

Landmarks Preservation & Parks Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday January 6th, 2016 at Broadway Housing, 135th Street and Riverside Drive
Meeting called to attention at 6:40pm

CB9 Landmarks & Parks Committee Members in attendance:

Joel Mentor (Chair), Gladys Tinsley, Michael Wells, Daniel Marks Cohen, Jonathan Thomas, Michael Palma

CB9 members in attendance:

Presentations:

NYC Department of Parks and Recreation

Update on Carmansville Playground Renovations (Community Parks Initiative Project) Amsterdam at 151 & 152nd Streets

Presenter: Mr. Steve Simon, Chief of Staff (Manhattan)

Mr. Simon passed around copies of the rendering and schematics for the proposed redesign of the playground. Last year, following review and support from Parks Committee, Public Design Commission has approved the proposal. Design, construction documents phases are complete. Once lawyers review bidding documents (February/March), project will move onto the next phase and should begin construction in the fall (September/October 2016). A groundbreaking ceremony will be held, to which members will be invited. Parks Initiative is an effort put forth by Mayor DeBlasio, with support from Commissioner Silver to renovate city parks that have not seen any significant investments in over 20 years. This CPI project was funded by capital allocation from former Councilman Robert Jackson. Additional funds were allocated to include construction of a comfort station. The playground and comfort station are two separate capital projects, for which construction will overlap. The comfort station is slightly behind schedule. The playground will reopen to the public by the end of 2017, early 2018.

Features of the redesign will include two separate play areas for different age groups, with modern and challenging play equipment. New spray shower area, new comfort station, full size high school regulation basketball court, and two overlapping half courts.

NYC Department of Parks and Recreation

Update from District Manager

Presenter: Robert McClean, District Manager (CD9)

Major cleanup efforts were undertaken at Morningside from 110-114 and 116-123 Streets, and planted over 49 trees. This was made possible by 5600 volunteer hours, and public donations.

NYC Department of Parks and Recreation

Proposal for Hungarian Revolution Monument at Riverside Park at 113th Street

Presenters: Jonathan Kuhn, Director of Arts and Antiquities – Margaret Bracken, Chief of Design and Construction

An organization representing those who fought in liberation efforts of 1956 in Hungary, approached the Department regarding installing a monument in Manhattan. To add relevance and commemorative value, and not create an intrusion, it was decided to add this monument to the existing site of Louis Kossuth. Kossuth was instrumental in the 1848 revolution in Hungary. The sponsoring organization will be responsible for funding this project.

The site is located in Riverside Park, on Riverside Drive and 113th Street at the northern most tip. Some reconstruction was done in the 1990's at the site to connect the Samuel Tilden Monument to the existing Kossuth Monument. It is surrounded by 5ft of paved area, initially installed in 1928. The area around the monuments is fairly well used by park goers, and nearby residents. This proposed addition will provide seating areas, an extended plaza, and new seasonal plantings. The design will feature a constellation of polished stainless steel, and text relevant to the monument. Funding for the construction will be provided by private contributions and endowments for continued maintenance.

Questions were raised in regards to the new plantings that will be introduced to replace current species. New plants/shrubs will be consistent to what is currently at the park. They will include variety, hardy, drought tolerant and appealing species. Irrigation access is available on site. However, this project will not include new irrigation lines. Concerns were raised about possible loss of convenient and private space provided by existing plantings. Another concern related to long benches which tend to attract the homeless was raised. As the design is more open, and has height, those issues should be mitigated. Timeline for the project identifies a completion date by the end of the year. Construction is not going to have a major impact on the area, as only a small portion of the affected area will be closed.

As this project will go to Landmarks and Public Design Commission, a letter of support is being requested in support of this project.

119th Street Gatehouse – Croton Aqueduct Waterline

Presenters: Andrew Birdick, Meisha Hunter – Architects, Preservationists

The group presented growing collaboration and campaign to support renovation to the 119th Street Gatehouse. Various community groups were approached regarding the project. CB9 issued a letter of support in 2010. The group outlined recent efforts and next steps to identify potential uses for the underutilized structure, and garner community feedback. A number of elected officials have offered their support for the project, as the group hopes to use this momentum to move forward. Some of the goals are to create a narrative to connect this site to other gatehouses along the Croton Waterline. The group is seeking sponsorships, grants and other funding sources to further their study, field surveys, and implement brainstorming sessions. Employing the voices of the community via town hall meetings will be a major part of realizing reconstruction goals. The gatehouse has remained at the top of CB9's list of capital funding requests. Our committee will issue a letter of continued support or resolution toward this project.

36 Hamilton Terrace – Proposed renovations (LPC)

Presenter: Antonio Di Oronzo – Principal, Bluarch

This project addresses proposed renovations that will take place at 36 Hamilton Terrace. Scope of the renovations will include reduction in density from 2 to a single family. Both facades will be restored, along with all windows and sills to match original designs and existing structures in the area. A bulkhead to accommodate elevator shaft, and kitchenette is also being added to the roof of the building, which will not be visible from sight lines on Hamilton Terrace or major thoroughfares. The bulkhead is recessed to about 20 feet. A bay window on the rear of the building will be converted to include a door to provide access to the roof of an existing rear addition.

There were questions raised by residents on whether the owners have consulted with the Block Association. Provided that the proposal meets LPC guidelines, an owner is not obligated to obtain 3rd party approval, but could be seen as a courtesy to neighbors. Recommendations were made to ensure that the color of the cornice will be restored to the original stone color. Mr. Di Oronzo stressed how beneficial this renovation will be to the area. Our committee withheld a vote on the project, as additional information was requested from the Architect regarding a materials list intended for the façade of the building.

695 St. Nicholas Avenue – Renovations to address LPC violations

Presenter: Nasir J. Khazada LLC., Consulting Engineers

This presentation relates to Landmarks violations received at 695 St. Nicholas Avenue, corner of 145th Street, site of "Checkers". LPC has requested that existing metal treads and panels along the base of the surrounding glass walls and windows be removed, replaced by limestone colored stucco. Reduce number of oval shaped signage and ensure they are not illuminated. Security cameras have to also be colored so that they blend in with surrounding surfaces. Side

louvre, and stair thread to receive the same color treatment. Side window is to be replaced with double-hung, single aluminum frame window. Security gates to be outside mounted, and replaced with 70% visibility types. The landmarks committee voted unanimously to support this renovation.

Save Harlem Now (SHN) – Preservation initiatives

Presenter: Valerie Jo Bradley, President

Ms. Bradley provided an in depth profile of the organization and membership of its board. SHN is a membership not for profit advocacy organization dedicated to protecting, preserving, and celebrating Harlem's irreplaceable built heritage. Their goal is not limited to only saving individual outstanding structures, but also aim at preserving contextual buildings, landscapes, and other elements that contribute to define Harlem's sense of place and special character. SHN is a collaborative that aims at enriching Harlem's quality of life through continuity with the past, while enhancing awareness and our local economy.

Executive Members include:

Valerie Jo Bradley, President

Yuien Chin, Vice President

Angel Ayon, Vice President, Interim Treasurer

Jill Hanson, Secretary

Michael Henry Adams, Architectural Historian, Advocate

Gene Norman, Architect, Former LPC Chairman

Britt Densmore, Preservation League of NYS

This presentation was followed by a discussion around current and future landmark endeavors. This committee will partner with SHN to enact landmark plans outlined in CB9's 197A Plan, as well as identify possible new sites.

Old Business

Parks Without Borders initiative is still on going. Members are urged to support nominations for Jacob Schiff Park on Amsterdam Avenue and 138-139th Streets.

New Business

Partnering with Save Harlem Now to further the committee's landmark goals. Ms. Bradley will serve as point of contact to the Parks and Landmarks Committee as we move forward to present to LCP the list of properties identified in the 197A Plan.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10pm

Submitted by Joel Mentor