

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARKS & RECREATION

COMMITTEE

HELD ON MAY 25, 2016

AT THE RIVERDALE YM-YWHA, 5625 ARLINGTON AVE.

(pending committee approval)

Attendees:

Committee: Bob Bender (chair), Robert Fanuzzi, David Gellman, Marvin Goodman, Laura Spalter, CB8; Herb Barret, Christina Taylor, Community Committee Members

Absent: Sylvia Alexander, Arturo Guzman, Amy Joy Robateau

DPR: Margot Perron, David McConnell, Bryan Cantwell, Will Harris, Tony Rosa, Dennis Burton, Mike Ortiz

Others: I C L'Engel

Agenda:

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm.

Minutes of the April meeting were unanimously approved.

Design Presentation for Tot Lot Playground in Van Cortlandt Park

Will Harris, Dave McConnell, and Bryan Cantwell returned to the committee following last month's presentation with modifications to the design as requested by committee members. The size of the tot lot has been reduced from 21,000 square feet to 16,000 sq ft and the amount of synthetic turf has been reduced from 5000 sq ft to 3000 sq ft. No healthy trees will be removed other than perhaps a few saplings. New trees will be planted. The playground will take up one acre of a five-acre open space in the triangle between Broadway, the Mosholu driveway into the park, and the stables.

The number of entrances to the playground from Broadway has been reduced from two to one.

In response to committee members' comments, the Parks Department will reevaluate whether the number of lights in the park can be reduced. Light pollution outside the park is unlikely because these lights will be lower intensity than existing streetlights on Broadway. The designers also agreed to use perennial plantings at the playground entrance to minimize maintenance requirements.

The designers requested that the committee endorse the design in preparation for their presentation to the Public Design Commission. A vote was taken and the design was approved unanimously, 7-0-0.

Park Inspection Reports

The chair noted that 12 inspection reports had been received. Thanks to Sylvia Alexander, Herb Barret, Bob Bender, Suzanne Corber, Robert Fanuzzi, David Gellman, Rosemary Ginty, Laura Spalter, and Christina Taylor for their reports.

There were numerous maintenance issues noted in these parks. The most serious matters were disrepair of the Palisade Avenue sidewalk at Riverdale Park, disrepair of the W. 232 St sidewalk at Ewen Park, and broken pathways in several parks (Ewen, Brust, Spuyten Duyvil, Hackett, most notably). The chair will forward the inspection reports to parks manager Tony Rosa.

Mr. Rosa mentioned that he may be able to get equipment and personnel to dig out the dog run at Ewen Park, where the downslope fence has been compromised by the accumulation of leaf litter and other debris.

Budget Priorities

Committee members reviewed last year's budget priorities and discussed these and possible new priorities with the assistance of Mr. Rosa and Mike Ortiz from the borough office. Following the discussion, the committee identified these priorities:

Capital

1. Construction of a new restroom and related plumbing repairs in Fort four Park, plus required maintenance. DPR estimates the cost as somewhat in excess of \$3 million. Because this has been the committee's top priority for several years and

because this park is on the border between council districts, it was suggested that the committee ask Councilmen Cohen and Cabrera to make funding the restroom a priority.

2. Redesign and reconstruction of Bailey Avenue playground. DPR estimates the cost at \$5.36 million.
3. Construction of a restroom at Broadway and W. 251st in Van Cortlandt Park, adjacent to the Parade Grounds.
4. Construction of a pond wall at Spuyten Duyvil Park to prevent water runoff from the pond onto the roadway of the parking lot at the adjacent Metro-North station.
5. Erosion control measures in Ewen Park to prevent runoff downhill toward Riverdale Avenue. It was noted that the slope is used for sledding in the winter and that this should be considered if and when erosion-control measures are undertaken.
6. Reconstruction of the steps on the historic south side entrance to the Van Cortlandt House Museum.
7. Resurfacing of the basketball courts in Seton Park.
8. Renovation of Van Cortlandt Park stadium.
9. Renovation of the Strong Street playground.

Expense priorities are as follows:

1. Personnel sufficient for maintenance, especially of lawns and landscaped areas, and enforcement in CB8 parks, especially on weekends and times of high use.
2. Purchase of a small tractor such as a Toro or John Deere and accompanying trailer to aid in regular maintenance of CB8 parks.
3. One stump grinder and one replacement tractor for Van Cortlandt Park.
4. Increased horticultural personnel to assist in maintaining Greenstreets. (Several Greenstreets in need of attention were identified by vice chair Laura Spalter.)

These priorities were approved unanimously.

New Business

The chair thanked committee members Laura Spalter and Amy Joy Robateau for their participation in “It’s My Park” Day on May 14. In addition, the committee thanks Sergio Villaverde for his participation.

Van Cortlandt Park was one of the eight winners of the Parks without Borders citywide competition. The entrance to the park at Broadway and W. 242 St will be reconfigured to be more welcoming and attractive. This project will go through the normal review for capital projects, beginning with a scoping meeting. Details to come.

Margot Perron reported that the Parks Department has granted a permit to Affinity Health Care for a community health fair on June 25 from noon to 5 pm. The location will be two of the baseball fields behind Van Cortlandt Stadium.

The CB8 office received information from the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) that the pedestrian bridge over the Major Deegan Expressway in Van Cortlandt Park is in design procurement. A final design is expected in December, 2017 and construction is expected to begin in July 2018.

The meeting adjourned at 9 pm.