



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10
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PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MINUTES
Wednesday, February 12th, 2020, 6:00 pm
Hon. Karen Horry, 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, Tahanie Aboushi, Barbara Nelson and Derek Perkinson.

Board Members Excused: Karen Dixon, Eboni Mason and Kevin Bitterman

Committee Members Absent: Thomas Moore Deborah Gilliard and Staci J. Ramos

Guests in attendance: Shena Kaufman (NYC Parks- District Manager), LaToya Finley (FGLF - Youth Golf), Dan Hogle (The Black Institute), Kathryn Meuseudiek, Jack Einstein (Richman Law Group), Diane Sargent (Fred Johnson Tennis Courts), Diane Pinkerton (Malikah's Keepers), Charlene Edwards (Jackie Robinson Recreation Center)

PRESENTATIONS:

A. Use of Toxic Pesticides in CB 10 Parks - Resolution to Support NYC Council Intr. 1524-2019: A local Law to Amend the Administrative Code of the City of New York, In Relation to the Use of Pesticides by City Agencies - Dan Hogle (The Black Institute)

NYC Council Intr. 1524-2019 is a Local Law proposed to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to the use of pesticides by City agencies. This bill would prohibit city agencies from applying to any property owned or leased by the city any chemically-based pesticide.

The New York City Parks Department has long used Roundup to control weeds on city property. This toxic herbicide, which came onto the market in 1973, is manufactured by the agro-technological company, Monsanto. Roundup contains a cocktail of chemicals, including the compound glyphosate, that are linked to severe kidney damage, asthma, non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, and birth defects, among other grave disorders and side effects.

Intr. 1524-2019 would move city agencies to use biological pesticides, which are derived from naturally occurring substances, as opposed to synthetic substances. There is a general acceptance that biological pesticides are usually inherently less toxic than their conventional counterparts and are often more effective at targeting a specific pest. Biological pesticides can also be used in smaller quantities and break-down more rapidly in the environment. Further, the bill adds measures to prevent harmful pesticides from contaminating water systems by preventing synthetic pesticides from being sprayed within 75 feet of a natural body of water.

The issue is made more urgent, for New York City and for many municipalities and states, because most environmental regulation below the federal level in the U.S relies heavily on the determinations of EPA. Under the Trump administration, federal environmental regulation generally, and regulation of pesticides, in particular, have been dramatically weakened; this administration and its EPA clearly advantage agrochemical and other industry interests over the health of people and ecosystems. The consequent loss of public trust in federal agencies broadly, and EPA in particular, reinforce the need for localities to step up and protect local and regional residents and environments.

Intr. 1524-2019 was introduced on April 18, 2019 and was forwarded to the Committee on Health, after receiving support from a veto-proof supermajority of 34 City Council co-sponsors. Councilmembers Ben Kallos and Carolina Rivera, bill sponsors, and their 34 NYC Council colleagues sent a letter to Mayor Bill de Blasio on January 29th, 2020 requesting that he put a moratorium on the use of toxic pesticides “until policies and procedures can be codified by the City Council and relevant agencies”.

New Yorkers for Parks and (NY4P) testified before the January 29th, 2020 NYC Council Committee on Health. NY4P believes the legislation as written would be overly restrictive, and would have adverse impacts on management techniques used by NYC Parks, particularly in natural areas and park properties that present safety challenges for manual control of weeds and invasive species. While NY4P agrees with the spirit of the legislation as it relates to lessening the use of pesticides in our parks, the group asserts that an outright ban on all toxic chemical pesticides will create maintenance challenges that threaten some of their most unique open space assets.

The NYC Council Committee on Health addressed Intr. 1524-2019 on January 29th, 2020. The Committee’s action was to lay over the vote on the legislation.

The Black Institute presented their January 2020 “Poison Parks - A Special Report By The Black Institute” before the Parks and Recreation Committee and made copies available of the comprehensive report to the Committee and Community. The Black Institute will help interested groups to organize community-based meetings at which they will share their presentation to sound the alarm on the use of glyphosate in our parks. They can be reached at 212-871-6899 or www.theblackinstitute.org, info@theblackinstitute.org, theblackin (facebook), @theblackinst (twitter) and theblackinstitute (instagram).

Outcome: The Committee reviewed a drafted copy of a resolution to support Intr. 1524-2019. There was no vote taken, as the Committee did not have quorum. The sentiment of the Committee was in favor of the resolution and to forward it on to the Executive Committee. The Black Institute asked to use the resolution as a template for other local area boards. CB 10 was the first Board to consider the resolution.

B. Youth Golf Program - LaToya Finney

The Finer Life Golf Foundation (FLGF) promotes the introduction and increased participation of children in golf and would like to bring their program to the Central Harlem Community. They

provide exposure and education to children about the game of golf, while helping the youth recognize their own potential and self-worth through golf. The program is designed to promote critical thinking, social and life skills. The program is free and is open to all interested children. FLGF will provide instruction along with junior golf clubs, golf balls and tees, hitting mats, water and volunteers. FLGF also provided a listing of NY Colleges with golf programs and where golf scholarships are available.

Outcome: The Committee provided information on available community resources that could be beneficial in promoting the objectives of the not-for-profit organization. NYC Parks will help in identifying locations for the program and information on required permits.

C. Harlem EatUp!/Marcus Garvey Park - Tineta Newton (Harlem EatUp!)

The annual 2020 Harlem EatUp! will be held in Marcus Garvey Park. The week-long event will run from May 15th through May 17th 9:00 am to 9:00 pm, in addition to pre and post dates for set-up and breakdown. The hosting organization; Karlitz & Company provided over 200 neighborhood signatures from local area residents. The park will be closed to regular park use during the time of the festival. The event will provide admission to free area activities along with paid admission to enter the featured “Harlem Stroll” which will consist of 21 areas including “The Ultimate Grand Tasting, the Marketplace and the EatUp! Main Stage. The event, funded by local and corporate sponsorships, draws in 14,000 participants from around the city, tri-state area and beyond. Annually, the festival brings together local and world-renowned chefs, restaurants, food makers, artists and musicians to celebrate the food, art, culture and heritage of the Harlem Community.

Outcome: The presentation was advisory and the sentiment of the Committee was in favor of supporting the event and Community Board 11 in this endeavor. The group is requesting a letter in support to the project.

D. NYC Parks & Recreation Landscape Architects & Gardeners - Renovation of Hancock Park (St. Nicholas Avenue at West 124th Street) - Shena Kaufman (Manager - District 9 - NYC Parks)

Hancock Park will undergo a landscape renovation which will include the gutting of the 0.07 acre triangle/plaza followed by replacement with gravel, tables and chairs. The low-budget project will enhance the area which is currently under-utilized and proximal to a Citibikes’ station. Flowers will be planted. The project is targeted to be completed by Spring.

Commented [1]:

Outcome: The presentation was informational. No action is required by the Board.

DISCUSSIONS

A. P&R FY’20 Community Event - “Technology in the Park” Brochure & Logistics

The Committee discussed planning for a community outreach event in collaboration with Google’s Code Next Students/ Black Googlers Network and CB10 for Community youth ranging from 5th to 8th graders. The event, scheduled for Saturday, February 22nd, is being held at the Jackie Robinson Park Recreation Center from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Setup will be from 9:00 am

to 10:00 am and breakdown from 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm. The event brochure was reviewed and will be printed. The one-day event is designed to acclimate local area youth to the technological advances that are being required in today's workforce. The Committee will provide breakfast and Google will provide a pizza lunch.

Outcome: This event will be a Parks and Recreation Committee Community outreach project for FY'20. Event flyers will be e-blasted and youth organizations will be contacted individually.

B. Morningside Park Update

The horrific and fatal stabbing of Tessa Majors, a Barnard student, in Morningside Park this past December, has prompted copious brainstorming of Community Stakeholders, City Agencies, Elected Officials, Community Board 9, Community Board 10 and Columbia University, resulting in pro-activity to prevent any future such incidents:

Safety Improvements

- NYC Parks meeting regularly with NYPD, Columbia University and Barnard College Security to improve safety in the park
- New improved lighting for the entire park - all lampposts will be converted to brighter LED light, beginning with eight lampposts on the main staircase at 116th Street. Spring 2020 is the targeted date of completion
- Portable lighting has been installed on the perimeter of the park
- The addition of two new cameras at the foot of the 116th Street staircase, in complement to five pre-existing NYC Parks security cameras and the Columbia Security booth cameras
- Installation of a substation for the Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP) at 123rd Street. A PEP sergeant and six officers assigned to Morningside Park will be based there; working two shifts; seven days a week
- NYPD has assigned four officers to patrol the park on three shifts daily.

Programming

- "*Mindful Walking in Morningside Park*" - A group walkthrough of Morningside Park taking in the experience of the calming effects of nature. The group meets the 1st Wednesday of the month at 9:00 am at the lake and is co-sponsored by Friends of Morningside Park and Mindful Harlem
- "*Morningside Park Winter Farmers Market*" - The Morningside Park Farmers Market brings small farms and local artisan food makers together in the park every Saturday, year-round

Capital Improvements

The renovation of the playground at 123rd Street was recently completed. Reconstruction of the middle playground and basketball courts spanning 117th - 119th Streets is underway. The project upgrades will make the park greener, more sustainable and visually pleasing. The new playground will provide more options for play and fitness for all age groups and will be ADA compliant. The design will integrate the urban and natural landscapes while including play equipment for 5-12 year olds, swings, table tennis, game tables and fitness equipment, an intermediate basketball court and two smaller courts

The City Gardens Club funded an upgrading and beautification of the area around the pond at 113th - 114th Streets. The ballfields have been re-seeded and will be ready for the spring.

It was expressed that the CB 10 Community has been engaged in a campaign since 2014 advocating for the reconstruction of the Colonel Charles Young Playground ball field to accommodate a variety of sports which would provide local area youth more extensive athletic options. The endeavor escalated after the unfortunate 2016 death of Mrs. Odessa Sims, a long-time neighborhood resident; wife, mother and grandmother, who was fatally struck by stray bullets as she innocently sat with friends enjoying a summer evening in Colonel Charles Young Playground. The site, which is one of CB 10's premiere parks, remains in disrepair and is underutilized. It was suggested that the Morningside Park initiative serve as a model for the entire NYC Parks District 9.

Outcome: The Committee will continue to provide representation and support of this major effort which we hope to have extended to the CB 10 area as well.

C. A Preliminary Discussion: CB 10 Waterfront & Stakeholders

The Parks and Recreation Committee is seeking an update on the completed and pending projects for the Vision 2020 Plan, a comprehensive waterfront plan, which was originated in 2008 and released in 2011. The NYC Council Committee on Resiliency and Waterfronts will be hearing testimony from City agencies and waterfront advocates regarding what plans and projects may be included in the updated Plan scheduled to be released in December 2020. The City Council Committee will also examine how the updated Plan will address increasing climate resiliency in light of what we know today about climate change and ensure that all New Yorkers have access to the waterfronts.

Outcome: The Committee discussed organizing a meeting for March to address the issue of the Waterfront and Resiliency which will include agencies that can provide expertise on the topic as it pertains to CB 10.

I. Old Business

a. NYC Parks Updates:

- i. Park Updates** - -Colonel Charles Young Playground Ball Field Renovation - NYC parks has allocated \$750,000 towards the project (which was estimated at \$5 to \$8 million in 2016) - Committee will revisit with previous funding proposers and the NYC Parks Commissioner to move project to status of a capital project. The Jackie Robinson *Parks Without Borders* Project is progressing and nearing

summer completion. A. Philip Randolph Square is being funded and will be expanded and renovated.

- ii. **Seneca Village Task Force** - The Task Force will be continued. The permanent commemoration will be addressed in a special March 2020 Task Force meeting.

- iii. **Jackie Robinson Park Recreation Center HVAC System**

- Reconstruction** - The requested letter of support was sent to NYC Parks

- iv. **Byrd Classic Park Renaming** - Still pending review by NYC Parks Commissioner

- v. **The Exonerated Five and an Associated Exhibit in Central Park** - to be addressed at March Committee meeting

- vi. **CB 10 Gardens Mapping Brochure** - still pending completed draft

II. Voting Items:

Resolution to Support NYC Council Intr. 1524-2019: A local Law to Amend the Administrative Code of the City of New York, In Relation to the Use of Pesticides by City Agencies

Outcome: The Committee was unable to vote due to lack of quorum. The Committee sentiment was to move the item forward to the Executive meeting for a vote to go before the full Board.

III. New Business

- a. The Committee is planning to discuss the “Exonerated Five” and an associated exhibit within Central Park, with NYC Parks, The Central Park Conservancy and Community Stakeholders at the March meeting.
- b. The Committee will discuss the CB10 waterfront concerns at the March meeting.
- c. The Ronald McNair Park, William McCray Park, the Renaissance and the Rucker Park have immediate repair and revitalization needs. Some of these parks have not had renovations or upgrades for 30 years or more.

IV. Announcements -

- a. **Jackie Robinson Park Recreation Center - 85 Bradhurst Avenue, NY, NY 10039 (located at 148th Street):**

- i. Black History Month Piano Concert featuring Emme Kemp - Saturday, February 22, 2020 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm/Concert and 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm/Open Play
 - ii. Manhattan CB 10 Parks and Recreation Presents *“Code Next powered by Google”* Technology Event In Honor of Black History Month - Saturday, February 22, 2020 for 5th to 8th Graders - 10:00 am - 1:00 pm
 - iii. Spring Into Fitness Program featuring a free ZUMBA class. Dance to Latin and hip-hop music and receive information about healthy eating and light refreshments - Friday, March 20, 2020 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

The Committee **did not have quorum**, six 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 8:30 pm.

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