

PARKS AND CULTURE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE- MINUTES
MARCH 3, 2015-CB12 OFFICE

Committee Members Present

Osi Kaminer, Asst. Chair (OK)
Kelley Boyd, (KB)
Juan Mejia, (JM)
Elizabeth Lorris-Ritter, (LR)
Richard Lewis, (RL)

Committee Member Absent

Mitch Glenn, Chair

Board Members Present

NA

Public Member Present

Patti Jacobs (PJ)

Guests

Jennifer Hoppa, Admin. Northern Manhattan Parks, Sara Fisher, Joel Yoffie, Kevin McKeon, Trish Auditor, Rick Zeidler, NYC Parks and Gary Dearborn, New York Restoration Project (NYRP).

The meeting was called to order by the Asst. Chair Osi Kaminer at 7:08 with an introduction and welcome. OK, Asst. Chair explained that Mitch Glenn, Chair, is absent and she will be the presiding officer.

OK further stated that committee will follow the agenda.

1. The first presenter Osaliki Sepulveda, Program Manager from Alianza Dominicana Arts Organization did not appear.

OK changed the order of the agenda to allow Sara Fisher time to organize her presentation.

2. Jennifer Hoppa, Admin. Northern Manhattan Parks presented.

Parks Committee Report

a) Thank you to everyone who came to Northern Manhattan Parks/Natural Areas Conservancy's Inwood's Changing Forest, the Ecological and Sociological Mapping of Inwood Hill Park.

Excited that the assets of the forest are getting inventoried, so we can plan for their long-term stewardship. We want our trees to flourish. Their canopy, air quality benefits, shade and habitat value are essential to the health of our parks and the environment.

b) Trees are very important to NYC Parks and we have a wealth of trees in Northern Manhattan Parks

To date, through the Million Trees Program, NYC Parks, our partner organizations and hundreds of volunteers have helped us plant over 13,000 trees in Northern Manhattan Parks. Over 3,000 street trees and over 10,000 trees in the forests of Inwood Hill, Fort Washington, Highbridge and other park sites uptown.

c) Planting of trees is important but stewarding them is equally important.

* Borough Gardeners recently completed a borough wide young street tree pruning including uptown's new street trees

* Tree contractors and Parks is doing tree pruning work on select larger street trees

* For March and April, we'll have NRG ISRP crews working in the recently planted sections of Inwood Hill Park, removing vines, consolidating thrash/downed wood, some general clean-up, and they'll likely be doing some work mulching street trees if the weather allows.

* Through the Natural Areas Conservancy, we'll have a yearlong stewardship program, to build on the 1,690 volunteer hours we had in Uptown's Natural Areas in 2014. We also want to give a shout out to the ongoing work of the Shorakapok Earth Keepers in Inwood Hill Park.

* April 18th, We'll have a large NY Cares group working in Inwood Hill and Isham Parks, planting, working to minimize erosion issues, doing some soil enrichment and likely some planting.

* April 25th, everyone is invited to a Million Trees Stewardship Day, if your schedule doesn't enable you to participate in this day, we'll be planting an additional 200 trees in Inwood Hill Park and removing vines, Sign up at the Parks Departments Website.

d) Storm Removals/Sandy contract:

- Borough Wide
- Assessment of damaged trees
- Salt damage, less of an issue uptown, but we did have salt damage on Gaelic Field
- Trees that have been destabilized through limb loss
- Also identifying trees along paths or near lawns/pedestrian areas that have rot and decay
- FEMA funded, so trees will be removed and then followed by a tree replacement contract
- Iterative process: Borough Foresters did initial identification of trees for monitoring, and then Central Forestry conducted their assessments. More recently, Borough Foresters and my landscape staff have been going through the individual parks to verify trees for removal and to identify species type for replacement.
- Isham Park
 - Prior to the Sandy Contract, we developed a draft landscape plan with many of you.
 - With water service, we knew we could sustain improved horticulture.
 - We worked with NYC Park's Historic Preservation Division's Landscape Architects, Borough Forestry and DPR Landscape Coordinator and gardeners on a tree layer for the park, planning for succession given tree loss, ensuring that the trees planted are evocative of the park's historic estate period, and that the trees planted relate to the trees in other areas, to help the park landscape be more intentional and cohesive.
 - Where we can we are removing Norway maples and other invasive species, and replacing with more appropriate trees, but if the tree is perfectly healthy and is invasive, we will not remove it.
- **As part of the Sandy Contract** 37 trees are to be removed and replaced in Isham Park's 20 acres. The trees being replaced range from invasive Norway Maples to Black locusts, American elms, Planetree/sycamores, American lindens, Conditions found are:
 - 1) Decay in the base of trees
 - 2) Rot in the crown of trees
 - 3) Extensive deadwood in the crown or the stem

- 4) Cracks in the stem
- 5) Certain trees have been destabilized given excessive storm damage

-**Removals** will improve park safety; reducing falling trees or limbs
-Removals will also help the trees around the dead ones to thrive, (And protect healthy trees from falling trees)

Trees will be replaced on a one to one basis. Principles of tree replacement:

- In the immediate vicinity of the lost tree where possible, with the exception of areas where we have the rock outcroppings or vaults and can't reasonably plant a tree in that specific location.

-Shade Trees

-Native Trees

-Understory Ornamental Trees

-Autumn Color

-Winter interest- adding in some conifers which also help provide habitat

-Diversity of Species

-Species that are evocative of the estate era

Please note that some of the trees marked by Green X's have not been confirmed for removal. For some of the larger trees, Borough Foresters may be doing some resistograph testing to understand the tree's strength, stability, etc.

Some of the species that have been recommended include:

Copper Beech

Amelanchier

White Oak

Himalayan Pine

American Linden- we are losing one of these and want to ensure it remains in the tree palette here

Red Oak

Serbian Spruce

Saucer Magnolia

Scarlet Oak

Tulip Tree

Removals are slated to begin later this month with tree planting to start in the Spring when the ground has thawed. Fortunately we'll have water service on site and will be able to help sustain the new trees.

**Sara asked: will the public be trained?*

Jennifer: All volunteers must be registered

Next Steps:

-Inform the elected officials and community groups of start work date

-Finalize removals/planting plans for Fort Tryon, Inwood Hill and Highbridge Park

-Return to the Community Board with those details next month

e) Other Parks Updates in Northern Manhattan Parks:

* Ecology is improving: - 20 Eagles sighted on the Hudson and overhead in Inwood Hill Park, NY Times article

* Extensive Snow: Taking up a lot of our efforts, more snow to come. Wear and tear on some of our parks, so this Spring we'll have to revisit some areas for touch up.

* This Spring we'll be partnering with the Central Park Conservancy on lawn restoration at Bennett Park. In addition to getting some signage boards for the children's play area at the south end, and making some site improvements given snow damage).

*LR: Asked Jennifer how long would Bennett Park lawn area be closed while under repair.

According to Jennifer the process will start in April and should be completed within six months.

*Jennifer commented on the pot holes in Parks due to the harsh winter and the Park Department is assessing the damage.

This Spring, the Wi-Fi contractor will be doing lawn restoration at J. Hood Wright Park. Wifi is in at J. Hood Wright Recreation Center and out in the park. Next, the contractor will be working at Highbridge Recreation Center and around the HB water tower.

3. NYC Parks/NYRP Sherman Creek Center project - Gary Dearborn, contractor, presenting. This is a Capital project for Spring 2015. This project needs CB12 review and a Resolution to move to the Public Design Commission.

=> NYRP Sherman Creek Center is requesting to build a one story Environmental Administrative Facility.

LR asked: was this the same project proposed before?

Presenter and Jennifer Hoppa stated that that project expired in 2013 and NYRP is requesting to just build out using the existing building for staff and storage. Presenter stated that NYRP is upgrading the existing building.

KB asked: if the bathrooms will be ADA complaint and the general contractor Mr. Gary Dearborn stated that they will be.

Planned Occupancy 2016

The Resolution was approved with the following vote:

	<u>For</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>Abstaining</u>
Committee Members:	6	0	0
Board Members:	0	0	0
Members of the Public:	6	4	0

4. Sara Fisher Report regarding the Parks subcommittees Participatory Budgeting

Project: Sara had a lengthy power presentation, OK asked and the committee members agreed that a summary only is need due to time. Sara reported that over all the experience was excellent but participants felt that the budget was already set.

Joel Yoffie from the community asked who the redesign team was for the Javits Playground.

Jennifer: All information is public

Joel Yoffie from the community praised the overall transparency of the Parks Department.

RL requested that Wright Brothers Playground be reassessed.

Old Business

Sara Fisher expressed her concerns regarding the Landmarks Commission decalendering of the United Palace scheduled for May 1.

OK: stated that this issue was addressed by the Land Use Committee and a letter opposing the de- calendaring was sent to LPC. The committee unanimously agreed.

Sara Fisher Stated that LR who worked for NY State Senator Espaillat voted to support the de- calendaring of United Palace.

LR : Stated she was not speaking for the Senator but as a community person.

KB: The committee has not received any information regarding Concession Stand contracts, term and conditions.

KB: Stated she will contact the Mayor's office and Jennifer offered her assistance.

OK: Brought the minutes formatting for a vote

KB: stated that she spoke to CB12 Chair George Fernandez and this should be a CB wide format that need to be addressed. The committee voted to move this issue to the Executive Committee.

The Resolution was approved with the following vote:

	For	Against	Abstaining
Committee Members:	5	0	1
Board Members:	0	0	0
Members of the Public:	0	0	0

Announcements:

Sara Fisher announced that the 4K Run for Mental Health will take place in April 11th,2015 in Riverside Park

AIDS Walk

No New Business

No mail

The Meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully Submitted By Patti Jacobs