

Community Board 12, Manhattan Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee

January 8, 2019

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

Committee Members Present: Elizabeth Lorris Ritter (Chair), Daryl Cochrane (Asst. Chair), Barbara Frazier, Richard Lewis, Mitchell Glenn, Domingo Estevez, Nobles Crawford (Public Member). **Excused:** Karen Taylor. **Other Board Members:** Sally Fisher, Osi Kaminer, Steve Simon. **Also Attending (30 Total Attendees):** Leslie Peoples (NYC Parks), Phil Santora (NY Road Runners), Craig Church (NYC Parks), Valinn Ranelli (NMN4S, Inwood Indivisible), Jane & Thea Sugar, Aaron Simms (Inwood Art Works), Eric Davenport (Architect), Lizbeth Sanchez, Melissa Goldberg & David Cerron (Parks Revenue Div.), Omar Tejada, Charlene Edwards (Parks, J. Hood Wright Rec. Center), Meghan Alvarez (RowNY), Diego Quintera, Paul Kittas, Trish Anderton (Inwood Canoe Club), Jennifer Hoppa (NYC Parks), Rene Cuenca (Partnerships for Parks), Grace Prani, Carlie Reynoso (NYRP), Toby Jackson, Katherine O'Sullivan (Moving Forward Unidos), Joshua Goldberg, Allegra LeGrande, Jeanne Ruskin, David Sykes, Natalie Espino (MBPO), Bob Burnett (Hudson River Community Rowing), Adam Fran.

1. **The meeting was called to order** at about 6:43pm by the Chair.
 - **Recap of the La Marina resolution:** Last month's reso calling on the Parks Department to terminate La Marina's Concessions and on the SLA to revoke La Marina's liquor license was passed by the full Board on December 18th with 39 votes in Favor, none Opposed, 2 Abstaining, and 1 Not Voting due to conflict.
 - Fort Washington Armory space issues: this will be on the HHS Committee agenda, which has invited the concerned parties to its meeting next week.
 - Explanation and instruction to fill out the CB12 Committee survey, a new feedback tool instituted by the new CB12M Chair. *[Note: 1 person filled out the form.]*
2. **NY Road Runners (March 3rd; first qualifying event of the season):** Phil Santora passed out flyers regarding the Parking & Traffic Advisory for the event, and explained the time start of the Kid races (8am) and the Adults race (9am). The race will include several musical acts along the route. Discussion of the parking and traffic restrictions, and of the race route and logistics, ensued.
 - Liz invited Phil to come to the next two General Meetings with flyers (Jan. 22nd & Feb. 26th), and also recommended the NYPD re-route Magaw Place as one-way east- and south-bound to relieve traffic on Pinehurst Ave.; this has been an effective measure in the past. She also asked about fixing potholes along the route, and received confirmation it will be done.
 - Kids' registration is open through March 2nd (www.nyrr.org); adult race is already near capacity.
 - Event **still looking for volunteers.** (Email volunteers@nyrr.org if interested.)
3. **Update on La Marina Concession Agreement** Representatives of the Parks Dept. Revenue Division: David Ceron (Assistant Commissioner for Concessions), Melissa Goldberg (Dir. of Compliance), Liz Sanchez (Project Manager). After giving a summary of how La Marina got to the point of being shut down, and confirmation that they're aware of the Community Board's December 2018 resolution, they confirmed that while the license agreement is still active and in litigation, Parks cannot do anything with the space. They were willing to field questions directly from the community and the Committee, were limited in how they could respond due to ongoing litigation. Osi Kaminer, who is a member of CB12M's Licensing Committee contributed details of that Committee's deliberations in it October, 2018 and November, 2018 meetings, and suggested David and Melissa review the minutes of those meetings. They confirmed that:
 - City is not the plaintiff (i.e., Manhattan River Group, LLC is suing the City) *[Note: MRG's petition is a matter of public record and can be viewed here:*
<https://iapps.courts.state.ny.us/fbem/DocumentDisplayServlet?documentId=hPTA8p5q9/VRMSZBPD2j2Q==&system=prod>.

- Confirmed that Parks recognizes the importance and value of the community programs offered by Hudson River Community Sailing and are working to find a way to ensure their operations are not negatively impacted given ongoing concession litigation.
- Discussion was had on licensing transfer and transparency in the future.
- Katherine O'Sullivan asked about a service charge, and where that money went to, and recommended that in the future the Concession be split into separate Licenses, i.e., one for the marina and another for the restaurant. Parks will take this into consideration for the next RFPs, whenever that is. She also asked that the tarps, which block river views, come down as well.
- Possible future reso: What type of concession we'd like to see in the space at such time that a new RFP is under consideration. We'd like to see more arts, more public access to waterfront, more affordable dining.

In a matter unrelated to La Marina, there was a question about the Concession Agreement for the **restaurant in Fort Tryon Park**. It was explained by Revenue that the current Concession goes through the end of the year; a new RFP is under review and they hope to announce a new awardee (or renewal) in early 2019.

4. **Anne Loftus Playground** Representatives of NYC Parks Capital & Design: Leslie Peoples, Craig Church, and Eric Davenport. This project was the subject of two public scoping meetings, on June 27th (at the Playground itself) and on October 25th (at the nearby Inwood branch Library) of last year. The presenter shared goals for the playground space, as well as topographical maps of interest to provide context and to show what facilities are available to the community within a quarter- and half-mile radius. Also described the Playground's existing conditions, and the issues the project seeks to address. The primary focus was on fixing the playground's central water feature (and related plumbing/drainage), as well as making that area accessible. (Currently there are two steps down.) Also explained they have a specific person, Chris Noel, assigned to recommending and reviewing ADA access/compliance within parks for any new design or renovation. There was considerable discussion on the accessibility of the water features themselves, the extent to which they are welcoming to wheelchair users as well as to those with autism and other sensory challenges. Also discussed was the safety of the playground generally for those with sensory and behavioral disabilities, as well as physical ones.

There was some discussion of the safety surfacing, and an expressed desire to ensure greater durability here than at other recently-renovated playgrounds (e.g., Indian Road Playground in Inwood Hill Park). There was some concern about the maintenance/operation of the water feature, and the need to balance functionality with durability. There was also substantial discussion of rainwater recapture and water recycling; as has been discussed at length in this Committee in the context of other projects, NYC Departments of Health and of Environmental Protection prohibit the recycling of "gray water" in these contexts.

A member of the public (the wise child who would be playing in said playground!) asked where children would play if this playground is closed as well as the Javits playground (which is currently under renovation). Parks confirmed that Javits would be completed before Anne Loftus goes into construction. There was discussion about the approval and design process and timeline, and next steps. This presentation is to approve a schematic design which would then need to be approved by both the Landmarks Preservation and the Public Design Commissions; CB12 would not see a final design unless the input and requested changes were so substantial as to warrant a second presentation. Outside of ADA compliance issues of the water feature itself, there were many public

comments, mostly around lighting, a possible skateboard area, ways to make the playground features themselves more accommodating to children with varying abilities, and the basketball area.

The Committee agreed:

- Basketball is an acceptable addition based on a public petition with 200+ signatures, almost all of which were from people living within CD12, as well as representation from the community on this matter at both scoping meetings. There was some ambivalence, but since there are only three full courts and one half-court within a half-mile radius, and proposed space for the new half-court is currently empty, the addition of basketball would not be at the expense of any other features under consideration.
- Add a low fence (3.5-foot high) wall around half-court to protect from errant chest passes.
- Add 5th iteration of spray feature that is lower, gentler, and closer to the perimeter so as to be more welcoming to wheelchair users and those requiring a less chaotic water experience or one that is closer to the seating area.
- Add decorative lighting to the water feature, and perhaps additional lighting within the playground to enable evening use.
- Add more drinking fountains, and include bottle-filler feature in all drinking fountains.
- Use more “soft scape” surfaces to maximize natural water recapture.
- Consider a Lenape-inspired turtle in the decorative concrete, rather than concentric circles.
- Due to the large number of requested alterations, the Committee also requested that Parks **return to the Committee with a revised schematic** that incorporates these suggestions.
- **A resolution supporting the schematic design as amended was approved unanimously: Committee 6-0-0-0; Other Board Members 2-0-0-1; Public 10-1-1-0.**
- Liz restated the Resolveds & Whereases and will draft the final language based on the discussion.

5) Announcements / Mail / New Business

- Announcement of several then-upcoming events.
- Jennifer Hoppa gave a very brief report, including the groundbreaking on Dec. 20th of Phase I of the Highbridge Anchor Parks Project, and the beginning of the Audubon Playground renovation. She also announced a scoping meeting for the \$14 million Monsignor Kett Playground renovation, on Jan. 29th at 6:30pm, venue TBA.
- Due to the late hour, new business items regarding Paul Kittas’ request for a new survey of Highbridge Park for architectural features of the Croton Aqueduct, and a programming update from Hudson River Community Rowing were deferred to the February agenda.

There being no additional business, **the meeting was adjourned at 9:20pm**, in memory of Sidney Horenstein.