

Community Board 12, Manhattan Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee

December 11, 2018

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

Committee Members Present: Elizabeth Lorris Ritter (Chair), Daryl Cochrane (Asst. Chair), Barbara Frazier, Richard Lewis, Domingo Estevez, Nobles Crawford (Public Member). **Absent:** Karen Taylor, Mitchell Glenn. **Other Board Members:** Isidro Medina; Sally Fisher (Friends of Inwood Hill Park) **Also Attending (20 Total Attendees):** Pat Courtney; Charlene Edwards, J. Hood Wright Rec. Center; Steve Harris, President, Inwood Canoe Club; Jennifer Gonzales, Highbridge Rec. Center; Barbara Peck & Bob Barnett, Hudson River Community Rowing; Natalie Espino, MBPO; Meghan Alvarez, Row NY; Jennifer Hoppa, Northern Manhattan Parks Admin; Alexis Marnel, Morris-Jumel Mansion; Tiffany Braby; Morris-Jumel Neighborhood Assn; Kim McNeal (Chief of Recreation, Manhattan Parks); Rose Santo; and others who did not sign in, including David Thom; Jerry Culligan; Aaron Simms, Inwood Art Works; Terry Lorden; René Cuenca, Partnerships for Park.

1. **The meeting was called to order** at about 6:40pm by the Chair.
 - **November resos** regarding Pinehurst Steps & Inwood Landmarking Designation were approved unanimously by the full Board at last month's General Meeting.
 - Discussion of **space issues at the Armory** will go through Housing & Human Services Committee; no need to re-adjudicate here and drag embers of the public to multiple meetings.
 - Liz discussed **filming of "In the Heights"** with Warner Bros. representatives; one of many meetings they've held w/ community stakeholders (Richard also met with WB reps today). Update/briefing of production schedule planning (target: 10-wk production schedule beginning in May 2019) and other specifics of the production (e.g., potential contribution to local businesses and consideration of neighborhood disruption). Not a lot of details yet, but their approach to community conversations and local engagement is positive and impressive. For example, they are looking to use local businesses for catering, and local vacant storefronts for production offices, which is good for local economy and also reduces production footprint and number of lost parking spaces. WB also looking to have a community meeting in March/April. A discussion ensued. Daryl recommended a "Know Your Rights" fact-sheet for residents. Barbara wanted to make sure that WB would be paying individual locations appropriate rent and would be making capital improvements to locations rented.
 - Attended **Inwood Hill Park Ballfield #1 Public Scoping Meeting** last week. Parks expects to present a plan to the Committee in March/April.
2. As no one from **NoMAA** was present for a brief update, the floor was opened to Aaron Simms, **Inwood Art Works'** Executive Producer, who gave a breakdown of events through January at their pop-up gallery.
3. **Update on La Marina Concession Agreement** Liz gave an update of the current events concerning La Marina and the SLA's suspension last week of their liquor license. Liz invited people from the NYC Parks Revenue Division to the meeting, and while no one attended meeting, they did speak her yesterday to give a brief status update: Parks Dept. had revoked La Marina's privilege of having Special Events, but did permit the Neighborhood 360 event go forward as it has been planned prior to the Event suspension and it seemed unfair to penalize an unrelated party with such short notice to reschedule an large event. Parks' attorneys are reviewing the Concession Agreement regarding possibilities for termination and/or other penalties; as it is under review they can't comment at this time as to disposition, but hope to be able to attend and report at next Committee meeting, on Jan 8th. Not clear if a resolution is appropriate at this time as the process is ongoing and there are many unknown variables. Jennifer Hoppa clarified and added to La Marina's history of violations and the process forward, including that La Marina has until 12/17 to file a plea.

Richard sought clarity point does it reach the point where the operational license is "Instantly" revoked for the management/ownership; this must be clarified. Liz noted that there are due process provisions that prevent "instant" revocation, but we can and should sharpen language around revocation. Domingo wanted to know what is defined as a "Special Event" because that also is unclear seems rather subjective (e.g., what

was the process to make an exception for Neighborhood 360/BID). Liz again clarified that that event had been planned at that venue prior to the revocation of Special Events by Parks, and the BID was only informed of the change two day's notice prior to the event, which was not enough to move it to another venue. Isidro (ED of the BID) and Natalie Espino (MBPO rep) further clarified operational difficulties of moving a huge event on such short notice; they tried to find other venues to no avail. Barbara spoke to overall maleficence and irresponsibility of La Marina's current management.

Meeting attendees voiced frustration about continuous "breaches of contract/concession agreement" by La Marina and wondered "if now is not the time for a resolution, when is," and not waiting until January to "speak for community." Isidro, who also is Chair of CB12M's Licensing Committee, reminded that the Board passed a resolution in April opposing the renewal of La Marina's SLA license. Many recommended that Parks terminate both Concession Agreements (i.e., one for the restaurant and another for the marina) and also that the SLA permanently revoke the currently suspended liquor license. It was agreed that this should be done now, ahead of the SLA's consideration of the matter. (Date of that meeting not clear; Isidro to reach out to SLA for this info.) There was some concern about protecting the programs provided by Hudson River Community Sailing, which has become an excellent community partner; Parks Dept. will continue to work w/ them and to shield them from any access restriction to the dock as a result of any drawn-out litigation w/ La Marina. 8:05pm **A resolution to this effect was passed unanimously:** Committee 6-0-0-0; Other Board Members 2-0-0-0; Public 13-0-1-2. Liz reiterated the "Resolved" & "Whereas" clauses, and will draft the final language based on the discussion.

- 4) Following the 2018 Mayoral Charter Commission's work, which generated several ballot propositions for last month's elections, all of which passed, the 2019 City Council Charter Revision Commission requested that all 51 Community Boards provide suggested areas for review. A packet of process guidelines and possible recommendations for consideration by the Commission was distributed and discussed. Attendees were welcome to make recommendations -- on any subject, whether or not related to parks or cultural affairs -- for other areas of review, which Liz will forward to the Commission:
 - Overturn Community Board member term limits enacted by 2018 Commission. (several Board members)
 - Revenue generated by Parks' Concessions currently go to general revenue, not to the Parks Department, or to the Park or Borough where generated. (Dave Thom)
 - Give the Public Advocate subpoena power. (Domingo Estevez)
 - Increase Community Board budgets. (Gerry Culligan)
 - Expense budget rollover from one 'FY to the next rather than "use it or lose it". (Sally Fisher)
 - Funding for parks should be proportionate to land mass? NYC currently has 30k+ acres of parks land which is the equivalent of the Bronx, yet it only has <1% of the total NYC budget. Even if not geographically proportionate, it should be at least 1%. (Sally Fisher)
 - This is the "Parks & CULTURAL AFFAIRS Committee," so we also need 1% for Art. (Liz Ritter)
 - Budget is listed for all to see but other countries & cities also show where \$\$ ultimately were spend. This should be publically and readily available each year. (Nobles Crawford)
 - Why doesn't the Parks Department have its own Capital Budget? (Daryl Cochrane)
 - CBs should have a role in appointing the Landmarks Preservation Commissioners (Barbara Frazier)
 - Expand Participatory Budgeting and make the final project information more publicly available. (Nobles Crawford) <Note: this was the one of the Charter revisions passed on 11/6/18, and due to take effect in 2020.>
- 5) Announcements / Mail / New Business
 - Announcement of several then-upcoming events.
 - Parks is seeking professionals for Tennis instruction and released Concession RFP
 - Daryl to ask Parks Revenue about including sale of tennis balls etc. as part of Concessions

- Reminder to include ADA Access for Ft. Washington Courts as a Capital Priority in next year's ranking
- Sally - Letter/Reso encouraging the City & Parks Dept. to provide discounted access to tennis courts to the disabled as is done w/ Rec. Centers.
- Sid Horenstein, a community staple for Northern Manhattan Parks who gave hundreds of tours and lectures over the years about uptown's geological history, passed last week at 82. (NY Times obit here: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/10/obituaries/sidney-horenstein-dead.html>?) There was brief discussion around naming a something for him, preferably one of the iconic rocky outcroppings rather than a building. Jennifer Hoppa will discuss with his widow and make recommendations.
- Kim McNeal - Chief of Recreation (Manhattan Parks) offered explanation and more clarity around J. Hood Wright Rec Center, which will be turned into a Senior Center to reflect its actual use. There will still be a playground Associate and kids programming and opportunities for kids in the summer, as well as movies and special events for the community. The 20-child camp program in CD12 will continue, but will move to Highbridge Rec Center, which has more than ample space for that.

6) **NYC Parks Capital & Events Update:**

- Highbridge Phase I construction is starting later this month.
- Audubon Playground construction has begun.
- All Parks Capital Projects can be followed on the Parks Capital tracker: <https://www.nycgovparks.org/planning-and-building/capital-project-tracker>
- Monsignor Kett Playground, Dyckman Rest, & Inwood Soccer Fields are all in design. Follow these projects on the Inwood Rezoning/POA projects tracker: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/operations/performance/neighborhood-rezoning-commitments-tracker.page>
- Eagle Watch in Inwood Hill Park 12/23.
- New Year's Day hike in Ft. Tryon Park.
- Mulch Fest: Jan. 4th - 13th throughout the City & District; at Inwood Hill Park (Isham St. entrance) on 1/12 & 1/13, 10am - 2pm. SAT classes at Highbridge Rec Center.
- More events & calendar available at northernmanhattanparks.org.

There being no additional business, **the meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.**

Respectfully submitted: Nobles Crawford & Liz Ritter