

CB#9 Committee on Parks and Landmarks

Minutes of Meeting on February 14, 2005

Present: Carolyn Kent, Co-Chair; Sophie Johnson, Gladys Tinsley, Walter South, Patricia Jones, Savona Bailey-McClain; Geoffrey Nulle, Dale Dobson, Public Members; Board members Patricia Lewis, Christina Lee; L. Ann Rocker, President, North River Community Environmental Review Board.

Absent: Chantay Taylor, Co-Chair, excused; John Reddick, Maria Berman, Nicholas Bunning; Joshua Weinman, Public Member.

Short reports:

408 W. 145th St. has not yet been heard on its application to legalize work done without a Certificate of Appropriateness from LPC

City Council has passed a bill giving LPC the authority to intervene when a landmarked property is facing "demolition by neglect" by its owner.

City Council Landmarks sub-Committee has held a Hearing on a bill sponsored by Historic Districts Council that would require the Buildings Dept. to notify LPC of any application for a demolition permit in advance of granting this.

Morningside Heights Historic District Committee has nominated the Cathedral of St. John the Divine for listing on the National Trust 2005 list of the 11 Most Endangered Historic Places.

Plans for restoration of the 131st St. stairs in St. Nicholas Park presented by Bob Redmond, Director of Capital Projects, Manhattan DPR and Lawrence Mauro, Olmsted Design Center:

Councilman Robert Jackson has allocated \$1.2 million for this project; Over time, rushing waters have washed out soil underneath unsupported bluestone stair treads; the stones have cracked and 50% are not usable; Now a complete concrete foundation for the stairs from St. Nicholas Ave. to St. Nicholas Terrace at 131st St. will be supplied; all stairs will be taken up and evaluated; reusable old stone will be replaced on new foundation at the top of the stairs, new treads will go to the bottom. A handrail will

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be supported by a new bluestone edging along the side of the stairs; on the opposite side, a new bluestone curb will be added along with a granite channel guiding the water flow so that it will not damage the stairs. The landings will be of tinted concrete.

Mr. Mauro noted that St. Nicholas Park gardener Scott has brought in ground cover and created a lush look – he will transplant both out and back in any plants that will need to be disturbed by construction. He also mentioned that Samuel Parsons, architect of St. Nicholas Park, had stressed the use of native plants in writing on the Park. Savona McClain noted that the original plant list is available at the DPR Archives and offered to email this to Mr. Mauro. Samuel Parsons' large scheme involved a broad path at the base of the park's slope, an open slope, trees at the top – to look doubly high. The current plan does not involve planning any trees on the slopes but carefully maintaining the majestic trees now found at top and bottom of the ridge.

Schedule: work bid out in spring, work begins at summer's end '05 and continues for a year. The lighting will utilize the 9 ft. B pole with newly developed white lights within the Riverside Park luminaire.

Questions were raised: can the slope of the alley at the park's southern end be flattened? Can the path through the upper portion of the park's northern section be reviewed? Bob Redmond indicated that he would look into these matters and also focus on the Hamilton Grange installation in the middle area of the park at 141st St. He indicated that this would be considered a restoration in kind needing no full Board approval.

Savona Bailey McClain distributed a draft of the text being prepared for the St. Nicholas Park plaque, one of nine being installed by Heritage New York in northern Manhattan. The other installation in CB#9 will be placed in the King's College Room at Columbia University.

Discussion of the LPC senior staff decision not to pursue Landmark designation of the Hamilton Theater interior: we will talk with the Chair about further discussion with LPC and, as voted in December, direct discussion on community concern about the future of the Theater with Emmes Asset Management.

Adjourn until March 14, 2005 at 6:30 pm.

*Respectfully submitted,
Charlye Kent*