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PARKS AND RECREATION
Committee Minutes
Wednesday, November 10th 2021, 6:30 PM
Hon. Karen Horry, Chair

Meeting began at 6:40 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. Vice Chair Hon. Verna Diggs, Hon. Derek Perkinson, Hon. Verna Diggs, Hon. Marcus Wilson, Hon. Tahanie Aboushi and Hon. Dana Points

Committee Members Excused: Hon. Barbara Nelson, Hon. Shamier Settle and Hon. Terri Wisdom

Committee Members Absent: Hon. Kevin Bitterman,

Board Members Present: Board Chair Hon. Cicely Harris, Hon. Donna Gill, Hon. Dominick Boyce and Dr. Maurice Franklin

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

Guests in attendance: Marie Warsh (Central Park Conservancy), John Reddick (Central Park Conservancy), Barry Kessler ((New York Lawn Bowling Club), Carlos Martinez (Acting Director, NYC Parks Green Thumb), David Williams (Parks Manager/ Districts 10 & 11 NYC Parks), Azure Thompson (NYC Parks Green Thumb), Zakiya DeGraffe, (Director, Hansborough Rec. Center NYC Parks), Ra Wells (Rucker Park), James H. Collins, Gregory Baggett, Elijah Brooks (Youth On The Move), Ena K. McPherson, D.S. Boyce, Charlene Edwards, Howard Worley, Daniel Atha, Jamesh Collins, Jamie Baez, Jasmine Butler, Louise B., Ra Thriva (Art of Digital Hustle), KC, Louise B., Patty Butler, Cindy Worley, Haja Worley, Charlie Bass, Alex Munoz, Rosetta Washington Williams and Diane Herrigan Hubbard.

Welcome to Dana Point our new Committee Member

I. Presentations

- a. **Seneca Village - Central Park Conservancy (CPC)** is engaged in a new and unprecedented type of research that involves the generation of the Seneca Village experience through the existing landscape. Students are working with the project. The process utilizes a map overlay technology. The Seneca Village site spans 82nd Street to

87th Street. The landscape of historic Seneca Village (1825 - 1857) included 50 houses, 3 churches and a school. The hills, rocks and archaeological finds from that period are still present, essentially making the landscape a veritable archive. CPC seeks a better Seneca Village visualization through use of mid-19th century mapping and perception of the site as part of a broader regional context. Broadway/Bloomingdale Road in the area of Seneca Village was described as hilly and beautiful place, from 1825 to 1857, in contrast to the downtown Manhattan area. There were disease outbreaks and riots taking place. Summit Rock - highest point in Central Park was part of the original Seneca Village terrain. Tanner Spring, still in the park today, was a Seneca Village water source. The permanent commemoration will be informed by the combined resourcing of the natural history topology and ecology of the area to bring about a holistic experience of the mid-19th century village. The CPC goal is to use this new technology to inform planning for the reenactment of the community. Virtual viewing technology was suggested to be incorporated into the tour experience. CPC is also considering the adaptation of the neighboring playground as an extension of the Seneca Village experience as a possible reflective gathering space for families. The Toll Family Playground is located in the West 80s, near the entrance at West 85th Street and within the site of Seneca Village. Abraham and Joseph Spector Playground is located in the West 80s, near the entrance at West 85th Street and also within the site of Seneca Village.

Outcome: CPC will talk offline about setting up an ad hoc group to act as a sounding board and to discuss updates, fundraising and broader program of work.

- b. New York Lawn Bowling Club** - Support for the rehabilitation of the Central Park Lawn Sports center and historical restoration of the Mineral Springs Building is being requested. The New York Lawn Bowling Club (NYLBC) and the New York Croquet Club (NYCC) share the use of the Central Park Lawn Sports Center and Playing Greens located in the Mineral Springs section of Central Park, just north of Sheep Meadow. The Bowling and Croquet Greens are two fenced-in fields built specifically for lawn bowling and croquet, located just to the north of Sheep Meadow; mid-park at 69th Street. 2026 will be the 100th Anniversary for NYLBC and NYCC in Central Park. Although both sports have been played for centuries, they became popular again in New York City in the early 20th century, leading to their inclusion in Central Park with the creation of the facility in 1926. The green conditions have deteriorated over time and are reportedly unsuitable for playing condition most of the playing season (May - October). The drainage system is outdated, the surface need to be smoothed. Letters of Support were provided from Achilles International, Mark Ski, Chair of NYCC/Special Olympics Committee, Damon Bidencope, President, United States Croquet Association, BowlsUSA and World Bowls. Community Boards 5 and 8 passed Resolutions in support of the project. NYLBC and NYCC regularly offer free lessons and community events and will provide information to CB 10.

Outcome: The Committee voted unanimously to support the drafting of a resolution in support of the project and will be discussed as a. Opting item in December.

- c. NYC Parks Green Thumb Program & CB 10 Community Gardens** - 550 gardens exist throughout the NYC area covering 100 acres of green space. Carlos Martinez,

Acting Director of Green Thumb made the informational presentation. Green Thumb offers workshops, training and technical support and will connect Gardeners with resources. Simone is the Outreach Coordinator for CB 10. Only 3 garden sites in CB 10 have a system of water infrastructure. Fifteen CB 10 gardens need upgrade to increase onsite water access using methods such as pathways and raised beds. Rat infestations in CB 10 gardens are being addressed. Challenges to public access are presented by construction. membership limitations? Forestry needs will be addressed by NYC Parks this winter. Two gardens have been upgraded to full ADA compliance. Composting systems are being requested and is at the preference of the gardeners. Green Thumb will supply the lumber to construct compost units. Options will be explored as to how to engage CB 10 youth in local area gardens and to increase garden membership.

Outcome: Green Thumb will supply data, if needed for developing a Needs Statement. Green Thumb will also support gardening recruitment and membership retention.

- d. **Letter of Recommendation _Colonel Charles Young Triangle** - Letter was drafted, discussed and put to a vote. Committee voted unanimously to support.

II. Voting

a. Voting by Voice Vote

- i. Motion made by Hon. Dana Points and seconded by Hon. Tahanie Aboushi

Motion: To Support Letter Of Recommendation To Upgrade Colonel Charles Young Triangle

Outcome: Quorum was present : Unanimous to support: 6 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions and 0 recusals (Voice Vote: Hon. Karen Horry - yes, Hon. Dana Points - yes, Hon. Verna Diggs - yes, Hon. Derek Perkinson - yes, Hon. Marcus Wilson - yes, Hon. Tahanie Aboushi - yes)

Motion Passed

- ii. Motion made by Hon. Verna Diggs and seconded by Hon. Tahanie Aboushi

Motion: To Draft A Resolution To Support The Upgrade of Lawn Sports Facilities in Central Park

Outcome: Quorum was present : Unanimous to support: 6 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions and 0 recusals (Voice Vote: Hon. Karen Horry - yes, Hon. Dana Points - yes, Hon. Verna Diggs - yes, Hon. Derek Perkinson - yes, Hon. Marcus Wilson - yes, Hon. Tahanie Aboushi - yes)

Motion Passed

III. Discussions

a. **CB 10 Park Safety in COVID -19**

- i. Park employees who have not been vaccinated must be tested every week in order to retain employment. All Park workers must wear masks - vaccinated park visitors can opt not to wear masks if not in a crowded area. All other precautions remain in place. Event group capacity remains limited to 200 and may be increased to 500 in July. As of May 19, New York State has implemented the CDC's Interim Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People.

Face coverings are still required to enter any municipal building, including bathrooms, regardless of vaccination status.

- b. CB 10 Parks - Updates** - David Williams, Parks Manager/ Districts 10 & 11 NYC Parks
- i. The Colonel Charles Young Playground** - the first of the three-phase renovation project will be completed and includes the refurbishment of three basketball courts along the Harlem River Drive side of the park, installation of a mini-soccer pitch and renovation of the 145th Street basketball court. NYC Parks, NYPD Community Partnerships, Office of the Manhattan Borough President, Office of the NY County District Attorney and the Community will be hosting a ribbon cutting on Friday, November 12th at 4:00 pm.
 - ii. Bill Bojangles Robinson Playground** - Rodents are problematic in the park. Trash pickups have to be more efficient. NYC Parks mobile units will be dispatched to remove debris.
 - iii. Fred Johnson Playground** - The tennis court lighting will be scheduled for turn off, due to repairs and an electrical installation, for one day during 11/15 - 11/19. The date is to be determined, but could be Friday, 11/19.
 - iv. A. Philip Randolph Square** - A major cleaning was completed on 11/10.
 - v. Langston Hughes Playground** - Rodents have been sighted in the park.
 - vi. Harlem Lane** - update pending.
 - vii. William McCray Playground** - Rodents have been sighted in the park. NYC Parks sinkhole assessment will take place this month and Parks will return to the December meeting with a report and update.
 - viii. Jackie Robinson Park** - A wooden barrier has been temporarily constructed around the hazardous mud slick (that occurs after truck deliveries) will be cemented over with the installation of cobble stone during the week of November 15th. Mr. Williams will send photos of the repair. The mud slick developed after completion of the recent "Parks Without Borders" renovations. Volunteers are coming in to assist in tree installations to tree pits on Edgecombe Avenue.
 - ix. Colonel Charles Young Triangle** - A community request for bench replacement, improved lighting and tree planting for the plaza was voiced at the October meeting. A letter of Recommendation was voted on unanimously by the Committee and will be forwarded to the Executive Committee.
 - x. Hansborough Recreation Center** - Re-opening as of September 13th. Face masks, ID and proof of vaccination are required to enter the facility. Registration is currently taking place. Free memberships are being offered (through December 31st 2021) to NYC residents 12 and over who are vaccinated - current memberships for 11 and younger remain in place - No NYC Parks indoor pools open at this time. Visit NYC Parks: <https://www.nycgovparks.org/> for updates. Key tags have been issued to members. Sports and Fitness classes are currently being offered from 10:00 am to 7:30 pm. A scheduling and program offering update will be provided in January. The Honeys and Bears, Harlem's world renowned synchronized seniors swimming group, has been in communication with Hansborough Management to discuss pool updates and transportation to alternative pool sites during the interim while the pool is closed for renovations. Return trips from alternate pool facilities have been problematic. NYC Parks Legal Department is concerned with liability issues and

is still in the process of exploring options for transportation of the Honeys and Bears group during the Hansborough pool closure.

- c. **CB 10 Parks and Recreation Master Plan** - The Committee members will review the Parks Master Plan for CB 12
https://www.nycgovparks.org/sub_your_park/vt_north_manhattan_parks/master_plan_pdfs/june2012/Purpose_Planning_Goals_and_Info_gathering.pdf The CB 12 document was created for 2012-2030. The Committee will use the plan to make a determination to request a projection to be created for CB 10 by NYC Parks with community input.

I. Old Business

- a. **Exonerated Five Subcommittee** - The Task Force is in the process of scheduling a third meeting as well as a standing monthly meeting date
- b. **Request to Rename Langston Hughes Playground Basketball Court to William Atmore Byrd Classic Basketball Court** - still pending
- c. **Jackie Robinson Park mud slick repair** -
 - i. **Wifi in CB 10 Parks** - Free WI-Fi access in CB10 parks would help to bridge the digital divide which exists in CB 10. Internet access would provide great benefit with respect to disaster relief. We need free, secure and reliable Wi-Fi service in CB10 parks and playgrounds that provides a sufficient bandwidth to accommodate the park traffic. NYC Parks has been asked to advise what current options are for a free service.

I. New Business

- a. Invite 32nd and 28th Precinct Community Affairs Officers to December meeting - to discuss remedies to gun violence in CB 10 parks

II. Announcements

- a. **The Colonel Charles Young Playground** Ribbon Cutting and Press Event - Friday, November 12th - 4:00 pm
- b. **A Shout-Out To All Of Our Esteemed Veterans!!! Thank you for your Service and Dedication!!! - Happy Veteran's Day!!! (The CB 10 District Office will be closed)**
- c. **Metropolitan Museum of Art "Before Yesterday We Could Fly: An Afrofuturist Period Room" Opening November 5th.** The exhibit is a fabrication of a domestic space that assembles furnishings and objects to create an experience of authenticity for Seneca Village. Acknowledging that injustice, the exhibition asks: What if this community had the opportunity to grow and thrive? Powered by Afrofuturism—the inspirational, creative mode that centers Black imagination and self-determination—the exhibition transforms a 19th-century domestic interior into a speculative future home for Seneca Village residents whose time there was so unjustly cut short. In accordance with New York City mandate, all visitors age 12 and older must be vaccinated against

COVID-19. Masks are required for all visitors. <https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2021/afrofuturist-period-room>

- a. **NYC Parks Urban Rangers programming at the East River Esplanade** (Harlem River Park) at 142ndst Street - youth programs can request The Natural Classroom school application for the Fall at <https://www.nycgovparks.org/programs/rangers/natural-classroom/apply>
- b. **Jackie Robinson Park Recreation Center** is offering free one year memberships to individuals aged 12 and up who have been vaccinated against COVID-19. Proof of vaccination is required at registration, which ends December 31st.

III. Adjournment - Motion made to adjourn by Hon. Tahanie Aboushi and seconded by Hon. Dana Points

Meeting was adjourned at 8:51 pm.

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