

Tobi Bergman, *Chair*  
Terri Cude, *First Vice Chair*  
Susan Kent, *Second Vice Chair*  
Bob Gormley, *District Manager*



Antony Wong, *Treasurer*  
Keen Berger, *Secretary*  
Daniel Miller, *Assistant Secretary*

## COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

3 WASHINGTON SQUARE VILLAGE  
NEW YORK, NY 10012-1899

[www.cb2manhattan.org](http://www.cb2manhattan.org)

P: 212-979-2272 F: 212-254-5102 E: [info@cb2manhattan.org](mailto:info@cb2manhattan.org)

Greenwich Village ∨ Little Italy ∨ SoHo ∨ NoHo ∨ Hudson Square ∨ Chinatown ∨ Gansevoort Market

December 18, 2015

William T. Castro  
Manhattan Borough Commissioner  
Arsenal West, 24 West 61<sup>st</sup> Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10023

Jonathan B. Jarvis  
Director, National Park Service  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Commissioner Castro and Mr. Jarvis:

At its Full Board meeting December 17, 2015, Community Board #2, adopted the following resolution:

### **Resolution on the report produced by the Working Group on the establishment of a Stonewall National Monument based at Christopher Park**

**Whereas,**

- a. community groups were notified and there were community members present, and
- b. the working group was appointed to study and produce a report to the CB2 Manhattan Board the potential and possible issues with the establishment of the National Monument, and
- c. at the culmination of its fourth meeting the Working Group voted to submit the attached report to the CB2 Manhattan Board for its approval,

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that Community Board 2 Manhattan hereby **APPROVES** the December 9 report of the Stonewall National Monument Working Group and expresses its appreciation to the working group members for their contribution to this important initiative.

**Vote:** Unanimous, with 40 Board Members in favor.

Please advise us of any decision or action taken in response to this resolution.

Sincerely,

Tobi Bergman, Chair

Maury Schott, Chair

Community Board #2, Manhattan

Stonewall Working Group  
Community Board #2, Manhattan

TB/EM

c:

Hon. Jerrold L. Nadler, Congressman  
Hon. Brad Hoylman, NY State Senator  
Hon. Deborah Glick, State Assembly Member  
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Corey Johnson, Council Member

Tobi Bergman, *Chair*  
Terri Cude, *First Vice Chair*  
Susan Kent, *Second Vice Chair*  
Bob Gormley, *District Manager*



Antony Wong, *Treasurer*  
Keen Berger, *Secretary*  
Daniel Miller, *Assistant Secretary*

## COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

3 WASHINGTON SQUARE VILLAGE

NEW YORK, NY 10012-1899

[www.cb2manhattan.org](http://www.cb2manhattan.org)

P: 212-979-2272 F: 212-254-5102 E: [info@cb2manhattan.org](mailto:info@cb2manhattan.org)

Greenwich Village ∨ Little Italy ∨ SoHo ∨ NoHo ∨ Hudson Square ∨ Chinatown ∨ Gansevoort Market

### CB2 Manhattan Stonewall National Monument Working Group

#### Report and Recommendations

The Stonewall National Monument Working Group was formed by Community Board 2 Manhattan (CB2) in August 2015 in order to look at the ramifications of the establishment of a National Monument or Park based on Christopher Park or some other property nearby. The Working Group was formed by CB2 Chair Tobi Bergman following a unanimous vote by the CB2 Board supporting the concept of a National Monument commemorating the struggle for LGBT civil rights.

This proposal was originally made by the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), a non-profit established in 1919 to advocate for National Parks and to “ensure these places remained unimpaired for future generations.” In addition, as part of its core value of Inclusion, NPCA seeks opportunities to add locations to the National Park Service (NPS) that embrace the “different perspectives” of the American experience. It was with this in mind that NPCA felt it was essential that a site honoring the actions of LGBT Americans outside the Stonewall Inn in June, 1969 should be designated to join NPS sites like the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail in Alabama and the Women’s Rights National Historic Park in Seneca Falls, NY which honor those who fought for the civil rights of African Americans and for women’s suffrage.

In its first meeting, the Working Group, with the assistance of NPCA, identified several general areas of concern to look at:

- Process involved in designating a National Monument or Park
- Design
- Impact on the Surrounding Community
- Operations and Budget
- Programming and Narrative

In a subsequent meeting, the Working Group was again joined by representatives of the NPCA along with invited representatives from the NYC Parks Dept. and NPS to discuss in more detail these general areas and some of the specific concerns identified in each.

#### **Process**

There are two ways in which a National Park, Monument, Historic Site, etc (these terms are essentially interchangeable) can be added to the NPS, by either Congressional action or designation by the President under the provisions of the Antiquities Act of 1906. For the purposes of this proposal it has been assumed a designation for Stonewall would be done by the President under the Antiquities Act, although much of this discussion would also be relevant to legislation. In addition, designation under either scenario would require a piece of real property being ‘donated’ to the NPS as the basis of the new unit of the National Park System. .

While the original proposal from NPCA was to base the National Monument on a transfer of Christopher Park from New York City to the NPS, CB2 began looking at the issue without assuming the park would serve as the basis of the designated Monument. But as the process has moved forward, the City of New York has entered into discussions of a park transfer with the NPS. As such, the Working Group has concentrated on identifying and understanding the ramifications of Christopher Park itself becoming the basis for the new unit of the National Park System.

The Working Group is awaiting the resolution of these discussions and the NYC Legal Dept. has recommended that the transfer of the park be accomplished by a Mayoral authorization as is it a government to government transfer. That process will include alienation legislation passed by the NYS Legislature, the issuance of a Home Rule Message by the NYC Council supporting the exact language of the state bill and Community Board review, as shown below:

<b>Stonewall National Monument Local Approval Steps</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alienation legislation introduced in NYS Senate and Assembly;</li><li>• Community Board 2 review of transfer legislation;</li><li>• NYC Council review and passage of Home Rule message;</li><li>• NYC Mayor review and approval of Home Rule message;</li><li>• NYS Senate &amp; Assembly review and passage of alienation legislation;</li><li>• NYS Governor review, approval and signing of alienation legislation;</li><li>• NYC Mayor notice of intent to authorize transfer to NYC Council;</li><li>• NYC Mayoral authorization of transfer.</li></ul>

Full transparency should be maintained with clear opportunities for the Community Board, neighbors and neighborhood associations to have an ongoing role in the process.

The overall process includes two mechanisms with which community concerns can be addressed:

#### **Transfer Agreement**

Assuming all the above occurs and there is a transfer of the park to the NPS, an agreement between the parties would aim to establish how the operations and maintenance of the Monument would be carried out. The agreement should address responsibility for law enforcement and day-to-day maintenance in Christopher Park, as well as how the NPS would interact with non-profit groups such as the Christopher Park Alliance who have done so much to maintain and improve it. There is substantial precedent for this sort of agreement and the NYC Parks Department confirms that it has an excellent and long-standing relationship with the NPS at shared sites like General Grant National Memorial (aka Grant's Tomb) in Riverside Park, the Hamilton Grange in St. Nicholas Park and at other sites in Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island. If the President decides to dedicate the site, the transfer of the park would occur just prior to the President signing the declaration.

#### **3-year Management Plan Design**

In addition, once a National Monument is designated, there is a 3-year period allowed for the creation of a management plan for the Monument. This would allow for additional community input into how the Monument and the community would coexist.

Ultimately, the Working Group would like further clarity on the following points:

- The transfer agreement and management plan should allow for maintenance, operations and security of the Park to be managed by NYC city agencies, while providing NPS direction for Historic Monument programming.
- The transfer agreement and management plan should also provide for the involvement of community gardeners and stewards in the maintenance of the Park.
- Future improvements to traffic control and pedestrian safety should not be restricted by the federal designation.

- There should be a defined way to monitor and remediate potential neighborhood impacts such as increased bus traffic.

## **Design**

As the proposal has moved forward with discussions of Christopher Park being the core of the National Monument, it has also been determined that the overall National Monument should encompass City-owned and private property that was integral to the struggle for LGBT rights in the area surrounding the original Stonewall Inn and Christopher Park, similar to the boundary map of the Stonewall National Historic Landmark. Under the plans being discussed, the NPS would not own or regulate these other properties. Further, all parties agree that integral to the history being commemorated, Christopher Park was and must remain a community park. While its location opposite the Stonewall Inn was integral to the actions that took place in 1969, it must remain a community park in order to properly serve as the core for a National Monument to the Stonewall uprising (which is also referred to as the Stonewall riots or rebellion). As part of this history the name should remain Christopher Park.

It is also agreed that, as in 1969, Christopher Park is a critical green space to a dense, urban area made up of commercial and residential uses. As such, any National Monument should be managed to remain a part of that diverse urban fabric, and programming should avoid encouraging influxes of large groups. It is clearly the community's wish that the park remain a refuge, both for members of the community and visitors who wish to contemplate the courage of those who put their personal safety at risk to demand respect and equality for LGBT Americans.

The Working Group has identified the following concerns:

- Will federal ownership include all of the park or will the portion currently a 'viewing garden' be retained by the NYC Parks Dept?
- Will park design changes, including NPS program installations be subject to NYC Parks, Landmarks Preservation Commission and Public Design Commission processes?
- Signage should be limited and kept in proper relationship to the perimeter fencing.

The Working Group also hopes that local properties that are, or once were home to businesses and organizations that welcomed or sheltered LGBT people will be encouraged to 'join' the National Monument. This list, in addition to the Stonewall Inn, could include:

- *Julius'* on 10<sup>th</sup> Street
- *The Cherry Lane Theater* on Commerce St.
- The site of the *Oscar Wilde Memorial Bookshop* on Christopher St.
- The site of the *Ridiculous Theatrical Company*
- The site of *Caffe Cino*, a café, lounge and theatre space on Cornelia St. that is often considered the birthplace of Off-Off-Broadway
- The site of *Mama's Chick'n' Rib* at the corner of Greenwich Ave and Perry St.
- *The Corner*, the area around the corner of Christopher St and Greenwich Ave, a general 'hangout'.
- The sites of the *Sea Colony* and *Kooky's*, lesbian bars on 8<sup>th</sup> Ave and 14<sup>th</sup> St respectively
- The site of *Keller's*, a gay bar at the corner of West and Barrow Sts.

Additional properties on Christopher St, Greenwich Ave and other streets that were once home to businesses that welcomed LGBT patrons, as well as offices or meeting places for LGBT organizations such as the *Daughters of Bilitis*, *Gay Liberation Front*, *Gay Activists Alliance*, the *Mattachine Society* and others should be included. These could include locations that existed prior to Stonewall or were established in the neighborhood in great part due to the Stonewall uprising.

It is the understanding of the Working Group that many of these determinations, along with those related to the *Impacts on the Surrounding Community* and *Operations and Budget*, will be worked out with additional community input, **primarily during the 3-year period of establishing a management plan.**

## **Programming and Narrative**

CB2 expects that much of the programming and narrative will be designed through extensive research by NPS historians using authoritative resources. This should include input and documentation from resources such as the Lesbian Herstory Archives, National History Archives at the NYC LGBT Community Center as well as participant interviews. As it is now 46 years since the Stonewall uprising, this is especially critical as so many of those with first-person experience of the Stonewall uprising have passed away, many during the AIDS epidemic.

The Working Group encourages the NPS to look at new technological options for delivering the narrative. Christopher Park, at only .19 acres, is too small a canvas to communicate the entire narrative. Employing mobile web technology allows for site specific messages to be delivered to individuals to enjoy at their own pace. Technology also offers the ability to provide information in different languages to ensure the narrative reaches people of all ethnic backgrounds. Finally, it facilitates involvement of additional sites in communicating the narrative.