



Community Board No. 2

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Lisa Deller

Chairperson

Debra Markell Kleinert

District Manager

June 16, 2021

Land Use Committee Meeting Minutes

Land Use Committee Members – Present

Karesia Batan
Tannia Chavez
Lisa Deller
Sally Frank
Morry Galonoy
Kenny Greenberg
Christine Hunter
Lauren Springer

Land Use Committee Members – Absent

Nicholas Berkowitz
Stephen Cooper
Benjamin Guttman
Elliot Park
Katherine Sabal

CB 2 Staff

Debra Markell Kleinert, District Manager
MaryAnn Gurrado

Representatives/Elected Officials

Jack Bernatovicz, Representing Council Member Van Bramer
Vicky Garvey, Representing Queens Borough President Donovan Richards

Department of City Planning

Teal Delys
Alex Plackis
Ben Max

“Serving the Communities of Long Island City, Sunnyside, Woodside, and Maspeth”

City of New York Parks and Recreation

Joanne Amagrande
Paul Daley
Diane Dreier
Shirley Echevarria
Eric Mattes
Stacy Tull
Christina Twomey

Guests

Brian Ellis

PARKS PRESENTATION

Presentation on design plans for Michael Davison Playground.

Joanne Amagrande, Parks reported on the following:

- This is a special project for the community and for Parks.
- The Design Team put in a lot of effort to incorporate the amenities requested by the community as well as an appropriate memorial for Firefighter Davidson, who lost his life in the line of duty.
- She knows that everyone will be quite pleased.
- It is a small site and not a large playground but said DPR feels that their design is spot on and accommodates everyone in the community, whether young, middle aged and older. She is proud of the team and excited and hopes that everyone feels this, especially the Davidson family.
- Thanked Council Member Van Bramer for getting the funds and reported that he has been very generous.
- Introduced Diane Dreier, Director Design for Capital Projects, Parks.

Diane Dreier introduced her colleagues:

- Eric Mattes, Team Leader of Queens Capital Team
- Christina Twomey, Project Manager
- Paul Daley, project Manager

Christina Twomey provided a power point presentation for the construction of Lt. Michael R. Davidson Playground and discussed the following.

- Announced the total budget is \$4.815 million and funding was provided by Council Speaker Johnson and Council Member Van Bramer
- Goals:
 - Provide play equipment and water play for ages 2-12.
 - Element to honor Lt. Michael Davidson.
 - Separate passive space with seating for adults.

- Restoration and incorporation of existing historic structures.
- Provide an aesthetic that is appropriate for the site's historic context.
- Neighboring parks are Sunnyside Gardens Park and Lawrence Virgilio Playground.
- Existing conditions: the site is currently closed.
- No programmatic elements at the site.
- Discussed tree Inventory and the Cautley tree grove.
- Held a community scoping session, collected information, and saw a desire for passive space and play programming and restoring the existing structure.
- Photos of the site were reviewed.
- Proposal is to enlarge the entrance along 39th to make it more prominent and welcoming and to incorporate a decorative commemorative flagpole honoring Lt. Michael Davidson on access with the entrance, so it is the first thing visitors see.
- The northern end of the site is for Passive use
- Restored pavilion can be used as a gathering space for community events.
- The southern end is programmed for play with equipment and water features. The building shed will be restored as an all-gender restroom facility.

Paul Daley provided the following information:

- Historic photos of the garden shed and the pavilion.
- Reported the site is landmarked and both buildings are subject to landmark review. They are proposing to stabilize both buildings and restore them to their original historic appearance, using historically appropriate materials and paint color.
- Redesigning the building for a single toilet stall, ADA compliant, all gender. There will be an entry washroom with an ADA wash basin, diaper changing station and hand dryer.
- The southern portion or lower room will serve as mechanical room for the site.
- There will be water spray features and the shed will house plumbing and the electric panels.
- Will take the building back to original colors and materials, it had a steel roof and will replace the roof, make siding repairs, and repaint it white and dark green.
- Pavilion sits rather low and head room is very close and you can hit your head. They will elevate the building and set it at a slightly higher elevation for proper head room, giving them an opportunity to install new concrete piers/footings.
- They will make required structural repairs and the shingle roof will be replaced. They will go back to the color scheme to satisfy landmarks requirements.
- There will be lighting and power in the building for events, including nighttime lighting.
- There will be concrete pavers.

Christina Twomey discussed the following:

- Commemorative Flagpole to honor Lt. Michael Davidson.
- Engraved Maltese Cross with Lt. Davidson's engine company and badge number engraved into the granite flagpole base.
- Materials and shape of the monument were discussed.
- Lt. Michael Davidson's name would be prominent.
- Discussed play equipment and play structures and colors.
- Water play features.

- Paving patterns and benches.
- Proposed fence diagram four foot. They will use an 8-foot chain link fence where it borders private property.
- Discussed proposed tree plantings and proposed shrubs.

Lisa Deller asked about where the pavilion and the tree grove are located and asked about potential harm to the tree roots because of digging.

Christina Twomey stated that they decided to leave the pavilion in place because they would do more damage if they tried to move it. They work closely with Landscape Construction Unit. They have an arborist on site and take a lot of care.

Christine Hunter discussed the following regarding the passive sitting area:

- The groups in this neighborhood that is the least well served by existing parks is the seniors.
- In other existing parks the seating is very often facing a running track or play equipment, which is not conducive to seniors interacting with each other or having a pleasant place to sit outdoors.
- All the seating in that northwest corner seems to be facing away from each other which is not conducive to social interaction for the seniors. She asked if the seating could be moved to the other side against the perimeter of the existing green area so that benches faced each other. She also suggested L-shaped seating arrangements where people could meet and sit and talk and look at the park but with a green buffer between them and the play area.

Christina Twomey discussed the following:

- Must speak to Diane and that this is something that could be considered. They heard at the community input meeting was that seniors were not as well served here.
- They want to try to provide planting as well as seating and were limited in the amount of space they have in terms of accessibility for maintenance vehicles.
- They tried to include seating along the tree grove and there was not enough clearance between it and the planted area.
- They took into consideration that having those benches right up against the back of the tree grove might feel a little exposed and odd, having your back up against the tree grove as there is no ground cover there.
- They will speak to a landscape contractor who will give their input.

Lisa Deller discussed the interactivity and having the benches face each other.

Diane Dreier stated they will look at the area and will do their best.

Karesia Batan asked about the following:

- square footage of the pavilion and how many people it accommodates
- Permit requirement for the use of the pavilion
- Hours of operation for the comfort station

Parks responded:

- The pavilion would be 24 feet by 35 feet, 840 square feet
- The pavilion would accommodate about 35 to 40 people.

- In response to the question about permits, Parks stated that a small gathering under 20 would not require a permit, especially if it was a one-time meeting. A bigger group of 35 or more would need a permit.

Joanne Amagrande responded that for the comfort station it depends on the staffing plan, whether it will be a seasonal plan or if it is a fixed post site, which typically close at 6pm or 7pm at the latest. She doesn't know the budget two years from now and if there will be staff there all the time.

Christina Twomey stated the following:

- Providing a comfort station is something that is almost always a big priority for the community especially when you have play equipment and children.
- They are almost always asked for it and it was something that came up during the community feedback. When they have are able to restore the building to an actual function and use in this way gives the building a real purpose.
- Keeping it as a storage shed would not allow the community to benefit.
- Stated that typically they such an opportunity at the design phase: it would take many years to get the funding to put in the pipes after the initial construction. It is nice to have and doesn't take up much space.

Lisa Deller asked about lighting and who will lock the comfort station and take down the flag?

Joanne Amagrande stated the following:

- In the grand scenario it will be staffed, on the days when it is not staffed, comfort stations are left open and maybe a mobile crew will come over and lock the facilities. They do not take flags down daily any longer, if it is tattered, they will repair it. The mobile crew or staff will lock the building.
- There will be security lighting and DOT will confer with them and they will be dark sky compliant; the cone of light will shed downward and is not shed out and up.

Christine Hunter discussed following:

- She thinks the comfort station is a necessity and makes the park more usable for everyone.
- She asked if programmatically if this can be an adjunct from the point of view of parks staffing as it is so close to Windmuller; could it be under the purview of whoever is closing Windmuller?

Joanne Amagrande stated this is very preliminary to discuss this; she would defer to her operations team and chief of operations, and it depends on the budget they have and the amount of seasonal and park workers. It is too early for them to discuss this. They typically have playground associates if funded by the city council, if this program is instituted, they would lobby to have a playground associate there.

Lisa Deller asked about the 4-foot fencing.

Christina Twomey stated the following:

- They will be doing the 4-foot steel picket fence which looks more traditional and has a lower profile along the perimeters along the park property and the sidewalk and then at the boundaries where they are adjoining private property, they will be using the 8 foot 1 inch chain

link fence as this will provide more protection and visual screening and often property owners want more of a barrier between their property and public spaces.

Ms. Deller stated the 4-foot fence is easy for people to climb over.

Christina Twomey discussed the following:

- This is a well populated neighborhood and they felt that security may not be such a significant issue that they need to put a high fence. They want to make their parks more welcoming, many of their parks have high fencing around them and it doesn't make them feel welcoming. They want to be able to see into the park from the street and people to feel welcomed into the park.
- There will be a locking gate, but it will depend on what works best for the maintenance operations and borough.

JoAnn Amagrande said more than likely they would not lock it because they do not have the staff at 9:00 or 10 to lock it. Since it is a sweet neighborhood maybe a friends group could be started to lock it.

Lisa Deller asked about the composting situation and what is the timeline for construction of the park. The people who initiated gardening and composting are distressed by what happened previously with DPR. She asked if there is any opportunity for this.

Diane Dreier discussed the following:

- They are in the design phase which takes a year, anticipate this to be done in December of this year and then it goes into procurement process and then gets set up to bid by contractor which takes about nine months and construction is late 2022 or early 2023.
- Then construction goes for a full year, thus the park will not be completed until 2024.

Lisa Deller asked if while the park is vacant, if they would allow the group to conduct composting to be done there.

Joanne Amagrande stated that this is a question for the Commissioner and for the agency and that she would probably say not.

Diane Dreier stated that composting brings different types of animals to the neighborhood.

Ms. Deller stated there were people that came to the CB 2 and discussed preserving the area as there is no community garden space in this park.

Diane Dreier stated that we try to make our parks more accessible to everyone and not just one single group.

Karesia Batan stated that CB2 has met with the group, and they have a very comprehensive well planned responsible use of the space and understand that it would be a temporary use to feed our neighbors and asked if there would there some type of consideration for this type of agreement that they would respect and abide by.

Joanne Amagrande stated that she could not speak of this right now and stated that if they wanted to, they could get a petition to the Commissioner.

Lisa Deller discussed a model on 45th Street and discussed that Sunnyside Community Services contracted with a private developer with a leased term for use of that space and that it is working quite well.

Parks responded that this is a matter for the Borough Commissioner, and it is not something the Capital Team has any influence on at all.

Morry Galonoy said he appreciates the presentation and that he was impressed with the groups who came to us and that said the park looks great.

Lisa Deller stated we would like to invite them to attend a special meeting on June 23, 2021 when we will vote.

Joanne Amagrande stated she will bring it up to the Commissioner as a topic and that we want to keep the capital and the composting separate.

Christine Hunter made a motion, and it was seconded by Tannia Chavez to support the proposed playground with the stipulation that the passive seating area allow for more social interaction for seniors and the disabled. The vote was unanimous with 8 in favor of the motion; none opposed and no abstentions.

ULURP/CITY WIDE APPLICATION

Teal Delys introduced her colleagues:

- Alex Plackis
- Ben Max

CITYWIDE HOTEL TEXT AMENDMENT ULURP #N210406ZRY CEQR #21DCP111Y

A zoning Text Amendment to analyze and understand the potential impact of a citywide City Planning Commission (CPC) Hotel Special Permit in NYC

Teal Delys provided a power point presentation and discussed the project overview:

- The proposed text amendment would create a new special permit for hotel development citywide.
- It is intended to create a consistent framework for hotel development and ensure that hotels do not negatively affect the surrounding area.

Lisa Deller requested that for the presentation on June 23, 2021, DCP provide a slide that shows the similarities and difference of the two special permits.

Questions were entertained.

Lisa Deller made a motion, and it was seconded by Kenny Greenberg to oppose the application unless stipulations are added to include some provision around preserving the character of the existing neighborhood. The vote was 8 in favor of the motion to oppose; none opposed and no abstentions.

Teal Delys provided a power point presentation.

HEALTH AND FITNESS TEXT AMENDMENT – NON ULURP APPLICATION – N210270ZRY

Proposal to amend the Zoning Resolution to modify regulations related to gyms, spas, licensed massage therapy, and other health and fitness facilities defined as “Physical Culture or Health Establishments.” The proposed text amendment will remove the requirement for such facilities to receive a special permit by the Board of Standards and Appeals (ZR 73-36)

Proposal Overview

- A BSA special Permit is currently required to open and operate most exercise and health-related businesses, including gyms, spas, and licensed massage therapy.
- The physical Culture or Health Establishment (PCE) special permit process can be costly and lengthy for small businesses.
- Even with a special permit, gyms are not permitted along many local retail streets that allow compatible service and retail amenities.
- Removing barriers for gyms and other health-related businesses to open will help speed the economic recovery from the pandemic and ensure that neighborhoods have important health-related amenities.

Questions were entertained.

Lisa Deller made a motion, and it was seconded by Morry Galonoy to support the application. The vote was all in favor of the motion with none opposed and 4 abstentions.

Open Restaurants – timing when the board would like to hear it. We have until September 27, 2021, and the Text Amendment is being referred out June 21, 2021.

Teal Delys stated that responsibility for the application process will go to DOT and will be removed from DCP. with different rules in effect.

Lisa Deller said this would have to be presented to the full board.

Lisa Deller requested the presentation be sent to CB 2.

Jack Bernatovicz, Representing Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer’s Office

Jack Bernatovicz provided the following:

- Announced the dual street renaming for Donald McCallian on Friday, June 18, 2021, at 1:00 pm on the south west corner of 40th Street between Greenpoint Avenue and 50th Avenue.

Lisa Deller spoke about Don McCallian and said that he was a good man, a dedicated Community Board 2 member; a solid advocate for his community and a gentleman, He was a great person to have known.

Morry Galonoy asked about a building going up at 38-01 Queens Boulevard that is supposed to be a movie theater.

Lisa Deller said CB 2 will find out.

Karesia Batan spoke about the teamsters building at 48-18 Van Dam Street which is allowing artist Mark West to put his exhibit in the first-floor retail space.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by:
MA Gurrado

06/16/2021 LUCMM