

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

HELD ON APRIL 27, 2016

AT RIVERDALE NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE, 5521 MOSHOLU AVE.

Attendees:

Committee Members: Bob Bender (chair), Robert Fanuzzi, Marvin Goodman, Amy Joy Robateau, Laura Spalter (CB8); Christina Taylor (Community Committee Member)

Absent: Sylvia Alexander, David Gellman, Arturo Guzman; Herb Barret

Other CB8: Dan Padernacht, Joe O'Brien

DPR: Margot Perron, Will Harris, David McConnell, Michael Ortiz, Bryan Cantwell, Colleen Anderson, Antonios Michelakis,

Guests: David Lynch, Laura Lynch (both Kelly Ryan's); Julia Gordian, Pat Kolakiewick, Jim Block, Rob Spalter, Laurie Hogan, Leslie Hogan, I.C. Levenberg-Engel, Patsy Smyth, Latonia Almenda, Joshua Stephenson (CM Cohen's office), Gene McGloin, Sheila Berger, Sarah Thompson Moore (both Model to Monument), Markus Holtby, Cristina Lang (Sen. Klein's office)

Agenda:

The meeting began at 7:05 pm.

Request for Waiver of 30-Day Notification for Renewal of NYSLA License

The committee agreed to hear a request from Kelly Ryan's for waiver of the requirement for 30-day notification to the community board of a liquor license renewal, due to unusual circumstances. Because this was the first committee meeting scheduled after the request was received, the board chair asked to put this item on the committee agenda, and the committee chair agreed.

Joe O'Brien, chair of the Public Safety Committee, introduced Mr. Lynch of Kelly Ryan's, who explained the unusual circumstances. According to Mr. Lynch, Kelly Ryan's request for renewal of its liquor license was intercepted in the mail at some point. Kelly Ryan's was sent a phony license renewal, but information in the license renewal application was used by someone to make credit-card purchases. Kelly Ryan's was unaware of all this until it was notified that its liquor license had lapsed, at which point it learned of the scam and chose to close rather than operate without a liquor license. Mr. Lynch said that the matter is currently under investigation by the NYPD.

A copy of the original license renewal application was provided to the committee prior to the meeting.

After some discussion of the circumstances by committee members, Laura Spalter urged that the committee grant the waiver, saying that Kelly Ryan's had proved to be a community-minded neighbor. Bob Bender seconded those remarks. The committee agreed unanimously to approve the waiver.

Resolution from the Parks & Recreation Committee

Whereas Kelly Ryan's is a well-known pub located at 5790 Mosholu Avenue; and

Whereas Kelly Ryan's was required as part of its application for a renewal of its liquor license to provide notice of its application to the community board 30 days in advance of application; and

Whereas Kelly Ryan's representative appeared before this committee at its April 27, 2016 meeting to inform the committee that it had sent its form to the community board as required and that this form along with other forms sent to the NY State Liquor Authority had been intercepted in the mail; and

Whereas Kelly Ryan's representative informed the committee that it had been the victim of a scam in which information contained in its application had been used illegally and that this information has been reported to the NYPD; and

Whereas Kelly Ryan's liquor license has now expired, causing the pub to close down; and

Whereas Kelly Ryan's has re-applied for license renewal and has requested from the community board a waiver of the 30-day notice because of the urgency of its situation; and

Whereas the community board agreed to hear Kelly Ryan's request at its next committee meeting, which was the April 27, 2016 Parks & Recreation Committee meeting; and

Whereas committee members reviewed the application provided by Kelly Ryan's and found the explanation offered by its representative credible; and

Whereas committee members spoke favorably about Kelly Ryan's contributions to the community; and

Whereas the 50th Precinct reports no complaints against Kelly Ryan's; therefore

Be It Resolved that the Parks & Recreation Committee recommends waiving the 30-day advance notice requirement for Kelly Ryan's application to renew its liquor license.

In favor: B. Bender, R. Fanuzzi, M. Goodman, A.J. Robateau, L. Spalter (CB8); C. Taylor (CCM)

Opposed: none

Abstain: none

Design Presentation for New Playground in Van Cortlandt Park

William Harris and Dave McConnell of DPR presented the design of a new playground to be located at Broadway and Mosholu Ave in Van Cortlandt Park. This is an open area near the stables, part of which is currently used for a cricket practice pitch, and much of which is open area. The playground will be located in the open area closest to Broadway. Funding has been provided by Councilman Cohen and Sen. Klein. The playground is a “tot lot” intended for 2-5 year olds.

Mr. Harris and Mr. McConnell explained that the playground has been sited to preserve the trees that line Broadway and the Mosholu Ave extension into the park. This extension leads to parking lots for city agencies and the salt shed that is used by the Dept. of Sanitation. There will be two pathways to the playground from Broadway. The playground will be surrounded by a three-foot-high fence. There is no comfort station, but one is located a short distance away on Rockwood Drive, behind the stables. Signage will be installed to direct people to the restroom.

The playground will include climbing nets similar to those in Washington Square Park as well as climbing mounds that will provide a “non-standard” play experience. For example, a slide in the park will be accessed not via a ladder but via an adjacent mound. The mounds will be approximately 3 ½ feet high. There will be 8 swings. Safety surfaces will be installed underneath the swings and the climbing nets. Benches will be installed. There will be a spray shower (a water line will have to be installed to make this possible). The site is naturally shaded by the nearby trees. The playground will likely be locked by the borough staff. If funds are sufficient, a natural (unpaved) pathway will be built to connect the playground to the nearby John Muir trail.

DPR anticipates a construction timeline of one year following approvals by the community board and Public Design Commission, and the completion of the usual bidding process. Construction will likely begin in the fall of 2017.

There was much discussion of the playground design by those in attendance. Following the discussion, the DPR representatives agreed to return to the committee in May to respond to concerns that were raised, principally regarding the amount of artificial vs. natural turf in the playground; the size of the playground vs. the open space in the area; and what sort of lighting will be included in the playground.

Minutes of the March meeting were unanimously approved.

Design Presentation by the Art Students' League for Public Art in Van Cortlandt Park

Sarah Thompson Moore and colleagues presented the 2016 Van Cortlandt Park public art project, entitled "Air." It will be an 18-foot-high pyramid of perforated Cor-Ten steel (on top of the existing 3-foot-high base) that will include two sets of chimes, one atop the other, inside the pyramid. The chimes will sound as wind blows through the perforations on the pyramid. The sculpture is intended to remind visitors of the importance of the air that we breathe.

Committee members commented favorably on the art project and approved it unanimously.

Discussion of Tibbetts Brook Daylighting and Putnam Trail Right-of-Way Acquisition

Colleen Anderson and Antonios Michelakis discussed the status of the acquisition of the Putnam Trail Right-of-Way outside VCP. They noted that DCAS (the Department of Citywide Acquisition Services) and CSX Corp. have been in discussion about the Putnam Trail right-of-way from Van Cortlandt Park South to W. 230th Street, since 2011, when the ULURP for acquisition was approved. CSX owns the rights and at issue is a trail easement. CSX and the city have placed differing valuations on the property and for this reason the negotiations are ongoing. Funding comes from the remediation funds that were approved in exchange for the construction of the Croton Filtration Plant in VCP. (This issue has been discussed frequently in the CF Monitoring Committee meetings.) The city hopes eventually to acquire the rights to construct the trail, extending it from Van Cortlandt Park and connecting to greenways on the Hudson and Harlem rivers.

As part of this project, Tibbetts Brook, which currently empties into Van Cortlandt Lake, might be daylighted along the trail. Eventually this water, which now empties in the city sewer system, would have to discharge into the Harlem River, as it historically did, but that would require tunneling under the Metro-North Hudson Line tracks. DEP would have to conduct an extensive study for such a project and no plans for the project exist at present.

Committee members asked what can be done to move the acquisition process forward. Ms. Anderson said that it will take broad-based community advocacy to advance the process. Christina Taylor of Friends of Van Cortlandt Park noted that such an advocacy campaign has begun.

"It's My Park" Day Discussion

The chair noted that an equal number of committee members expressed a preference for Tibbett's Tail and for Washington's Walk for this year's "It's My Park" Day project. Outreach was made to representatives of "friends" groups for both parks. Al Chapman of Kingsbridge Heights Neighborhood Improvement Association responded enthusiastically and promised volunteers to

assist with the project at Washington's Walk. It was agreed that May 14 would be a good date for the project. DPR outreach coordinator Leenda Bonilla approved the project and will provide equipment.

It's My Park Day – Saturday, May 14, 10 am to 3 pm, Washington's Walk, Reservoir Avenue

Park Inspection and Budget Priorities

Because of the lateness of the hour, these items were postponed to the May 25 committee meeting. The chair thanked those members of the committee who have sent their park inspection forms.

New Business/Old Business

Margot Perron reported on a request from Affinity Health Care Group for a community activity day to be held in Van Cortlandt Park. Affinity contacted the community board to request support for the activity. Ms. Perron indicated that Affinity expected as many as 8,000 to 10,000 people to participate. Discussion of the fees required to hold such an event is ongoing and it is not clear at present whether the event will take place. The chair will follow up with Ms. Perron.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Bob Bender, Chair
Parks & Recreation Committee