



CICELY HARRIS
Chairperson

SHATIC MITCHELL
District Manager

CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10
215 West 125th Street, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10027
T: 212-749-3105 F: 212-662-4215

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday, February 9th 2022, 6:30 pm

Hon. Karen Horry, Chair

Meeting began at 6:35 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. Verna Diggs, Hon. Marcus Wilson, Hon. Dana Points and Hon. Barbara Nelson

Committee Members Absent: Hon. Kevin Bitterman, Hon. Shamir Settle, Hon. Terri Wisdom, Hon. Tahanie Aboushi and Hon. Derek Perkinson

Board Members Present: Hon. Donna Gill and Hon. Wilma Brown

District Office: Jasmin Heatley (Community Assistant)

Guests in attendance: Deputy Commissioner Chauncey Parker (NYPD Community Partnerships), Steve Simon (NYC Parks Manhattan Chief of Staff), Dr. Jill Strauss (Borough of Manhattan Community College), Dr. Maria Volpe (John Jay College), (David Williams (Parks Manager/ Districts 10 & 11 NYC Parks), Jana LaSorte (Administrator, NYC Parks - Harlem Historic Parks), Zakiya DeGraff (Director, Hansborough Recreation Center), Charlie Bass, Adrienne Perry Ellexicon, Khalid Yisrael, Julius Key (Malcolm X Improvement Association), Abena Smith, Tefone Herring, Patrick Managan, Gregg Rappoport (FDA), Max Markham, ZoomHarlemvenus@icloud.comuser, Adrienne Perry, James Bramble, Gregory Baggett (APRS), G. Kirk Foote, Kayla Dawes, Leary Santos and Dr. K. Samuels.

I. Presentations

- a. **Colonel Charles Young Playground Brief Update - Deputy Commissioner Chauncey Parker - NYPD Community Partnerships** - The Playground has been renamed Brigadier Charles Young Playground. Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear announced that the U.S. Department of Defense approved a posthumous honorary promotion to the grade of brigadier general for Colonel Charles Young, one hundred years after his death in 1922. In February 2020, Gov. Beshear posthumously promoted Col. Young to the honorary rank of brigadier general in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Last February, the Governor sent a letter to President Joe Biden encouraging him likewise to promote Young in the

U.S. Army. In a letter dated Nov. 1, 2021, Under Secretary of Defense Gilbert Cisneros Jr. informed the chairs of the U.S. House and Senate Armed Services committees of his decision to approve the request, and Secretary of the Army Christine Wormuth informed Charles Young's family of the promotion on Jan. 19th, 2022.

The community-generated project to renovate the playground, initiated in 2016, is fully funded through NYC DA forfeiture funds, elected official allocations, private donations and NYC Parks. A contract has been signed with the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation to design and install the multi-disciplinary sport "Field of Dreams" which will accommodate baseball, football, soccer, lacrosse and rugby and be completed in 2022. In addition, the comfort station will be fully renovated. The plan also includes:

- A refurbished handball court
- An asphalt-resurfaced running track around the periphery of the park from 143rd Street to 145th Street
- A canopy over the chess table area
- A plaque to commemorate neighborhood resident Odessa Sims who was tragically and fatally wounded while sitting in the park in 2016. Mrs. Sims' death prompted community outrage and a galvanizing of the community to improve the park's safety.
- A commemorative mural the story of Colonel Charles Young, entailing a portrayal of the Colonel's legacy and that of the Harlem Hellfighters and the 369th Harlem Armory.
- New Adult Fitness Equipment
- Multi-sensory playground equipment (musical, as well) that is inclusive of children of all levels of ability
- 2 Picnic tables on 143rd Street side of park - lawn area

Concern was expressed by the Frederick Douglass Academy about the size of the field. NYC Parks will conduct a measurement of the existing field footprint. An update will be provided at a special meeting scheduled for Monday, February 28th. A statue of Brigadier Charles Young is also being proposed.

Outcome: NYC Parks will conduct a measurement of the existing field footprint. An update will be provided at a special meeting scheduled for Monday, February 28th.

- b. Collecting Narratives and Creating Memorials in Virtual Reality Around the Harlem Meer in Central Park - Borough of Manhattan Community College and John Jay College** The project entitled: "Augmented Reality - A City In Conversation" will have a "Pokémon Go" - like format and is proposed to be geolocated around the Central Park Meer. The non-physical exhibit will require signage posted at the site of the Dana Discovery Center and at a northern end entrance of the park. Wifi needed for the project is available in Central Park. Narratives will be collected from 36 individuals including local area residents,

Mt. Sinai Hospital staff, food pantries, etc. People interested in participating will receive 2 \$35 gift cards and will be asked to share their personal experience during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The project is led by Jill Strauss, PhD and Maria Volpe, PhD. Dr. Strauss is an Associate Professor of Speech, Communications and Theater Arts at the Borough of Manhattan Community College, CUNY. The design of the virtual reality exhibit brings together those who lived and/or worked in Harlem/El Barrio since March 2020 to talk about their experiences during the pandemic. Participants' stories will be interpreted and transformed visually into an augmented 3-D reality monument through an app designed by media artist Will Roberts. The exhibit will be viewable on cell phones. The exhibit will also have an online component hosted by CUNY. Volunteers are being invited to apply. Contact CB 10's District Office for the event flyer.

Outcome: The group has been advised to speak with Central Park Conservancy about their proposal. The Committee did not have quorum. Committee Members present were unanimously in favor of supporting the project. The Committee is pending receipt of correspondence, from the Project, with the Central Park Conservancy and is prepared to issue a letter of support.

- c. **Hansborough Recreation Center Update and Need for Supportive Resolution** - Manhattan Community Board 10 is recommending that the 2022 reconstruction start date be maintained for the Hansborough Recreation Center and pool. NYC Parks is rescheduling the start date to 2023 due to revised design plans. The revised scope of work, presented to the Committee in June 2021, went from \$4 million to \$29 million, is pending contract bids which will be solicited in March. NYC Parks advised that there are some strong prospects for contractors which will determine a 2023 start date vs. the 2022 start date. The revised plans for the renovation project has increased in scope and includes:

- new pool filtration equipment
- repair exterior of pool building
- new skylight
- new boilers for the Recreation Center
- replacement of the building elevator

Design work is expected to be completed in March. Bids will be solicited after design review and approval. Steve Simon - NYC Parks will continue to push to move date from 2023 to the initial start date for 2022. Many of the group's members are in their 80's and 90's and are unable to regularly practice at their sport. The Committee consensus is that a drafted letter of support to maintain the 2022 start date be advanced to the Executive Committee in the process for a full Board vote.

The Center located at 34 West 134th Street is home to the renowned Harlem Honeys and Bears; a seniors synchronized swimming group who have been featured on National Geographic, CNN and MSN, just to name a few. They are truly a Harlem treasure and are currently being deprived of the Hansborough facility which they have utilized since 1979. The Hansborough pool has been closed since 2019. The Community remains concerned about the continued lack of access to a premiere community facility which has been unavailable since 2019. Ms. Letice Graham, a Honeys and Bears, recently celebrated her 100th birthday.

Outcome: The Committee did not have quorum. Members present were unanimously in favor of issuing the drafted letter of support. The sentiment of the Committee will be forwarded to the Executive Committee

- d. Letter of Request for NYC Parks Development of CB 10 Parks Master Plan -** In follow-up to Committee review of the Parks Master Plan for CB 12, a letter was drafted to make the recommendation to NYC Parks to develop the plan for CB 10 parks and recreational facilities. Since 2014 Central Harlem parks, playgrounds and recreational facilities have undergone extensive renovations. The plan would be designed to provide guidance in preserving, protecting and maintaining the investments as well as the integrity of the CB 10 park network. As a long-time under-served community, development of a 10 year plan would be integral to retention of this achieved equity and would ensure that CB 10 residents have ongoing access to safe and viable green space. Development of the plan design would involve the collaboration of diverse community stakeholders and NYC Parks engineers and architects.

Outcome: Committee Members present were unanimously in favor of issuing the drafted letter of support. The sentiment of the Committee will be forwarded to the Executive Committee.

II. Voting

- a. Voting could not be held due to lack of quorum**

i. Voting Items:

- 1. Letter of Support To Recommend Project: “Collecting Narratives and Creating Park by Borough of Manhattan Community College”** - Committee Members present were unanimously in favor of supporting. Letter is pending substantiation that the group has corresponded with the Central Park Conservancy regarding the proposed project.
- 2. Hansborough Recreation Center Letter of Affirmation** - Committee Members present were unanimously in favor of supporting.

3. Letter of Request for NYC Parks' Development of CB 10 Parks Master Plan- Committee Members present were unanimously in favor of supporting.

Outcome: The sentiment of the Committee with respect to voting items will be forwarded to the Executive Committee

III. Discussions

a. CB 10 Park Safety in COVID -19 and Park Updates

Park employees who have not been vaccinated must be tested every week in order to retain employment. All Park workers must wear masks - vaccinated park visitors can opt not to wear masks if not in a crowded area. All other precautions remain in place. As of May 19, New York State has implemented the CDC's Interim Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People. Face coverings are still required to enter any municipal building, including bathrooms, regardless of vaccination status. NYC Parks COVID-19 protocols have been upgraded to mandate that volunteers be required to show proof of vaccination and must submit a signed COVID-19 waiver. Participants must be masked and practice social distancing.

b. CB 10 Parks - Updates - David Williams, Parks Manager/ Districts 10 & 11 NYC Parks

- i. The Brigadier Charles Young Playground** - Dog owners not cleaning up after pets. Poop Bag dispensers need to be kept filled and owners must be encouraged to be more responsible. The bleachers for the main basketball court, located on 145th Street, will be installed this February.
- ii. Fred Johnson Playground** - Construction has not been started as yet. The old comfort station will be demolished and has a projected start time for spring 2022. Award of the contract is pending.
- iii. A. Philip Randolph Square** - The Friends' Group is still conducting visioning.
- iv. Langston Hughes Playground** - Volunteers will assist in Feb. 18th cleanup
- v. St. Nicholas Playground South** - Cars have been illegally parking on the sidewalk in between the trees. Parks will place no parking signs in the area.
- vi. Hancock Park** - located on St Nicholas Av, Manhattan Av, W 123 St is in need of a Friends Group. The plaza recently underwent a beautification project by NYC Parks
- vii. William McCray Playground** - Parks conducted rodent extermination. NYC Parks held a virtual charette on Jan. 27th, which was very productive, well-attended and generated a robust dialogue. Community concerns and recommendations for the parks' design were garnered for

incorporation into reconstruction plans. NYC Parks will come to Committee in May with design plans for review and support.

- viii. Jackie Robinson Park** - Handball court refurbished and new pipes were installed to the pool on Jan. 18th. Debris was cleared along Edgecombe Avenue. Large illegal dumpings of fruits and vegetables being found on 155th and Bradhurst Avenue. Responsible party is being determined. Dog poop bag dispensers needed to curtail dog owners not cleaning up after their pets. The Harlem Horticultural Beautification Project is developing a garden and plant house near the bandshell. Repairs are being assessed for the bandshell which has suffered cracks and fissures due to weathering so as to determine requirements for upgrade. Programming being developed for the upcoming months. Permits are \$25. Historic Harlem Parks will assist with the permit process.
- ix. Renaissance Playground** - The Community Board submitted the site as a capital project budget priority request.
- x. Colonel Charles Young Triangle** - The park has been renamed Brigadier Charles Young Triangle. Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear announced that the U.S. Department of Defense approved a posthumous honorary promotion to the grade of brigadier general for Col. Charles Young.
- xi. Hansborough Recreation Center** -

I. Old Business

- a. William McCray Playground** - A charette was held on Jan. 27th. The virtual meeting was well-attended and generated a robust dialogue around community and stakeholder concerns with respect to design plan aspects.
- b. Spring 2022 Parks and Recreation Committee Community Outreach Event**
A date is not available at this time due to the uptick in Omicron variant of COVID-19. Upon determination of a date, if the event is feasible, a coordinator will be assigned.

- a. **Exonerated Five Subcommittee** - report pending
- b. **William Atmore Byrd Classic Basketball Court Rename Request** - NYC Parks is awaiting any new designated procedures for park re-namings generated by the newly appointed Parks Commissioner Susan Donoghue.

II. New Business - None

III. Announcements

- c. Posthumous promotion of Colonel Charles Young to Brigadier General
- d. Renaming of Colonel Charles Young Playground to Brigadier General Charles Young Playground
- e. Renaming of Colonel Charles Young Triangle to Brigadier General Charles Young Triangle
- f. William McCray Playground community feedback intake until February 11th
- g. Brigadier General Charles Young Playground Community meeting scheduled for February 28th

IV. Adjournment - Motion made to adjourn by Hon. Barbara Nelson and seconded by Hon. Dana Points.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:42 pm.

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