

## BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

### MINUTES OF THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD JANUARY 23, 2013 AT THE BOARD OFFICE

#### **Attendees:**

Committee members: Bob Bender (chair), Laura Spalter (vice chair), Robert Press, Rosemary Ginty, Marvin Goodman, Damian McShane, Mike Heller, Robert Fanuzzi, CB8; Herb Barret, Memorial Grove; Christina Taylor, FVCP

DPR: Margot Perron, Benjamin Kramer, Richard Chen, VCP; Laura Hernandez

Others: Catherine O'Brien Young, John Manning, Deb Dolan, Matt Turov, Virginia Scott, Ruth Kraus, VCP Nature Group; Shelley Keeling, resident; Miawling Lam, Riverdale Review; Andrew Sandler, Councilman Koppell's office; Michael Blaustein, Senator Klein's office

The meeting began at 7:05 pm. Minutes of the November meeting were unanimously approved.

#### **Van Cortlandt Park Nature Group**

Deb Dolan spoke on behalf of the Van Cortlandt Park Nature Group. Organized about a year ago, this group encourages enjoyment of the park and advocates for the park's natural resources: trees, birds, etc. "Nature must be given paramount concern in the park." The group works with other groups such as the Audubon Society, Friends of Van Cortlandt Park, VCP Conservancy, etc. There are approximately 20-30 members, according to Ms. Dolan.

Margot Perron said that the group will be invited to participate in the ongoing VCP Master Plan process.

Robert Press asked whether the group could comment on effects of the filtration plant on the natural resources of the park. There was some discussion of what these effects might be.

The Chair welcomed the group and encouraged them to send a representative to committee meetings.

#### **Street Tree Planting**

Laura Hernandez of DPR's Bronx Forestry division addressed the committee on street-tree plantings and the Million Trees project. She said that so far 220,000 street trees have been planted under this project, while another 400,000 have been planted by homeowners and others on private property. Greenblock consultation is a process in which DPR assesses an entire block for tree planting. It requires a group to take

responsibility for caring for these trees. The recent tree plantings on Riverdale Avenue in north Riverdale are an example of the Greenblock program. Approximately 150 street trees were planted in CB8 in 2012. 50 locations have been identified for planting in the spring 2013 cycle. Trees are planted by contractors who are responsible for those trees for two years. Trees come from private nurseries; approximately 100 species are approved for planting.

Ms. Hernandez advised that DPR has a stewardship program open to the community that will instruct residents on how to plant and care for trees. (Additional information can be found at the Partnership for Parks website.)

Ms. Hernandez explained that because street trees are planted on city property, they can be planted in front of buildings without the consent of the owners or residents if the site is deemed suitable. This is not unlike other obligations that property owners have to the larger community (e.g., sidewalk maintenance).

Among the locations scheduled for planting in the spring are portions of Mosholu Avenue near Broadway. Cannon Place had been considered but will have to await completion of the DDC retaining wall project.

The committee discussed various locations that it hopes DPR will consider for Greenblock consultation. Among those locations identified by committee members are:

- \*Bailey Place between Bailey Avenue and Fort Independence Street
- \*Heath Avenue between Summit Place and Albany Crescent (Ms. Hernandez indicated that this block is currently under consideration)
- \*Albany Crescent between W. 231 St and Bailey Avenue
- \*W. 197<sup>th</sup> St between Sedgwick Avenue and Webb Avenue
- \*The south side of W. 255 St. between Mosholu Avenue and Fieldston Road
- \*W. 230<sup>th</sup> Street from Broadway to Johnson Avenue
- \*W. 225<sup>th</sup> Street west of Broadway
- \*W. 240<sup>th</sup> Street west of Broadway
- \*Tibbett Avenue south of W. 230<sup>th</sup> Street

These locations are being forwarded to Ms. Hernandez for consideration.

### **“Friends of” Update**

The Chair and Vice Chair updated the committee on the proposed Friends of Vinmont Park and said that enough people have been identified that a date and time for an organizational meeting will be set.

The Chair reported that he had exchanged emails with residents who want to be involved in a Friends of Ewen Park group. He suggested that these residents be contacted when DPR plans its design presentation for the Ewen Park basketball court/tot lot project so that the meeting can also be used to organize and energize the group. Mike Heller, who lives near Ewen Park, agreed to contact neighbors in his building about the Friends of Ewen Park.

The Chair suggested that the committee consider Ewen Park for this spring's "It's My Park Day" activity. Further discussion of this subject will take place at next month's meeting.

### **Miscellaneous Business**

Margot Perron reported that the VC Ice Rink is currently on plan, with expenses and revenues approximately as anticipated. She said that the most recent Master Plan meeting focused on the Stadium area and what might be done with the rink area during the warm-weather months. There will be a February 12 fund-raiser for the VCP Conservancy at the rink.

The Chair reported that in consultation with Board Chair Bob Fanuzzi and the CB8 office, he wrote to Bronx Parks Commissioner Hector Aponte to express frustration that there was no notification from DPR to CB8 in advance to explain that there would be no Christmas tree lighting ceremony at the Monument. Andrew Sandler said that so far as he was aware, no local elected officials were notified either.

The Chair reported that at the most recent Croton Filtration Monitoring Committee (CFMC) meeting, DPR reported that it seems to have a qualified bidder for the Jerome Park reservoir/Ft. Independence park renovation project that the committee considered in its design phase a few years ago. DPR will come back to the committee to discuss operational (not design) matters at a future meeting.

Christina Taylor reminded committee members that the Bronx Speak-Up takes place on February 23 at Lehman College. On April 14 FVCP will sponsor a tree giveaway at the FVCP Compost Site near the stable. The Friends are looking for volunteers to do trail maintenance on Saturdays from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in March until June.

The Chair and Mr. Sandler agreed to renew efforts to urge DPR to move forward with renovation of the grassy area in Seton Park.

Marvin Goodman asked that attention be given to the area between Phyllis Post Goodman Park and the Henry Hudson Parkway, which he said is deteriorating. The Chair promised to bring this matter to the attention of park manager Tannise Palmer.

Herb Barret asked what has happened to the flag that flew over David Sheridan Plaza at the intersection of Broadway and Mosholu Avenue. There was discussion of this matter and the Chair agreed to ask DPR to investigate and to replace the flag.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40PM. The next committee meeting will take place on February 27.

Bob Bender  
Chair  
Parks & Recreation Committee