

## **PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Wednesday, April 14th, 2021, 6:30 pm

**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, Hon. Derek Perkinson, Hon. Tahanie Aboushi and Hon. Nadine Pinkett

**Committee Members Absent:** Hon. Kevin Bitterman and Hon. Deborah Gilliard

**Board Members Present:** - Board Chair Hon. Cecily Harris and Hon. Donna Gill

**Board Chair:** Hon. Cicely Harris

**District Office:** District Manager the the Shatic Mitchell, Jasmin Heatley (Community Assistant)

**Guests in attendance:** Ambassador Sujay, Velma G., Jose's IPad, Abena Smith (President, 32nd Precinct Community Council), Gregory Baggett (A. Phillip Randolph Neighborhood Alliance), Minah Whyte (Assemblyman Al Taylor), Dara Harris (Honeys and Bears), Zakiyah DeGraffe (Hansborough Recreation Center), Aarian Punter, Allen Black, Amelia A. Montgomery, Carol Martin, Cassandra Polite, Dolina Duzant, Georgia Dawson, Harriet Addamo, Jamie Baez, Jane's IPad, Jeanne Nedd, Jana LaSorte (NYC Parks Administrator Harlem Historic Parks), John Hession, Joyce Adewumi (NY African Chorus Ensemble/NYC Multicultural Festival), Maleta Apogo (Community Resident), Vernon Ballard (A. Phillip Randolph Neighborhood Alliance), Shena Kaufman (Parks Manager District 10 & 11), Chris Noel (Community Member i-Phone), Shamier Settle (A. Phillip Randolph Neighborhood Alliance), Mary Williams, Richard Cox, Richard Williams, Robert McCullough (Each One Teach One Rucker Pro Legend), Samuel White, Jr., Rajab safi, Moto z3, Tiffany Foster, Walter Gilroy, Veronica Cook, SANAB, Mary Vinson, Yvonne Stanford, Allen Black, Aarian Punter and Ysabel Abreu. There were 51 participants including phone callers.

### **I. Welcome/Introductions**

### **II. Presentation**

- a. Hansborough Recreation Center and Pool - Internal NYC Parks meeting to be held on 4/15 to discuss approval for comprehensive design plans to include the pool and other areas of the center. Presentation postponed to May P&R meeting. The Community is seeking timeline which has been revised to include pool renovation. The five year life span on the current pool repairs were not feasible-funds are sufficient and have already been allocated for a more extensive pool repair. **Outcome:** Design plan revisions to be presented at May P&R meeting.
  
- b. **Holcombe Rucker Park - Greg Marius Basketball court** - A presentation was made by NBA veteran and Commissioner of Rucker Pro-Legends/Each One Teach One: Bob McCullough, along with Richard Cox and Aarian Punter. Rucker

Park hosts the world's most famous basketball court and is a treasured gem of Harlem. The proposed refurbishment will include new glass backboards, new bleachers all around the park and renovation of the clock. The plan was derived by the NBA Players Association in consultation with NYC Parks. Parks has been in dialogue with NBPA SR VP Dan Gladstone (Business Development and Basketball at THINK450 National Basketball Players Association (a for-profit subsidiary of the NBA)). Tentative reconstruction of Holcombe Park is proposed for mid-May with completion by mid-August. Activities are hopeful for Harlem Week. 155th Street and Frederick Douglass Blvd. was also suggested for street co-naming and will be referred to the Transportation and Historic Landmarks Committee. Landmarking is being considered; the Committee inquired as to how renovations would impact landmarking, while also considering the need for capital renovations and upgrade of the facility. The world renowned basketball court is cracked and needs to be restored. On December 24th, 2020, wind gusts of 65 miles per hour whipped through New York City along with heavy rains knocking over trees and power lines. Wind gusts and rain impacted Holcombe Rucker Park, completely uprooting trees, and damaging the Frederick Douglass benches, basketball court, stand, rims. NYC Parks secured the Holcombe Rucker Park from further damage and provided protective barriers for the community. **Outcome:** The Committee voted unanimously to support through a full Board Resolution to be drafted and circulated amongst Committee Members for review and then moved on to the Executive Committee for a full Board vote.

- a. 2021 NYC Multicultural Festival at Jackie Robinson Park - Joyce Adewumi. - The NYC Multicultural Festival is designed to celebrate all cultural expressions through music, dance, poetry, art, food, fashion, etc. The festival is organized for the community by the community. The event is open to all ages. Participants are encouraged to creatively express their heritage through their garb. Food vendors will be present and have food for sale. Tickets will be free. Pre-registration will be required. The proposed venue is the bandshell at Jackie Robinson Park. The event is scheduled for 12 to 6 pm on June 5th. The Committee had concerns around the event being closed to the community and restricted to attendance by the performers and their friends and family only. It was suggested that the event include a digital-based virtual platform like Zoom, etc. to make the event more inclusive. The event which was first held in 2010 in Jackie Robinson Park would have a 150 limit, markings would be placed to designate 6 foot social distancing, sanitizing stations would be put in place, 6 people apart seating and hand sanitizer, mask and face shield give-aways. The group will be working with NYPD. Food is to be served. The event needs distinction as to whether it is private or public, as invitees will be friends and family of performers only, with some people on-line. A suggestion was made to use EventBright which allows for contact tracing. COVID-19 test results could be required or to use COVID-19 event model used by Central Park Summer Stage or the National Action Network Annual Convention. The Committee also had concerns about COVID-19 safety precautions and requested that more detail be provided on or before the May

Parks and Recreation meeting. Ms. Adewumi agreed to provide the information as requested. A vote to give a letter of support was tabled until May.

**Outcome:** Ms. Adewumi will provide a detailed written plan for COVID-19 Safety Precautions to be implemented during the event.

## II. Discussions

### a. NYC Parks Feasibility Studies

1. William McCray Playground - West 138th Street - Sinkhole Update - NYC Parks District Manager Shena Kaufman was extremely responsive and had the sinkhole area cordoned off with fencing by March 12th. CB 10 received 96 pages of parent signatures in support of immediate attention and repair of the sinkhole. The signatures were attached to the advisory letter sent to NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver. Parks advises that they are looking to secure funds to make the repair, but have nothing definitive to date. The Committee advised that the Community would like to have the current condition of the sinkhole ascertained and explained in a report to the Community and any next steps being planned to allay fears and concerns. The Community sees the situation as dire at this time and warranting immediate address by NYC Parks and any other pertinent city agency. The issue was to have been discussed at the March 17th District Cabinet meeting but did not occur as NYC Parks was not represented at the meeting. The request for discussion will be re-scheduled for the April 20th District Cabinet meeting, again, where support from other relevant city agencies would be able to provide collaborative solutions. The Community is also requesting a charette around renovation plans. The Community Board has also reached out to elected officials regarding the matter. The Committee also recommends that pro-bono resources should be identified to provide a geological assessment of the sinkhole and its current state. NYC Parks is being asked to explain the rationale in stating that there is no further structural damage taking place, what is the contextual time frame? When was the most recent assessment and how was the assessment made. Parks advises that they are working to identify funding for the renovation. The Community has the following questions:
  - a. When is the inspection happening to understand the severity of the sinkhole?
  - b. What testing has been done specifically at this site?
  - c. Have they conducted any bore hole testing? Which would give them an indication of the structural integrity of the ground.

- d. Have they conducted a study of existing infrastructure that may run under the site?
- e. Have they tracked the size of the hole over the past 20 years to observe if the problem has worsened?
- f. The Park is abutted by several properties including the school, are they looking at the probability of other possible sinkholes forming?
- g. The entire park is paved and therefore the trees would be placed in tree pits when the park was built, with the purpose of containing the roots. Where can reports be obtained where they've ruled out possible causes?
- h. What measures are being taken to assure the sink hole doesn't increase in size?
- i. Can GB-SAR (ground-based synthetic aperture radar) technology be used to assess the structure?
- j. How long will the play area be fenced off?
- k. Will this be a 5-10 year process?
- l. Will any repairs be completed during the time the area is fenced off?

Hon. Marcus Wilson advised that Regional Property Manager (Jennifer Lau) and the community managers of Savoy Park and Harlen Housing Team from Fairstead expressed interest in having Fairstead participate in the discourse and supporting in efforts. In the absence of access to Hansborough Recreation Center (closed due to covid/construction) and the closure of Abraham Lincoln Playground due to construction, in addition to Fred Samuels Playground not having a play area designated for toddlers, the importance of renovating William McCray Playground grows greater.

CB 10 Parks and Recreation Committee would like to facilitate a charette with NYC Parks and community stakeholders to discern all necessary park repairs and designs. **Outcome:** Committee will request that concerns be addressed at the April 12th District Cabinet meeting and do outreach to identify pro-bono assessment of the sinkhole and continue to secure support from elected officials.

- 2. Jackie Robinson Recreation Center Upgrade to Promote Year-Round Use: Skating Rink and Pool - pending information for capital process
  - a. What would be the capital process to bring project to fruition?
- b. A. Philip Randolph Square Park- Sanitation & Security for Food Vending Cart - letter is being drafted by A. Philip Randolph Neighborhood Alliance and will be

sent by week's end to ascertain the details of NYC Parks' plan for the sanitation and security as it is related to the food vendor cart. **Outcome:** If the response requires follow-up by CB 10 we will address any concerns at that time.

- c. Firefighter Lt. Michael Davidson Mural - Mr. Hession, cousin to Lt. Davidson, is proposing a mural on the handball wall inside of the Renaissance Playground (located at 144th Street) to honor Lt. Davidson, who lost his life fighting a fire on 149th and Saint Nicholas Avenue. Cited four times for bravery, served the community as a member of the FDNY for fifteen years, and was stationed here in Harlem on 143rd Street, Engine 69, Ladder 28. Lt. Davidson leaves behind four children and a wife. Today marked the third anniversary of the passing of fallen Firefighter Lt. Davidson Mr. Hession provided a photo for the basis of his proposed rendering. **Outcome:** Mr. Hession will submit petition signatures and letters of support from local area community-based organizations, i.e. tenant and block associations and businesses to substantiate community support.
- d. CB 10 Park Safety in COVID-19 - all COVID-19 precautions remain in place.
- e. CB 10 Parks Updates - Shena Kaufman- 10,000 seasonal workers being hired by parks; positions will run up until December 31st. 18 and older can apply. Applicants with a drivers license -\$15 per hour, Non-driver's license \$12 per hour. Resume required. For additional information visit <https://www.nycgovparks.org/opportunities/jobs>. The Community is encouraged to apply.

### III. Voting by Voice vote - Quorum present \_\_\_\_\_

- a. Motion made by Hon. Barbara Nelson and seconded by Hon. Nadine Pinkett. (Hon. Tahanie Aboushi and Hon. Karen Dixon were not present for the vote)  
Motion: **Drafting of Resolution To Support The Renovation of The Greg Marris Basketball Court in Rucker Holcombe Park.**  
**Outcome:** Quorum was present : Unanimous to support: 7 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions  
(Voice Vote: Hon. Karen Horry - yes, Hon. Derek Perkinson - yes, Hon. Nadine Pinkett - yes, Hon. Marcus Wilson - yes, Hon. Terri Wisdom - yes, Hon. Barbara Nelson - yes, Board Chair Hon. Cicely Harris - yes)
- b. Motion made by Hon. Barbara Nelson and seconded by Hon. Nadine Pinkett  
Motion: **To Draft Letter To Support The 2021 NYC Multicultural Festival at Jackie Robinson Park** (Hon. Tahanie Aboushi and Hon. Karen Dixon were not present for the vote)  
**Outcome:** Quorum was present : Motion Failed. 2 yes, 5 no, 0 abstentions

(Voice Vote: Hon. Karen Horry - no, Hon. Derek Perkinson - yes, Hon. Nadine Pinkett - no, Hon. Marcus Wilson - no, Hon. Terri Wisdom - yes, Hon. Barbara Nelson - no, Board Chair Hon. Cicely Harris - no)

- c. Motion made by Hon. Barbara Nelson and seconded by Hon. Nadine Pinkett  
Motion: **To Table Drafting of Letter To Support The 2021 NYC Multicultural Festival at Jackie Robinson Park** - Pending receipt of detailed information for COVID-19 Safety precautions (Hon. Tahanie Aboushi and Hon. Karen Dixon were not present for the vote)

**Motion: Outcome: Quorum was present : Unanimous to support: 7 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions**

(Voice Vote: Hon. Karen Horry - yes, Hon. Derek Perkinson - yes, Hon. Nadine Pinkett - yes, Hon. Marcus Wilson - yes, Hon. Terri Wisdom - yes, Hon. Barbara Nelson - yes, Board Chair Hon. Cicely Harris - yes).

**Outcome:** Ms. Adewumi will provide a detailed written plan for COVID-19 Safety Precautions to be implemented during the event.

## II. Old Business

- a. Exonerated Five Subcommittee - waiting for an Agreement review and approval from NYC Law Department for pro-bono web site development. The MBPO helped to secure a \$4500 grant from the Fund for the City of New York which will be received and disbursed to the web developer by Partnerships 4 Parks for start-up costs.
- a. William Atmore Byrd, Sr. Classic Basketball Court Naming at Langston Hughes Playground still pending. Commissioner Castro will issue a list of namings to be presented by NYC Parks in June.

## II. New Business - None

## III. Announcements

- b. NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver (2014 to present) will be leaving in June 2021 and joining a civil engineering firm based in North Carolina. Commissioner Silver has lead the Parks Department since 2014 and oversaw more than 800 capital projects to-date during his tenure. Commissioner Silver is a dedicated public servant who continues to strengthen parks in Manhattan Community Board 10, demonstrating his commitment to ensuring that every New Yorker has beautiful outdoor spaces to enjoy.
- c. Congressman Espaillat hosted an event to honor the resiliency of the Exonerated Five on the 32nd anniversary of the Central Park Five incident.
- d.** Arts and Culture Committee Harlem Talent Initiative event on May 10th - Jasmin will share flyer

## III. Adjournment

**Meeting was adjourned at 9:53 pm.**

*~ Respectfully submitted by Parks and Recreation Chair, Hon. Karen Horry ~*