

Community Board 12, Manhattan
Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee Meeting: June 12, 2018
CB12 Conference Room (530 W. 166th St., 6th fl., NYC 10032)

Committee Members Present: Elizabeth Lorris Ritter (Chair), Mitchell Glenn (Assistant Chair), Domingo Estevez, Barbara Frazier, Richard Lewis. **Absent:** Daryl Cochrane. **Staff:** Paola Garcia. **Also attending:** River De La Cruz, Paul Kittas, Meghan Alvarez, RowNY; Jodie McCoy, Trish Anderton, & Bob Barnett, Inwood Canoe Club; Grant McKeown, Inwood Indivisible; Jennifer Hoppa, NYC Parks; Valinn Ranelli; Jessica Morril, Harlem River Community Rowing.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm by the Assistant Chair, in the absence of the Chair, who was late due to public transit delays.

1. No one was in attendance from **GreenThumb Gardening**; item deferred to a subsequent meeting.
2. **NYC Parks Report** (Jennifer Hoppa, NYC Parks Northern Manhattan Parks Administrator) **Capital Project updates:** \$72M+ in City capital funding & 20M in private funding being invested in our 600 acres.
 - a) J. Hood Wright: Fitness Equipment design finalized Over \$300k and project in bidding cycle.
 - b) Pinehurst Avenue Step Street: Parks, 181st Street Beautification Project, CB 12 met up at the site. Design needs were identified. It's a replacement in kind, without significant changes in the infrastructure/staircase itself, but rather in the planted areas where the volunteers work in this Greenthumb Garden.
 - c) Fort Washington Park
 - Amtrak Bridge: in design review by Amtrak underway. Project to then go through construction bidding process. Construction likely to start Fall 2019. \$4M+. Parks has tasked the contractor with keeping the bridge open during construction, but is also evaluating an alternate route for pedestrians and cyclists to use during construction.
 - Eco Dock: Parks is working to secure the additional \$1.3M needed to construct the dock that is more viable. We are partnering with Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance on the project, and they too are pursuing additional capital funds for the project.
 - d) Inwood Hill Park
 - Outdoor Green Gym: Construction has begun! It's a one year construction duration,
 - Water Line Project: \$850k water line is coming to completion. They should be receiving their street connection permits from the Department of Environmental Protection this week. Construction expected to be complete by month's end in time for Summer and public restrooms.
 - Bluestone Staircases/TBTA work, closed one path and will reopen it and then will need to close another pathway.
 - Nature Center \$2.4M. Building shell received PDC approval. Design is complete and project is in the construction bidding process. Construction expected to start Fall 2018 pending good construction bids. Construction duration is anticipated to be 18 months.
 - e) Dyckman Farmhouse: (\$6.6M+) Multiple projects include the roof, making restrooms ADA compliant, making the building accessible (ADA). The Historic House Trust is developing a more comprehensive scope of work to meet all of the facility's structural needs. Roof work will be fast tracked.
 - f) Fort Tryon Park:
 - Javits Playground was awarded, contract is registered. Shop drawings are being reviewed and long-lead items ordered. The Order to Work on site was issued for July 9th, so that everyone has the playground through the end of the school year and the holiday weekend.
 - Anne Loftus Playground: \$4.1M upgrades, including a water park for all ages and abilities. Public Scoping Meeting is confirmed for out on site on June 25th at 6:30 p.m.

- g) Highbridge Park Anchor Park:
 - Phase I status: Design completed. In procurement. Construction to begin Winter 2018/Spring 2019, depending on the construction bids we receive.
 - Phase II received approval from the Community Board and Public Design Commission. It includes Adventure Playground, a new outdoor fitness area in Sunken Playground, lighting of the greenway from W. 165th St. down to the High Bridge at W. 173rd St. and an artificial turf soccer field at W. 175th St. Design completion by Spring 2018, final PDC approvals received. Then procurement, with construction likely to start spring 2019 if not before.
 - Highbridge Water Tower is advancing
 - Con Ed is doing feeder upgrade work in Highbridge Park in 2018 and 2019 and will reconstruct the park's eastern path upon completion of their feeder work.
- h) Audubon Playground: \$7M project is underway. Design Completed. Project is in procurement with demolition of the building to occur first and the construction of the playground to follow. Asbestos abatement is first phase prior to demolition. Possible July start on the comfort station building.
- i) Morris Jumel Mansion exterior restoration \$1M will be led by Historic House Trust's Architectural Conservator and ideally will include the ADA ramp to the facility. We are working with conservators on how to repair the Octagon's Ceiling. Mansion has over a dozen free public programs planned for this spring/summer so that everyone can continue to enjoy the mansion's grounds.
- j) Sherman Creek: NYRP Pre-Fabs, new staff facilities and public restrooms are being installed. Pop Up Park on the former boat clubs site (future home of RowNY) this summer. Row NY presented last month at this Committee; they will be negotiating a license agreement with NYC Parks to construct and operate a boathouse at the former boat clubs site, reinstating its historic purpose. Here is the public notice to CB & electeds, indicating that they will be entering into a negotiation phase and will ultimately go through FCRC and Public Design Commission, etc.

NYC Parks Programs in Northern Manhattan (Visit www.northernmanhattanparks.org for complete list.)

- a) Inwood Trails Stewardship Day & Fort Tryon Park Friends Committee Beautification Days
- b) Sherman Creek Pop-Up Park: Parks, NYRP and Row NY will be collaborating to have more summer programming in the former boat clubs site, the future ROW NY Boathouse site. Movie Nights, Fitness,
- c) Harlem River Community Rowing working to have them at Muscota again:
- d) Open Sails by Hudson River Community Sailing:
- e) Inwood Canoe and Kayak Club
- f) Ranger Programs, Recreation Programs, LOTS of Movie Nights, including Films on the Green with the French/Mexican Embassy.
- g) Announced a dozen free programs of history, music, nature, film, dance, and science education, as well as 17 different ongoing free yoga, Zumba, mediation, and other fitness programs; an ASL class for parents/children, and a free Monday night Inwood Art Works film series in Inwood Hill Park.

Lighting on Inwood Hill Park's Ballfield #5 The Inwood Little League has requested lights for Ballfield 5. This would extend use by a couple of hours, to 10pm. The Councilmember has agreed to fund it, but Parks would first like to provide temporary lighting before committing to this expense. After discussion it was agreed that this would be prudent. The Committee suggested that Parks monitor the use to see if more games are being played as a result of the evening lighting, and put up signage with phone number and email for providing feedback (positive or negative) regarding ballfield use and evening lighting.

3. **Belated Welcome, Remarks & Announcements** (Elizabeth Lorris Ritter, Chair)

- Announced Culture Hub, a month-long pop-up arts and event space through Inwood ArtWorks in a former nightclub at 404 Tenth Ave. @ W. 202nd St. Space is available for meetings, rehearsals, etc., with a wide range of free, low-cost, or pay-what-you-can classes or performances every night except Mondays.
- NoMAA ArtStroll Continues, with hundreds of events and open studios throughout Washington Heights, Inwood, and West Harlem. Also a full day of special programming on June 21st for the “ArtStrollstice”. CB12 and CB9. Several upcoming events, including the 3rd Annual Inwood Film Festival (March 15th-17th), the First Annual WH JazzFest (March 9th-11th) with an accompanying art exhibit at Le Chéile (181st St. & Cabrini Blvd.), and NoMAA’s excellent Women’s History art exhibit, thoughtfully curated by Andrea Arroyo, at the Rio II Gallery (Riverside Dr. @ 135th St.), both through the end of March.
- The September meeting will be held on the FIRST Tuesday, Sept. 4th, as the second Tuesday is Rosh Hashanah.

4. **Coliseum Landmarking Issues** River De La Cruz asked about the disposition of the former Coliseum movie theatre on W. 181st St. & Broadway, itself a former grand vaudeville theatre. She made a passionate plea for saving the building, and for protecting our neighborhoods landmarks. There was a lengthy discussion, and while all were in agreement that it is a shame and a waste that the building doesn’t qualify for landmarking due to extensive renovations, alternations, and disrepair, and that it is a further sadness that the current landlord has been so unresponsive and apparently uninterested in any of this history, it was agreed that Ms. De La Cruz’ passion is not for naught. She was encouraged to keep attending CB meetings and to get involved with other like-minded individuals to build awareness and programming in the community. One doesn’t always know where one’s efforts will lead, but it’s never a waste to have fought for something, even when that battle is lost. It sets up wins for other battles, and sometimes turns the tide in a war. It was noted that it wasn’t until the Eikrenkotters of the United Palace came to the early “Save the Coliseum” meetings some years ago at the original Word Up (across the street from UP) and saw the strong involvement in and commitment to the arts and arts programming in the community that they clarified their own vision for turning the United Palace into the arts & cultural center it now has become. Similarly the ArtStroll started as a small one-day event sponsored by the CB and the Manhattan Times, and bloomed into a month-long multi-event arts extravaganza, spawning a non-profit organization (NoMAA) that works year-round to support and foster the arts in our community.

5. **High Bridge & Old Croton Aqueduct** Paul Kittas once again raised the idea of landmarking parts of Higbridge Park as they relate to the Old Croton Aqueduct. Once again it was pointed out to him that in order to do a survey of the area an application requesting that the area be considered for landmarking must be submitted. He is welcome to file such an application, but the Board can’t write a letter of support until there’s an actual proposal to support. He will work on that with other like-minded individuals, and reach back out to the Board when he has an actual proposal.

There being no additional business, **the meeting adjourned at about 8:30pm.**