

Community Board 12, Manhattan
Joint Meeting of the Public Safety and Parks & Cultural Affairs Committees
May 2, 2018

Public Safety Committee members: Richard Lewis, Chair; Domingo Estevez, Assistant Chair; Katherine Diaz; Rud Morales; Mary O'Shaughnessy; Derek Peralta. **Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee members:** Elizabeth Lorris Ritter, Chair; Mitchell Glenn, Assistant Chair; Daryl Cochrane; Domingo Estevez; Barbara Frazier; Richard Lewis. **Other Board Members:** Mary Anderson, Sara Fisher, Osi Kaminer, Steve Simon. **Government, Agency & Corporation Representatives:** BC Chris Ritchie, FDNY Bn. 13; Lt. Rotte & Christopher Stoll, 33rd Precinct; P/O Frey Damien, NYPD/Transit; Lt. Rodriguez, 34th Precinct; Allan Valerio, Community Organizer, Manhattan District Attorney; Danny Hernandez & Jennifer Hoppa, NYC Parks; Sgt. J. Rivera & DI McCants, Parks Enforcement Patrol; John Kiernan & A.R. <illegible>, US Coast Guard Auxiliary. **Members of the public:** Paul Hintersteiner, Deborah Barrett, Ydarian Castillo, Jerry Culligan.

The meeting was called to order at 7:02pm and chaired by Liz Ritter, who made brief announcements regarding public art:

- 6 sculptures Kathy Ruttenberg installed on the Broadway Malls between 72nd & 157th Sts.
- There is a current exhibition on the Cloisters Lawn "Knights/Not Knights," pieces by Icelandic artist Steinunn Thorarinsdottir. There will be an opening event next week including the President of Iceland.

Emergency Services Reports (all statistics for previous month):

FDNY information: Bn 13 Dudley

- 31 gas emergency responses.
- 29 minor fires.
- 4 all-hands or greater fires in Washington Heights/Inwood

Transit NYPD: PO Frey

- 33 precinct: 1 grand larceny
- 33 precinct: 1 felony assault, in which a man was pushed to the tracks; there was an arrest.

PO Frey noted that the location where a crime victim realizes that property is gone, is the precinct in which the crime is counted. R. Lewis asked whether panhandling is escalating across subway lines in general; anecdotally it has increased in lines serving Washington Heights/Inwood. PO Frey reported that the Neighborhood Coordination Officer program is being expanded to the Transit Division in June, and more train patrols will be implemented.

34 Precinct: Lt. Reilly

- See Compstat report (requested by RL Lewis) for incidents in period
- There has been an increase in robbery and assault.
- Grand larcenies are down.
- No fatal crimes were committed in period.
- Grand larceny—automobile was down; the primary cause of this type of crime remains unattended vehicles left running.
- Owners of unattended vehicles will be issued summonses.
- NCO Sector meetings for the precinct will be held as follows:
 - Sector A, May 24
 - Sector B, June 10
 - Sector C, June 2
 - Section D, May 19

Mary O'Shaughnessy reported that she has attended two NCO meetings and found the officers friendly and engaged.

33 Precinct: Lt. Rodriguez

- See Compstat report (requested by RL Lewis) for incidents in period

Manhattan DA: Allan Valerio reported that the Clean Slate event held on April 28 at the Washington Heights YM/YWHA was successful.

Parks Department: For this season, there will be 34 Parks Enforcement personnel assigned to the CB 12 area. The chief is B. McCants. Sgt. John Paul Rivera is the sector sergeant for CB12, specifically Highbridge. Captain Calderone is new to the area as of December 15. For calendar 2017, 594 summonses were issued. The infractions included parking violations, dog waste/dog off-leash, and smoking. The staffing for Manhattan North (north of 125th St., river -to-river) is 35, including 2 sergeants, 14 officers, and 19 seasonal workers. The coverage hours are to be 0700 to 1000, 7 days a week. Highbridge Park is to receive 1 seasonal sergeant, and 6 officers, plus six seasonal staff. The sergeant is a seasonal assignee.

BF asked about the experience level of "seasonal" workers. PEP replied that officers can be coming back for "6 or 7 years"—they are experienced, and work full-time for part of the year. The seasonal workers have a work schedule of Thursday through Monday, from 1030-1900. They cannot arrest or issue summonses. Full time officers start their tours later.

Jennifer Hoppa stated that earlier enforcement tours prevent "large-scale setups" on Parks property.

Domingo Estevez stated that the community needs funding for barbecue pits, and Jennifer Hoppa replied that that request is on DPR's list of priorities, but the CB and members of the community must advocate for funding from elected officials and continue to prioritize this need for funding from elected officials. (Parks does not have its own capital budget.)

A member of the public inquired as to the reasoning behind the closing of Juan Pablo Duarte Square, and Liz Ritter offered to explain offline.

Neighborhood "hot spots" were named, including Monsignor Kett Park, Wright Brothers Playground, and Dongan Lawn. Jennifer Hoppa stated that extra enforcement would be detailed to these areas.

Domingo Estevez noted his concern that marginalized community members are further marginalized by arrests for violations of Parks rules. The Manhattan DA liaison stated that no prosecutions are pursued for any behavior described in this meeting except for drug dealing. A discussion followed about decriminalizing behaviors and adopting positive approaches, including having young people hand out garbage bags. The Parks personnel emphasized that the vast majority of park users just want to have a good time, and if large-scale set-ups are stopped before they start early in the day that avoids a lot of problems later in the evening.

Public attendee Deborah Barnett expressed concern that there is "zero oversight" on the Dongan playground, and noted concerns including loud music, drugs, and motorbikes. Jennifer Hoppa noted that there is a new lockup crew for that space.

Discussion followed on the need to educate community residents on Parks regulations, and Parks enforcement staff stated that they do not give tickets for barbecuing, but for failure to comply with requests to end the barbecuing. User education in place of summonsing does not excuse amplified sound, because that "leads to the other suff."

The 34th Precinct representative stated that for a few hours every tour, a patrol car is stationed outside Inwood Hill Park. Parks Enforcement is part of sector officer duty. Mounted NYPD officers and officers on bicycles were suggested as solutions to parks patrol needs.

A request for a portable NYPD light at Raoul Wallenberg was made.

Coast Guard Auxiliary: The Coast Guard Auxiliary introduced themselves and explained their service as most of what the Coast Guard does, except for law enforcement and military

operations. They have taken part in Sherman Creek events, and conduct free vessel safety checks and kayaking classes. Mitch Glenn asked about safety rules for jet skis. A: Jet skis are power vessels, and operators must have boating safety instruction, and must obey no-wake zones. A marine radio tuned to channel 16 or 17 will enable water users to contact CGA. Attendee stated that as a kayaker, she sees that people do not pay attention; the CGA suggested publicizing safety classes.

Richard Lewis inquired as to unsafe boating areas, and the CGA responded that there are old pilings by 155th Street in the Hudson; up by the Marina; and buoys are up by Spuyten Duyvil. There is a no-wake zone on the Harlem River. In answer to a question from the public, the NYPD and FDNY respond to reports of people jumping from the GWB ridge.)

With regard to traffic issues, NYPD will be working to control traffic.

Events and Status Changes

- NYPD and Parks are cooperating on National Night Out on the Payson Playground and Highbridge
- Inwood Nature Center bathrooms are open
- The Grand Staircase in the Park at Arden Street has been opened
- The Urban Wildlife Festival at Highbridge will be 5/5
- It is noted that bouldering is legal except in Fort Tryon Park
- Riverkeeper cleanup is scheduled for 5/5
- Friends of Sherman Park will be cleaning on 5/19 from 11-3
- NYC Human Rights having breakfast on 7/9
- The Ring Garden has no water. Parks will look into it but water is scheduled for 6/3.
- Hike the Heights will start at the RING garden and go to Sherman Creek.
- The restroom rehabilitation at 172 Street has started.

The meeting concluded at 9:35pm.

Respectfully submitted: Mary O'Shaughnessy

Edited by: Elizabeth Lorris Ritter & Richard Lewis