



CITY OF NEW YORK MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10

215 West 125th Street, 4th Floor New York, NY 10027
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Website: <https://cbmanhattan.cityofnewyork.us/cb10/>

Hon. Marquis A. Harrison
Chairperson

Shatic Mitchell
District Manager

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday, May 10th 2023, 6:30 pm

Hon. Karen Horry, Chair

Meeting began at 6:33 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. Elvin Garcia, Hon. Barbara Nelson, Hon. Jaran Manzanet, Hon. Dana Points, Hon. Tahanie Aboushi and Hon. Derek Perkinson.

Committee Members Absent: Hon. Shamier Settle, Hon. Verna Diggs and Hon. Nathan Quist

Board Members Present: Board Chair Hon. Marquis Harrison, 2nd Vice Chair Hon. Charles Johnson

District Office: Jasmin Heatley (Community Associate)

Guests in attendance: Katrina Adams (Harlem Junior Tennis), AJS, Altenor Molien, Andre Benjamin, Anthony Williams, Ben Beirut, Clara Mattie, Dave Williams (NYC Parks Manager, Districts 10 & 11), Dennis and Denise, KL, Diller Diaz, Edna Lieberman, Iphone 2 (Darnell), Sonya Simmons (President - Jackie Robinson Park Conservancy), Jah Jabbar, Khalid Bey, Lane Addonizio (VP of Planning - Central Park Conservancy), LayLay, Lora McClean, Nia Cooper (FDA), Shani Hedge (FDA), Tyler Daley (FDA), Bree Smith, Lucious Reid, Luka M., Nina's Iphone, Sam Penceal, Trisha Smalls (WEACT), Steven Schuler, Abena Smith, SsH's Iphone, Steve Simon (NYC Parks Manhattan Chief of Staff), Ondel's Phone, Chauncey Payne (FDA), ***6882, Jana LaSorte (Administrator - Harlem Historic Parks), Mohammed, Makhi McCoy (FDA) and Ron Myers

I. Welcome/Introductions

II. Presentations

a. Central Park Conservancy - SENECA VILLAGE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

What does Seneca Village's history and legacy mean to you?

To a modern-day visitor, the site of Seneca Village resembles much of the surrounding Central Park landscape, with rolling hills, rock outcrops, and playgrounds. But what many do not realize is that this area--near the Park's perimeter from West 82nd to West 89th Street--has an exceptional history. During the first half of the 19th century, before the area became Central Park, it was home to a predominantly Black community. many of whom owned property. Central Park Conservancy and New-York Historical Society are extending an invitation to the Community to attend a first Community Conversation on Seneca Village and its legacy. The coalition is kicking off a long-term, community-informed project to highlight the history of the Village and honor its significance. This event will offer CPC friends and neighbors a forum

to learn about Seneca Village and how the exhibit which is already in place can be enhanced to amplify the story of the historic Seneca Village Community's story. Complimentary morning refreshments, lunch, and children's activities will be provided. The event is scheduled for Saturday, June 3, 2023 from 10:00 am-3:00 pm and will be held in the New-York Historical Society located at 70 Central Park West, New York, NY 10024.

Outcome: The Committee will ask the District Office to e-blast the event flyer and will provide CB 10 Parks and Recreation Committee representation at the event.

2. Harlem Junior Tennis and Education Program

HJTEP uses tennis to develop life skills while providing academic enrichment as a pathway for student athletes ages 6 - 18 to earn college scholarships. On court, HJTEP operates youth tennis programs helping to close the "play equity gap." Off court, the HJTEP Learning Resource Center offers holistic academic and wellness support to youth through life-skills training, nutrition and fitness, a diagnostic academic assessment of each child, along with tutoring, mentorship, ACT/SAT testing, and college counseling.

HJTEP participants may join the tennis program at any stage of development from beginner to advanced levels of play. Aspiring student-athletes advance through the HITEP tennis programs by progressing through each level of play: Grassroots I and II, Futures & Intermediate, High Performance I and II, with the ultimate goal to be selected for the Tournament Team. Student-athletes invited to join the Tournament Team will have attained both high standards of play as well as high academic achievement. HITEP's metrics for success include maintaining 100% player retention while qualifying 36% of HJTEP players for tournament play with at least 13% of HJTEP players competing at the national level. Many HTEP players have also gained tournament experience at the international level.

Homework help is provided to all HJTEP parents and K-8 graders, which extends to 9-12-graders in the form of Focus Session Study Halls. Virtual co-working space, SAT/ACT prep and college / career counseling are offered, along with private tutoring to further cultivate academic achievement and exceptional executive functioning capacity. HJTEP's Learning Resource Center teaches all student athletes how to self-advocate, identify personal goals and the actions necessary to achieve them. They also participate in social and emotional learning workshops and one-to-one sessions with social workers and mental health counselors. For 50 years, HITEP's Learning Resource Center has improved Harlem's educational statistics through its resource offerings and enriched environment.

The cornerstone of HJTEP's wellness initiatives is the Tennis Against Obesity program (TAO). TAO helps students, schools, and parents recognize and combat the growing obesity epidemic via fitness, nutrition, discipline, and fun. HITEP's year-round educational and wellness programming includes seasonal events (competitions, community clinics, and activations with partners). Regular speakers are engaged during the school year to expose HJTEP community members to topics such as financial literacy, financial aid, fitness, and nutrition. Each year, outreach always expands opportunities for staff development and increased mentorship opportunities for HJTEP's student-athletes.

At this time HITEP is in need of capacity expansion for sustainability. Current space in the 369th Harlem Armory Tennis Facility, as per HITEP, limits participation and warrants the need for a much larger physical asset. The organization expressed that a new facility would be able to double student capacity and that the pandemic created conditions which increased the importance for HJTE's expansion. The project would also include a pickle ball court and a refurbishing of the existing outdoor courts. Social isolation, lower reading levels/ test scores, teen mental health crisis, etc. They believe that dedicated space is required for HJTEP growth and evolution. The importance of facility location/size in its centrality to Harlem was stressed. As tennis is booming, broader community benefits result in additional sports programs, pickleball, lecture/event space, rentals. Deepening HJTEP relationship to Harlem and its

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neighborhood. A safe, space available in Harlem, year-round, at below-market cost: HJTEP described as "Home away from home" "Like a family". Close play equity gaps in underserved neighborhoods respond to cuts in sports budgets in NYC public schools 17,000 NYC children have no access to sports. Alternatives to other pay to play' youth sports programs redress socio-economic inequities, provide social & academic development for at-risk youth and increase community access to wellness, social/human capital and inclusive positive spaces for at-risk youth. Children living in Central Harlem are reported to be 4 times more likely to be involved in or witness a violent incident compared to children in other parts of NYC. The Organization has support from tennis great Venus Williams (Former WTA World #1) and James Blake, (Former ATP World # 4).

The organization espouses that tennis is surging. In the last 2 years across the United States with 4.9 million new tennis player, 22.6 million tennis players total with a 27.9% growth in participation.

The proposed site is the interior of the Frederick Johnson Playground (Park ID: M159 and 2.44 acres) and is located at Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Blvd. & West 151st Street. The park was selected because of its historic association with Harlem and world tennis. The Frederick Johnson Playground Public Restroom Building Construction, an NYC Parks capital project has been underway with expected completion in 2023. "The Jungle" is the affectionate nickname for the eight Frederick Johnson tennis courts. The complex got its official name in 1971, when it was dedicated to Mr. Johnson. The park honors Frederick Johnson (1891-1963), tennis player, coach, teacher, Harlem native and one-armed teaching pro who discovered and guided the career of the tennis great Althea Gibson. the Former New York City Mayor Hon. David Dinkins formed the *David Dinkins Tennis Club (DDTC)* at "The Jungle". Mr. Sam Penceal, DDTC President, spoke on behalf of members of the organization that has been offering services to the community since 2010. The park-based tennis program located In Frederick Johnson works with extensively experienced teachers, school administrators, and professional tennis coaches. DDTC members, lead by Sam Penceal, have been hosting this successful reading and tennis program annually at Fred Johnson Park known as "the Jungle" in Harlem for over 13 years. The Harlem tennis courts are hallowed ground and served as practice courts for some of the most famous black tennis players, including Althea Gibson, Arthur Ashe and James Blake. Reading and tennis programming have been offered for families since 2010 to present, for 8 weeks during July through August - on Saturdays from 8 am to 11 am.

The Community expressed concern about the impact of the proposed facility on "The Jungle" Community. The organization assured that the outdoor courts would continue to be free and available via permit through NYC Parks, however a fee would be charged for use of the courts inside of the facility. Community members are concerned about ongoing access to the courts and the potential for privatization.

Outcome: The Organization was advised to reach out to garner community support through petitions and letters of support from tenants associations and other local area entities and return to the June meeting.

They were also asked to provide synopses of conversations held with NYC Parks Commissioner Sue Donoghue and Manhattan NYC Parks Commissioner Anthony Perez.

3. NYCFC 2nd Annual Soccer Tournament and Community Day

CB 10 will be collaborating with the Third Rail, Black Players for Change and NYCFC to host the 2nd Annual Soccer Tournament and Community Day. The event is scheduled for Wednesday, June 7th, from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm in Brigadier General Charles Young Playground at the mini soccer pitch located at West 143rd Street. The Third Rail and Black Players for change are teaming up to organize a 5v5 kids soccer tournament in Central Harlem. There will be food, refreshment, and music along with tabling by CB10, The New York Historical Society and NYPD Consumer Affairs will provide and supervise the NYPD Rock Climbing Wall and Video Game Van. Flyers will be made available next week for e-blast. Local schools and youth organizations will be contacted to attend.

Outcome: The Committee will table at the event and provide recruitment support for local area youth. Event budget will be submitted to the District Manager.

4. Jackie Robinson Park Pool Conversion to Pool/Ice Skating Rink Statement of Objectives and Goals - Subcommittee Formation

The Committee discussed a draft of a Statement of Objective and Goals for the proposed project. Jackie Robinson Pool and Play Center. The Committee has held several discussions on the proposed conversion and has expressed the need for a feasibility study to NYC Parks. The subcommittee is still being formulated.

Outcome: The Committee is still in the process of finalizing a Statement of Objectives and Goals for submission to NYC Parks, as well as identifying Community Stakeholders to collaborate on the subcommittee. Meeting schedule will be announced.

3. Voting - There were no voting items.

4. Discussions

1. CB 10 Park Updates

- 1. Harlem Historic Park/ Jackie Robinson Park Update -** The park is experiencing issues with drainage problems and there is concern that there may be a sinkhole which may be associated with erosion in the ball-field, which is impacting#NYC Parks has instituted a subsurface investigation through a special funding line. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Department of Transportation (DOT) are working in the park to resolve issues with reoccurring accumulation of hazardous mud piles. There is reportedly some structural sinkage in the area of 152nd Street and Edgecombe Avenue. Central Park Conservancy is assisting with reseeding of the Park lawns. The Jackie Robinson Park Day was a very successful event.
- 2. Jackie Robinson Park Conservancy Updates -** JRPC will be hosting a music series that will combine local musicians with celebrities. Six Friends Groups from lower Manhattan community will sponsor the seriesDetails will be shared at the June meeting. The very successful NY Green Fund program for youth is coming to an end. Planting was done Fridays from 9 am to 12 pm on 152nd Street from Bradhurst Avenue to Edgecombe Avenue. The next meeting regarding the dog run will be held on May 23rd. Information can be found on the JRPC WEBSITE.
- 3. Hansborough Recreation Center Updates -** The capital projects to renovate the facility, install a new elevator and reconstruct the pool remain on track. The pool



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procurement is moving to bidding. Ms. McNeal is navigating the project. Fall 2023 closure is expected. The facility will host a job fair and is hiring for the summer camp mobile units with movies, etc. Arts, culture and fun series including Hip Hop for seniors will be held 11 am to 12:30 pm. Hansborough to collaborate with Rucker Park Family Fun Day movie night scheduled for June 3rd. District Office will e-blast info.

4. **Brigadier General Charles Young Playground** - capital projects to reconstruct the ball field, ball field perimeter and comfort station renovation remain on track. Groundbreaking is scheduled for August 2023.
5. **Brigadier General Charles Young Triangle** - No update at this time. DOT has not installed safety bollards.
6. **Harlem River Park** - NYC EDC will be scheduling charrettes to garner community input with respect to project completion and programming in the CB 10 portion towards the end of 2023.
7. **St. Nicholas Park So.** - designated a Community Parks Initiative (CPI) capital project - Design phase is underway- No further update at this time.
8. **William McCray Playground** - Exterminated for rodents.
9. **Renaissance Playground** - A Community Parks Initiative (CPI) capital project. - Parks will be holding a charrette - scheduled for 5/31. Survey submission still pending from Community. District Office will e-blast.
10. **Rucker Park** - Park Family Fun Day movie night scheduled for June 3rd. District Office will e-blast info.
11. **Courtney Callendar Playground** - Comfort station reconstruction still pending to become a NYC Parks capital project. Advocacy is ongoing.
12. **A. Philip Randolph Square** - Design Charrette was held on Thursday, April 27th.
13. **Frederick Johnson Playground** - Comfort Station Reconstruction Project is at 42% completion and will be finished by December 2023.
14. **Fred Samuel Playground** - No update at this time.
15. **Harlem Lane Program (Percy E. Sutton Playground)** - No update at this time.
16. **Langston Hughes Playground** - Disruptive youth and adult population drug activity. Shrubs will be cut in order to deter the behaviors.
17. **Hancock Square** - No update at this time.
18. **ACP, Jr. Malls** - No update at this time.

All parks were treated for rat abatement.

5. Old Business

1. NYC EDC Harlem River Park Charrettes dates pending
2. CB 10 Parks Master Plan - Committee Chair will be updated on May 15th by NYC Parks
3. William Atmore Byrd Classic Basketball Court Rename Request (inside of Langston Hughes Playground) - still pending

6. New Business - None

7. Announcements

1. **Central Park Conservancy - Seneca Village Community Conversation** - Saturday, June 3, 2023 from 10:00 am-3:00 pm and will be held in the New-York Historical Society located at 70 Central Park West, New York, NY 10024.
2. **2nd Annual Soccer Tournament and Community Day Event** - Wednesday, June 7th, 2023 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Brigadier General Charles Young Playground - West 143rd Street and Malcolm X Boulevard.

8. Adjournment - Meeting was adjourned by Committee Member Hon. Tahanie Aboushi.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:36 pm.

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