



**CICELY HARRIS**  
Chairperson

**SHATIC MITCHELL**  
District Manager

# CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10  
215 West 125th Street, 4th Floor  
New York, NY 10027  
T: 212-749-3105 F: 212-662-4215

## **PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Wednesday, October 12th 2022, 6:30 pm

**Hon. Karen Horry, Chair**

Meeting began at 6:36 pm and was held via Zoom link. The meeting was chaired by Hon. Karen Horry, Committee Chair.

**Committee Members in Attendance:** Chair, Hon. Karen Horry, Hon. Dana Points, Hon. Tahanie Aboushi, Hon. Derek Perkinson, Hon. Nathan Quist, Hon. Jaran Manzanet and Hon. Elvin Garcia.

**Committee Members Excused:** Hon. Barbara Nelson

**Committee Members Absent:** Hon. Shamier Settle

**Board Members Present:** Hon. Cicely Harris, Board Chair and Hon. Dr. Maurice Franklin, Hon. Donna Gill and Hon. Shawn Brannon

**District Office:** Shatic Mitchell (District Manager), Jasmin Heatley (Community Associate)

**Guests in attendance:** Erica Sopha (VP for Park Use & Stewardship, Government Relations, Policy and Community Affairs - Central Park Conservancy), Kaitlin Holt (Associate Director of Interpretation and Programs | Central Park Conservancy), Jana LaSorte (Administrator, Harlem Historic Parks), Dave Williams (District Manager, NYC Parks), Robert McClean (Regional Manager, NYC Parks), Zakiyah DeGraffe Nicholson (Director, Hansborough Recreation Center), Sharon Cohen (Harlem Figure Skating), Dolina Duzant, Gwendolyn Black (Arts & Jazz Fest, NYC), Ahmad Sarwary, Charlie Bass, 1347\*\*\*53, M. Linton, Frederick McNulty, Adrienne Perry, Ron Myers,

## **AGENDA**

### **I. Welcome/Introductions**

### **II. Presentations**

- a. **Central Park Conservancy - Erica Sopha, Vice President for Park Use & Stewardship · Central Park Conservancy, Vice President for Gov't Relations,**

## **Policy and Community Affairs - Upcoming Halloween Events and programming**

Free 1st Saturday Conservatory Garden audio tours are available beginning November 5th. The tours run for 90 minutes. Upcoming highlights feature Oct. 26th and Oct. 27th Halloween on the Meer Events - all events are free and will include a free pumpkin give-away (while supplies last) Harlem Meer Center - nature-based programming is being made available to encourage community engagement and to promote greater usage of the facility. Green spaces in and around cities, collectively known as urban forests, can mitigate regional and local flooding from storms, reduce water scarcity, improve air and water quality, regulate temperature, and aid soil nutrient cycling, all while sequestering carbon. Central Park Conservancy is implementing strategies for re-purposing of public green space. CPC will re-visit “dog-off leash” signage for updates.

**Outcome:** Erica will be our new liaison to Central Park Conservancy. Marie Warsh will return to provide updates on the Seneca Village project.

### **b. Central Park Conservancy - Kaitlin Holt, Associate Director of Interpretation and Programs | Central Park Conservancy - Update on the Harlem Meer Center and programming offered by the Conservancy - Meer Lasker Pool Update**

When completed, the new Harlem Meer Center will provide:

- Year-round free and low-cost programming and expanded recreational opportunities, with increased access to nature
- Enhanced swimming and skating, including a full-scale ice rink, an additional new skating experience on the Meer, a larger-than-Olympic-size pool, and a new outdoor spray pad
- Year-round access to restrooms and amenities and more community programming
- A boardwalk through freshwater marsh plantings at the edge of the water body, which will serve as an ice ribbon for skating in the winter
- Unhindered access across the north end of the Park

The design has been led by the Central Park Conservancy and Susan T. Rodriguez Architecture & Design in collaboration with Mitchell Giurgola. The complex engineering of the facility will accommodate a raisable pool floor which will be lowered for pool usage and raised for ice skating. The raised floor will be covered with green turf during the fall interim period.

Significant progress has been made since breaking ground in September 2021. Demolition of the old building is now complete, and construction of the new facility and surrounding landscape is underway, including excavation adjacent to the West Drive to support the new building foundation. A new construction phase, begun in the summer of 2022, is reconnecting the Loch (the waterbody located in the North Woods’ Ravine) to the Harlem Meer, once again allowing water to flow unobstructed from the Pool into the Meer. A temporary dam is being built at the southwest corner of the Meer to facilitate the reconnection. After divers install the dam, all affected fish will be carefully relocated, and the newly separated portion of the Meer will be drained. Central Park Conservancy anticipates that the dam will be in place through the winter and into the spring. Shoreline reconstruction and development of the stream course will continue for much of the duration of the project. This project phase is being carried out in compliance

with and under the regulatory oversight of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Protection of Waters program, dedicated to preserving and protecting the State's lakes, rivers, streams, and ponds. The project completion is targeted for preparation for the opening of the 2024 pool season.

The Committee raised the issue of ensured access to permits for the skating rink facility for Central Harlem groups such as Figure Skating In Harlem Inc. and Ice Hockey in Harlem who oftentimes have difficulty securing rink time at existing local area facilities.

### **III. Voting -** There were no voting items

### **IV. Discussions**

#### **a. Conversion of Jackie Robinson pool to pool/ice skating facility - Sharon Cohen, Founder and CEO**

Figure skating in Harlem (FSH) has been in existence since 1997 and is celebrating its 25th anniversary. The youth-based organization's mission is to ensure that girls of color have improved access to International/national recognition - AWARDS in figure skating. The organization has an enrollment of 150 in an after school program at PS 96 and 100 in their summer program. Figure Skating in Harlem helps girls, ages 6-18, transform their lives and grow in confidence, leadership and academic achievement. The group practices at Chelsea Piers. FSH espouses to be the only organization in the world for girls of color that combines the power of education with access to the artistic discipline of figure skating to build champions in life. Participants go on to college. FSH hosts an annual ice show - The 2022 Gala celebrated 25 years of Excellence and Sisterhood on April 25th at Gotham Hall in New York City, over 400 supporters attended including Gold medalist Nathan Chen, the 2022 U.S. Figure Skating Olympic team, and honorees: Esi Egglestone Bracey, Lorine Pendleton, Bernice DeAbreu, Valerie Simpson, and Whoopi Goldberg.

FSH has been featured on CBS News, the Today Show, ABC News Nightline, Netflix, NBC's Tribute to American Legends of the Ice, CNN Heroes, and has collaborated with Beyoncé and her clothing apparel company. 23rd Annual Gwendolyn Simmons' Soul on Ice Winter Skating Party

Students of FSH would greatly benefit from access to a local area ice skating facility and minimize their current challenges in securing rink space for general practice and performance galas. The community-at-large would benefit from the added amenity as a robust and more eclectic selection of sports and fitness engagement.

**Outcome:** Harlem Historic Parks Administrator Jana LaSorte will look into identifying possible funding for a feasibility study to adapt the Jackie Robinson Park pool for ice skating and will follow-up with NYC Manhattan Parks Deputy Commissioner Anthony Perez.

#### **b. CB 10 Park Updates - David Williams, Parks Manager (Districts 10 & 11 NYC Parks) - Hansborough Recreation Center -**

1. Flag football being offered. Saturday Night Lights. Swing Dance Oct. 21 6-8 pm. Pelham Fritz 10/14 6-8 pm. - Flyers to be sent by

- Zakiyah DeGraffe. (Fitness and Harlem Globetrotters Event upcoming 3-7 Marcus Garvey to be e-blasted)
2. Honeys and Bears - trying to find space to swim in in-door pools during winter season - St. Mary's is closed for renovations) - capital projects - procurement phase still on schedule for January 2023 closing date - up to 18 months construction will proceed after ending of procurement phase.
- i. **Brigadier General Charles Young Playground** - capital projects on track
  - ii. **Harlem River Park** - completion of CB 10 portion and programming needed. Community is requesting commemoration to the legacy of Richard Toussaint and Harlem River Park.
  - iii. **St. Nicholas Park So.** - designated a Community Parks Initiative (CPI) capital project
  - iv. **William McCray Playground** - Design plan and procurement pending.
  - v. **Renaissance Playground** - A Community Parks Initiative (CPI) capital project.
  - vi. **Rucker Park** - Knicks Basketball clinics being held. The last event is scheduled for October 20th. The Each One Teach One organization was not advised and has been restricted in their access to the Greg Marius Court. NYC Parks has been advised and will follow-up to ensure community access and advanced advisement of any and all programming.
  - vii. **Jackie Robinson Park** - Mud slick repaired and area made safer, - homeless encampment removal 145th - 150th Streets, - Jackie Robinson Park Conservancy & Partnership for Parks planting bulbs, - 3 sets of bleachers installed, - bollard installed at 150th Street and Bradhurst Avenue at site on bandshell drive-in to deter illegal of bandshell, - Halloween event scheduled for 10/29, - Bulletin Board with park notices being posted at 152nd Street and Bradhurst, - Councilwoman Kristin Richardson Jordan to fund upgrade of ball fields to prevent erosion; previously determined estimates under former Councilman Perkins' administration to be re-assessed.
  - viii. **Courtney Callendar Playground** - Need for comfort station will be listed as a capital project in the District Needs Statement.
  - ix. **A. Philip Randolph Square** - Bi-weekly homeless removal- DHS and PEP needed - staffing issues at 28th precinct.
  - x. **Frederick Johnson Playground** - Comfort station reconstruction project is on-track for completion by Spring of 2023.
  - xi. **Fred Samuel Playground** - homeless population increasing - stationing furniture, etc. outside of park - DHS and PEP needed
  - xii. **Harlem Lane Program** (Re-named Percy E. Sutton Playground - sitting area and pathway completion by Fall 2022
  - xiii. **Langston Hughes Playground** - bathroom vandalized and sink was shattered - replacement parts are pending. Bathroom will be winterized.
  - xiv. **Hancock Square** - renovated
  - xv. **ACP Malls** - Regional Manager Robert McClean - malls from 110th to 125th Streets have been weeded. Planting of \$2-3,000 of bulbs with emphasis on native plants to attract Monarch Butterflies (which is

currently on the endangered species list) - NY Botanical Garden Botanist - Rockefeller Center - NY Horticultural involvement suggested.

1. Japanese lantern beetle aggressive to Elm Trees
2. Magnetic/Electric Key to fire hydrants - plastic bridge installed to protect garden water hoses at cost of \$1500. - Water tank transport (Water truck utilized on Park Avenue - NYC Parks' water truck is out of service). - New water truck needed - 500 gallons of water needed to water the ACP malls. There has been no coordination with the ACP Malls Friends Group - group will be contacted - Weeding needed for the remainder of the mall which extends to 155th Street.

**c. Completion of CB 10 Portion of Harlem River Park and Programming -**

The community is still in need of programming and implementation of the plans which have been developed. The Community is requesting posthumous commemoration to the legacy of Richard Toussaint and Harlem River Park; an integral planner and advocate for the project.

**d. District Needs Statement -**

**4 (Department of Parks and Recreation) DPR Capital Budget Requests (Infrastructure/Capital Improvement)**

We are requesting that the CB10 portion of Harlem River Park be completed and the bikeway be expanded to close the gap between 145th and 163rd Streets.

We are requesting that the Jackie Robinson Park ball field be upgraded through renovation or reconstruction to mitigate the constant flooding. This would allow for more optimal use of the fields, particularly for our little league organizations and school groups.

We are requesting that the comfort station at Courtney Callendar Playground be reinstalled through reconstruction.

We are requesting that the Jackie Robinson Park pool be upgraded through reconstructive conversion from a pool to a pool/ice skating rink to optimize the use of the facility during the winter months, particularly for our youth organizations and school groups and adults.

**2 DPR Expense Budget Requests (Services/Programming)**

Plantings of the 42 Malls down the center of Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Boulevard. ACP is essential to the aesthetics of Community Bopard 10. We are requesting testing of the soil, trees and a drainage evaluation in order to determine the best sustainable plant life and design that would render the 42 Malls similar in appearance and also a barrier design to discourage walking on the Malls

Enhance Park Safety Through More Security Staff (Police or Parks Enforcement Hire and assign additional Park Enforcement Patrol Officers (PEP) to parks within Community Board 10.

**Outcome:** The Parks and Recreation District Needs narrative will be posted in google docs for further review and commentary. In addition, the drafted statement will be discussed in the upcoming CB 10 District Needs Forum for further community in-put.

## **II. Old Business**

- a. Exonerated Five Task Force Update - Unanimous passage of Resolution to support the Exonerated Gate naming in Central Park at October General Board Meeting
- b. William Atmore Byrd Classic Basketball Court Rename Request - still pending (Request must be re-visited with new Manhattan Borough Parks Commissioner Anthony Perez)
- c. NYC Parks Master Plan - still pending
- a. CB 10 WiFi Forum & CB 10 Parks - still pending

## **III. New Business**

- a. Jackie Robinson Park Pool Conversion to Pool/Ice Skating Rink
- b. Proposed commemoration to Richard Toussaint in Harlem River Park

## **II. Announcements**

- a. **West Harlem Development Corporation Community Evening**
  - i. **5-K Walk/Run - Oct. 29th - 11:00 am**
  - ii. **Community Evening of Christmas Caroling - (date TBA)**

## **III. Adjournment** - Motion made to adjourn unanimously by common consent.

**Meeting was adjourned at 8:51 pm.**

*~ Respectfully submitted by Parks and Recreation Chair, Hon. Karen Horry ~*