

June 19, 2017

Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP  
Commissioner  
New York City Department of Parks & Recreation  
830 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10065

Re: St. Nicholas North Playground – Proposal to Re-name to Byrd’s Classic Park

Dear Commissioner Silver:

Manhattan Community Board (CB) 10 is writing this letter in support of the re-naming of St. Nicholas North Playground to Byrd’s Classic Park. The park, (M211B – Playground 103) is located at West 130th Street and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Boulevard, was originally named after St. Nicholas, the patron saint of Amsterdam whose likeness adorned one of the ships that brought the first Dutch settlers to New Amsterdam.

The playground is currently undergoing renovation construction under the Parks Department’s Mayoral Community Parks Initiative. 244 Signatures and letters of support were submitted on behalf of the park renaming initiative for "St. Nicholas Playground North" to "Byrd's Classic Park" in honor of William A. Byrd, Sr.

William Byrd was President of the 131st Street Block Association and an avid community activist during the 1970’s, ‘80’s and 90’s. Hi reputation was widely celebrated not only throughout the Harlem community, but nationally as well. In April 1970, William Byrd was a major proponent along with other members of the 131st Street Block Association, presented six million signatures to Brooklyn Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm and Detroit Congressman John Conyers. Congresspersons Chisholm and Conyers introduced a bill in Congress, which was finally passed in 1983. On November 2, 1983, President Ronald Reagan signed the law making January 15th a national holiday in honor of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Since 1986, the holiday has been observed on the third Monday in January.

It is the recommendation of Manhattan CB10 that St. Nicholas North Playground be re-named to Byrd’s Classic Park to honor Mr. William A. Byrd, Sr. in memorial to his extensive contributions to the Community throughout decades of his residency in the area.

Sincerely,

Cicely Harris  
Chairperson  
Manhattan Community Board 10

Karen Horry  
Chair  
Parks and Recreation Committee  
Manhattan Community Board 10

cc: William T. Castro, Manhattan Borough Commissioner, NYC Department of Parks &  
Recreation  
Bill Perkins, NYC Council Member  
Inez Dickens, NY State Assembly Member  
Adriano Espaillat, Congress Member  
Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President

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