

CB12M Parks & Cultural Affair Committee
November 9th, 2015
Minutes

Committee members Present: Osi Kaminer, Asst. Chair, Barbara Frazier, Juan Mejia, Mitch Glenn, Richard Lewis. Committee Members Absent: Elizabeth Lorris-Ritter, Chair (excused), Domingo Estevez. Public Member: Natalie Espino. Board Members Present: Mary Anderson, Richard Allman.

Guests: Jennifer Hoppa (DPR), Sara A. Fisher (Friends of Inwood Hill Park), Maggie Clarke (Ring garden), Marechal Brown (DPR), Kristen King (NYC Parks' Natural Resources Group).

The meeting was called to order at 7:07pm

1. The Capital & Expense Budget Priority for FY'17 was handed out but wasn't discussed in detail.

2. Marechal Brown, Director of Horticulture, NYC Parks, Forestry, Horticulture, Natural Resources and Kristen King, Director of Forest Restoration, NYC Parks' Natural Resources Group spoke about Roundup uses:

DPR uses few weed control methods such as chemical weed killers (Roundup), mulch and invasive species eradication. Because of the high volume of international trade the New York City region is at the center exposure to invasive plants into the United States. For the same reasons NYC also has the greatest diversity of non-native plants.

Invasive species are the leading cause of decreased plant biodiversity in urban landscapes. There are 5,000 acres of forested parks in NYC. Woody invasive vines such as Bittersweet and Porcelain Berry are the most common invasive plants in NYC parks. But because of a limited staff (12 full time gardeners), the Natural Resources Group use small-scale applications of Roundup; no one area can get dedicated attention. And because of low funding and small staff, it is impossible to go back to the same area on weekly bases.

As an alternative to Roundup, the Natural Resources Group uses cutting and mowing but this requires regular follow up. The invasive plant is cut first; this reduces the amount of herbicide that must be applied. Newspaper-based mulch is installed right after new plantings. And a biological control, the Melaleuca Weevil, is used only as needed.

Local Law 37 (2004) restricts pesticide use on public property by all city agencies. The law bans the use of a few types of pesticides when:

1. the label contain the word 'danger' and/or

2. If it's a possible, probable, or likely carcinogen according to the EPA and/or
3. If the California office of Environmental Health hazardous assessment declares a chemical a developmental toxin.

In addition, Local Law 37 (2004) mandates the use of integrated pesticide management, requiring that city agencies use a range of techniques to treat weeds and invasive species.

DPR is committed to furthering these practices and the staff and gardeners are trained and informed about different methods of weed removal. Additionally, every agency is required to report use of pesticides, what types and their names to the Department of Health every February.

The EPA is now reviewing registrations for pesticides containing glyphosate and a ban on pesticides such as Roundup has been proposed (S.5472) by State Senator Brad Hoylman (27th District). The New York City Council has introduced a bill (Intro800) that will prohibit City agencies and its contractors from applying any pesticide that is considered a carcinogen including but not limited to glyphosate.

More staff and funding is needed for DPR to implement alternative methods to combat woody weeds if and when the ban will be in effect.

The founder and president of the Ring Garden, Maggie Clarke, asked that no Roundup or other pesticides be sprayed around the perimeter of the Ring Garden and that other methods such as weeding should be applied as was done up until three years ago. Jennifer Hoppa (DPR) and Maggie Clarke (Ring Garden) will discuss the issue in an effort to reach an agreement.

3. Jennifer Hoppa Parks Update

- Inwood Pathways: MTA worked with Parks and restored pathways around the toll plaza bridge to help mitigate recurring impacts on park pathways. The work will help with Forestry access, FDNY access and NYPD and PEP access. It will also minimize impacts on park pathways from 218th Street up to the bridge
- ADA bathroom renovation complete. Water Service design is in the bidding process for construction. Water Service construction to 218th Street projected to start Summer 2016
- NYC Parks' goal is also to make the Nature Center itself be an educational exhibit on storm resiliency and the importance of storm resilient design, the role of marshes, etc. We are still awaiting funding from FEMA for the interior exhibits portion of the work. Public Scoping meeting in early December
- Morris-Jumel Mansion: Fencing work may continue into December.
- Fort Tryon Park: Contract awarded for the staircase behind Anne Loftus Staircase to Cloisters. The contractor will begin purchasing materials and supplies and preparing permit applications next month. Onsite work will follow.

- Highbridge Laurel Hill Terrace Steps: NYC Parks had to close public access/use to Highbridge Park's grand staircase at Laurel Hill Terrace. NYC Parks' Engineers did an inspection and determined that the staircase's steps are structurally unsound given the subsidence. Roughly \$928k is needed to do a full investigation and stabilization of the Laurel Hill Terrace structure, which is over 100 years old. There is no funding for the project at this time.

Other Funding Needs:

- Highbridge: \$2.5M to light the pathways from the High Bridge and Access Trail. \$7M for a bathroom and a playground/bbq area at Adventure Playground- the Trail head to the High Bridge access trail. \$7M for a pathway from the High Bridge up to Amsterdam Avenue. \$4.5M for the Old Croton Aqueduct Path to be paved and its lighting
- Fort Tryon: \$3M for Pathways around the Cloisters and down to Anne Loftus Playground/Riverside Drive
- Inwood: Dyckman Fields Soccer Fields \$5M. Pathways to facilitate maintenance, forestry, enforcement \$1.5M. Clove ADA boardwalk \$3M
- Emerson Playground: Expansion \$4M

Public Programs And Events:

- October's 'It's My Park' month resulted in over 15 projects that were executed by Friends Groups, corporate and civic partners.
- Fall Field Day at Highbridge Park on November 3rd was a huge success. People from all over came to the park for the first time
- Over 50 people participated in the Fort Tryon Park Trust's Mushroom talk and tour of Inwood Hill Park over the weekend
- This Sunday is the Commemoration of the Battle of Fort Washington from 12-3pm in Fort Tryon Park
- Margaret Corbin will lead tours of the battle scene with a Piper and Drummer
- Dyckman Farmhouse will have an old tavern game
- Morris-Jumel Mansion will have quill writing
- Fort Tryon Park Trust will teach kids how to make tri-cornered hats. Light refreshments by the New Leaf Restaurant

4. Wish list for services and concessions in our parks:

A mini workshop was conducted and ideas gathered as follows;

Fort Tryon Park:

- Zip line
- Ice rink

Fort Washington Park:

- Mobile swimming barge G. W. Bridge area

- Drone/model planes areas
- Educational programs on plants and trees
- Organized activities for older adults

Highbridge Park:

- “wilderness” camping survival skill course
- Carousel
- Olympic skateboarding platform
- Underground tunnel
- Mini golf
- Zip line
- Bubble over Highbridge pool

Inwood Hill Park:

- Healthy Food carts
- Zip line
- Replace LaMarina with a boat house similar to the one in Central Park at 74th St.
- Boating at Muscota Marsh
- Holiday Food Tents (ie., 4th of July BBQ)

General not park specific:

- Water park
- Skeet shooting
- 400 meter track
- Smart/Park waterway
- Bubble structure for the winter
- Canoe/ kayak rentals

5. Sally Fisher report on Participatory Budgeting process related to Parks & Cultural Affairs:

Council Members Ydanis Rodriguez would like to recruit more delegates to take part in the process. You can submit request in writing and contact CM Rodriguez office at 917-521-2616

The meeting adjourned at 9:16pm

Wish List workshop:

