

Community Board 12, Manhattan Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee

June 11, 2019

CB12 Conference Room (530 W. 166th St., 6th fl.)

Committee Members Present: Elizabeth Lorris Ritter (Chair), Nobles Crawford, Barbara Frazier, Mitchell Glenn, Rosy Perez, Joanna Castro & Alexis Marnel (Public Members). **Excused:** Daryl Cochrane, Domingo Estevez, Francisco Lopez, Karen Taylor. **Other Board Members:** Richard Lewis (Chair) Sally Fisher. **Also Attending:** Erhan Sakallioghe, Trish Anderton, Steve Harris (Inwood Canoe Club); Monique Copper (The Netherlands); Ryan Desso; Laura Daigen-Ayala; Shiloh Holley (Morris-Jumel Mansion); Megan Alvarez, Fallon Parker, & Ashley Cooper (RowNY); Nancy Fiaschetti & Liz Ciotti (Pied Piper Children's Theatre); Melissa Goldberg, Nate Grove, Seth Goodwin, Jennifer Hoppa (NYC Parks); Dave Thom; Jim Joseph (Art / NY); Ricardo Medina; Gary Dearborn & Charlie Reynoso (NY Restoration Project); Alexander Campos (Hispanic Society of America); Roxanna Petzold (Inwood Art Works); Rik Walter & James Bosley (UP Theater Co.); Tiffany Braby; Luis Ramos (Naguake NYC); Obed Fulcar (Friends of Sherman Creek); Michelle Bishop (Harlem Needle Arts); Jeanine McAdam (HeightSites.com); Mino Lora (People's Theatre Project); Emmanuel Abreu & Veronica Liu (Word-up Community Bookshop), Shawn Folz (Ft. Tryon Park Trust), Jerry Culligan (Rocky's Dog Run); Natalie Espino (MBPO); Charlie Samboy (NYCEDC); Shirley Levy & Angela Blocker (DCLA).

The meeting was called to order at about 6:35pm by the Chair.

1) Welcome, Opening Remarks, Announcements, Old Biz: (6:35pm)

- Welcome to Rosy Perez (new Committee/Board Member) and Joanna Castro (new Public Member) and farewell to Mitchell Glenn, who is moving and resigning from CB12M.
- Last month we had two resolutions, both of which were passed by the full Board at the General Meeting: J. Hood Wright Soccer Pitch (37-0-0-1); overnight closure of Tunnel Street to 190th St. 1-Train for "In The Heights" filming (joint w/ Traffic & Transportation Committee; 36-1-1-0)
- Uptown Art Stroll open studios was a major success last Saturday (6/8); more open studios this Saturday (6/15) plus events all through the month of June at various uptown venues.

2) Updates & announcements: more than a dozen organizations reported. (Events that were imminent and which will have passed by the time these minutes are distributed are not listed.)

- RowNY: offering swimming and rowing programming to kids at local middle- & high schools; 100% of our kids go on to college.
- Friends of Inwood Hill Park: we have a Sing for Hope piano through 6/23.
- Inwood Canoe Club is officially in session for the season; free walk-up Sundays
- Expanded family days at Morris-Jumel Mansion this summer including yoga, film programs, concerts and George Washington dinner (7/14)
- Inwood Art Works: FilmWorks Al Fresco (free Monday nights in Inwood Hill Park) plus a series of outdoor films at Morris-Jumel Mansion this summer.
- Pied Piper Children's Theater: Kids intensive program being offered during July
- NYRP: announced various summer programming (films, African dance, etc.)
- People's Theater Project - Summer program for middle/high school at their studio space (5030 Broadway), and kids pop up drama program in Inwood's Payson Playground. PTP academy launching in September, a scholarship based intensive program.
- UP Theatre Co. will be doing a full reading of the Mueller report at World Up Community Bookshop Sat/Sun June 22nd/23rd.

3) Fort Tryon Park Trust Membership Program: Shawn Folz (6:58pm)

- Annual fundraiser on the Stanley Michaels Promenade, July 11th, 6pm-8:30pm; theme is Flower Power; we will be honoring Sarina Prabasi & Elias Gurmu of Buunni Café.
- Gave a brief history of Fort Tryon Trust, and shared information about the Trust's current projects, volunteer opportunities, financial expenditures, and the importance of the group to community welfare. Discussed the "Fortify the Fort" initiative which focuses on mending the Park's 84-year-old infrastructure, including retaining walls which need \$150k of additional repairs. Distributed membership brochures; you can join online at forttryontrust.org/donate.

4) Dyckman Marina Update: Nate Grove (NYC Parks Chief - Marine Operations) (7:05pm)

- The Chair gave the background on the Marina and the current status and licensing breakdown. However, focused the conversation on marina only (NOT the restaurant, which is still tied up in Bankruptcy Court), and the wish to keep this portion of the meeting to <30 min.
- Nate confirmed the NYC Parks will be operating the waterway directly. As a 16-year NYC Parks veteran, he developed a division focused on waterways when there wasn't one. Two models of engagement: license/lease to a third party, or direct operation. He's familiar with the Dyckman Marina's issues and challenges and has a fairly good idea of what makes the location successful for the community. Talked about the differences between private and public ownership, and the plus/minuses of each. All of the fees of the site goes to the City's General Fund and not the Parks Department.
- Nate is working on funding for the site currently, and just started getting up-to-speed to get the Marina back in working order. Note new email: DyckmanMarina@parks.nyc.gov. Summer Goals: make a working order dock (overnight and/or transit docking if sufficient staff; vessel launching); future goals: seasonal dockage, moorings, programming. We are working w/the Law Department to formalize relationships and programming through Hudson River Community Sailing, Inwood Canoe Club, RowNY, NY Restoration Project, etc.
- Announcement regarding capital plans: EDC has funded \$22 million for shoreline restoration and rehabilitation of Dyckman pier, Inwood Canoe Club's bulkhead and a Community Eco dock. This project (and its funding) can be followed in the Inwood Rezoning Capital Tracker. (Eco Dock still needs additional funding.)
- "Charter boats" encompasses the full range from a 6-passenger sailboat to water-taxis to "booze cruises". Commercial boats are a potentially lucrative asset for business for the revenue they bring in, but we are looking for a mix of uses that suits the community; there is no "one-size-fits-all solution."
- Regarding the current fee structure, we have to deliver on a federal grant (from Fisheries & Wildlife, which is administered through NYSO was addressed in the context of the "Code of Federal Regulations" within the Federal grant. Thus, NYC Parks tries to keep the fees low without running afoul of the grant stipulations - and all-but guaranteed the fee will be the lowest rate in Manhattan (\$4.60/foot out-of-season; ~\$100/foot in-season) once rates at the Riverside/79th St. Boat Basin are raised following completion of reconstruction & repairs there.
- Re the July 8th hearing: our goal was to have the hearing as quickly as possible within the CAPA (City Administrative Procedure Act) required guidelines for 30-days' public notice so we could put the rules change into place and get the marina up and running. We got the first available date in an accessible Parks venue, without displacing public programs/former commitments at area Recreation Centers (e.g., Highbridge, which had a camp program on that date). If you cannot attend the hearing in person, you can submit comments by email or fax

Q&A / Discussion

- Kayak storage? A: The goal is to be able to deliver it as soon as possible. Still dealing with the former operator moving-out (since we're only two weeks into the process).
- How will the space/moorings/docking be distributed? A: So far, first-come-first-served, with modifications based on size and availability. (I.e., a later applicant might get a slip before an earlier applicant if the size slip that the earlier applicant wants is not available but the size the later applicant wants is available.)
- How big will the Marina be and what will happen with the land/beach? A: Hard to define at this early point in time, and still some issues are pending bankruptcy proceedings.
- Sewage issues still, and Hackensack/City Island marina competition? A: Sewage will go into holding tanks, not into DEP lines. Hackensack & CI are not considered "comparable."

5) NYRP Living Shoreline Pilot Project at Sherman Creek: Gary Dearborne (NYRP) (7:40pm)

- Gave background on Sherman Creek Park, and the target of the restoration, a 2,100' segment that represents about a third of the park's total length. There's significant erosion in this section due to wave energy from boating and because of geese eating the saltmarsh grasses which help to hold mud/soil in place. They've finally secured \$500k total funding from private sources (New York Restoration Project & donation) and NYS DEC; no City funding.
- What's being proposed is to mitigate the wave energy with a "living shoreline," including wetland planting measures and submerged man-made objects. Assessing what's appropriate for Sherman Creek Park, and are leaning towards Oyster Castles, which are proprietary stackable modular units (like Legos™) designed to break-up wave energy and host growing oyster beds. These have been used successfully in North Carolina's Outer Banks, in the Chesapeake and elsewhere in the DelMarVA watershed, and in New Jersey's Raritan Bay. The proposal here would be to install twelve arrays, each approximately 13'-20' long x 5' wide x 30" high, at mid-tide with 5'-6' gaps between arrays. NYRP has designed this with input from NYC Parks, the Army Corp of Engineers, and other groups. They are looking to install this fall for a pilot period through early spring 2020, and need Public Design Commission approval to proceed. This would be the first Oyster Castle installation in NYC, and is designed so as to not impede any boating activities of the planned boathouse and docks immediately to the north by NYC Parks/RowNY.
- A resolution supporting this pilot project was approved unanimously: Committee Members 5-0-0-0; Public Members 2-0-0-0; Other Board Members 3-0-0-0; Public 17-0-1-0.

6) EDC & DCLA on Immigrant Research & Performing Arts Center (IRPAC) Request for Expression of Interest (RFEI): Charlie Samboy (EDC); Shirley Levy & Angela Blocker (DCLA) (8pm)

- This RFEI is somewhat confidential because it has not yet been released to the public, so people are asked not to share pictures of the presentation, and it cannot be distributed at this time.
- The IRPAC was created in response to a community's priority identified through engagement for the InwoodNYC Neighborhood Planning Initiative. The City is funding up to \$15 million in capital to renovate or construct a 15,000 square foot space, as well as a one-time DCLA-funded grant of \$75k for consultants for technical assistance, \$75k/year for five years for electricity/utilities, and \$125k for the NYPL for the immigrant research piece.
- The goal of the RFEI (both for single submitters and collaborations) is to identify an organization in Northern Manhattan that is familiar with the community, though the process will be open to all. The RFEI is different than an RFP because it is more inclusive in the response that can be submitted, to give all types of applicants an opportunity. NYCEDC is looking to release the RFEI very soon, and receive responses back within eight weeks of release. They will be working with CB12 to identify a date for an informational session for the community, and promote with multi-

channels of marketing. Although the norm for RFEI/RFP is to have an info session at the agency's offices downtown, EDC will hold the session in the community to make it easier for representatives of local CBOs to attend. There will be an FAQ for those unable to attend.

- Atypically, NYCEDC doesn't want to choose the space first then choose the operator because it constrains the operator; here it is better for the operator to have a clear role in identifying the space so they are not operationally constrained by someone else's choices.
- DCLA explained the role of their Agency and their current work using the 2018 city-wide cultural project. IRPAC assistance for operators will be executed in two phases: 1) strategic planning and space design, which would begin immediately upon award; 2) business & financial planning, to gear up for operation and opening and which would begin one year prior to the scheduled opening of the IRPAC.

Q&A / Discussion

- Both Liz and Sally suggested making experience in serving Northern Manhattan a requirement for submitting entities; this was generally agreed-to by approving nods throughout the room, and to open up the use to fine as well as performing arts. Additionally, open up the RFEI designation by removing the word "Performing" from the title (i.e., "...& Arts Center").
- Mitchell: the numbers are speculative; can the capital budget go higher for construction + acquisition? A: The capital budget is \$15 million; if a respondent can bring additional funding to the project then obviously they can spend more. If the construction (plus land acquisition, if applicable) is less than \$15 million, the unused funds cannot be used for operating expenses; they are capital dollars only.
- Nobles: what is the scale and timing of marketing the info session so that the RFEI process remains inclusive? A: we will include in monthly DCLA newsletter and through CB12M, as well as ads and posts in news outlets and social media in both English and Spanish, eblasts, and word-of-mouth.
- Barbara wanted assurances that the location will be in Inwood, the subject of the rezoning and that the space would actually be adequate for the inclusive, mass use. A: Due to real estate costs, site availability, opportunity, etc., EDC & DCLA are willing to consider WH locations and cannot guarantee that the IRPAC will be located in Inwood.
- Richard: how will you ensure financial viability, and that aren't too many top-heavy admin salaries? A: the successful applicant is a large and experienced enough organization that has the resources to run this company successfully. There are more requirements here than if it were a leased property.
- Sally: What exactly is an immigrant? There is a rich history in Inwood of the Native People and we are all immigrants, whether more recently from the Dominican Republic and other parts of Latin/Central/South America, or from Germany, Ireland, Greece, etc., in the 19th & 20th centuries, the Dutch in the 17th C., or the many captive Africans brought to NYC over 250 years of slavery. A: it would be the role of the IRC to speak to all of that history.
- Mino: what is the relationship between the organization and the NYPL? What say does NYPL have regarding the PAC? What is square footage for research vs. PAC? A: We are not proscribing that. The goal for NYPL is to partner to support the operator. Q: Can the IRPAC be larger than 15k s/f if the organization is bringing additional capital funding? A: yes.
- Alexis: would this space be like downtown theatre spaces where you can rent either studio/rehearsal space or black-box theatre for actual performances? A: the final project/program will depend on what is submitted; we do not want to proscribe or constrain the submissions.

There was also significant discussion regarding the usual genesis of research facilities, which is with a donated extant collection, and the unlikelihood of finding a single organization that has requisite expertise in both immigrant (or any other kind of) research in addition to art services (performing or otherwise) and administration of performance space. The Committee recommended that more work needs to be done with both the budget and the scope of the project

7) Co-naming/Sign-age near IHP Honoring Lenape Chief: Luis Ramos (Founder of Indigenous Mobile Library) (8:50pm)

- The Lenape tribe, the Indigenous People who settled the Inwood area, would like to be more integrated in the naming of places around the Northern Manhattan area. Cited recent collaboration with the Ft. Tryon Jewish Center, Nichan Inc., local Inwood residents and the Lenape tribe. This is the beginning of support for a “Lenape Way” street sign at Seaman Ave. & Isham St., and/or for a plaque at Seaman Ave. & W. 204th St. to commemorate the remains of a Lenape Chief and his wife’s were exhumed. Mitchell suggested co-naming all of Seaman Ave. as “Lenape Way;” additional suggestion was to co-name Payson Ave. as it borders Inwood Hill Park.
- Other possible locations for commemorative signage is near the Shorockapock Rock where Manhattan is alleged to have been “purchased” from the Lenape; the current signage is quite dated and frankly offensive. Tubby Hook is also an extremely important site where there should be signage honoring the Lenape.
- Interpretive signage would probably have to be a capital item through the city’s Public Design Commission, NYC Parks Departments Division of Arts & Antiquities, and DoT; the Downtown Alliance’s “History Trail” is an example of how it could be done. Jennifer Hoppa will raise with Arts & Antiquities the issue of the offending American Legion language on the Shirockapock Rock. Joanna recommended requiring developers to include historical interpretive signage with any new construction.
- Since the City Council votes on street co-namings in June & December it was suggested that the Committee offer a resolution in November for the Council’s consideration in December.

8) Hours at J. Hood Wright Senior/Community Center (Community Petition?): (9:12pm) A petition had been circulated among the community in response to cutting back the hours of operation, but the item was removed from agenda as there was no one here to speak to it. Parks advised that there still will be a summer camp program there.

9) Jennifer Hoppa’s NYC Parks Report: (9:13pm)

- High Bridge Water Tower renovation will begin next month as part of the Highbridge Park Anchor Parks initiative. Phase II (bike path, lighting, soccer field, etc.) starts after July 4th and will take approximately 18 months.
- Re the mural in Javits playground on the playground side of the Mother Cabrini Shrine wall: this was a renegade mural and, per determination of the Public Design Commission, will not be replaced. Future temporary public art installations using the NYC Parks process are a possibility, even though the site is a National, State and City Landmark.
- Gave a general update on the many capital projects throughout the district; see NYC Parks website’s capital tracker for details.
- Announced dozens of then-upcoming free events in parks throughout the District.

10) La Marina: No update as the matter is still in litigation.

11) Coogan's Bluff (Paul Kittas): Not in attendance.

12) New Business: (9:17pm)

- Michele Bishop (Harlem Needle Works): Explained what the organization is (preservation and creation of African fabric and fashion design) and that they're working with Morris-Jumel Mansion this summer with a series of activities celebrating the Africa/Latino diaspora (there will be a special dance production on June 30th), provide workshops, technical support to artists.
- Jerry Culligan asked about the Ft. Washington Park dog run.
- Dave Thom - La Marina filed the re-organization plan today, and there will be a hearing on Thursday, June 13th which will determine if their Concession license is revoked.
- Natlie Espino - In honor of Pride Month the MPBO's gallery has been updated with 20+ LGBTQ artists' work on non-gender-normative experience, on exhibit through July 10th.

There being no additional business, **the meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm**

Respectfully submitted: Nobles Crawford & Liz Ritter