



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10
215 West 125th Street, 4th Floor—New York, NY 10027
T: 212-749-3105 F: 212-662-4215

CICELY HARRIS
Chairperson

SHATIC MITCHELL
District Manager

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MINUTES
Wednesday, September 11th, 2019, 6:30pm
Hon. Karen Horry, Chair

Meeting began at 6:32 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, Kevin Bitterman, Karen Dixon and Barbara Mason

Committee Members Excused: Eboni Mason

Committee Members Absent: Seitu Jamel Hart, Tiffany Reaves, Derrick Perkinson and Deborah Gilliard.

Guests in attendance: Lane Addonizio (Central Park Conservancy), John D. (Mitchell Giurgola), Christopher Nolan (Central Park Conservancy), John T. Reddick (Central Park Conservancy), Grey Elam (Central Park Conservancy), Susie Rodriguez (Central Park Conservancy) Mia's Dayson (LTACT Communications), Makela Watkins (Central Park Conservancy), Brenda Ratliff (121 St. Nicholas), Mitchel Loring (NYC Parks), Erica Bilal (NYCEDC), Waheera Marsalis (NYCEDC), D. Glaude (LTACT - Tennis), Isabel Samuel, Steve Simon (NYC Parks), Penelope Cox (MBP), Pam Elam

PRESENTATIONS:

A. Central Park Conservancy - Meer Lasker Pool

The landmarked Central Park's Lasker pool and ice rink is in need of a major makeover. The proposed project will be funded collectively by the Central Park Conservancy and the city. The project will warrant the pool and rink closure due to construction for three years. The reconstruction will better connect the North Woods and the Harlem Meer, both currently blocked from one another by the rink. Donald Trump's company, the Trump Organization, runs the skating rink, but their concession expires in 2021. During the summer months, the rink turns into a public pool, operated by the city's Parks Department. The city will provide \$50 million for the project, with the Central Park Conservancy funding the rest from private donations. The heavily used facility has been continuously plagued with problems and is reportedly beyond repair due to serious flaws in the original engineering since its construction in 1966.

The project will remove the facility structure as a barrier so the watercourse that runs through the ravine will once again flow overland into the Meer, instead of being diverted into a culvert behind the pool and rink building. The path beside the watercourse will likewise be re-established, restoring the lost pedestrian connection and view through Huddleston Arch toward the historic landscape. The project team's design calls for the new recreational facility to be shifted to the eastern portion of the site rather than straddling the middle, with the pool house built into a slope in the topography. A

landscaped berm will envelope the elongated oval pool and rink, fully integrating the facility into the setting.

In expanding the recreational opportunities at the Meer, the design also provides a boardwalk across a series of small islands and the freshwater marsh where the restored watercourse will flow into the Meer. By making the facility more open and accessible, the project will support expanded year-round programming opportunities for the first time while enabling connections among the communities of Park users, from casual strollers and picnickers to recreational runners and birdwatchers. The design proposes increased access for communities around the north end of Central Park. The facility will be integrated into the landscape and re-establish long-severed connections to one of the Park's most picturesque areas. The new facility will be built in the spirit of Central Park's original design by Frederick Law Olmsted, (American landscape architect), and will provide year-round programming and expanded recreational opportunities at the Harlem Meer, enhanced swimming and skating, including a new area for free-form skating on a lake in Central Park, a larger than Olympic-size pool, and a new outdoor spray pad. The facility will be more integrated into the surrounding landscape, and provide Park users with year-round access to restrooms and amenities, a boardwalk that travels through a series of small islands and a freshwater marsh, unhindered access across the north end of the Park — both by reconnecting the watercourse that runs through the Ravine so it flows freely into the Harlem Meer, and re-establishing the pedestrian path that once ran alongside it.

The Conservancy is investing in a comprehensive reimagining of the site. The new design was created by the Conservancy's design office, led by Chief Landscape Architect Christopher J. Nolan, FASLA, with the architectural team of Susan T. Rodriguez Architecture|Design in collaboration with Mitchell Giurgola. The project includes building the indoor space of the new facility into the slope on the eastern side of the site, with a green roof overlooking the area better integrating the facility into the surrounding landscape, allowing visitors to move more easily across the north end of the Park between the North Woods and the Harlem Meer providing a new swimming pool and a new outdoor splash pad, which will be available for visitors before and after the public pool season, installing a seasonal ice rink for skating and hockey, constructing a boardwalk in the Meer that converts to a skating ribbon in winter, accessed from an open-air pavilion on the shoreline, expanding nature-based recreation, re-creating the watercourse that historically existed between Huddleston Arch and the Meer. A new menu of recreational activities and programs will be introduced — such as boating, fishing, nature walks, and wildlife observation — and the facility will be available to the surrounding communities more throughout the year.

The project has a budget of \$150 million, which includes a \$40 million maintenance and capital repair fund, to ensure that the new facility continues to serve the public at the highest standard. The City of New York has allocated \$50 million to the project, and the Conservancy has committed to raising \$100 million and overseeing the design and construction; and

The Conservancy and the New York City Parks anticipate that groundbreaking will take place in spring 2021. Construction is expected to be completed in 2024. The Conservancy is working with NYC Parks to develop a plan to minimize inconvenience and to identify interim locations for existing programs during the construction period. The Central Park Conservancy is visiting Community Boards surrounding Central Park

to share the design plans for the proposed reconstructed facility with extended amenities. The design plan is developed as a result of public charettes and incorporates community feedback; comments, questions, concerns and suggestions. Central Park Conservancy will be returning to CB 10 with a final design and are requesting a resolution from CB 10 in support of the project. They have received sanctions from CBs 9 and 11 to date.

Objectives:

- Replace the existing facility
- Remove a physical and visual barrier
- Repair the damaged landscape and impaired hydrology
- Design an environmentally sustainable solution
- Develop a design inspired by the scenic landmark
- Provide the maximum swimming and skating possible in the restored site
- Build a welcoming, accessible facility
- Server more park users year-round
- Expand nature-based recreation

Outcome: The consensus of the Committee members present was to move forward with a resolution draft to be submitted at the September Executive Committee meeting for a full vote at the October full Board meeting.

B. Harlem African Burial Ground

The Economic Development Corporation (NYC EDC), in conjunction with the Harlem African Burial Ground Task Force and the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, is proposing a new 15,000 square foot space memorial and cultural center to honor the historic Harlem African Burial Ground, as a component of a mixed-use complex including affordable housing and jobs for the East Harlem community. The memorial center would also be used to inter the remains of Africans buried in the pre-existing cemetery used from the mid-1660's to the 1830's after it was leased from the Low Dutch Reformed Church of Harlem (now the Elmendorf Reformed Church) to be used as grazing land for sheep and cattle.

The African burial ground was located on the southeastern portion of the 2.7-acre bus depot site, which covers a full city block in what was formerly the original Dutch settlement of Nieuw Haarlem in the 17th century. The 126th Street Harlem African Burial Ground Memorial and Mixed-Use Project is designed to preserve this essential piece of the city's history, while simultaneously addressing needs expressed by the East Harlem community. The 126th Street Bus Depot site has had many uses over the years. It once sat within the Dutch village of Nieuw Haarlem, which was then a sparsely populated agricultural area, far removed from the densely developed settlement of New Amsterdam at the southern tip of Manhattan. Over 350 years ago, the Reformed Low Dutch Church of Harlem and its associated cemeteries were created here, with the first church building near a portion of the bus depot site and the shoreline of the Harlem River. The river was wider at that time and extended through the northeastern corner of the bus depot site. Over time, the shoreline was filled in and the Manhattan street grid was built, establishing the block in its current configuration. Adjoining the Reformed Low Dutch Church of Harlem was a plot of land identified as the "African Burying Ground at Harlem," which was actively used until the mid-19th century. The church moved to its current location in 1825 and the burial ground was sold in 1853, thus

marking the beginning of a succession of sales, different uses, and adjustments to the burial ground site. It was developed as an amusement park and casino, a barracks for an all-black National Guard unit, a film studio, and finally in the 1930s, as a bus depot. Decades of neglect, construction, and subsurface disruptions resulted in the displacement of the original African Burial Ground. The MTA is returning the site to the City. Acknowledging the immense historical significance of the site, in 2015 the City, through NYCEDC, began to work in partnership with elected officials and community stakeholders to develop a transformative mixed-use project at the site, centered on a new Harlem African Burial Ground memorial and cultural center to honor the significance of the site and its descendant community. While historical records had suggested that the former cemetery had once been located beneath the bus depot, this could not be confirmed without an on-site study.

In 2015, after the MTA announced it would relocate its operations, archaeologists commissioned by NYCEDC found the disarticulated remains of at least three people, likely of African descent. This historic rediscovery conclusively established that an African burial ground had existed on the site, allowing the City and community to begin planning for a memorial and mixed-use redevelopment. The remains were consecrated in a ceremony led by Task Force co-chair Reverend Dr. Patricia A. Singletary, and are currently held in safe storage at the Landmarks Preservation Commission archives so that they can be reinterred at the future memorial. Consistent with the City's Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP), additional archaeological work has been conducted by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPS), supervised by HABGTF. Redevelopment of the 2.7-acre bus depot block will, first and foremost, feature a permanent outdoor memorial on the 0.4-acre footprint where the historic Harlem African Burial Ground was formerly located. Next to the memorial, an indoor cultural center will provide programming related to the history and cultural significance of the burial ground.

The future operator of the memorial and the future developer will work together to create a living memorial befitting this sacred space, following the mission and vision laid out by the Burial Ground Task Force. The City of New York will provide capital funding to construct the memorial and cultural center, and the mixed-use development will generate a permanent revenue stream to support its operations. The city's Economic Development Corporation says it will begin looking this fall for a nonprofit operator for the Harlem African Burial Ground, a cultural center and outdoor memorial set to take shape on a trapezoidal piece of land between Second and First Avenues. The project, officials say, comes with a promise of a built-in funding stream. In the 1660s, the site was a cemetery, perched on what was then the banks of the Harlem River. It served as the only place in the Dutch-controlled Village of Nieuw Haarlem where people of African descent were legally allowed to be buried. When the City Council approved zoning changes in 2017 to allow the new development, Melissa Mark-Viverito, who represented the area, reached an agreement with then-Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen. Under the deal, at least 80% of the apartments will be affordable — and the future developer will supply \$1 million a year to operate the memorial and cultural center. the EDC and the Department of Cultural Affairs will release a "Request for Expressions of Interest" (RFEI) for nonprofit groups interested in running the site. EDC will officially ask for development proposals after fulfillment of the RFEI. The Harlem African Burial Ground site is now on both the national and state registers of historic places. Being listed on these registers is a milestone and recognizes the importance of the sacred site and provides it with a measure of protection in moving forward.

Outcome: The NYC EDC visit was informative. CB 10 is being asked to engage the community in a search for a tenant for the memorial cultural center. An RFEI will be released in October and will

be forwarded to the CB 10 District Office. The CB 10 Community is also being encouraged to monitor the progression of the project through the NYCEDC <https://www.nycedc.com/project/east-126th-harlem-african-burial-ground-project> and HABGTF: <https://www.habgtaskforce.org/home> websites.

C. Women's Suffrage Monument - Central Park

The “Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony Women’s Rights Pioneers Monument” will now include abolitionist and women’s rights activist Sojourner Truth, in addition to Stanton and Anthony, per the Monumental Women’s Statue Fund (Statue Fund). The decision to add Sojourner Truth came after the city’s Public Design Commission approved the statue with the condition that “the applicant will work to identify meaningful ways to acknowledge and commemorate women of color who played an active role in the Woman Suffrage Movement. The original design of the monument included a scroll with the names and quotes of 22 women other than Stanton and Anthony who played important roles in the women’s suffrage movement, including Truth. But that design received criticism for not giving enough recognition to the other women, and the commission worried that it could be perceived as insulting and marginalizing. Truth, Anthony and Stanton often attended the same meetings and conventions, and historical records show they wrote to each other and supported each others’ work. The design of the monument will feature Truth speaking, Anthony “bringing documentation of injustice” and Stanton poised to write, Truth sits with Stanton at a small table, perhaps on the occasion of a conference for the abolition of slavery or for women’s rights or for both, as these movements were, for much of their history, joined in activism. Meredith Bergmann is the sculptor selected to create the statue. A rendering was not immediately available, but will be unveiled at the Public Design Commission on Monday, September 16th. The three figures each represent an essential aspect of activism,” Bergmann said. “Girls and boys who encounter this monument will see a positive image of diverse women working together to change the world. The new design must be reviewed by the Public Design Commission. The statue is scheduled to be presented on Central Park’s Mall -Literary Walk on Aug. 26, 2020, the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th amendment.

Outcome: The Statue Fund provided an update on the design and current project status.

DISCUSSIONS

A. Colonel Charles Young Playground Ball Field Renovation Resolution

Colonel Charles Young Playground is located from 143rd to 145th Streets between Malcolm X Blvd. and the Harlem River Drive. The Community has been engaged in extensive discussions since 2014 (a period of 5 years), with NYC Parks and elected officials around design plans for implementation the Cal Ripken Foundation “Field of Dreams” Program. The original resolution was passed unanimously by the full Board on October 5th 2016 in support of this grass roots initiative to renovate the existing ball field which remains under-utilized. The park, which is a premiere facility, could be servicing thousands of local area youth who live or attend school and other extra-curricular programs within Community Board 10 and who otherwise have to travel outside of the community to engage in intramural or interscholastic sports in more accommodating facilities. NYC Parks recommends that requests be made to elected officials to allocate funds for the capital project. NYC Parks reports that there are no monies currently available to fund the capital project. The Committee is reviewing a

drafted resolution to recommend the project to be funded by elected officials in an on-going effort to bring the project to fruition.

Outcome: The Committee did not have quorum and was unable to vote. The sentiment of the Committee was to move the resolution forward to the EC for a vote to move forward to the full Board for a vote. Committee will review and recommend any needed revisions.

B. Playground Associates for CB 10 Parks Resolution

There are currently three NYC Parks “Kids in Motion” programs in CB 10; Jackie Robinson Park, Martin Luther King, Jr. Playground and St. Nicholas Playground North. Local area youth and their families would be provided a safer park area. In addition, CB 10 has a large homeless families population. Children of these families could benefit greatly from the facilitation of safe and consistent park programming with structured activities. CB 10 is requesting an increased number of playground associates through the NYC Parks Kids in Motion Program. Parks has advised that eligibility criteria of selected parks requires a functional comfort station and no public safety issues. The Committee will draft a resolution.

Outcome: The Committee did not have quorum and was unable to vote. The sentiment of the Committee was to move a resolution forward to the EC for a vote to move forward to the full Board for a vote. Committee members will review, comment and make any needed revisions of the final copy online.

C. Park Issue Updates - Steve Simon (NYC Parks - Manhattan Chief of Staff)

- A. **Hansborough Honeys and Bears - Program Interim Location** - Karen Dixon - Executive Director of Harlem Dowling will speak with CEO of Children’s Aid Society after speaking directly with Honeys and Bears to assess their needs with respect to interim programming at Milbank Center during Hansborough pool closure due to repairs.
- B. **Hansborough Elevator Upgrade** - Parks advises that this be listed as a high priority listing on CB 10 Budget Priorities
- C. **Jackie Robinson Park - “Parks Without Borders”** - Project is on schedule
- D. **A. Philip Randolph Square** - a park re-design is being drafted by NYC Parks
- E. **Byrd Classic Park Renaming** - Deputy Commissioner Castro’s office has received additional supporting documentation and was reviewing the request and advised that a determination would be made by June. Parks now advises that to-date the review is still pending due to a backlog over the summer.

D. **P&R FY’20 Community Event - “Technology in the Park” - Proposed Partnership with CB 11 and Google in Marcus Garvey Park** - The Committee would like to use Jackie Robinson Park as the out-door event site for the fall 2019 or spring of 2020 - Discussion tabled for October meeting.

E. **District Needs Statement FY’21** - Committee Members will review prior statement and make comments and/or revisions on-line.

F. **Budget Priorities** - Committee Members will review prior listing and make comments and/or revisions on-line.

I. Old Business

a. Updates:

- i. **Seneca Village Task Force** - Central Park Conservancy will be installing 16 digital and interactive signs throughout the foot print of the historic village, A launching event to be hosted by the Central Park Conservancy is scheduled for Wednesday, October 23rd. The location and time will be announced shortly. A public opening event will be held 10/26 and 10/27
- ii. **Nelson Mandela Garden** - The Gardners are still hopeful that Garden will be restored to their care. They are planning a prayer vigil for Saturday, September 14th.
- iii. **Joseph Daniel Wilson Memorial Garden** - The City is actively engaged in a transaction to purchase the privately owned lot with the titular owner and is expected to enter into finalization.

II. Voting Items:

- a. Colonel Charles Young Playground Ball Field Renovation Resolution
- b. Playground Associates for CB 10 Resolution
The Committee did not have quorum - voting did not take place

III. New Business

- a. A suggestion was offered by Ms. Ratliff to close A. Philip Randolph Park until a viable solution can be reached to solve the on-going problematic issues
- b. Lenox Terrace residents are in opposition to bringing over-scaled developments to Central Harlem. The residents' specific concerns with respect to CB 10 parks include;
 - i. The proposed re-zoning would lead to a huge jump in the area population (with 2,000 new apartments (which Olnick's own estimates would bring 3500 new residents to Lenox Terrace, basically doubling the developments' current occupancy). The group asserts that this would place substantial pressure on the Hansborough Recreation Center as well as parks and playgrounds in the immediate area which serves youth, young adults, adult and senior populations.
 - ii. The re-zoning would also drastically increase the potential development of the land which is the site of the landmarked Hansborough Recreation Center and the Kennedy Center. The residents assert that this could lead to pressure on both NYC Parks and Catholic Charities to either develop these properties or sell them to developers, which would further decrease public space and programs for recreation in the area.
 - iii. Re-zoning to a C6-2 property will inadvertently pave the way for a decrease in space, programs and recreation in the Central Harlem area as well as overburden the capacity of city workers to maintain

sanitation and overall aesthetics of the districts' parks due to an increased populace and subsequent overcrowding.

IV. Announcements -

- a.** NYC Parks Event - Halloween Pet Costume Party - Celebrate Halloween with NYC Parks and your best friend; your pet! Dress up with your pet in your best Halloween costumes and join Parks for pictures in their photo booth, pick a pumpkin in a pumpkin patch, dance to music and more! Saturday, October 26th, 2019 12:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. - Jackie Robinson Park Bandshell (85 Bradhurst Avenue, New York, NY. 10039 located at 148th Street) - The event is free and open to the public. For accessibility information contact Ahmad.Sawary @parks.nyc.gov or call 212-234-9607.
- b.** Google CODE NEXT registration ends Friday, September 13th for High School Students
- c.**

The Committee **did not have quorum, five** of the nine standing members were not in attendance. No items were voted on. The Committee strongly suggests that members attend to achieve quorum for all future meetings.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:45 pm.
~Respectfully submitted by Parks and Recreation Chair, Karen Horry~