



CICELY HARRIS
Chairperson

SHATIC MITCHELL
District Manager

CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10
215 West 125th Street, 4th Floor
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PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MINUTES
Wednesday, February 10th, 2021, 6:30PM
Hon. Karen Horry, Chair

Meeting began at 6:30 pm and was held via Zoom link.

The meeting was chaired by Hon. Karen Horry, Committee Chair.

Committee Members in Attendance: Chair, Hon. Karen Horry, Hon. Barbara Nelson, Hon. Marcus Wilson, Hon. Terri Wisdom, Hon. Karen Dixon and Hon. Tahanie Aboushi and Hon. Kevin Bitterman

Committee Members Absent: Hon. Derek Perkinson, Hon. Deborah Gilliard and Hon. Nadine Pinkett

Board Members Present: - Hon. Donna Gill, Hon. Shanelle Washington and Board Chair Hon. Cecily Harris

District Office: District Manager Shatic Mitchell, Juanita Anderson (Community Associate) and Jasmin Heatley (Community Assistant)

Guests in attendance: Shena Kaufman (District 9 Manager - NYC Parks), Dana Mondesire, Lane Addonizio (Central Park Conservancy - Sr. VP Planning), Susan Rodriguez (Susan T. Rodriguez Architecture Design PLLC), Abena Smith, Dolina Duzant, Christine Hotz, Falgani Smith (Central Park Conservancy), Jana LaSorte (Administrator, Historic Parks -NYC Parks), Jessica Sain-Baird (Central Park Conservancy), Sonia Flamberg (Susan T. Rodriguez Architecture Design PLLC) Gregory Baggett (A. Philip Randolph Square), Amy Maresko (Susan T. Rodriguez Architecture Design PLLC)

I. Welcome/Introductions

II. Presentations

- A. *Central Park Conservancy Harlem Meer-Lasker Pool Reconstruction (Revised Design Plans)*
Lasker Pool is located in Central Park at West 110th Street and is the 5th largest pool in the city. Systemic problems, including serious flaws in the original engineering, have plagued the existing Meer-Lasker facility since its construction in 1966. The building severed the Ravine landscape and Loch watercourse from the Harlem Meer. Water running from the Loch into the Meer was redirected through a culvert (a tunnel that carries water around Lasker beneath the ground), which has resulted in regular flooding throughout the years. The reconstruction project will remove this barrier so the watercourse that runs through the ravine will once again flow overland into the Meer, instead of being diverted into a culvert behind the pool and rink building. The path beside the watercourse will be re-established, restoring the lost pedestrian connection and view through Huddleston Arch toward the



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historic landscape. The project team's design calls for the new recreational facility to be shifted to the eastern portion of the site rather than straddling the middle, with the pool house built into a slope in the topography. In connection with plans to replace the failing pool and rink at the Harlem Meer, the project reviewed by the community boards in Fall 2019 and approved by the public design commission in March 2020 included work to naturalize the adjacent Meer shoreline, introduce freshwater marsh plantings, and construct a boardwalk to facilitate access to the Meer for nature-based exploration and recreation. CB 10 passed a resolution to support the project in October 2019.

As originally proposed, the boardwalk would form a loop through a freshwater marsh and around a series of small islands in the portion of the Meer adjacent to the new pool and rink. New marshland plantings would be concentrated in the portion of the Meer near the facility, and the existing island (which was built in the 1990s by the Central Park Conservancy in an effort to screen the existing facility from view as well as provide wildlife habitat) would be replaced with a series of smaller islands.

Based on dialogue with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) — which has jurisdiction over the Meer as a regulated waterbody of the state — the Conservancy has developed an alternative design for the boardwalk and marshland plantings. In the revised design, instead of constructing the boardwalk within the Meer, portions of the existing path along the southern edge of the Meer will be replaced by boardwalk through a naturalized shoreline condition. The existing path in this location is not original (it was added on fill in the mid-1940s as part of the redevelopment of the Meer under Parks Commissioner Robert Moses). The new design represents a lighter touch to achieve the objectives of diversifying and enhancing habitat, improving water quality, and increasing the opportunities for nature-based recreation available to the community.

A fish rescue from the Meer will be conducted under the supervision of the DEC, (as required whenever work is performed in a waterbody), involving relocation of fish to the unaffected portion of the Meer. The project also warrants the removal of 51 trees in the interest of restoring the landscape and building the new facility into the topography. 130 trees will be planted in the newly restored landscape. Access plans are being developed in collaboration with DOT and MTA to mitigate presence of construction vehicles' impact on buses and traffic in the area.



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Project timeline will remain the same. The Conservancy and the New York City Parks anticipate that groundbreaking will take place in spring 2021. Construction is expected to be completed in 2024.

Outcome: Committee recommended drafting of a resolution to support the revised design plans.

III. **Discussions:**

- A. *Harlem River Park Academic Waterfront Study Area* - A tide deck is an engineered rocky salt marsh created to provide an immersive and educational river ecology experience for Park patrons not to mention a supportive environment for wildlife. NYC Parks advises that there is an existing structure located along the shoreline between 142nd and 143rd Streets inside of the Harlem River Park that can be refurbished to function as a tide deck. NYC Parks' Engineering Department is exploring a scope of work; a timeline of investigation is pending further information from Parks.
- B. *Proposal: Jackie Robinson Pool Upgrade to Promote Year - Round Use As a Winter Ice Skating Rink and Summer Pool.* Harlem's Jackie Robinson Outdoor Pool, measuring 235 x 82 feet, was designed by architects Aymar Embury II and Harry Ahrens to accommodate 4,090 bathers at a time. Ice skating has many health and wellness benefits and is a great venue for outdoor exercise during the winter months. "Ice Hockey In Harlem" (IHH) uses the sport of hockey to engage students and improve their self-esteem, while also providing a safe after school alternative and improves their school attendance and grades. This would provide a local area facility for groups to utilize within the community and would add an additional robust layer to Jackie Robinson Park while affording more park amenities and recreational choices to the community. Community Boards 9 and 12 will be invited to participate.

Volunteer support and stewardship need to be increased for Harlem historic parks.

Dog run inquiry for Jackie Robinson Park - locations can be worked out and a feasibility study conducted. - must be community initiated.

Outcome: Historic Harlem Parks Administrator Jana LaSorte will make request of NYC Parks to conduct a feasibility study for the suggested project to upgrade Jackie Robinson pool to a year-round ice skating rink and pool

- C. *CB 10 Park Safety in COVID-19:* City parks are open. Park goers are asked to take extra precautions to stay healthy and safe and should wear face coverings and maintain at least 6 feet of distance between themselves and others when outside and avoid congregating in groups.



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Park restrooms are open and being cleaned daily with appropriate cleaning products to ensure that they are being fully disinfected. Playgrounds are open. Adults and children are asked to wear a face covering and maintain at least six feet of distance between each child not in the same household. Playgrounds are cleaned daily, however, play equipment is not sterilized. Caregivers are asked to keep children home if they or their child feels sick, and to wash hands frequently, including before and after using play equipment.

Fields and courts are open. Participants should continue to wear face coverings, follow social distancing protocols and avoid participating in high-contact sports such as football and pick-up basketball. Vaccination information will be supplied by District Manager Shena Kaufman as it is updated.

D. *CB 10 Park Updates*

1. William McCray Playground (0.46 acre) located on W. 138th Street between Malcolm X Boulevard and 5th Avenue has a sinkhole in the area of the swings. NYC Parks advises that the playground is monitored weekly for any infrastructure change to the sinkhole. NYC Parks is currently engaged in raising funds to renovate the entire park. A study was done by NYC Parks and Commissioner Silver has visited the park. The park is adjacent to St. Mark The Evangelist School located at 50 West 138th Street. The playground is monitored by Parks on a weekly basis. Funding is currently available to plant trees around the perimeter. Parks acquired the site at W. 138th Street between Fifth and Lenox Avenues in 1934. Later additions of land in 1989 and 1992 more than doubled the size of the property. Twenty-seven years ago, in June 1994, an extensive renovation was completed that provided colorful modular play equipment, safety surfacing, painted games, spray shower, benches, and game tables. New trees were planted, and the basketball court was completely resurfaced. The playground was rededicated on November 16th, 1994. The Community is expressing concern for the safety of the area as sinkholes, particularly as they are created in urban areas are dangerous and unpredictable. The situation warrants immediate attention. The Community is requesting input to design plans for the park renovation.
2. Vending Trucks - City-wide program; a restaurant-related vendor designation, (plans were being considered prior to COVID-19 pandemic). Issues pertaining to safety, permits and licensing are still being worked out by Parks. Information regarding the vending process for CB 10 parks will be made available to the Board as soon as it is definitive and will be e-blasted to the community. Parks being considered are A. Philip Randolph Square and Fred Samuels. Renaissance and Rucker are also to be considered. Colonel Charles Young Playground was recommended by the Community. Other suggested sites should be sent to District Manager, Shena Kaufman.



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3. Inquiry: Can Safe Streets Corridor manage Safe Street vaccine information? - NYC Parks response pending.
4. \$284 million allocated by the Mayor to restore the East River Esplanade was announced in January. \$187 million will be used to repair 94th Street up to 107th Street in addition to \$1 million that was already allocated for irrigating the plants. \$69 million will be spent on repairs from 118th Street to 124th Street, and \$28 million for Pier 107.
5. Community Garden adjacent to Fred Samuels Playground is under the jurisdiction of NYCHA and may be in need of a gardening group. Inquiry to be made.
6. Harlem Lane & Frederick Johnson Playgrounds - March construction date - Restroom at Frederick Johnson date still pending existing restroom to be demolished (currently located in back of Harlem River Houses) - capital renovation - new restroom will be located at front end of park
7. Farmer's Markets - being proposed by NYC Parks for Fred Samuels June to begin June 12th and possibly run through summer and fall - Parks will provide update.
8. Harlem River Park artwork restoration- pending further information from Parks.

E. *Voting*

1. Motion made by Hon. Kevin Bitterman and seconded by Hon. Barbara Nelson
Motion: To Support Revisions to the Central Park Conservancy Harlem Meer-Lasker Pool Renovation Project - Revised Design Plan

Outcome: Quorum was present : Unanimous to support: 6 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions

Voice Vote: (Hon. Karen Horry - aye, Hon. Kevin Bitterman - aye, Hon. Tahanie Aboushi - aye, Hon. Marcus Wilson - aye, Hon. Terri Wisdom - aye, Hon. Barbara Nelson - aye.

IV. **Old Business**

A. *Exonerated Five Subcommittee*

1. Update: Central Park Conservancy has requested that a website be developed through the subcommittee group and made available to them in order for them to proceed with their proposed preliminary plans to commemorate. The subcommittee will meet this Thursday 2/11 at 6:00 pm to discuss Website development and signage content.



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- B. *Colonel Charles Young Playground*
1. Mini soccer pitch will replace the standalone basketball court on the Harlem River Drive side of the park, the three remaining adjacent courts will be refurbished and receive new backboards.
- C. *The main court on 145th Street and Malcolm X Boulevard* will be refurbished through replacement of the existing court surface asphalt, straightening of the backboards, refinishing of the bleachers and fencing. General Board voted to support at the February 3rd Full Board Meeting.
- D. *Collaboration with Clemson University- Resilient Urban Design - School of Architecture - CB10 Parks - Tactical Urbanism Projects*
1. Harlem River Park Waterfront Resiliency Study Area (Harlem Drive and West 142nd Street) - Tide Deck - NYC Parks is assessing a program for an existing waterfront access area that can be refurbished to function as a protected “tide deck” in Harlem River Park between 142nd and 143rd Streets. A tide deck is an engineered rocky salt marsh created to provide an immersive and educational river ecology experience. As an example; the western edge of Manhattan’s pier 26 is accessible to park patrons as a tide deck while also providing a supportive environment for wildlife - Update from Clemson as to graduate student progress with project to be provided.
 2. A. Philip Randolph Square (ACP Boulevard, St Nicholas Ave. and West 117th Street) - Collaborative project has begun with Clemson University students

IV. Announcements

- a. A public viewing of the award-winning actress, trailblazing role model and Harlem native, Cicely Tyson at the historic Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, where she will lie in repose on Feb. 15 (10 a.m. - 6 p.m.)

V. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:56 pm.

~Respectfully submitted by Parks and Recreation Chair, Karen Horry~