

Committee on Parks and Landmarks

Minutes of Meeting on March 13, 2006

Present: Carolyn Kent and John Reddick, Co-Chairs; Sophie Johnson, Gladys Tinsley, Savona Bailey McClain, Frances Mack, Anne Z. Whitman, members; Geoffrey Nulle, Public Member; Michael Henry Adams, Ernestine Welch, Vicky Gholson, Board members; Jordi Reyes Mont-Blanc, CB#9 Chair. Committee members Pat Jones and Walter South were excused.

Karen Gamble, 824 St. Nicholas Ave., Rich Benigno, Community Dog Run; Irvine Smalls Jr., Executive Director, Stephen Mitchell, Doris Prester, Harlem Youth Soccer; Aisha Fraites, Partnerships for Parks; L. Ann Rocker, NRCERB; Jim Dowell, Riverside Park Fund; KC Sahl, Administrator, Margaret Bracken, Landscape Architect, Riverside Park, and Paul Evans, Park & Recreation Manager, DRP; LaQuita Henry, Heritage Health & Housing; Brad Taylor, Jackie Connors, Friends of Morningside Park; Ernestine Temple, Office of Assembly Member Denny Farrell, Peggy Shepard, Helen Chin, WEACT

The meeting was opened at 6:30 pm and the agenda was approved.

New tot lot: Margaret Bracken, DPR, presented plans for a renovation of the play areas along Riverside Drive between 117th and 118th St. through a grant to DPR for redevelopment of such spaces. The plan entails two areas, one for tots, one for children to 8 yrs. The areas will provide swings, including an ADA swing, two small climbing structures, a sandbox with an ADA sandtable, a climbing structure for older children and a sprinkler area. Water has been brought to the play area and this will assist in the care of the seven new Dutch Elm resistant trees which have been planted to replace elms lost in the area. The area will be given much stronger protection for children by installation of a picket fence which will extend along the entire length of the play areas including the 'free play' grass panel which will connect the play areas. Margaret Bracken has met with parents in the immediate neighborhood for discussion of details of the plans and has received an enthusiastic welcome from neighborhood early childhood schools. Approval vote was unanimous: Committee members 7, Public member 1, Other Board members 3, Community 3.

20th Anniversary celebration of the Riverside Park Fund to include a Public Art Project. Jim Dowell, President, Riverside Park Fund presented plans for

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the temporary installation, May 6th through Sept. 16th, of works by eleven emerging artists which, echoing the English landscape "folie," will create specific sites of interest throughout the park. Two of these will be in the CB#9 portion of the Park, at 148th Street and on the viewing turrelle at Riverside Drive and 151st St.

Certificate of Appropriateness application: William Rohlfing, President, Uptown Townhouse LLC, presented a rendering for the stoop which he is planning to restore to 737 St. Nicholas Avenue (between 146th and 147th Sts.) This is modeled upon an original stoop extant within this Henri Fouchaux corner limestone townhouse group. Michael Adams urged that Mr. Rohlfing consult a postcard collection available at the Museum of the City of New York. It was agreed that we would approve the rendering as shown with the understanding that details yielded by further research would be acknowledged in final plans for the stoop. Approval vote was unanimous: Committee members 7, Public member 1., Other Board members 3, Community 3.

Application to NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal's Main Street Program for a grant of \$200,000 was presented by LaQuita Henry, Heritage Health and Housing, Inc., with her request for a letter of support from CB#9. She presented an introductory description of this streetscape improvements project to cover W. 141st to 145th Sts. along Amsterdam Avenue and stressed that this planning would be done in partnership with community owners within this area. It was suggested that the area be extended south to 140th St. It was further noted that the Board's letter of approval for the application would indicate that the Board would at this time reserve judgment on the specifics of the planning as yet to be defined and that these be brought as developed to the Committee. Approval vote was Committee members 6 -1- 0, Public member 1, Other Board members 3, Community 4.

Request for support for initiation of a partnership between the Central Park Conservancy and the Historic Harlem Parks Coalition (Morningside, St. Nicholas, Jackie Robinson and Marcus Garvey Parks). Brad Taylor, President, Friends of Morningside Park and Co-Chair John Reddick presented this plan to seek to raise funds and support for equipment, staff and materials aiding in improving maintenance and programming for the broader public benefit. Approval vote was Committee members 4 - 1 - 1 - 1, Public member 1, Other Board members 2 - 0 - 1, Community 5.

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Request for approval of temporary art installations to be placed in Morningside Park was put forward by Savona Bailey McClain, Executive Director, West Harlem Art Fund, Inc. These installations will represent a part of the Hallelujah Public Art Fest to be held July 8 to Sept. 30th through the Fund's mission to bring art to open, public spaces throughout Northern Manhattan where the work of all qualified artists will be welcomed. Approval vote was Board members 4 - 0 - 1 - 1, Public member 1, Other Board members 2, Community 6.

Presentation of the proposed Harlem Waterfront Council, Inc. as a support group for the soon to be developed park on the Harlem Piers area was presented by its initiating association, WEACT for Environmental Justice represented by Peggy Shepard, Executive Director, and Helen Chin, Waterfront Park Program Director. This proposed group would provide programs, interpretation, and development of the park and would perhaps apply for a management role. A number of community groups have accepted membership on the 15 member Board of Directors and 2 seats are now offered to CB#9. A question was raised about the preponderance of Central Harlem groups listed on the proposed Board of Directors. The matter was tabled until the Chairs have had the opportunity for discussion on the park's support and maintenance with DPR and EDC.

Presentation of an alliance of field sports programs on the playing field at W. 148th St. in Upper Riverside Park was presented by Tom Holmes, a Director of the Old Blue Rugby Foundation and Irvine Smalls, Executive Director of Harlem Youth Soccer. The Old Blue Rugby Foundation will contribute an AstroTurf field with bleachers seating 2000 as well as renovation of the bathrooms and some work on the playground. The Old Blue Rugby team would use the field for both play and practice; the Harlem Youth Soccer program has 250 youths now involved and is eager to use the field as home base. These two groups are consulting with Tony Fernandez on his baseball/softball programs and there is a potential for a football team to be promoted from within CB#9. A number of concerns were immediately raised: will the field be available to schools? How will teams interface so that all will have playing time? Aren't injuries a problem in soccer? On the current field or on a new, 2nd field? Will local children be pushed out? It was remarked that CB#9 kids need a good sports place and that the donation of funds suggested here is commendable. Topic will be continued.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm. Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Kent