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PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday, September 14th 2022, 6:30 pm

Hon. Karen Horry, Chair

Meeting began at 6:30 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. Barbara Nelson, Hon. Nathan Quist, and Hon. Elvin Garcia.

Committee Members Excused: Hon. Derek Perkinson Hon. Shamier Settle and Hon. Jaran Manzanet

Board Members Present: Hon. Cicely Harris, Board Chair and Hon. Dr. Maurice Franklin,

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

Guests in attendance: Marcus Wilson, Michele Linton, Chas Iphone, Tamia Mackey, Janine Sarna- Jones (Jackie's Home Run), Haydee Guzman-Momti (Makedollaz), 1212***96, Kevin O'Brien (Makedollaz), Kevin O'Brien, Bliss Griffin (Jackie's Home Run), Taren's iPhone, Isaiah Clinton, 1201***52, 1919***27, 1718***28, 1718***21, 1646***34, Tamia Mackey, 1201***52, Lane Addonizio (Vice President of Planning - Central Park Conservancy), Alex Munoz - (NYC Parks GreenThumb), Min. Carolyn Cuffee, Anthony Denaro (Jackie's Home Run), Julia, Renee Sanders, 1347***15, Cayla Torres, 1646***55, 1718***94, Lonnie "LJ" Portis (WE ACT for Environmental Justice), Jana La Sorte (Administrator, Harlem Historic Parks), Joyce McCollin, Daniel B. (julia), Joyce McCollin, Renee Sanders, 1917***54, Amy, 1347***80, Michaela, Kristen Rea (Jackie's Home Run), Jill McIntosh (Jackie's Home Run), (Jill McIntosh, Peg Guillon, 1718***28, Charlie Bass, 1917***81, 1646**11, Yvette T., 1347**53, Aarin J., Katie Stevens (Jackie's Home Run), Malia McDaniel, Melissa's Galaxy S9+, Aarin J. (Jackie's Home Run), Abena Smith, Taren's iPhone, Raph.I.L., 1646**29, 134***41, Alexis, lacolesmith 1646***13, 1347***24, 1718***31, 1646***49, Tiara, Raphael (Jackie's Home Run) 1646***49, 1917***55, Shatika Chatman, 1646***01, Lilo, Tamaya Hampton, 1347***41, Robert Mclean (Regional Manager, NYC Parks), 1917***62, 1856***07, Michele Linton, Joelea Harris, 1646***98, 1718***15, Joe H, 1917***09, Brandee, 1347***63, 1646***57, Tamia Mackey, Vanessa Wool (Jackies Home Run), Joe H, Jay, 1347***41, Zakiyah DeGraffe (Director, Hansborough Center), Tefone Herring, 1646***13, Yvonne Grice (Fire Table), 1718***46 17133058614, Vanessa Potter Wool (Jackie's Home Run), Candice Wilson, 1973***64, 1252***21, Catherine T., 1718***15, Chas, D. Francois, 1212***61, Chas Iphone, 1646***12, 1929***01, Andre's iPhone, 1917***66, 1832***05, 1917***84, Michele Linton, 1646***064, 1347***45, 1917***55, Johnny Torres, Ron Cottrell, 1646***49, Tonya Dawkins,

Ron Cottrell, Johnny Torres, J Thompson, Adrian Summers, 1646***12, 1281***80, 1914***45, 1917***46, 1212***96, Alicia J, 1917***84, Johnny Torres, Frances, Luisa Aquino, 1718***80, 1718***28, Tamia Mackey, Tiffany Hardy's, William Allen MPA (Senator Cleare), 1917***79, 1646***90, Vanessa Potter Wool, Veronica Riddick, 1917***35, 1718***46, 1914***26, 1917***81, Tamaya Hampton, 1281***80 Yvette T., 1646***17, Brenda Walker, Alicia Blandon, Michaela (Jackie's Home Run), 1917***55.

I. Presentations

a. Exonerated Five - Resolution To Support the Gate of the Exonerated

Central Park's original entrances were named in the nineteenth century in honor of professions and populations that had played a prominent role in New York City's history. The City of New York, in consultation with Community Board 10 and directly inspired by the experience of "The Exonerated Five," has proposed to name the park entrance on 110th Street between Fifth Avenue and Malcolm X Boulevard the Gate of the Exonerated, in honor of all those who have been wrongfully convicted of crimes. The CB 10 Exonerated Five Task Force has met extensively with elected officials, Central Park Conservancy and NYC Parks to coordinate and plan educational and interpretive platforms, content, and programs in connection with the dedication of the Gate of the Exonerated.

The Parks and Recreation Committee addressed a community-based advocacy, first voiced by the community on October 2nd, 2019, for a commemoration to the resiliency of the Exonerated Five to be located in Central Park. The Executive Committee authorized the formation of a Parks and Recreation subcommittee comprised of stakeholders on March 25th, 2020 to facilitate the process of permanently commemorating social justice and the resiliency of the Exonerated Five. A CB 10 resolution was passed in June 2020 to advocate for a permanent exhibit to commemorate the resiliency of the wrongfully accused and unjustly prosecuted Exonerated Five in Central Park. The Parks and Recreation subcommittee facilitated diverse dialogue to flesh out objectives and goals, including panel discussions with community stakeholders, elected officials, city and state agencies, not-for-profits and established experts held March through May 2020 and public panel discussion webinars July 2020. A statement of objectives and goals was developed, approved and then Presentations were made to Manhattan Community Boards including those surrounding Central Park from September 2020 through March 2021. Each of the Community Boards provided supportive Resolutions or Letter of Supports. The Manhattan Borough Board issued a supporting Resolution. In addition support was garnered from a plethora of local, state and federal elected officials, social justice organizations and advocates. In 2021 CB 10 formed a Task Force to continue the facilitation of stakeholder participation in promoting social justice and commemoration of the resiliency of the Exonerated Five.

The Task Force is in the process of creating the website and planning a series of events for the week leading up to the twentieth anniversary of the exoneration. The Exonerated Five are expected to attend. The language of the plaque has been drafted. It is currently with NYC Parks for approval.

It was recommended that the Task Force experience the virtual “Say Their Names” Exhibit being featured in a Central Park field at 85th Street near the Spector Park and in the vicinity of the Seneca Village exhibit. The augmented reality exhibit does not require physical objects. It requires a geo-location process and the use of an app.

Outcome: The Committee is in favor of the resolution to Name the Central Park gate located at 110th Street between Fifth Avenue and Malcolm X Boulevard the Gate of the Exonerated. The sentiment of the Committee will be forwarded to the Executive Committee.

b. WEACT - Emergency Preparedness: CB 10 Parks and Community Gardens

The presentation was made by Lonnie Portis is (Environmental Policy and Advocacy Coordinator) - WE ACT’s Federal Policy Office coordinates the Environmental Justice Leadership Forum (EJ Forum), a national coalition of 54 environmental justice organizations working together to advance climate justice and impact policy to ensure the protection and promotion of communities of color and low-income communities throughout the U.S. Public green spaces confer health benefits to those who make use of them. WEACT noted that Northern Manhattan was redlined, specifically Central and East Harlem. Today, 85.3 percent of Central Harlem residents and 85.8 percent of East Harlem residents are people of color. These same neighborhoods are also among the most heat-vulnerable in NYC, as compared to other urban areas. The dangers of extreme heat are compounded by the detrimental impacts of racism and poverty on human health, resulting in low-income communities and communities of color being the most vulnerable and the most exposed to the urban heat island effect. WEACT shared an Informative and Interactive brochure which is user-friendly and soon to be made available to the public. Guidelines have been developed to inform design and planning for flood resiliency with respect to NYC Parks. This guidance, based on climate-smart data will serve as an essential tool for planners, designers, engineers, and consultants as they tackle the planning challenges associated with designing parks and open spaces brought on by a changing climate. Resilient park designs can be instrumental in allowing for quick recovery from storm events. The brochure provides information on the “100 and 500 year” flood plains prediction in northern Manhattan (terms used to describe the recurrence interval of major floods). Environmental Justice in vulnerable neighborhoods can be remedied through the installation of trees with flower beds. Grants for this effort are available. Legislation is needed and must be advocated for mitigation of heat through expansion of sewer systems, promotion of bioswell rain gardens and green roofing infrastructure.

Outcome: WEACT will provide the interactive brochure link upon its completion in late October or early December. The Committee will refer WEACT to the Land Use Committee

c. NYC Parks Green Thumb - State of CB 10 Community Gardens Update -

Alex Munoz (Assistant Director for Community Engagement), presented. GreenThumb supports more than 550 community gardens and 20,000 volunteer gardeners each year with materials, technical assistance, educational workshops,

and more. CB 10 has 23 community gardens. Gardeners are engaging in growing of mushroom crops. The current 4 years license is being extended to 10 years (problematic clauses have been waived - The Committee requested a copy of the new Green Thumb license agreement. Licenses will be sent to Gardeners upon process of completion, in either October or November.

Outcome: Green Thumb will send a copy of the new license agreement to the Community Board.

- d. **“Jackie’s Home Run” - Proposal for Dog Park and Off-leash Hours in Jackie Robinson Park** - The presentation was made by Bliss Griffin. The group suggested 4 possible sites: (1) the green space at 153rd Street - adjacent to parking lot at Polo Grounds. The city recently removed a homeless encampment and cleaned the area which is sort of isolated. It is at the north east corner - 2949 W. 155th (near Highbridge Park Bradhurst @ 155th Street. Highbridge Park will have to be consulted. This is the preferred site. The area will require lighting; (2) an area near the baseball field at 152nd Street, (3) an area near the bandshell at 148th Street, and was unclear as to preference. They will return with a definitive location for the proposed dog run; and (4) The green at 145th Street. Currently Dogs must be on a leash (no more than six feet long) at all times, except in dog runs and designated off-leash areas at the prescribed times. The group is interested in Dogs off Leash hours in the dog run before 9 am and after 9 pm until the park closes.

Outcome: The Group will return with a more definitive site location out of the four suggested locations.

- e. **Request to Name the Basketball Court in William McCray Playground to the Darius Lee Basketball Court** - The request was presented by Marcus Wilson. Darius Lee, a senior at Houston Baptist University in Texas was tragically killed during a 2022 Father’s Day cook-out in Harlem River Park on June 20th. He was 21 years of age and was aspiring to go on to play in the NBA. Mr. Lee grew up in Harlem, attended St. Raymond High School for Boys in the Bronx and was home for summer break. Darius Lee played guard and forward basketball positions at a community college in New York's Sullivan County before enrolling at Houston Baptist University. He was scheduled to graduate in December with a bachelor's degree in sports management. Mr. Lee was recently named the university's Male Student-Athlete of the Year. He led the team in scoring and rebounding last season, and finished sixth in the nation in steals per game, earning a second team All-Southland Conference selection. Mr. Lee scored 52 points in a quadruple-overtime victory last season, as well. Darius Lee was raised on 138th Street where he attended St. Mark the Evangelist School located at 55 West 138th Street. The school is adjacent to the William McCray Playground where Mr. Lee played as a child. He was recognized as being active and an asset to the community. Mr. Lee was posthumously awarded his college degree. Mr. Lee’s family has formed the Darius 23 Foundation. 400 signatures

were collected most outside of the immediate vicinity and the state of New York - more local signatures and letters of support will be provided by October 3rd. The support for the renaming was tremendous.

Outcome: The Committee voted unanimously to support the naming of the basketball court inside of William McCray Playground.

II. Voting - Voting by Voice Vote

- i. Motion made by Hon. Barbara Nelson and seconded by Hon. Tahanie Aboushi. **Motion: To Support Resolution To Name the William McCray Playground Basketball Court to the Darius Lee Basketball Court**

Court

Vote: Quorum was present : Unanimous to support: 7 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions and 0 recusals (Voice Vote: Hon. Tahanie Aboushi - yes, Hon. Barbara Nelson - yes, Hon. Karen Horry - yes, Hon. Dana Points - yes, Hon. Nathan Quist- yes and Hon. Elvin Garcia - yes, Hon. Verna Diggs - yes).

Outcome: **Motion Passed**

- ii. Motion made by Hon. Tahanie Aboushi and seconded by Hon. Dana Points. **Motion: To Support the Resolution To Name The Gate of The Exonerated in Central Park**

Vote: Quorum was not present: 5 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions and 0 recusals (Voice Vote: Hon. Tahanie Aboushi - yes, Hon. Nathan Quist - yes, Hon. Karen Horry - yes, Hon. Dana Points - yes, and Hon. Verna Diggs- yes).

Outcome: **The sentiment, in favor of the Resolution, will be moved forward to the Executive Committee.**

II. Discussions

- a. **The “Say Their Names” Augmented Reality Exhibit in Central Park & Schomburg Dinner** - The landmark exhibition honoring those lost to racial a s social injustice will make its New York City debut on Saturday, September 17th. The inaugural exhibit will be on view for one month in New York's historic Seneca Village, an area that had been one of the largest African American settlements in the country prior to being dismantled in 1857 to make way for Central Park. The West 85th Street site will be home to the “*Say Their Names*”*exhibit* as an augmented reality (AR) experience combining digital photography, technology, and art to allow visitors to engage with hundreds of familiar and unsung faces lost over time due to racial and social injustice. The San Diego African American Museum of Fine Art (SDAAMFA) under the leadership and vision of Gaidi Finnie -Executive Director and the SDAAMFA Museum Board will co-host an inaugural event on Friday, September 16th at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

- b. **District Needs Statement FY'24** was discussed and will be developed offline and presented at October meeting
- a. **Hansborough Recreation Center** - Zakiyah DeGraffe (Director) - please see Park Updates below.
- b. **NYC Parks - CB 10 Master Plan** - pending response from MBP Levine and NYC Parks
- c. **Programming in Harlem River Park** - Contact Urban Rangers - suggested Kite Flying Workshop and programming provided by Urban Rangers Natural Workshops [<https://www.nycgovparks.org/programs/rangers>]. [The Natural Classroom: People, Place, and Parks <https://www.nycgovparks.org/programs/rangers/natural-classroom>]
- d. **CB 10 Park Updates** - David Williams, Parks Manager (Districts 10 & 11 NYC Parks) -
 - i. **Hansborough Recreation Center** -
 - 1. Procurement phase ending by December 2022
 - 2. Construction Begins February 2023; including pool, lobby and 4th floor access to indoor track and cardio room, basement staff bathrooms, installation of new windows and 4th floor flooring, restoration of weight room. - The boiler and HVAC system repairs are a separate capital project
 - ii. **Brigadier General Charles Young Playground** - sprinkler system in need of repair
 - iii. **Harlem River Park** - completion of CB 10 portion and programming needed
 - iv. **St. Nicholas Park So.** - designated a Community Parks Initiative (CPI) capital project
 - v. **William McCray Playground** - The schematic design for this project has been approved. Parks is now developing the documents required to build this project. - designated a Community Parks Initiative (CPI) capital project
 - vi. **Renaissance Playground** - designated a Community Parks Initiative (CPI) capital project
 - vii. **Jackie Robinson Park** - It's My Park Day - Oct. 15th and 16th - Basketball court re-surfaced and painted
 - viii. **Courtney Callendar Playground** - Basketball court re-surfaced and painted
 - ix. **A. Philip Randolph Square** - homelessness population increasing - bringing furniture in park - DHS and PEP needed
 - x. **Frederick Johnson Playground** - comfort station on track for completion by Fall 2023
 - xi. **Fred Samuel Playground** - tree pruning and basketball court resurfaced and painted - comfort station plumbing issues identified - bathroom winterization will be done in November or early December
 - xii. **Harlem Lane Program** (Re-named Percy E. Sutton Playground) - sitting area and pathway completion by Fall 2022

I. Old Business

- a. William McCray Playground Renovation Design Plans Letter of Support was ratified unanimously by the full Board at the September 7th General Meeting
- b. William Atmore Byrd Classic Basketball Court Rename Request - still pending
- c. CB 10 WiFi Forum & CB10 Parks - discussion still pending with Economic Development & Technology Committee

II. New Business - Community Gardens License Agreement conversion from 4 to 10 years.

III. Announcements

- a. Retirement of Manhattan NYC Parks Deputy Commissioner William Castro - September 15th - We now welcome new Manhattan NYC Parks Deputy Commissioner Anthony Perez as of Friday September 16th.
- b. Mosquito spraying due to a positive report of West Nile virus, scheduled for the very next day - Thursday, September 15th, was announced in meeting- public was unaware. It was very concerning and people had to scramble to get the word out. Area included above 57th Street, East Harlem, Central Harlem and Washington Heights.

IV. Adjournment - Motion made to adjourn unanimously by common consent.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:23 pm.

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