



# CITY OF NEW YORK MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10

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Hon. Marquis A. Harrison  
Chairperson  
Minah Whyte  
District Manager

May 2, 2024

Sue Donoghue  
Commissioner  
New York City Department of Parks & Recreation  
830 Fifth Ave  
New York, NY 10065

Re: **Rucker Tournament Lighting in Holcombe Rucker Park**

Dear Commissioner Donoghue,

Manhattan Community Board 10 is writing this letter to strongly urge that lighting in Holcombe Rucker Park be brought to immediate repair. The Rucker Tournament in Holcombe Rucker Park, scheduled for June 17th through August 28th, warrants operable lighting to ensure safe and optimal conditions for this legendary and world-renowned Harlem event.

The annual basketball event has been held for the Community and the youth every summer since 1986. In addition, the iconic park is located across the street from the Polo Ground Houses. The lack of lighting is a cause of ongoing safety concerns.

The annual tournament operation hours are from 4 am to 9 pm. Last year NYC Parks removed the lights and replaced them with temporary lighting in order to facilitate the event. NYC Parks has informed Robert Wells, CEO of 155 Entertainers Streetball Tournament, that lighting will not be available for this year's event. This will prevent hosting of a safe event for the Community.

The park, which houses the "reigning hallowed ground of streetball courts," is named after Holcombe Rucker, a local teacher and a playground director for the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. Mr. Rucker started a basketball tournament in 1950 in order to help less fortunate youth stay off the streets and aim for college careers.

Since 1969, Holcombe Rucker Park has been a source of incalculable pride and entertainment for Harlemites as well as basketball enthusiasts the world over. What began in 1956 with Holcombe Rucker's youth tournament, which would lead to 700 Harlem youth receiving college scholarships, was carried on and expanded with each passing generation. Bob McCullough and Freddie Crawford continued this legacy with the Rucker Pro Am tournament and Each One Teach One program, providing young people a source of pride and inspiration over the decades. Greg Marius would take up the mantle with the Entertainer's Basketball Classic, inspiring

countless youth from NYC and beyond to achieve greatness. Both of these tournaments inspired basketball players throughout the world and drew the respect and participation of some of the world's greatest athletes and cultural icons.

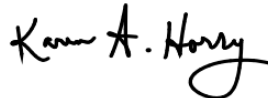
Many who played at the iconic park in the Rucker Tournament achieved a level of fame for their abilities, with several having gone on to play in the National Basketball Association (NBA).

Manhattan CB10 finds this treasured, historic and vital annual event to be of phenomenal merit and strongly urges that it be supported by NYC Parks with the necessary lighting to ensure continued success. During Manhattan Community Board 10's General Board meeting held on May 1, 2024, the board voted unanimously with (32) votes in support of these repairs to this world-renowned park in the board's district. Please advise as to when the lighting situation will be corrected. We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



Hon. Marquis Harrison  
Chairperson  
Manhattan Community Board 10



Hon. Karen Horry  
Chair  
Parks and Recreation Committee

cc:

Tricia Shimamura  
Manhattan NYC Parks Borough Commissioner

Robert Wells  
CEO, 155 Entertainers Park Streetball Tournament