

CB12M Parks & Cultural Affair Committee
October 6th, 2015

Committee members Present: Elizabeth Lorris Ritter, Chair; Osi Kaminer, Ass't Chair; Barbara Frazier. Committee Members Absent: Mitch Glenn (excused), Domingo Estevez, Juan Mejia. Public Member: Natalie Espino. Guests: Shakara Pettings (NYRP), Paul Kittas, Trish Anderson (Inwood Canoe Club), Pat Courtney (Friends of Isham Park), Peter Levy, Diogenes Abreu (NMIC), Elaine Delgado (Hispanic Society of America), Christina Domenech (Hispanic Society of America), Basia Nikonorow (OFO), Sara A. Fisher (Friends of Inwood Hill Park), Jennifer Hoppa (DPR), Ky Williamson (Rotary Club of Inwood) Roralta Haraugo, Arelis de La O (Friends of Audubon Playground)

The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm

1. Hispanic Society of America (Elaine Delgado)

The Hispanic Society of America (HAS) is located on 613 W. 155th St. & Broadway (212-926-2234) and offers a variety of FREE educational programs and classes for children, adults, and families. The Society offers various workshops and programs for schools and the visually impaired. HSA collaborates with other institutions around the world to promote Hispanic artwork. A large exhibition from the Society is now on display at the National Gallery in Washington, DC.

The society's mission is to collect, study and exhibit Hispanic culture and art. Their collection includes more than a thousand paintings by Spanish and Latin American artists, 200,000 manuscripts, and so much more. The museum is open six days a week and the library is open five days a week; all are free to use.

The HSA is working on a new website where some of the artwork and study materials will be digitized. A Committee member suggested that HAS try to work on getting larger exposure by working with other institutions like the 155th St. Children's Museum or getting information placed in the tourist info kiosks at Columbus Circle or in Times Square.

The façade restoration is in its final stages; the roof is scheduled to undergo renovation next year.

2. Dyckman Farmhouse Museum Alliance (Meredith Horsford)

The Dyckman Dutch Farmhouse is located at 4881 Broadway & W. 204th St. (212-304-9422) and was built in 1784 by the Dyckman family, who originally came here around 1600. They built the current house after their original home in Inwood was destroyed in the Revolutionary War. Today, the Farmhouse is owned by the DPR and is a member of the Historic House Trust New York City. The Farmhouse is also run by a non-profit, the Dyckman Farmhouse Museum Alliance. The Farmhouse has been operated as a museum since 1916 and next year will be its 100th anniversary. One of the big goals is to better engage our community different ages, groups and backgrounds. The signage at the Farmhouse and flyers are now all bilingual (English/Spanish).

The Farmhouse offers watercolor painting workshops for kids, lectures for adults, group tours and camping outside. So far this year they have many more visits than last year. A listing of events and workshops is available on their Facebook page.

Upcoming projects include: upgrade the lighting and a new roof. The Farmhouse would also like to install an ADA ramp and bathrooms for better accessibility.

3. Parks Update (Jennifer Hoppa)

- Highbridge Ice Rink: no bidders in second round, despite special events, sponsorship and holiday additions

- Highbridge Water Tower: initial cost projection for full restoration/stabilization of the historic water tower was projected to be \$3.5M, with just over \$1M projected for the stabilization work to allow for public access. After further analysis by our consultant engineer/historic preservation team, Capital indicates that with the \$1.27M CM Rodriguez has provided, we can only address roof repairs, granite crack repairs and window replacement. It will NOT allow us to reinstate public access.
- Morris Jumel Mansion: perimeter sidewalk and retaining wall work around the Mansion is essentially complete and is expected to be done by the end of November, weather allowing.
- Fort Washington Waterfront: Protecting our children along the New Waterfront Path. NYC Parks and Amtrak are partnering on a fence project to protect users of the Fort Washington Waterfront
- Dyckman ADA Ramp: part of the Fort Washington PlaNYC project, is complete and is being enjoyed by the public
- Inwood Hill Park Pathways at North End, \$1M improvements installed by MTA as part of their ongoing bridge work
- Inwood Nature Center Progress: \$1.85M ADA bathroom renovation complete and the water service construction to 218th Street projected to start this month. New Capital Funding for Nature Center building CM Rodriguez' \$600,000, FEMA \$491,000 and \$750,000 from Public Programs/Recreation. It will cost \$1.85M to make the Nature Center a safe facility again and one that will be more storm resilient in design. NYC Parks' goal is also to make the Nature Center an educational exhibit on storm resiliency and the importance of storm resilient design, the role of marshes, etc. Funding from FEMA for the interior exhibits is still pending. There will be a Public Scoping meeting in early December
- Fort Tryon Park pathways and Palisades Overlook: \$900k have been enjoyed by the public. Open House New York, October 17th and October 18th
- Anne Loftus Staircase to Cloisters \$1.3M Construction is slated to start next month
- Javits Playgroud is fully funded for phase one at \$2.45M. The Fort Tryon Park Trust gave a \$350,000 allocation for capital reconstruction, along with Councilmember Rodriguez' \$1.5M and Gale Brewer's \$600,000, the Phase I project is fully funded. We had a public scoping meeting and expect the Capital Division to come to the Community Board with findings to date/concepts in January.
- There are several on-going volunteer groups that are working on a regular basis in our parks: Morris Jumel Mansion, Dyckman Farmhouse, Natural Area volunteers of Friends of Inwood Hill Park and others.
- Open House New York will have multiple sites that will be open in October 17th
- DPR is working to balance the needs of Moose Hall/Inwood Shakespeare Festival with the BBQ area.
- Free Sailing classes are available at La Marina on October 10th

4. Capital & Expense Budget Priorities for FY17 were discussed at length. Each attendee received stickers to indicate which projects and programs were most important to him/her. After these votes were tallied, the collective priority ranking was as follows:

FY '17 Expense Budget Rankings for the Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee		
Trk Code	Program Name / Description	Ranking
312200509E	Fund additional Park Enforcement Personnel (PEP) (DPR)	1
NEW	Educ/cultural programming at museums & historic houses (e.g., Hispanic Society, Jumel, Dyckman FH, etc.)	2
312201503E	Dedicated Forestry Crew for CD 12	3
312201103E	Fund additional staff for Sanitation, Maintenance & Operations, Horticulture	4
312201504E	Fund enhanced digital surveillance in parks	5
312201104E	Increase funding for after school programs at J. Hood Wright, Highbridge and Inwood Parks	6
NEW	Engineering/feasability study for Highbridge Park btw. High Bridge & Alex. Ham. Bridge to provide connectivity	6
NEW	Muscota Marsh boating storage: site prep & containers (not capitally eligible)	6

FY'17 Capital Budget Rankings for the Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee			
Trk Code	Project Name / Description	Ranking	Est. \$\$
NEW	Renovate & reconstruct Audubon Playground, including removal of existing structure	1	\$7 million
312201607C	CD12: Science Barge	2	
312200415C	Inwood Hill, Highbridge and Fort Tryon Parks: Reconstruct park pathways and paving	2	\$6 million
312201105C	Hispanic Society of America: renovations (roof, interior, terrace) & ADA compliance efforts	4	\$30+ million
312201409C	Renovate/rehabilitate Msgr. Kett Playground (W. 204th btw. 10th/Nagle Aves.)	5	\$4 million
312201603C	Highbridge: new lighting in Sunken Playground & pathways to the High Bridge	6	\$4 million
NEW	Highbridge water tower Phase II: handrail repair, window guards, interior lighting, ADA entrance ramp, and carillon	7	\$2.5 million
NEW	Dyckman Farmhouse: ADA ramp; retrofit bathrooms for ADA	7	\$750k
312201507C	Install water service for dog runs in Ft. Washington & Ft. Tryon Parks; plumb 2 existing drinking fountains on eastern slope of Ft. Tryon Park by dog run and down to B'way; install lighting in FW Park dog run at 165/RSD	7	\$850k
312201606C	Highbridge Park (165th and Edgecombe: New Adventure Playground): ADA compliant comfort station & BBQ area	7	\$7 million
312201604C	Renovate / retrofit public restrooms throughout CD12 for ADA compliance	11	\$3 million
312201103C	Add public restroom in Ft. Washington Park per PlaNYC	11	\$7 million
NEW	Jumel Mansion: ADA compliant ramp(s) and bathroom facilities	13	\$40k
312201602C	Funding for more Wi-Fi locations first in the southern tier of CD12 parks	13	variable
312201307C	Sherman Creek: NYRP Phase II clean-up & waterfront access	13	\$1 million
312201612C	Lighting for tennis and basketball courts in Inwood Hill Park	13	\$1.75 million
312201105C	Bennett Park: Complete Phase II Renovation (new comfort station and playground)	13	\$5 million
312201005C	Highbridge water tower: stabilize structure and replace windows to secure for future repairs/restoration and public access	C/S	
312201601C	Jumel Mansion: HVAC and digital/cabling access	C/S	
312201506C	Renovate / repair the Nature Center in Inwood Hill Park	C/S	
312201104C	Renovate Javits Playground (Ft. Tryon Park)	C/S	
312201303C	Dyckman Farmhouse: roof repairs	C/S	

5. Old Business: Parks concessions. We are still waiting for answers from DPR in response to our follow-up to our May 5th Committee meeting attended by representatives of the DPR Revenue and Concession Divisions, and the Mayor's Office of Contracting regarding La Marina and other concessions. Liz Ritter will draft a letter from herself and George Fernandez to reiterate our questions and hope to have a response by our next meeting.
6. New Business: Paul Kittas is an advocate for a project at Highbridge Park where he looked at all the ramps. He is looking for a connection between the areas of park between High Bridge and the Harlem River south of W. 181st St. The master plan for the area was done but a feasibility study for that specific area (i.e., between the Alexander Hamilton & High Bridges) is required. This item was added to the Expense Projects list.
7. Announcements were made regarding then-upcoming events which since have occurred.

The meeting adjourned at 9:53pm