

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

MINUTES OF THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON FEBRUARY 24, 2010 2010

Attendees:

Community Board Committee Members: Bob Bender, Karen Pesce, Tom Durham, Yael Levy, Rosemary Ginty

Community Committee Members: Lynn Schwarz, FIPNA

Department of Parks & Recreation: Emilio Llopiz, Shirley Echevarria

Other Community Attendees: Russell Lowe, Rita Lowe, Ed Lowe

Agenda

The meeting began at 7:05 pm.

The minutes of the January meeting were approved.

Old Business

Van Cortlandt Park Parade Grounds - No change since the January meeting. Test pits to determine the source of the sub-surface water can't be dug until the surface is dry. Total permits for baseball and softball fields will decline when the Parade Grounds reopen because of the reduction from six to four fields. There are two fields at the north end in the unfunded "Phase 3" area. They will need backstops and fencing before they can be used. It may cost \$50,000 per field to install backstops and fencing. Soccer fields are reduced from seven to six, but one of the fields was previously unusable so there will be no net loss.

Riverfest - Yael Levy reported that the event will be held on Sunday, June 13 from 1 to 5 pm at the College of Mt. St. Vincent. It is intended to celebrate the Hudson River and call attention to the Hudson River Valley Greenway, which is in a study phase in the Bronx. There will be entertainment and educational activities. Several committees have been organized to plan the event and volunteers are welcome.

Ft. Independence Park basketball courts - Shirley Echevarria reported that the proposed locks for the courts have been approved, and the next step is to fabricate the locks on site. This can't be done until the weather improves. The committee urged that this work be made a priority.

Bob Bender reported that he has received comments from community residents praising DPR for placing bales of hay at the bottom of the hill in Ewen Park to prevent sleds from crashing into the benches or sliding out onto the sidewalk and street. Shirley Echevarria reported that the hay comes from the VC equestrian stables and is subject to availability.

Tom Durham asked about a metal band on a retaining wall in Brust Park that interferes with sledding for toddlers and youngsters. Ms. Echevarria said she would investigate to see whether the metal band can be removed or buried.

New Business

Russell Lowe presented his proposal for a memorial in Seton Park to Bronx service members who have been killed in Iraq or Afghanistan. So far 12 Bronx residents have lost their lives in these wars. His presentation included repainting benches and fences, adding benches, painting a flag design on the pavement, installing a commemorative plaque, and other details. The proposal is part of Mr. Lowe's service requirement for his Boy Scout eagle award.

The committee applauded his well-thought-out and ably presented project. Ms. Echevarria explained parks regulations that would affect the proposal. The plaque would require review by DPR and other agencies, and this process could take years. However, painting of the benches and fences can be done so long as DPR-approved paint is used. Ms. Echevarria can arrange for the paint if Mr. Lowe can find volunteers. Minor repairs to the pavement can be made, but painting a flag design would require DPR approval. Benches can be added if they conform to standard DPR design and if funding can be secured.

Mr. Lowe agreed to provide the volunteers to re-paint benches and to conduct a ceremony, provided that he applies for and receives a special-event permit. The painting will be done on April 24, which is the day scheduled by DPR for tree planting in Seton Park. The ceremony, which would include a banner, flag, and Boy Scout color guard, would tentatively take place on May 8.

Bob Bender mentioned that Saturday, February 27 is the date of the annual Bronx Parks Speak-Up. (The event was subsequently postponed because of the Feb. 25-26 snowstorm and will be rescheduled.)

Next meeting will be Wednesday, March 24.

The meeting adjourned at 8 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bob Bender
Chairman
Parks & Recreation Committee