

Community Board 12, Manhattan
Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee Meeting: January 9, 2018
CB12 Conference Room (530 W. 166th St., 6th fl., NYC 10032)

Committee Members Present: E. Lorris Ritter (Chair), Mitchell Glenn (Ass't Chair), Daryl Cochrane, Natalie Espino, Domingo Estevez, Barbara Frazier, Richard Lewis, Karen Taylor (public member). Staff: Paola Garcia. Also attending: Katherine Winkelman; Brad Conover & son; Ira Gershenhorn; Isabelle Chagnon; Steven Harris; Trish Anderton, Inwood Canoe Club; Charlene Edwards, Jennifer Hoppa, Danny Hernandez, NYC Parks; Meghan Alvarez, RowNY.

Meeting called to order at 6:35pm.

1. 6:35pm **Welcome, Opening Remarks & Announcements** (Elizabeth Lorris Ritter, Chair)
Announcements of upcoming events, including "WINTER JAM" (lots of winter fun) in Central Park (Bandshell area) on Saturday, Jan. 27th, 11am-3pm. Northern Manhattan Parks Admin Jennifer Hoppa also announced that Wesley Hamilton has been moved to Gracie Mansion/United Nations; introduced new CD12 Parks & Rec Manager, Danny Hernandez (danny.hernandez@parks.nyc.gov / 917-524-1407 x116).
2. 6:40pm **Old Business: Update on Bennett Park & request to evaluate for a dog run** In deference to community member Brad Conover, who was in attendance with his young son, we moved this item up in the agenda. Gave a summary of the salient points from last month's length presentation and ensuing discussion (see previous minutes). Mr. Conover noted that he measure the distance between the retaining wall and the proposed dog run area, and it is indeed 20' (as estimated). Ms. Hoppa summarized her Dec. 21st email response to the Committee's follow-up:
 - Following a public Scoping and Master Planning process for Bennett Park prior to the most recent renovation, the community and the Parks Department prioritized circulation and better access to rocky outcroppings. The Master Plan didn't call for a dog run due to space constraints, noise, and the fact that there are already five dog runs within CD12 (in Inwood Hill, Fort Tryon, Highbridge, J. Hood Wright, and Fort. Washington Parks). This is considered a regional use.
 - The Public Design Commission also required revisions to have the park's Revolutionary War history shine through, as well as to increase porous surfaces for better drainage, resilience, and water recapture. If anything, Parks would be looking to increase vegetation.
 - Viability of vegetation is compromised by soil compaction and by dog urine/feces.
 - Siting a dog run is not so much a question of cost (though it's true that funds aren't currently available were a dog run agreed to be a good idea), but is it an appropriate use. This was revisited during the Master Plan; as a result Parks expanded/improved four existing dog runs.
 - Bennett Park already is over capacity and having a regional use generator such as a dog run would exacerbate that.
 - Another possible area for a dog run is be in Ft. Washington Park just west of the Henry Hudson Pkwy, south of the W. 181st St. pedestrian bridge. This would activate that area of the park.
 - Brad stated that there already are dogs in the park and they conflict with playing children. Also, it is too far to have to walk to the other dog runs. Several people pointed out that dogs can still be in Bennett Park on their leashes, and that is an adequate way to exercise a dog when time is not sufficient to walk to one of the dog runs.
 - Brad: we also would like off-leash privileges in the Park. There has been more enforcement lately with people getting summonses for having their dogs off leash. A: this also was discussed at length at many past meetings; due to other park uses and user conflicts, it's not appropriate for off-leash consideration. The increased enforcement is to keep the environment safe for all parks users, including for those dog owners who are observing the law and keeping their dog(s) on-leash. Parks will continue to enforce existing regulations.
 - Mitch Glenn encouraged Mr. Conover and other dog owners to consider other methods, including visiting other area dog runs, and exercising their dogs on-leash.

3. 7:05pm **Consideration of Landmark Designation in Inwood Hill Park:** Presenters not in attendance; defer to February 13th meeting.
4. 7:10pm **NYC Parks Report** (Jennifer Hoppa, NYC Parks Northern Manhattan Parks Administrator)
See full report in separate document.
- 16 ongoing projects in CD12M totaling \$65million.
 - Nature Center starting construction this fall, pending bids
 - Dyckman House: looking at phasing
 - ADA: public scoping meeting to be scheduled probably in March
 - Javits Playground \$670k funding shortfall made up by C/M Rodriguez; YAY & THANKS!.
 - Highbridge Anchor Park Phase I should go into construction Winter '18 / Spring '19.
 - Highbridge Anchor Park Phase II currently in the construction documents phase.
 - Ft. Washington Park EcoDock needs \$1.3million to go forward.
 - Re Ft. Washington Park wooden deck bridge: Amtrak is committed to replacing the bridge, but the existing bridge is in such bad shape that an alternative route will be needed to maintain access to FW Park during bridge (re-)construction.
 - Inwood trails project to maintain/improve 4.2 miles of trails: this is a special project not a capital project. Many came out on Jan. 8th; another work day scheduled for this weekend.
 - Announced additional programs from multi-page handout w/scores of items; flyers also in back.
 - A water pipe burst at the Morris-Jumel Mansion, causing significant damage to the Octagon Room, George Washington's study & the office above, and the basement below. The Mansion will remain closed at least through mid- February pending damage assessment and a repair plan.
 - Richard Lewis: what is happening with the Inwood Hill Park Nature Center? A: The Urban Park Rangers currently are operating out of the Payson Playground facility. When the Nature Center is repaired will not be the same kind of curated experience as at Central Park due to lack of staffing/funding. Additional science programming for local schools has been funded in part through Partnerships for Parks through the \$300k Baker Field community benefits agreement from Columbia University.
 - Daryl Cochrane: What is the status of the comfort stations in Audubon Playground renovation design? A: there will be a third "family" bathroom which will be fully ADA-compliant.
5. 7:25pm **Presentation regarding a floating pool in public waterways:** Presenters not in attendance; defer to February 13th (or March 13th) meeting (depending on availability). Meanwhile, for more information, visit www.PlusPool.org, or check out: <https://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20170619/dumbo/plus-pool-floating-east-hudson-river-osmosis>.

There being no additional business, **the meeting adjourned at 7:30pm.**

Respectfully submitted: Elizabeth Lorris Ritter