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Anatole Ashraf
Chairperson

Debra Markell Kleinert
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April 24, 2025

Environment, Parks, and Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes

This meeting was teleconferenced using Zoom

Committee Member Attendees

Carlos Castell Croke, Chair
Nellie Afshar
Lauren Springer
Alexandra Gonzalez

Committee Member Absentees

Benjamin Lucas
Andie Olivares
Jolly Patel

Environment, Parks, and Recreation Committee Public Member Absentees

Kevin Davis

Guest

Christine Coulombe, President of the Friends of Noonan Park Dog Run

Community Board 2 Staff

Debra Markell Kleinert

Carlos Castell Croke welcomed everyone to the Environment, Parks and Recreation Committee meeting.

Carlos Castell Croke attended a Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice briefing. He made the following points:

- The Mayor's Office's Urban Forest Plan, seeks to increase tree canopy coverage to 30% throughout New York City by 2035.
- There will be public meetings to kickstart the plan. On May 1, 2025, an in-person meeting in Rockaways, Queens, will be held to discuss this plan. Additionally, there will be an in-person meeting in East Harlem, Manhattan, on May 15, 2025, and a virtual meeting on June 4, 2025.

There was a discussion on the Green Asphalt Letter that the Environment, Parks, and Recreations Committee and the CB2 Office are working on. The following points were discussed:

- A resident within CB 2 Queens and the Blissville Civic Association expressed their frustration with a Green Asphalt Plant that is polluting the air in Blissville, Queens.
- More than a year ago, the plant was issued a violation by the State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) for violating certain environmental laws, but the plant's behavior remains unchanged.
- The committee will finalize a letter to send to DEC, requesting information on how the department will address the issue, enforce its violation, hold the green asphalt plant accountable, and if other agencies could get involved in resolving this issue.
- Committee members provided recommendations to make the letter more compelling.
- Carlos Castell Croke said he would try sending the letter to DEC next week.

There was a discussion on flooding, a recurrent issue within CB 2. The following points were discussed:

- Carlos Castell Croke, the committee chair, expressed his desire to bring attention to some of the flooding hotspots within CB2 and report them to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).
- The committee chair indicated his interest in having the DEP provide an update on what they are doing to address flooding in the community or the resiliency efforts they are undertaking.
- Carlos Castell Croke encouraged the committee members to share any locations that may experience flooding so they could monitor those areas and report them. Additionally, Christine Coulombe added that asking community groups on social media could help locate areas that experience flooding.
- Once locations susceptible to flooding are identified, Carlos Castell Croke intends to monitor these hotspots and report them to 311 when it rains, and once enough cases are reported, these locations would be reported to DEP so they can get addressed.

There was discussion on potential temporary dog-run sites that the committee worked with NYC Parks to locate while Murray Playground's Dog Run undergoes renovations. The following point was discussed:

- NYC Parks has not provided an update on the potential temporary dog run sites.

Additional updates:

Carlos Castell Croke contacted city-wide organizations such as Nature Conservancy, Natural Areas Conservancy, and The New York League of Conservation Voters to discuss some of their work in the environment and parks across the city. He believes there is a good opportunity to hear from these organizations to learn how they may impact the communities within CB2.

Lauren Springer suggested bringing a guest to a committee meeting that could discuss climate change through advocacy or policy lenses, though she is also open to a research perspective.

Carlos Castell Croke mentioned that NYC groups discuss resiliency efforts, such as the Waterfront Alliance, which he may reach out to.

The committee chair added that the federal government scrapped an offshore wind project in New York; he said it would be great to hear from experts on that project who could provide information to advocate for the state government to support the scrapped project.

Carlos Castell Croke said he is looking for a vice chair for the committee and encouraged committee members to express their interest in the position or provide suggestions on who can fill the vacancy.

Lauren Springer is also the Chair of the Health & Human Services and Education and Unhoused and Shelter Committee. She was previously requested by the former chair of the Environment, Parks, and Recreation Committee to identify sites where AED Defibrillators could be placed. Lauren Springer reported that her committee identified adult exercise areas, parks, and buses - areas where there are a lot of seniors as potential places where AED machines can be installed.

The committee meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,

Rafael Nava