

Community Board 12, Manhattan
Minutes for the Joint Public Safety and Park & Cultural Affairs Committee Meeting
May 3rd, 2017 – 530 West 166th Street – 6th Floor Conference Room

Public Safety Committee Members present: Richard Lewis (Interim Chair), Natalie Espino, Rud Morales, Domingo Estevez.
Absent: Javier Trejo (Ass't. Chair), Katherine Diaz and Rasheed Young (Public Member).

Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee Members present: Elizabeth Lorris Ritter (Chair), Natalie Espino, Barbara Frazier, Richard Lewis, Daryl Cochrane, Mitchell Glenn, Domingo Estevez. **Excused:** Osi Kaminer (Ass't. Chair), Karen Taylor.

Public and Invited Guests: William Cardoza (PEP Captain-NYC Parks Dept.), Charles Edward (NYC Parks Dept.), Sara A. Fisher (Friends of Inwood Hill Park), Alex Rice (USGC Auxiliary 5-11), John Gallagher, District Staff (US Coast Guard – DSO-FS and SLO-NY), Peter Levy, Dana Andrews, Allegra LaGrande, Peter Johnson, Jennifer Hoppa (NYC Parks Dept., Northern Manhattan Admin.), Cliff Elkind, Deborah Cardona, Betsy Haggerty, Orlando Ovalles (for Assemblymember Carmen De La Rosa), Michael H. Dockett (Ass't. Commissioner, Urban Park Service), Capt. Donahue (Executive Officer, 33rd Precinct), PO Carmen Gomez (Community Affairs, 33rd Precinct) and Officers from the 34th Precinct.

Other Board Members: none; **Staff:** Paola Garcia.

Welcome, Opening Remarks and the Agenda PCA Chair, Elizabeth Lorris Ritter called this joint meeting of the Parks & Cultural Affairs and Public Safety Committees, along with Richard Lewis (Interim Chair/PSC to order at 7:09 pm. She introduced the Committees' members and asked the panel of invited guests present introduce themselves. A quorum was present for the entire meeting. Some **announcements:**

- Applications now available in the Board office for the lottery for free slots in Columbia University's annual summer sports camps. These slots are reserved as a community benefit for residents of 10032, 10033, 10040, 10034, and the Marble Hill portion of 10463 as part of the Baker Field community benefit agreement.
- As a placeholder for the fall the United Palace Arts & Cultural Center will be seeking funding and this may be an opportunity at the Board's annual budget rankings in the early fall.
- Highbridge Park Renovation Phase 2 planned design for the southern tier will be on June's PCA Committee.
- "Drums Along the Hudson" Festival in Inwood Hill Park: June 4th

Purpose of the Meeting Each year questions and issues have arisen within our community district over the roles the FDNY, NYPD, Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP), and the Northern Manhattan Parks administration on public safety and enforcement in our parks and playgrounds and various statistics on staffing, fires, and crime. To address some of these matters in detail as well as to focus on prime community concerns and obtain concise and clear responses from agency stakeholders a series of questions, and topics will be discussed. Since the emphasis was on new items please refer to last year's minutes as well for matters not covered at this meeting: http://www.nyc.gov/html/mancb12/downloads/pdf/2016/joint_ps_pca_committee_meeting_minutes_may_3_2016_final.pdf.

Information on Dog Runs and the Law Discussion began on dog runs in the city parks, rules and regulations as well as locations. For more complete information see <https://www.nycgovparks.org/facilities/dogareas> **NYC and NYS law requires that all dogs be on a leash, except in areas specifically designated as a "dog-run" or "off-leash" area.** Here are a few areas in our district. The dog runs in our district are: Sir William's run in Fort Tryon Park; Homer's Run in Inwood Hill Park; Rocky's Run in Ft. Washington Park (by W. 165th St. & Riverside Drive); as well as dog runs in the northern end of Highbridge Park (by Amsterdam Ave. /Ft. George Hill) and in J. Hood Wright Park on the Haven Ave. side. The general hours for these dog run areas are 9am to 9pm. **Despite common perception and practice, dogs are not allowed off-leash anywhere else in NYC parks.**

Despite adequate signage at the entrances of all parks and playgrounds indicating where and when dogs may be allowed off-leash, some on the community wanted not only more signage, but specific signage that give directions to dog run areas. They argued that there is a perception with lax enforcement that people can walk or

run their dogs everywhere. On the other hand, one of the goals of enforcement is to educate rather than dwell on just punishment, for example, how to collect and dispose of dog waste. If the problem does persist summonses will eventually be given to repeat offenders. For all the rules and regulations see <https://www.nycgovparks.org/rules/section-1-04#animals>.

Despite signage at every park entrance, there appears to be a need for more and different types of displays in several hot spots cited particularly at night: Dyckman Street entrances, Fort Washington Park throughout, Sugar Hill Luminaries Lawn, Sunken Playground trails at W. 159th Street/Edgecombe Avenue, Southeast end of Fort Tryon Park, Isham Park, Highbridge Park basketball courts, and Bennett Park. PEP will follow up on public education and enforcement in these areas; the public also is urged to help share this information.

Discussion on Bicycles in the Park (Designated and Non-designated Areas) Pedestrian are being hit by bikes in the parks; there also are conflicts between cyclists and dogs, both on- and off-leash. This is a NYPD/PEP enforcement matter. Bike riding or the uses of public motor vehicles are prohibited in city parks and playgrounds; if there is a roadway in the park it must be designated for bike use. There are some hotspots, particularly on downhill paths and walkways. PEP will provide additional public education and enforcement, and requests that the public continue to provide information on hot spots around the district. A member of the public reported that there are gasoline powered vehicles/dirt bikes in the southern section of Fort Washington Park near the W. 158th Str. Staircase. Additionally:

- Jennifer Hoppa, Northern Manhattan Parks Admin., noted out that Highbridge Park has both a BMX jump park and a 2½ mile mountain biking trail where ATV's are not permitted: http://www.nycmtb.com/?page_id=285 or <http://www.nycbikemaps.com/maps/high-bridge-park-mountain-bike-trail-map/>
- The 33rd Precinct reported that they have issued some 34 bike summonses related to red light violations, failing to yield, etc. There is an additional problem with enforcement in some parks and playgrounds since it is hard to get a patrol car into some of these areas.

On another matter, the Neighborhood Coordinating Officers (NCO's) do empty the parks out at night, however there was a continuing complaint for that PEP officers need to do more. It was agreed and acknowledged that the PEP does an excellent job with the staffing that they have, and the problem is that even with the addition of 14 FTEs last year there still aren't enough of them to cover the vast acreage in CD12.

Discussion of Waterways with the United State Coast Guard John Gallagher, District Staff (US Coast Guard) gave a presentation on jurisdiction of the USCG on the federal waterways in our district. The Harlem River is considered tidal channel. All powered boats need "safe boating certification" either from the state or federal government. This can be accomplished by completion of an 8 hour accredited course (part time or fulltime) and pass an exam with a grade of a least 75% given or approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators see <http://www.nasbla.org/> or <http://www.uscgboating.org/regulations/state-boating-laws.php> <https://www.boat-ed.com/newyork/?campaignid=261945619&adgroupid=18544659499&keyword=%2Bnasbla%20%2Bsafe%20%2Bboating%20%2Bcertification&gclid=CLXd-9uGgtQCFVKBswodMcUleg>

"The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, First District Southern Region. The USCG Auxiliary is the largest volunteer organization in the world serving a branch of the military and is made up of over 28,000 dedicated patriots from Maine to Guam who volunteer their time, efforts and expertise to serve the US Coast Guard, their country and community. As part of Team Coast Guard the 3400 members of District 1 Southern Region serve US Coast Guard Forces throughout eastern New York, from the City of New York north to the Canadian border via the Hudson River Valley and Lake Champlain and east to Montauk Point, plus the states of Connecticut, western Vermont and northern New Jersey.

Auxiliary members work side by side with the Active Duty Coast Guard in all their missions except those involving Law Enforcement and military operations. <http://www.d1south.org/pages/home.php>

All motored powered boats/craft need to be documented and registered with numbers (black and white letter) on the bulkhead. Sailboats with a motor are considered a powered craft. Jet skis are considered a hazard to kayaks and canoes. Operators of jet skis also required to have passed an 8hr certification course and are required to wear a life jacket when operating the craft. Manufacturers are required to insure their production of

a safe craft. Wave jumping is illegal. The USCG maintains water and air patrols, employ search and rescue operations, provides aids to navigation, outreach to boaters and the public and provide lots of drop-off literature. Finally, there is no such thing as a “right of way” concept in boating, What is required is for each operator to maintain craft control, visual contact and stay a safe distance away from another boater. No certification is required for non-motor powered water craft.

Discussions with the NYPD Both Precincts reported on results of their COMSTAT year to date Crime Reports. See <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/nypd/stats/crime-statistics/crime-statistics-landing.page>. Additionally:

- The 34th Precinct reported that they are aware of the potential for increase in fireworks as the summer approaches and spontaneous July 4th celebrations in parks; Sector B, C, & D patrols will be increased. Q: can NYPD trace license plates of cars crossing from NJ having purchased fireworks legally in PA? A (33rd Pct.): this is a matter for the Vice Squads to pursue.
- The 33rd Precinct will add three police officers to cover activities in the Highbridge Pool. (This in addition to dedicated PEP staff.) for 11am - 8pm coverage. They will start as soon as the school year ends on June 29th. They will cover locker break-ins/attempts as well as fights and other potential criminal activity.
- A member of the public reported that youth are hanging out late into the night in Highbridge Park along Amsterdam Ave. behind GWHS; 34th Pct. will follow-up. To cover nightlife activities the 34th Pct is moving two Sergeants to the midnight shift (11:15pm - 7:15am, instead of 8am to 4pm).
- Q: is smoking ‘hookah’ in the City parks illegal? A (Cmmr. Dockett): no.
- Information on the effectiveness of body-cameras recently issued to the 34th Pct? A: so far no issues.
- Major crime in CD12M parks larger than one acre is relatively low compared to city-wide. See below.

2016 PARK CRIME REPORT FOR COMMUNITY BOARD 12, MANHATTAN											
SEVEN MAJOR COMPLAINTS											
Report covering the period Between Jan 1, 2016 and Dec 31, 2016											
QUARTER (SUMMARY)	SIZE (ACRES)	CATEGORY	MURDER	RAPE	ROBBERY	FELONY ASSAULT	BURGLARY	GRAND LARCENY	GRAND LARCENY OF MOTOR VEHICLE	TOTAL	
1Q - TOTAL	631.229	ONE ACRE OR LARGER	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	
2Q - TOTAL	631.229	ONE ACRE OR LARGER	0	1	4	2	0	1	0	8	
3Q - TOTAL	631.229	ONE ACRE OR LARGER	0	0	1	6	0	9	0	16	
4Q - TOTAL	631.229	ONE ACRE OR LARGER	1	0	7	1	1	1	0	11	
ANNUAL TOTALS			1	1	13	9	1	12	0	37	

Source: Extracted and compiled by Richard Lewis (May 1st, 2016) from City wide NYPD Reports.
http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/crime_prevention/crime_statistics.shtml

Park Enforcement Patrol Officers (PEP) Discussion Asst. Commissioner Michael Dockett explained the manpower and the assigned number of parks enforcement personnel in CD12M:

The Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP), a uniformed and unarmed division of the Parks Urban Park Service, was created in 1981 to promote the proper use and enjoyment of city parks by enforcing park rules and regulations as well as health, traffic and sanitation codes. PEP focuses on quality of life issues and coordinates its work with the NYPD to ensure public safety in city parks. PEP officers have the authority to issue summonses to anyone violating park rules and regulations. In addition to their enforcement duties PEP officer provide directions and information to park patrons assist in crowd control during public events and deter, identify and report activities that require police attention .PEP officers work five days a week in eight-hour shifts. The shifts are 8am to 4pm and 4pm to 12am. They may be scheduled overnight and at some grant funded sites. They patrol the City's park system to ensure park patrons obey park rules as stipulated in the Rules and Regulation Handbook or the UPS Officers Field Manual, commonly call the “card code carrying book”. Current Manhattan Parks Commissioner Castro along with Bob Russo founded PEP and was its first Director.

When ask to explain how many PEP Officers as FTE’s are there in CD12M he responded that Highbridge Park has:

- three Park Security Officers (City Seasonal Aides [CSA] with no arrest powers)
- one Sergeant and five Security Officers (non-seasonal) assigned to the Pool;
- four Park Security Officers (non-seasonal).

Manhattan North (which includes all of Manhattan north of 125th St., so all of CD12 plus the northern parts of CD9 & CD10) has fourteen permanent shielded officers, including himself: one Captain, three Sergeants, and nine security officers. In addition, there are seven CSAs who work five days/week (Thursday to Monday): four are assigned to Inwood Hill Park, and three to Highbridge Park. None are assigned elsewhere in the District.

In addition and as noted above, there will be three NYPD officers on patrol at the Highbridge Pool and some deployment of mounted Park Rangers in other parks. There was a discussion on parity in the distribution of PEP Officers in other parts of the city and the board’s annual request for more PEP officers.

Park Name	Acres
Inwood Hill	196.398
Fort Washington	184.143
Highbridge (Manhattan)	130.100
Fort Tryon	67.213
Isham	20.132
J. Hood Wright	6.699
Bennett Rest	3.567
Bennett	1.800
Msgr Kett	1.000
Acreage in Northern Manhattan Parks >1 acre is 611. (Source nyc.gov/parks .)	

Park Name	Acres
1. Pelham Bay Park, Bronx	2,765
2. Greenbelt, Staten Island	1,778
3. Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx	1,146
4. Flushing Meadows, Queens	897
5. Central Park, Manhattan	843
6. Freshkills Park, SI	813
7. Marine Park, Brooklyn,	798
8. Bronx Park, Bronx	718
9. Alley Pond Park, Queens	655
10. FDR Boardwalk, South/Midland Beaches, SI	638

Top ten NYC parks by area. Total acreage is 10,154

See http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/buildings/excel/dpr_park_list.xls

We have more than 600 acres of parkland in our major parks (see chart above). Uptown does not get its fair share of PEP officers. Downtown currently has 2 PEP officers per 100 acres of parkland; uptown has half as many officers for twice as much, for a ratio that is *one-quarter* the coverage.

Discussion on Barbecues Some public safety issues were raised about barbecues and jump off parties related to them where there are traffic violations when individual stop and put coolers and other pieces of equipment over fences and sidewalks near highways. This is a particular problem in the green areas east of the Harlem River Drive, adjacent to the River, south of Sherman Creek and Dyckman St. It was suggested to have an earlier curfew in this area, perhaps 10pm (instead of 1am, which is the default for all NYC parks unless otherwise noted); this will be placed on the agenda for the June 6th meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:16 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Richard Lewis, Interim Chair, Public Safety Committee
 Edited by Elizabeth Lorris Ritter, Chair, Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee