

Community Board 12, Manhattan Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee
Tuesday, June 14, 2016 (Rio II Gallery, 898 St. Nicholas Gallery)

Committee Members Present: Elizabeth Lorris Ritter, Chair; Osi Kaminer, Assistant Chair; Natalie Espino, Barbara Frazier, Mitchell Glenn, Richard Lewis, and Karen Taylor. **Committee Members Excused:** Daryl Cochrane. **Others Attending:** Janet Handy & Laird Kelly, Inwood Canoe Club; Jeanne Poggi, Hank Sutter, Jean Jaworch, and Anita Flanagan, 181st Street Beautification Project; Joanna Castro, Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance; Sara Fisher, Friends of Inwood Hill Park; Jonathan Spencer, Inwood Shakespeare Festival; Jennifer Hoppa, NYC Parks & Recreation; Charlene Edwards, Director J. Hood Wright Recreation Center; Andrea Arroyo, Artist; Leslie Day; John Moran.

The meeting was called to order at 7:10pm by the Chair, Elizabeth Lorris Ritter, who gave introductory remarks, and thanks to Ana Ofelia Rodriguez for gracious hosting of this evening's meeting, including refreshments.

1. **181st Street Beautification Project, Jean Lee Poggi:** Problems with the terraced gardens on either side of the Pinehurst step street at W. 181st St. Between rotting, degraded timber (some of which dates to 1917 and may have been improperly installed) and a severe rat infestation with multiple burrows, the situation is so bad that last month's "It's My Park" Day events were cancelled for the first time, and only the most experienced gardeners can go in to do any work. DoT Manhattan Commissioner Margaret Forgione has agreed that the terraces are DoT's responsibility. DoT doesn't have funding, but if they receive it they would like to transfer it to Parks Department which has the necessary landscape/gardening expertise. It isn't clear what would be required: likely a short-term project for evaluation/assessment, and a longer term project to resolve structural issues and replant. The steps were reconstructed in 2001; water and sewer lines were replaced, though much of the original timber was not due to budgetary constraints. DEP/DOH need to help coordinate in this effort. There was a motion made and passed in support of the evaluation and renovation of the steps, and calling on our elected to fund such projects: unanimous by Committee (6 members) and public (12 members, with 2 abstentions and 1 not voting due to conflict).
2. **Inwood Canoe Club, Commodore Janet Handy & Laird Kelly:** Established in 1902, ICC is NYC's oldest canoe club. It is the last remaining boathouse along that part of the Hudson (just below Dyckman St.), which used to have more than a dozen. Since 1900's had competitive paddling program that produced 7 Olympians. 1984 fire destroyed boathouse and was rebuilt at club expense. Club sponsors Sunday open house (10am-noon) with free kayaking for. (Must be able to swim.) There are 35 boats available, and about 90 people come each Sunday. Club is fully insured. ICC collaborates with various schools (WHEELS, Inwood Academy, Swimmers for the Bronx) for educational programming. Club currently has 60 members. \$300/year fee, two-month initiation process to learn procedures and rules of safe kayaking. Club status is 501c7; wants to file for 501c3 so they can solicit grants and contributions. Committee suggested to pilot an evening open house. Approach DA's office for coaching money and support. Club needs support for shoreline preservation and expansion for another boathouse (both capital items). Phone: 212-810-9597.
3. **Paul Kittas, Licensed NYC Tour Guide:** Gave presentation on improvements on Coogan's Bluff iPhone app for Highbridge Park. Is also developing "Revolutionary War" tour app about Northern Manhattan /Ft. Lee. He will do series of tours based on the Revolutionary War starting at Margaret Corbin Circle.
4. **Parks Update: Jennifer Hoppa, North Manhattan Parks Administrator**
Recent Events in Northern Manhattan Parks:
 - May 14th: Hudson River Community Sailing for their Open House Sails in mid-May.
 - June 2nd: Hike the Heights 14: CLIMB (City Life is Moving Bodies) and many community groups hiked from Central & Fort Tryon Parks to the High Bridge. It was a two-borough festival, joined on the historic High Bridge.
 - Drums Along the Hudson (Inwood Hill Park) June 12th: Thanks to all who made this year's event a success. (Note: organizers requested to hold it in a smaller, more contained area of the park for a more intimate feel.)
 - Scandia Symphony Concert June 12th in Fort Tryon's Billings Lawn; two more concerts planned for 6/19, 6/26.
 - Vigil last night at Bennett Park for those killed and injured in Orlando.
 - *Dis Location* in Fort Tryon Park, a site-specific piece on Th/F/Sat on the immigrant experience, choreographed by Drastic Action's Aviva Geismar, daughter of a Holocaust survivor. The company also partnered with City College Academy of Arts students to teach them to choreograph dance about their own immigrant histories.
 - Second week of Inwood Shakespeare Festival (ISF) in Inwood Hill Park: *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Weds-Sat nights at 7:30. Bring your blanket. This past Saturday, PEP restricted any BBQ/Picnic set-ups on the Peninsula to ensure a dedicated facility for ISF. (15 people other than cast members attended, perhaps due to weather.)
 - NYC Parks' Partner: Bread and Yoga: 3x/week free outdoor movement/activity in Inwood Hill Park.
 - City Parks Foundation tennis programs: M/W 1pm-4pm, July 5th – August 15th.
 - Sing for Hope Piano will be on site at Inwood Hill Park through June 21st.

Stewardship:

- Thanks to all who came out in May for the various It's My Park Day projects to help uptown Parks: 8 events in May, and 2 more in June at ten different parks. A special shout out to RecycleDay/Friends of Inwood Hill Park for pulling out 200 bags of trash from the Inwood Hill Park forest and along the Fort Washington Waterfront.
- Thanks NYRP/Pernod Ricard: 150+ participants planted almost 700 trees in Highbridge Park on June 2nd.
- Thanks NYC Mountain Biking Association and Deloitte for partnering with us to improve the Highbridge Mountain Biking Course.
- Tomorrow we have a group doing a trail maintenance project on Inwood Hill Park's footpaths from the Caves up towards the Overlook under leadership of NYC Parks' Forestry, Horticulture & Natural Resources Group.
- Fort Tryon Park Trust: Friends Committee Volunteer Day on Sunday June 26th at 10am.

Research Projects in Inwood Hill Park:

- Parks' Forestry, Horticulture and Natural Resources groups collaborate with researches from all over the region on ecological studies.
- Seed trap project: These traps are part of a permitted research project by a doctorate student at Rutgers. They relate to native tree recruitment. The research project is a multi-site project meant to complement the research work on forest health that the Natural Areas Conservancy is undertaking in natural areas citywide.

Capital Projects

- Javits Playground design presentation at end of July.
- Inwood Nature Center: anticipating a presentation in September. Water line work will start this fall.
- Stair 50 at Anne Loftus Playground receiving bids later this week.
- Community Parks Initiative Sites: similar to upgrades installed last summer at Monsignor Kett Playground, NYC Parks has done upgrades at Highbridge's Sunken Playground and Adventure Playground: new play equipment decks, painting, horticulture and color seal coat on all the basketball courts.

In response to a question about kayak storage at the Muscota Marsh, Ms. Hoppa reported this project is still awaiting expense funding. (It is capitolly ineligible.) She also clarified in response to an assertion from a member of the public that the Parks Department has not yet received the \$300k committed by Columbia University.

5. **BBQing and Shakespeare on IHP Peninsula:** Johnathan Spencer, Inwood Shakespeare Festival, stated that he was very pleased that peninsula was cleared last Saturday. Ms. Sara Fisher confirmed that while attendance may have been light due to weather, the performance environment was vastly improved. Ms. Hoppa noted that this was achieved by using virtually all of Northern Manhattan's PEP resources for this one area. On behalf of ISH Founder/Director Ted Minos, Mr. Spencer suggested that the peninsula be a dedicated performance space, stating the peninsula was once "most tranquil... our back yard; our children played, we picnicked" and now "beer bottle caps are embedded by the thousands". Others spoke of loud sound systems/amplifiers, and huge grills. There was general agreement that the Parks enforcement should continue for the next two Saturdays, and that we need more PEP so that other areas of the District can be covered without using all of the PEP resources for this one area. Due to the lateness of the hour, it was agreed that the issue of BBQing on the peninsula should be taken up at a future meeting. We might also want to explore if some kind of permitting system, such as is used at the Street End Parks, could be employed in IHP, and also if there is any way to train volunteers to work with PEP on enforcement, analogous to NYPD Auxiliaries.
6. **J. Hood Wright Rec Center: Charlene Edwards, Director:** Discounted memberships (\$25) available to veterans, disabled, seniors (62+) and youth (<25) at all NYC rec centers. (Youth <17 are free.) Help spread the word! Phone: 212-927-1563.
7. **Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance / Joanna Castro** reported that the "Evolving Terrain" installations will be appearing in Ft. Tryon Park. Gave general application guidelines. People are enthusiastic for this temporary art.
8. **Other Announcements & Updates:** *Summer films in Highbridge & Inwood Hill Parks;* details: www.nyc.gov/parks. *La Marina:* Caribbean Themed Day, June 25th, 2pm-10 pm; Latin Music, June 26th, 5pm-midnight. Andrea Arroyo also has a *live art event at the Morris-Jumel Mansion with jazz accompaniment* by Marjorie Elliot, Sunday at 1pm.

There being no further business to conduct, the meeting adjourned at 10pm.

Respectfully submitted by Barbara Frazier & Elizabeth Lorris Ritter