



# The City of New York

## ***Bronx Community Board Three***

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**HON. VANESSA L. GIBSON**  
**BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT**

**GLORIA ALSTON**  
**CHAIRWOMAN EMERITUS**

**JOETTA BROWN**  
**CHAIRPERSON**

**ETTA F. RITTER**  
**DISTRICT MANAGER**

**PARK & RECREATION/YOUTH SERVICES & HISTORICAL OUTREACH COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, September 18, 2024**  
**6:00 PM**  
**1426 Boston Road**

### Staff Present

Etta Ritter  
Courtland Hankins

### Members Present

Rita Jones, D'Andra Van Heusen-Thomas, Robert Brown, Jacquelyn Moore-Hill, Raymond Moya, Linda Kemp

### Guests Present

Maria Febus, NYC Department of Parks & Recreation  
Ismael Guzman, NYC Department of Parks & Recreation  
Scott Daly, New York Junior Tennis & Learning  
Franny Shea, New York Junior Tennis & Learning  
Lonnie Hardy, Cauldwell Programs  
Rosalinda Alvira

*All other Guests Names on File*

### Call to Order

Ms. Rita Jones, chairperson of the Bronx Community Board Three Parks and Recreation/Youth Services Historical Outreach Committee, called the meeting to order at 6:10 pm.

Ms. Rita Jones announced that this is her last meeting as chairperson as she will be moving to Virginia next month, October 2024.

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## Presentation

**Ms. Lonnie Hardy, Director, Cauldwell Programs (on behalf of the King Charles Unicylce Troupe)**

**Topic: Request to rename Clinton Playground #9 to Jerry Lee King Playground (Founder of King Charles Troup)**

Ms. Rita Jones introduced Ms. Lonnie Hardy to those in attendance.

Ms. Hardy began by stating that Clinton Playground #9 currently only has 1 basketball court and a few benches. Ms. Hardy mentioned that Clinton Playground #9 should be comparable to other parks in the Bronx, like Pelham Park.

Ms. Hardy let those in attendance know that as a young girl she learned how to ride a unicycle with the King Charles Unicycle Troupe. She also learned how to interact within a team, conflict resolution, and time management from the King Charles Unicycle Troupe. Ms. Hardy stated that the King Charles Unicycle Troupe created a community and a family within the neighborhood.

Ms. Hardy concluded her presentation and opened the floor to comments and questions.

District Manager Etta Ritter spoke on her experience as a youth watching the King Charles Unicylce Troupe. Ms. Ritter stated that the King Charles Unicylce Troupe had a positive impact on many lives within the community.

Ms. Rita Jones mentioned that the King Charles Unicycle Troupe continue to support the community by performing in local events. They have performed at Ms. Jones own events very recently.

Ms. Ritter made note that King Charles Unicycle Troupe may even help to bring funds for the parks renovation.

Ms. D'Andra Van Heusen-Thomas, Co-chairperson of the Bronx Community Board Three Parks and Recreation/Youth Services Historical Outreach Committee questioned having another naming in the community for the King Charles Unicycle Troupe as there is also a street named after him.

It was then mentioned that the street is co-named King Charles Unicycle Troupe Way, whereas the playground is proposed to be named Jerry L. King Park, after the found of the King Charles Unicycle Troupe.

Ms. Jacquely Moore-Hill, committee member of the Parks and Recreation/Youth Services Historical Outreach Committee, asked if the King Charles Unicylce Troupe will be active in the playground.

Ms. Hardy and Ms. Jones mentioned that they are already active in the playground and park anytime they are requested to be.

Mr. Robert Brown, committee member of the Bronx Community Board Three Parks and Recreation/Youth Services Historical Outreach Committee, asked if there are more playgrounds in mind for name changes.

Ms. Jones stated that now is the time for the community to get more active to make changes that better reflect the community.

Ms. Moore-Hill asked if the Parks Foundation will be involved in this renaming initiative.

Ms. Hardy answered that that could be discussed further with the Parks Foundation.

Ms. Van Heusen-Thomas mentioned that other conservetories and park interested organizations may want to collaborate on the renaming initiative.

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## Motion

It was motioned by Mr. Robert Brown to approve the renaming of Clinton Playground #9 to Jerry L. King Playground and seconded by Ms. Linda Kemp.

## ALL IN FAVOR

## MOTION CARRIED

Ms. Maria Febus, the Crotona Park Administrator of the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation made mention that the approval process begins with the Community Board, then the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation, and final approval by the NYC Council.

Ms. Febus stated that this is a good start to the process of renaming Clinton Playground #9 to Jerry L. King Playground.

It was mentioned that a renovation of the playground to create multi-purpose play areas, in the vein of original playground designs, could cost upwards of \$10 million dollars. There must be strong community advocacy to the elected officials.

Mr. Scott Daly mentioned that these initiatives can be take a lot of time.

Ms. Febus stated that the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation needs more community advocates.

Ms. Van Heusen-Thomas requested to have Friends of Crotona Park present at the next meeting.

## Presentation

**Maria E. Febus, Crotona Park Administrator, NYC Parks & Recreation Department**

**Topic: Overview of the Vital Parks for All initiative.**

Ms. Rita Jones introduced Ms. Maria Febus to those in attendance.

Ms. Febus introduced Mr. Ismael Guzman the Project Development Coordinator for Crotona Park at the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, to speak about the Vital Parks for All initiative Let's Green NYC.

Mr. Guzman stated that Let's Green NYC is stewarding volunteers to address climate change and care for greenspaces. Stewardship Saturdays is a volunteer initiative to help clean the park. It starts at 10:00 a.m. at the Crotona Park Nature Center. You can visit [nyc.gov/parks/volunteer](http://nyc.gov/parks/volunteer) to sign up.

Mr. Guzman mentioned that independent organizations can be added to the Park Directory by submitting a request. Once they become listed the organization is able to interact with other organizations to collaborate on Park initiatives.

Ms. Febus then spoke on the Vital Parks for All initiative's vision to strengthen the city's health, environment and communities through the parks system. The Vital Parks for All strategic initiatives include the following:

- **Stronger Parks, Safer Communities** – A \$256 million investment in park facilities in priority precincts identified by the Mayoral Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, complemented by over 1,000 free outdoor programs to activate parks and foster community, improving safety.
- **Growing Wetlands, Gaining Resilience** – A \$100 million investment in resiliency to advance 19 priority wetland projects in NYC's Environmental Justice Areas.

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- **Let's Green NYC** – A program to empower 500,000 plus New Yorkers with opportunities to steward and improve their parks, connecting them to nature and one another improving health.

Ms. Van Heusen-Thomas suggested that meetings with resident associations should be scheduled.

Ms. Febus mentioned that she would come be next month to provide updates.

It was also mentioned that Hill & Dale playground is in disrepair and Crotona Park is looking for grants and donations in order to renovate the playground.

Ms. Febus conclude her presentation.

### **Announcements**

Mr. Scott Daly, Senior Director of Community Tennis Programs at New York Junior Tennis & Learning located at the Carey Leeds Center in Crotona Park announced that the Carey Leeds Center is not just a center for tennis programs, it is also a community center and an early voting center.

Mr. Daly reminded those in attendance that the seminal talks to create the Carey Leeds Center started right here at Bronx Community Board Three's Parks and Recreation Committee meetings.

Mr. Daly spoke on the following programs at the Carey Leeds Center:

- Friday Community Youth Tennis Trainings
- Sunday Community Adult Tennis Program
- Thursday Community Older Adult Clinic
- Community Youth Tennis Program
- Saturday Night Lights Tennis Program
- Serve & Inspire Community Police Engagement Program

Mr. Daly introduced Ms. Frances "Franny" Shea, who was in attendance, as the newly hired Development Associate at New York Junior Tennis and Learning.

Ms. Linda Kemp, board member of Bronx Community Board Three, announced her annual Breast Cancer Awareness Walk. The upcoming event celebrates the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Breast Cancer Awareness Walk and begin at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, October 12, 2024 at Crotona Park.

### **Correspondence**

Ms. Etta Ritter, District Manager at Bronx Community Board Three, shared that Nos Quedamos announced a resiliency hub construction process at Bronx Sunshine Garden, located at 1768 Bryant Avenue. Nos Quedamos requests a letter of support from Bronx Community Board Three by October 6, 2024. The consensus of board members present stated that they have not been given enough lead time to make a decision within that timeframe, and that the decision will be tabled until the next committee meeting.

Ms. Ritter suggested that all questions regarding the resiliency hub construction process be prepared by the next meeting.

Ms. Ritter stated that she has noticed that there are no food service concession businesses in Crotona Park and inquired as to the reason why.

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Ms. Febus answered that there were four RFP's (requests for proposals) for mobile food trucks in Crotona Park, however, there were no businesses interested. Ms. Febus mentioned that she would ask the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation's Revenue Department to open up the bids again once Bronx Community Board Three reviews the RFP's on the agency's website and deem that they should be reopened.

Ms. Ritter asked those in attendance if there were any Capital Budget recommendations related to parks.

Ms. Jacquelyn Moore-Hill, board member of Bronx Community Board Three, asked for more security (Park Enforcement Control) in certain areas of the park.

Ms. Rosalinda Alvira, a Bronx District Three resident, requested a dog park be created in Crotona Park. Ms. Febus responded that the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation has completed four dog park surveys and has consistently stated that there is only one area in Crotona Park that would be feasible for a dog park. Ms. Febus stated that the location proposed has been turned down by those advocating for the dog park.

Ms. Linda Kemp requested a lighting plan for the basketball courts at Drew Park be included in the Capital Budgets proposal.

### **Adjournment**

The Parks and Recreation/Youth Services & Historical Outreach Committee meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

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