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CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10
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RESOLUTION RESTORATION OF THE KINDERBERG AND RENOVATION OF THE CHESS & CHECKERS HOUSE IN CENTRAL PARK

WHEREAS Central Park was created, in anticipation of the City's future growth around it, for the purpose of providing for all New Yorkers a pastoral refuge from crowded urban conditions. Throughout its history, the Park has experienced cycles of decline and restoration. The Central Park Conservancy was formed in 1980 in response to the Park's dramatic deterioration in the 1960s and 70s. Since then, the Conservancy has engaged in restoration projects and capital improvements throughout the park, and has assumed responsibility for the day-to-day operation and management of the Park; and

WHEREAS The Children's District is the historic name of an area near the southeast corner of the Park, north of the 59th Street Pond and south of the 65th Street Transverse, between the Center Drive and the East Drive Park. Conveniently sited to welcome visitors immediately upon their arrival in the Park, it offered facilities catering to the needs of small children and their caregivers, including the Dairy refreshment house and the Children's Cottage (a changing and restroom facility). Most significant of these was the Kinderberg, also referred to as the Children's Shelter or the Nursery. Completed in 1868, it was the largest and most elaborate of the Park's many rustic structures. Sited on a large outcropping of rock overlooking the Pond, the Kinderberg offered shade, seating, and tables for mothers and children to rest, picnic, and play games; and

WHEREAS The Kinderberg was razed in the 1940s and in 1952, the existing Chess & Checkers House was constructed on the site. The octagonal brick structure was originally open on four sides and functioned as an open-air pavilion. By the 1980s, doors and windows were added to fully enclose the structure. The existing dimensional lumber trellis on the plaza surrounding the building was added in 1985; and

WHEREAS The last significant project at the site was a restoration of the building exterior and addition of the existing trellis in 1985. The trellis has reached the end of its useful life, and the pavement beneath shows signs of significant settling and deterioration. The building roof has not been replaced since the original construction in 1952. The stairs and steeply-sloped path leading up to the facility are not accessible. Finally, there are no longer public restrooms in the Children's District to support the public programs run out of the Chess & Checkers House or activities at the Dairy, the Conservancy's main Visitor Center and gift shop; and

WHEREAS The project is a continuation of the restoration of the Children's District that began with the Conservancy's recently completed restoration of the Conservatory Garden and Dairy Access Path renovation project, supported by a CB 10 resolution in 2020; and

WHEREAS Objectives include:

- Restoration of the Kinderberg site in keeping with the historic purpose and design of the Park and to serve the needs of contemporary park users
- Address of the condition of the Chess & Checkers House
- Provision of restroom facilities for visitors to the Children's District
- Address of the accessibility of the facility; and

WHEREAS the scope of Work includes:



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- Recreation of a rustic shelter, based on the original Kinderberg structure, encompassing the existing Chess & Checkers House
- In-kind replacement of the existing asphalt hexagonal pavers.
- Restore the exterior of the Chess & Checkers House
- Replacement of the roof, cupola, windows and doors in-kind
- Renovate the interior of the Chess & Checkers house to include public restrooms as well as space to support public programs
- Upgrade of the existing mechanical and utility systems
- Construction of an ADA-accessible ramp to the facility in the slope on the east side of the Kinderberg, adjacent to the existing stairs
- Restoration of the existing stairs and addition of handrails; and

WHEREAS Central Park Conservancy presented design plans for the Kinderberg restoration and the Chess & Checkers House renovation project to the Parks and Recreation Committee, to garner community feedback on the proposed plans, on December 8th 2021; and

WHEREAS The Kinderberg restoration and the Chess & Checkers House renovation project has a budget of \$7 million and is fully funded; and

WHEREAS The Central Park Conservancy and New York City Parks anticipate that construction on the Kinderberg and Chess & Checkers House project will begin in March 2022 and completed by December 2022 or January 2023; and

WHEREAS Central Park Conservancy has met with surrounding Boards to Central Park; 5, 7 and 8 who are in support of the project; and

WHEREAS on December 8th, 2021 the Parks and Recreation Committee had quorum and **voted 7 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions and 0 recusals;** to support the project; and

WHEREAS on December 29th, 2021 the Executive Committee had quorum and **voted 12 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions and 0 recusals;** and

WHEREAS on January 5th, 2022 the General Board had quorum and **voted 35 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions and 0 recusals** to support the project ; and

THEREFORE NOW be it resolved that Manhattan Community Board 10 supports the joint efforts of New York City Parks and Central Park Conservancy to upgrade the Kinderberg site and Chess & Checkers House through new designs and reconstruction.