



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10
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**Manhattan Community Board 10 Resolution Supporting
Central Park Commemoration of Seneca Village**

WHEREAS Seneca Village was a settlement of mostly African American landowners in the borough of Manhattan in New York City, founded in 1825 by free black people – the first such community in the city – although it also came to be inhabited by several other minorities, including Irish and German immigrants, and Native Americans; and

WHEREAS the settlement was located on about five acres (2.0 ha) approximately bounded by where 82nd and 89th Streets and Seventh and Eighth Avenues would be now, if Central Park had not been built. A stone outcropping near the 85th Street entrance to Central Park is believed to be part of a foundation of the African Methodist Church. At its peak, the community numbered more than 350 people, and had three churches, two schools, and two cemeteries. It existed until 1857, when it was torn down for the construction of Central Park; and

WHEREAS Seneca Village was Manhattan's first significant community of African American property owners. By the 1840s, it had become a multi-ethnic community consisting of African Americans, Irish and German immigrants, and Native Americans; and

WHEREAS in 1855, the New York State Census reported approximately 264 individuals living in the village. There were three churches, as well as a school and several cemeteries. Within two years Seneca Village would be razed and its identity erased by the creation of Central Park; and

WHEREAS the Seneca Village Project includes several integrated components: archaeological and archival research and education; and

WHEREAS on March 14th, 2018 the Central Park Conservancy and the Seneca Village Project presented to the Manhattan Community Board 10's Parks and Recreation Committee on a proposed desire to commemorate the historic settlement; and

WHEREAS commemorative formats as suggested by the community, i.e. garden with a technologically interactive component emphasizing the village footprint, history and culture, with a tie-in to the artifacts collected by the Seneca Village project within the context of Central Park; and

WHEREAS a design competition for a commemorative technologically interactive Garden was suggested that would incorporate an interpretation of the Seneca Village while also preserving the archaeological site; and

WHEREAS the Committee will revisit the issue in June to assess the progress of the Central Park Conservancy's evaluation of the proposed commemorative formats as suggested by the community; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Manhattan Community Board 10 unequivocally recommends that New York City Parks commemorate, within an educational context, the site of the historic Seneca Village in Central Park with a vote of 29 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions.