Start – and Sustain – a 'Friends of Park Group.'" Guests will include Councilman Cohen, Commissioner Rodriguez-Rosa, and four panelists who have started or sustained a local parks group.

### New Business

The annual Veterans' Day ceremony will be held at the VCP Memorial Grove on Sunday, Nov. 5 at noon.

DPR is sponsoring a planting day at Riverdale Park on Sunday, Dec. 3 from 9 am to 1 pm. Meet at Palisade Ave & W. 232 St.

The chair congratulated Christina Taylor on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Friends of Van Cortlandt Park (FVCP).

Laura Spalter thanked Tony Rosa for providing mulch for Endor Garden.

Laura Spalter announced the press event taking place on Thursday Oct. 26 with CSX to congratulate the company on its recent clean-up of the "Putnam South" area from Van Cortlandt Ave. South to W. 230<sup>th</sup> St.

### Old Business

Toni Butler and Barbara Velez, residents who live directly across Broadway from the VCP Parade Ground, thanked everyone involved in managing traffic so successfully on Saturday, Oct. 14, the busiest cross-country meet of the fall season. In particular, DPR and NYPD performed outstandingly. Committee member David Gellman and resident Susan Brenner spent the day helping to manage traffic.

Both residents said, however, that the weekday events continue to cause serious traffic problems and must be addressed. There was agreement that what happened on Oct. 14 shows what is possible, and we have to mobilize DPR and the 50<sup>th</sup> Pct. to address the weekday problems too.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:30.

Bob Bender, Chair  
Parks & Recreation Committee