



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10
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CICELY HARRIS
Chairperson

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday, September 12th, 2018, 6:30pm

Hon. Karen Horry, Chair
Hon. Leevert Holmes, Vice Chair

Meeting began at 6:30 pm and was held in the 4th Floor Conference room. The meeting was chaired by Hon. Karen Horry, Chair.

Committee Members in Attendance: Chair Karen Horry, Leevert Holmes, Henrietta Lyle, Eboni Mason and Karen Dixon

Committee Members Excused: Crystal Shipp and Seitu Jemel Hart

Committee Members Absent: Kevin Bitterman, Maurice Sessoms and Troy Gethers

Guests in attendance: Cal Jones (Seneca Village), Marie Warsh (Central Park Conservancy), Dr. Leonard Jeffries (Dr. Jeffries Foundation), Gregory Bagget (A. Philip Randolph Square), Vern B., Gail Morse (Senior Citizens Water Aerobics Class), Ivy Walker, Yolanda Brooks (A. Philip Randolph Square), Deborah Hill (Hansborough), Janai Shabazz (Hansborough), Dara Harris (Harlem Honeys & Bears), Rasheedah Ali (Harlem Honeys & Bears/Aerobics)

PRESENTATIONS:

A. Central Park Conservancy and Seneca Village – Proposed Commemoration in Central Park – Maria Warsh

Seneca Village was a settlement of predominantly African American landowners in the borough of Manhattan, founded in 1825 by free blacks – the first community of its kind. Becoming multi-ethnic by 1840 to include Native Americans and Irish and German immigrants. The settlement was located on approximately five acres of land bounded by 82nd through 89th Streets from Seventh Avenue to Central Park West. The historic settlement was destroyed as a result of eminent domain in 1857 to make way for the construction of Central Park.

The Seneca Village Project, the Community and other concerned stakeholders, in collaboration with the Central Park Conservancy, are seeking to identify and implement an appropriate commemoration within the aesthetic context of the current area in Central Park. The anticipated project will tie in the archaeological finds and artifacts provided by the Seneca Village Project into

several integrated components that will create a comprehensive educational experience.

Central Park Conservancy hired an interpretive educational specialist over the summer to determine a plan for the collected artifacts and their expression within the context of any proposed project.

The Task Force composition will include Seneca Village Project members, historians, possible funders, Mother Zion AME Church, City College, Parks & Recreation and Central Park Conservancy. Andrew Williams, a direct descendant of Andrew Williams, an original settler of Seneca Village, has been contacted and is expected to participate in the planning process. Other descendants are also being sought out. The Landmarks & Historic Preservation and Arts and Culture Committees will be invited to collaborate as well. The task force focus will be to determine how to commemorate, and will then make their recommendations.

The artifacts uncovered by the Seneca Village Project are currently being stored at a repository at City College. Central Park Conservancy in collaboration with the Museum of the City of New York has the artifacts listed on the museum's website. The Institute for Excavation of Seneca Village is a 501(c)3 organization. The timeline for the project includes a launching project scheduled for February 2019 during African American History Month.

Outcome: Central Park Conservancy will arrange for a Fall tour of the Seneca Village footprint. The Committee Chair will follow up with Ms. Warsh to confirm details of the Seneca Village Task Force meeting dates which was approved by the Executive Committee at the June 2018 meeting.

B. Hansborough Pool – Honeys & Bears

Members of the senior community of the Hansborough Recreation Center came before the committee with three pressing issues: (1) water temperature not being kept consistent at 82 degrees during senior activities, (2) removal of the water aerobics class from the Recreation Center's program schedule, and (3) time reduction for the Honeys and Bears swim time.

The group visited the Committee in September, November and January of 2018 and are now returning a year later with the on-going issue of the need to have a temperature setting of 83 degrees to accommodate the senior swimmers during their scheduled programs. Parks explained in January that a heat exchange mechanism had been added to the existing boiler, but would be ineffective in the event of a boiler breakdown. The mechanism worked for a short time only. Parks informed the Committee that they are aware that the boiler ultimately needs to be replaced.

The seniors would like to have the senior water aerobics class reinstated. It has been completely removed from the fall scheduling. In addition, the Honeys & Bears would

like their scheduled returned to its original time slot as the shortened time creates an undue hardship.

The seniors have the support of elected officials.

Outcome: The Committee sentiment is to issue a letter of advocacy on behalf of the Honeys & Bears as well as the general senior population to (1) to provide remedy to maintain the temperature at 83 degrees consistently during the allotted scheduling for the senior activities, (2) to reinstate the seniors water aerobics class, and (3) reinstate the shortened Honeys and Bears programming session to its original allocation. The letter will also recommend that Parks identify a local relocation site for the senior programming in the interim of the projected two year closing for renovations.

C. A. Philip Randolph Square

A. Philip Randolph Square is a shaded seating area located at the intersection of St. Nicholas Avenue and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Boulevard at 117th Street. The 0.07 acre triangle/plaza has been continuously plagued by homeless encampments and associated public violations (urination, defecation, etc.) as well as drug trafficking. The Community is seeking permanent remedy as it presents a severe public safety hazard. Despite continuous efforts by NYC Parks, NYPD and DHS, the problem persists. **Gregory Baggett** presented in advance of upcoming meetings with Park and elected officials to make the Board aware of their activities

Outcome: Mr. Baggett will return to request a letter of support, post-meetings. Assistant District Manager Shatic Mitchell will raise the topic as a major issue at the District Cabinet meeting scheduled for September 19th.

DISCUSSIONS:

A. Nelson Mandela Garden Letter of Support

The Mandela Garden has received a notice of eviction dated for October 8th. The group is hoping to be offered a relocation site more comparable in space to the existing garden. HPD has suggested relocation to relatively minute sites, small sites inside of pre-existing gardens and remote sites which are being cultivated by local area groups. The Mandela gardeners have not found any of these HPD-offered relocations to be adequate to continue the garden and its corresponding activities.

Outcome: The Committee is in favor of issuing a letter of support with emphasis on the recommendation to HPD to research additional options for a larger relocation site.

B. 2020 District Needs Statement and Budget Priorities

The budget process begins in June/July with district consultations between agency local service chiefs police precinct commanders, sanitation, superintendents, etc. and CBs to discuss local service needs.

The Committee will review the 2019 Parks and Recreation District Needs Draft to begin to assess needs for 2020. Approved and pending items for 2019 need to be determined. The Community was asked to make suggestions on a feedback form provided during the meeting – some individuals opted to return forms via e-mail.

Outcome: Committee members will review 2019 draft of P&R District Needs Statement and provide comments, revisions or concerns via e-mail.

III. Old Business

a. Updates

- i. Community Outreach - Chess Event – further information needed - tabled
- ii. Harlem African Burial Ground – The Harlem African Burial Ground site is now on both the national and state register of historic places. This will afford additional protection to the sacred site.
- iii. Harlem EatUp! – Committee Chair Karen Horry attended meetings over the summer at the invitation of CB 9. The Friends of Morningside Park, as well as other concerned Community stakeholders attended the discussion with Harlem EatUp!

The Committee is still information gathering at this point and does not have an official position at this time, respective of CB 9's determinations.

iv. Parks:

1. Jackie Robinson Park – located on West 145th Street through West 155th Street between Edgecombe and Bradhurst Avenues is a Parks Without Borders Project; Procurement phase completion date is September 2018 with construction projected to begin October 2018 and completion January 2020. The \$4,441,000 mayoral funded project will reconstruct stairways, fencing, sidewalks, and entrances in Jackie Robinson Park.
 2. Colonel Young Playground – located on West 143rd to West 145th Streets between Malcolm X Boulevard and the Harlem River Drive is a project which involves renovation of the existing ballfield to a turfed multi-sport field to accommodate football, soccer Lacrosse in addition to baseball. The project is still pending due to a dertermination of the channeling of funds. The Parks Department is requiring \$12 million to complete the project.
- v. ULURP re: purchase of the private land plots for Joseph P. Daniel Wilson Memorial Garden by the City from the titular owner will be presented at the Thursday, September 20th Land Use meeting.

IV. Voting Items

- a. Nelson Mandela Garden Letter of Support - The Committee did not have quorum Board Member Eboni Mason left early. The sentiment of the Committee was in favor of issuing the letter. No items were voted on.

V. Announcements

Janai Shabazz is leasing the former Annie B. Newsome Daycare facility – there is a grassy area adjacent to the site that is maintained by the city which was formerly owned by the Abyssinian Development Corporation and apparently went into foreclosure and is now city-owned as per ACRIS. Ms. Shabazz is concerned about impact on her business if a developer wants to purchase the lot.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:33 pm.

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