

BROOKLYN COMMUNITY BOARD 6
ECONOMIC/WATERFRONT/COMM. DEV. & HOUSING COMMITTEE
PARKS/RECREATION/CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 19, 2012

ATTENDANCE: ECON/WATER/COMM DEV & HOUSING COMMITTEE

PRESENT:

R. BASHNER	N. BERK-RAUCH	L. BUFFINGTON
N. COX	V. HERMANIA	A. KOZYR
A. KRASNOW	D. ORTIZ	

EXCUSED:

F. BROWN	E. DEMETRIOU	D. KIKEL
R. LUFTGLASS	L. DEROSA	D. SCOTTO

ABSENT:

R. CERVONE	A. DAVILA	P. MINDLIN
G. O'CONNELL	M. SCOTT	L. SONES

ATTENDANCE: PARKS/RECREATION.CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

PRESENT:

Z. ABRAMS	E. CAUSIL-RODRIGUEZ	R. CERVONE
N. COX	I. DUTTON	J. FRANCIS
R. GRAHAM	J. HEYER	H. HUGHES
G. KELLY	N. LALLI	M. PETTIT
E. ROBERTS	C. RYAN	J. OLTMAN-SMITH
A. VESSELS		

EXCUSED:

J. KLETTER	K. MAIER
------------	----------

ABSENT:

C. PIGOTT	B. SLADE
-----------	----------

GUESTS:

J. STRABONE	J. NEGRYCZ	M. ABLON
A. BESHEER	P. BLAKE	S. NEWFIELD
P. MOORE	E.C. HAMILTON	B. KRONGEL
E. ARMSTRONG	N. KATZ	L. AVIROM
N. FUNG	B. HANSON	B. KNELLER
R. MEYER		

The meeting was called to order at 6:40pm.

Presentation and update on construction of the Brooklyn Bridge Park

Committee co-chair Nica Lalli introduced guest speaker Regina Myer, President of the Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy. Ms. Myer listed on-going and planned developments at the park, and noted several upcoming park events.

Ms. Myer presented the following previous, on-going and planned developments at the park:

- Phase 1 was completed in March 2010 with the opening of Pier 1. Additional phases of work have thus far been completed through the summer 2012, with the opening of the Pop-up Pool at Pier 2.
- In June of 2012, their Board of Directors approved additional work at Pier 1, including the development of a hotel and an apartment complex. This work will create 210 permanent jobs and 300 temporary construction jobs.
- The Field House project has a commitment for a track cycling facility, and will include additional multi-use recreational facilities.
- There will be a request for proposal (RFP) targeting commercial and retail development among vacant buildings in the north end of the park.
- Fall 2012 construction (to be completed in early November) includes:
 - Completion of Pier 5 and portion of Pier 5 uplands, which include 5 acres of multi-use active recreation and the picnic peninsula with a concession, barbeque and play area.*
 - Completion of the Squibb Park Bridge spanning Furman Street to provide a more direct connection into the park at Pier 1.*
- Additional details on the phases of park development can be found here: <http://www.brooklynbridgepark.org/progress/park-phasing>

A number of events at the park were noted, including:

- [Brooklyn Book Festival Bookend Event](#), 9/23/12
- Harvest Festival, 10/20/12
- Additional details on park events can be found here: <http://www.brooklynbridgepark.org/events>

Additional points that were raised during a question and answer period included:

- Permitting will be handled by the Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy, and will be aligned with NYC Parks and Recreation policies and procedures.
- Pier 2 facilities will include 5 basketball courts, shuffle board courts, bocce ball courts, and facilities for in-line hockey, handball and chess. There will also be 5 acres of open space for general use.
- The Department of Transportation (DOT) is looking into a stop sign at the juncture of Congress Street and Columbia Street. Several community members in attendance voiced concern over the safety of children crossing over to the park, particularly at this location.
- Construction on the apartment building project is expected to begin next summer.

The following suggestions were made to Ms. Myer by community members in attendance:

- Consider adding signage to highlight the distance between the north side park entrance and the first exit, as that distance is considerable.

- Consider adding signage that can provide information on businesses in adjoining neighborhoods, as a local economic development action.
- Consider adding concrete table tennis courts.

Review and consideration of a request for an extension to the Cobble Hill Park closure hours

Committee co-chair Nica Lalli introduced guest speaker Nelson Fung, New York City Parks Department's District Manager for CB's 6 & 7. Mr. Fung noted the following:

- The issue being considered by the Parks Department is whether to extend the open hours of the park from 9pm to 10pm.
- Mr. Fung's understanding is that the New York Police Department (NYPD) supports this adjustment.
- Mr. Fung is aware that patrons have been ticketed for being in the park after hours, which is one reason this change has been requested.
- Current standards in New York City is for all playgrounds to be closed at 9pm; however, there are no set standards for how late non-playground park areas may remain open.

Committee co-chair Nica Lalli introduced guest speaker Jeff Strabone, of the Cobble Hill Association. Mr. Strabone noted the following:

- Other parks in the vicinity are open till 10pm or later, with at least one open till 1am.
- There has been recent, strict enforcement by the NYPD, and the cost of a ticket is \$250. This has caused a strain in the relationship of the community with the 76th Precinct.
- The Cobble Hill Association (CHA) has an email from the 76th Precinct Community Affairs Officer supporting the adjustment of the closing time from 9pm to 10pm.
- The CHA compromised on requesting a 10pm close time, with some members preferring a range of different times.
- The seven member CHA board unanimously supported the decision to request adjusting park hours to close at 10pm. However, that position was not supported by all CHA members.

Additional points raised during a general discussion period included:

- The closing time of the park was originally dusk.
- Among community members who spoke, there was general consensus that the NYPD's 76th Precinct has been unusually aggressive this past summer in issuing tickets. Some community members complained of what they considered inappropriate tactics, including aggressive use of patrol vehicles. One speaker commented that she was advised to take down the badge number of any officer who behaves in a ways considered inappropriate.
- A number of different community members who live near the park noted a range of illegal and/or disruptive activities which typically occur, including marijuana use, sexual activity, music and instrument playing, and loud conversations. These activities occur both during normal park hours and after hours.
- The NYPD was invited to participate in the committee meeting, but did not attend.

Arguments in favor of extending the closing time to 10pm included:

- A number of community members noted that the park is used as a convenient short-cut, and that recent NYPD 76th Precinct ticketing practices curtailed this use.

- A number of community members believed that a 10pm closing time would help improve relations with the 76th Precinct.
- One Committee Member noted that increasing the use of the park during evening hours by law-abiding community members would decrease the level of illegal/disruptive behavior, during that time.
- Jeff Strabone of the CHA noted that there are not facilities at the park associated with inherently noise-making activities, like basketball courts.

Arguments against extending the closing time to 10pm included:

- A number of community members considered the potential for additional noise, and generally disruptive activities, between 9pm-10pm to be highly significant.
- One community member believed that the police would be less/non-responsive to noise complaints that occurred during open park hours, as opposed to complaints that occurred after the park is closed.
- One community member stated that when the construction of the park was originally debated, a closing time of dusk was the compromise position agreed to at the time.
- Regarding relations with the 76th Precinct, one community member felt that the issue had been addressed and that enforcement of the 9pm closing time had been moderated already.

MOTION:

Judy Francis made a motion to accept the Cobble Hill Association’s recommendation to adjust the closing time of Cobble Hill Park from 9pm to 10pm. Rosemary Graham seconded the motion.

VOTE: 12....YEAS 1....NAYS 2....ABSTENTIONS (without cause)
MOTION APPROVED

Member Business

Nica Lalli announced that a guest speaker at the next committee meeting will be Emily Lloyd, Prospect Park Alliance President and Prospect Park Administrator. There was also discussion of Parks budget cuts and concern about Park privatization.

New committee members were introduced, and the conversation to orient new members was tabled.

MOTION:

Glenn Kelly made a motion to accept the minutes from the June 20, 2012 committee meeting. Elaine Roberts seconded the motion.

MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

There being no further business, Ms. Lalli adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:15pm.

Minutes were submitted by Zach Abrams.