



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD No. 4

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J. LEE COMPTON
Chair

ANTHONY M. BORELLI
District Manager

August 3, 2005

Anna Colletti
Director of Special Events
Department of Parks and Recreation
Arsenal West
24 West 61st Street
New York, NY 10023

Re: Special Permit for use of DeWitt Clinton Park

Dear Ms. Colletti,

CB4 understands that ENK (The Unconvention Center at Pier 94) desires to use a portion of DeWitt Clinton Park for just over 2 weeks in mid September, 2005 for events relating to a large show on Piers 92 and 94. The long time requested is primarily for the set up and subsequent dismantling of a very large (25,000 sq ft) tent plus ancillary tents and portable HVAC gear. The area originally requested is the site of the softball and other sport playing fields.

This area is in great demand during the fall months by numerous sport leagues, two of whom testified at the July meeting of the Waterfront & Parks Committee. As described by the league representatives, even a smaller version of a tent on any part of the that location would render all of the fields useless as, even now, when playing softball, the outfields overlap and players must keep an eye out for each other as a result.

A two week use of the ballfields would displace thousands of adults and children who use the fields for organized sports and recreation. On Sunday afternoons alone, nearly 1,000 people utilize the three fields in addition to nearly 150 children participating in little league. On weekday evenings more than 1,000 adults utilize all three fields for community softball leagues. These statistics do not even include the school children and adults who utilize the park during weekday mornings and afternoons nor do they reflect Friday bookings. Further, the leagues stated that (a) there were simply no other facilities to move the games to and (b) a two-week disruption essentially wipes out the season.

In response to the Waterfront and Parks Committee request, ENK reviewed their plans and presented a revised plan at the Full Board Meeting on Wednesday, July 27, 2005. This revised proposal consisted of three smaller tents, one each placed on the basketball court, racquetball court and one on the space between these two courts. However, even with these adjustments this use would deny park users and community residents use of already limited park space in our community. In addition, ENK could not specifically commit to making a significant improvement to the park, or to donating funds for park improvement, to help mitigate the two-week use of this much used public space.

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CB4 feels strongly that a park is a park, and that, in principle, a park should not be used for such a large scale commercial purpose, even if leagues were not to be disrupted in the process, but especially if sports leagues have to suspend two weeks of playing to accommodate such a purpose. Even the prospect of significant mitigation on the part of the applicant is not enough to offset losing two weeks of a park's use. Therefore, CB4 must strongly disapprove of the proposed use on the ballfields, and recommend that DPR not issue any permits to ENK for the proposed tent and activity in any part of this park.

Sincerely,



J. Lee Compton
Chair
Manhattan Community Board No. 4



John Doswell
Co-Chair
Waterfront & Parks Committee

Kristin Dionne
Co-Chair
Waterfront & Parks Committee

cc: Elyse Kroll, ENK
Zog Sports
Yorkville Sports Association