

Community Board 12, Manhattan Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee

Tuesday, December 10, 2019 @ 6:30pm

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

Committee Members Present: Elizabeth Lorris Ritter (Chair), Daryl Cochrane (Assistant Chair), Richard Allman, Domingo Estevez, Ayisha Oglivie, Rosy Perez, Alexis Marnel (Public Member). **Committee Members Absent:** Francisco Lopez, Karen Taylor. **Committee Members Excused:** Nobles Crawford; Barbara Frazier, Joanna Castro (Public Member). **Also Present:** Carmen Quarles & Jennifer Hoppa, NYC Parks Department; Trish Anderton & Steve Harris, Inwood Canoe Club; Folana Miller; Jerry Culligan; Mike Fitelson, United Palace; Heather Godfrey, Dance Project of WH.

1) Welcome, Opening Remarks, & Updates (6:40pm in the absence of a quorum, which was achieved at 7:10pm.)

- No update on New Leaf Café concession. Earlier today, Parks Revenue Div. representative confirmed that an RFP respondent was selected, but they are still in negotiations over specifics. Parks expects to have an update before the concession expires on Jan. 22nd, hopefully before next Committee meeting.
- Scoping meeting for Inwood soccer field project held on Nov. 19th; details below in Parks report.

2) Brief Programming Updates from various community arts & cultural groups (6:44pm)

- Jennifer announced many upcoming events, including: Inwood Hill Park trails day, 12/14, 9am-noon; Highbridge Park mountain bike orientation (skills & trails maintenance), 12/14 & 1/11/20; 10am-3pm; Family Wellness Day @ Highbridge Rec Ctr, 12/14 & 1/18/20, 11am-2pm; IHP; Shape Up NYC @ Highbridge Rec Ctr., Thursdays, 7pm-8pm; IHP Bald Eagle Watch (Payson Ctr.), 12/21, 9am-10:30am; Heather Garden Tour 1/5/20, 1pm-2pm.
- Mike Fitelson, United Palace: Elf, Sunday 12/15 at 4pm, featuring “carol-oke” Xmas sing-a-long.
- Hispanic Society free concert Dec. 19th at 7pm at the American Academy of Arts & Letters.
- Trish Anderton: Inwood Canoe Club doesn’t offer winter public programming, though some members do go out on the water in their own boats.

3) Parks Update from Northern Manhattan Parks Admin., Jennifer Hoppa (6:49pm)

- Monsignor Kett Restrooms: Since 2015, NYC Parks has worked to standardize comfort station design. They continue to explore ways to standardize construction by looking at size, cost, and to suit community needs. Parks is taking the opportunity of the Msgr. Kett renovation project to pilot a design for family/inclusive restroom: the comfort station building will include male and female restrooms with ADA facilities, as well as a neutral/mixed gender facility. This pilot is based in large part on this Board’s and specifically Committee’s long-standing advocacy on accessibility particularly for bathroom users whose caregivers may be of a different gender, as well as ongoing conversation within the agency. The current Parks administration has invested in the construction and reconstruction of more than 15% of our park comfort stations (27 have been completed, and 76 are active capital projects) has clarified local laws to ensure inclusivity for all, related to self-identity and facility usage; and has placed changing tables in each men’s and women’s restroom. This design change can be accommodated within the existing budget and is anticipated to add only a modest delay of approximately three months.
- Highbridge Water Tower Reconstruction is underway:
- Highbridge Park Quisqueya Playground Bathroom Project currently scheduled for Procurement completion in June ‘20 with construction slated to start in July ‘20.
- Audubon Playground bathroom project has been awarded. Construction slated to begin end of this month or early January ‘20.
- Pinehurst/181st Street Step Street: bids came in ~\$250k too high; will be rebid.
- Inwood Nature Center: minor changes were made to help simplify bidding. Many new bidders have picked up the bid packages. Bid Opening scheduled for 12/16/19.
- IHP soccer field scoping meeting: \$6.3mm project funded by C/M Rodriguez mostly to fix poor drainage. The field is compacted and has no water service. It is in a flood plain so in order to install artificial turf they would need either to raise the elevation, or swap with the baseball fields (which are grass and can

be in the flood plain). A conceptual design plan likely will come before this Committee in March or April. Lighting is not currently included in the budget. Neither is a comfort station, for which C/M Rodriguez strongly advocated at the scoping meeting. Parks may be able to include a semi-permanent/portable restroom facility such as are used in the Rockaways.

- Public scoping meeting for ballfields adjacent to Inwood Hill Park's Ballfield #1, which share its outfield, to be held Mon. Jan. 6th at 6:30pm at the Muscota New School (4862 B'way).
- Jerry Culligan asked about the path at Ft. Washington Park by the River. A: this is reconstruction of rip-rap post-Sandy; though this park is outside of her jurisdiction, she was able to answer his questions based on Parks' online capital project tracker.
- Daryl Cochrane asked about the Dyckman Marina. A: docks are out; repairs are being made. The Hudson had a soft opening in the very late summer, operating for about 6 weekends. There were no complaints, and a lot of good feedback. The new operator is working w/ local CBOs to do events, and small private catered events also will be allowed in the off-season. There will be a full opening for the new season on Friday, May 1st.
- Daryl also asked about Javits Playground: A: a tree felled by lightening damaged some equipment. A dispute between the contractor and the play equipment fabricator on payment is delaying replacement equipment installation.
- Daryl also asked about Gorman Park. A: This will be addressed through a large, \$4mm engineering contract for multiple retaining walls. Gorman Parks has been assessed; there are a lot of issues with drainage due to the age of the retaining wall (almost 100 years old). Q: will construction be started by summer? A: alas, no, unlikely.
- Alexis Marnel asked for an update on the rabies outbreak. A: there was one additional rabid raccoon in the Raoul Wallenberg Playground in addition to the two noted in last month's minutes. Again, these and other areas have been bated with an oral vaccine that looks like ketchup packets. *NOTE: IF YOU SEE animals (e.g., raccoons, squirrels) that appear sick, lethargic, or vicious, or otherwise are acting strangely, CALL 311; DO NOT approach the animal(s).*
- \$4.4mm "PlayFair" campaign has increased number of PEP officers to 14 (of which only 2 are dedicated to High Bridge area), 6 more City Parks Workers (CPWs), and Urban Parks Rangers at the Payson Center.

4) Street Co-Naming Near/Adjacent to Inwood Hill Park to Honor Lenape Heritage: As none of the relevant parties was in attendance due to scheduling and other personal issues, this item was deferred to January or February, pending availability.

5) Hart Island: As no resolution was drafted and there was no one in attendance to speak to the issue, this item also was deferred to the next meeting.

6) Additional Announcements / New Business (7:30pm)

- Alexis announced upcoming Victorian Holiday Party at the Morris-Jumel Mansion this Saturday.
- NoMAA Uptown ArtStroll Poster Contest: all media encouraged; \$1,250/\$500/\$250 prizes; deadline 2/24/20; info at www.artstroll.com.
- Heather Godfrey of WH Dance Project: looking to expand their Board, and especially seeking individuals with professional expertise (accounting, legal, finance, business, HR, dance). There was some brainstorming around venues for this type of outreach, including reaching into donor and program base.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:42pm.