



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10
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PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MINUTES
Wednesday, September 13th, 2017, 6:30pm
Hon. Karen Horry, Chair

Meeting began at 6:45 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, Troy Gethers, and Henrietta Lyle, Maurice Sessoms and Leevert Holmes

Committee Members Excused: Crystal Shipp

Committee Members Absent: Kevin Bitterman, Mark Bones, LaShanda Myers and Derrick Graham

Guests in attendance: Jamil Phillips (Hansborough Recreation Center, Director), Joseph Davis (El Museo del Barrio), Deborah Hill (Honeys and Bears), Jean Miller Honeys and Bears), Rasheedah Ali (Hansborough Aerobics Class), Kim McNeal (DPR, Chief of Recreation), Ana Chireno (El Museo del Barrio), Maite Basaguren (El Museo del Barrio) and Katherine Nicholson (Community Resident).

PRESENTATIONS

A. **HOWARD BENNET PLAYGROUND ART EXHIBIT – ANA CHIRENO AND MAITE BASAGUREN**

Project Objective:

To activate park space with health-inspired public art projects that promotes physical activity and strengthens community connections for adult populations. The \$13,750 project is scheduled for installation by a November 29th, 2017 deadline. The proposed project is designed to promote healthy living through increasing access, availability, awareness and appeal of public spaces that advocate physical activity, social cohesion and overall health.

The exhibitor (El Museo del Barrio) will be responsible for (1) fabrication costs, (2) installation and deinstallation costs (including rigging, engineering drawings if required and site restoration), (3) maintenance, (4) insurance and (5) A \$500 - \$10,000 bond.

The project has qualified for selection criteria include artistic merit, organizational capacity and artwork durability.

The project involves the creation of an oversized Coqui sculpture placed on a round platform in the middle of the Howard Bennet Playground. The giant Coqui will be painted with an original flower pattern in bold colors. The platform will be decorated with artificial plants and grass, resembling El Yunque's habitat.

The sculpture will be based on the artists' previous three dimensional mural works, which consist of children silhouettes and floral patterns painted on weather resistant panels in bright colors. A colorful landscape will be created between 25 to 35 feet long for the Howard Bennet Playground. Entrance gates. The installation will depict a narrative of the immigration journey of Puerto Rico's Coqui frog to New York. The three dimensional mural will be integrated with the artists' signature style floral patterns, highlighting Coqui frogs.

The project landscape measures: 25 to 35 feet long x 7 feet high x 3/4" deep approximately, weighing about 350 lbs. and will be constructed of plywood. The Coqui sculpture will measure 32" high x 28" wide x 34" long and will weigh approximately 150 lbs.

The project will entail the carrying out of precision measurements of the proposed sites no specific gates and outline preliminary drawing and sketches were made available.

The installation will be done in about three days. The work will be suspended with fence brackets, well secured with outdoors materials that will be weather resistant and waterproof. The panel will be varnished with anti-graffiti coating but some maintenance through the year will be expected.

The project will also include community engagement in the form of either two talks to the community or two art workshops. The group was encouraged to work with local area schools to develop multi-disciplinary curriculum to educate youth and the community on the coqui, its natural habitat, cultural significance, etc. The group was also asked to establish the relevance to the historical African American CB 10 community as well.

Outcome: The Committee has requested that the project leadership reach out to P.S. 194, Democracy Prep, Harlem Hospital, Lenox Terrace, Alma Rangel Gardens, Hansborough Recreation and other local area residents to establish community input and support.

B. HANSBOROUGH - HONEYS AND BEARS – RASHEEDAH ALI-SECK

The Honeys and Bears are an older adult group ranging in age from 62 to 100 which is famous for performing synchronized swim routines. The group has been practicing at Hansborough Recreation Center since 1979. The Honeys and Bears have also been conducting a successful intergenerational youth swim program that has produced some award winning youth swimmers. Needless to say, the Honeys and Bears are a CB 10 treasure and have been featured in countless documentaries in recognition of their many accomplishments and abilities.

The group has been having ongoing issues with the Hansborough management with respect to (1) water temperature being too cold, which is not conducive to the seniors who must contend with arthritis and other disabilities that are associated with aging, (2) the loss of program scheduling due to Hansborough's efforts to diversify their programming, and (3) the replacement of the previous water instructor.

Ms. Kim McNeal, DPR Chief of Recreation and Jamill Philips, Hansborough Recreation Center Director both advised of the many challenges encountered in accommodating the different water temperature requirements for the varying age groups and swim conditions, i.e., lap swimming, recreational and instructional swim. The Committee suggested an exploration of best practices utilized by other facilities working with similar demographics. The Committee also urged the Parks Department to consider prioritizing the seniors and intergenerational swim programs so that their scheduling is not reduced. Ms. McNeal advised that a new water instructor will be hired to begin at the beginning of October.

New windows are being installed in the pool area and may help to mitigate the water temperature control issues.

Outcome: The Committee will re-visit the issue of the water temperature maintenance in November to determine if there has been any progress.

DISCUSSIONS

A. COMMUNITY GARDENS PROPOSED RESOLUTION

The Committee reviewed a draft of a proposed resolution to bring remedy to how community gardens are handled with respect to a CB 10 general policy. The Committee recognizes, as does HPD, the critical importance of community input to the success of any local development projects. Area residents know first-hand what their housing needs are, what community facilities and other infrastructure they'd like to see in their neighborhoods.

Outcome: The Committee agreed to table the resolution and re-visit in October. Committee members will work to fine tune the proposed resolution.

B. EQUITY AND CB 10 PARKS

The topic was explored to assist in the development of the Parks and Recreation District Needs Statement and Budget Priorities components. Although there has been recent public investment in CB 10 parks as a result of the Mayoral Initiative, there are still disparities between Central Harlem parks and other Manhattan areas. The Committee viewed a 15-minute August 13th NY1 News clip featuring an interview by In Focus host Cheryl Wills of NY1 of Manhattan reporter Michael Scotto and Susan Chin, the executive director of The Design Trust for Public Space. The Committee discussed the need for the development of public-private partnerships and civic leadership, specifically park stewardship in CB 10, as these aspects are also integral to park improvement and sustainability.

C. PARKS AND RECREATION COMMUNITY OUTREACH EVENT

The Committee is re-visiting, as its community outreach event, a youth chess tournament to be held in Colonel Young Playground, for the spring 2018. The proposed event will be a collaboration of CB 10, NYC Parks and “Chess in the Schools”.

D. AFRICAN AMERICAN BURIAL GROUND (126TH STREET BUS DEPOT)

A church was established in the mid-1660s in a Dutch village named Nieuw Haarlem in Upper Manhattan. The church had separate cemeteries for white European descendants and black African descendants. When the church moved, the remains of the whites were moved to Woodlawn Cemetery. The graves of the blacks were left where they were as the land was given over to a beer garden, a movie studio and, eventually, a block square depot for street cars and buses. This is an opportunity to correct a grievous wrong and bring honor to the African Americans who were buried in the cemetery.

Bus Depot Task Force

In 2015, after the MTA moved much of their operation off-site, the NYC Council Speaker’s office convened the East 126th Street Bus Depot Task Force, a group of elected officials, City agencies, and community stakeholders including the Harlem African Burial Ground Task Force (HAGBTF), to discuss the goals for the site.

After many meetings, it was determined that the future of the site should have the following goals:

- Develop a living memorial and cultural center to honor and commemorate the significant social, economic, and cultural history of the cemetery and its descendant community
- Create a mixed-use, mixed-income development program
- Enhance site connectivity to the neighborhood
- Realize a financially feasible program to support project uses
- Maximize job creation

The project entered the City's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) On February 21, 2017. The 7- month procedure is currently in the City Council phase which is a sixty day period.

In 2018, after ULURP approvals, a Request for Proposals will be released to select a development team to redevelop the site and meet the public goals established by the Task Forces, community, and elected officials.

“A historic resources assessment is required if there is the potential to affect either archaeological or architectural resources. Impacts on historic resources are considered on those sites directly affected by the proposed project and in the area surrounding the project site.

The project site does not encompass any designed historic architectural resources. However, the Proposed Project would result in in-ground disturbance on the project site, and therefore has the potential to affect archaeological resources present on the site. 2Because the project site is known to contain significant historic and cultural archaeological resources, measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any adverse impacts on historic and cultural resources will be developed in consultation with New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) and others as appropriate, such as the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (PPRHP) and the Harlem African Burial Ground Task Force. Therefore, an assessment of archaeological resources will be provided in the DGEIS [Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement], as described in the Draft of Scope of Work.” – per the Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS) - 126th Street Bus Depot CEQR NO. 16DME011M - 19 August 2016.

Update:

The New York City Council voted on Wednesday, September 27th , to approve a zoning application for the development of a the 126th Street African Burial Ground Memorial and Mixed-Use development.

The project is designed to deliver a permanent memorial, “deeply affordable” housing and jobs for East Harlem residents. The project will include (1) a permanent outdoor public memorial that will be located on the historic footprint of the burial ground, (2) an indoor cultural center that will provide educational programming, (3) approximately 1 million square feet of residential and commercial space and (4) approximately 80% of units in the project will be affordable, and at least half will target households with incomes ranging from extremely low to moderate. The memorial will honor the historic contribution of African-Americans to East Harlem and the city’s history. – *per New York Times: Rezoning a Block in Harlem, Respecting an African Burial Ground – Sept. 26, 2017*

Outcome: The Committee has requested a presentation by the Harlem African American Burial Ground (HABG) Task Force to apprise the CB10 community of the project. CB 10 will issue a position statement after speaking with CB 11 and the Task Force with respect to the honorable disposition of the remains and the proposed memorial center.

E. BUDGET PRIORITIES

The Committee has been discussing 2019 budget priorities since June of last fiscal year and will have a final version for the October 16th submission date to the District Manager.

F. DISTRICT NEEDS STATEMENT

The Committee has been discussing 2019 budget priorities since June of last fiscal year and will have a final version for the October 16th submission date to the District Manager.

Voting Items:

- Community Gardens Resolution – Item was tabled until October, in order to provide for more information gathering.

New Business

Announcements

Resolution on the Location of the Harlem Eat Up in Morningside Park

The Committee **did not have quorum**. Five of the ten standing members were not in attendance. The Committee strongly suggests that members attend to achieve quorum for all future meetings.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:12 pm.

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