

**Community Board 12, Manhattan Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee**  
**Minutes for Tuesday, December 6, 2016**  
**530 W. 166<sup>th</sup> St., 6<sup>th</sup> floor**

**Committee members present:** Mitchell Glenn, Darryl Cochrane, Natalie Espino, Barbara Frazier, Richard Lewis, Karen Taylor.  
**Excused:** Elizabeth Lorris Ritter, Osi Kaminer. **Others in Attendance:** Chris Noel, ADA Coordinator NYC Parks; Jennifer Hoppa, Northern Manhattan Parks Administrator; Rosa Naranjo, Washington Heights Communal Action; Sara Fisher, Friends of Inwood Hill Park; Jennifer Bristol, Ft. Tryon Dog Run; Danita Nichols, NYPL; George Bloomer, Leatt Bedder, Rob Mastrianni, Joge Prado, Rebecca Byrnes, Alex Kozar, and Ricardo Hinkle, NYC Parks; Humberto Perez, Elvis Laureano, Crisnelly Munoz, Albert Feliz, Cindy Reyes, Jeannel Vicioso, Jhonathon Ganamaguay, Obelis Mendez, Carolina Guzman, Cleimy Ozorio, Scarle Mejia, Luz Mejia, Luz Rivera, Jenifer Benitz, Alex Arevalo, Rachel Arias, Nisha Rosario, Paul Kittas, Aaron Scott Isham Park, Omari Naki, Mirta Jimenez Union Communal, Sisa Martinez, Nancy Bruning, Irving Zargle, John Estrella, Carlos Gonzalez, Sebastian Joa, Lucia Rodriguez, Sabrian Espinal, Johanna Arozarena, Vismel Paulino, Staff Cocha, Jerry Robles, Ricardo Irizarry, Jdenis Moran, Edvard Checo, Juan Rodriguez, Alondra Mercedes, Sarah Aucoin, Katherine O'Sullivan.

The meeting called to order at 7:04pm, by Mitchell Glenn who presided in the absences (due to family illnesses) of the Chair and Assistant Chair.

1. **Report on Highbridge Park Anchor Project visioning session:** Mitchell Glenn reported that roughly 120 people attended (in addition to Parks staff and electeds' reps). The group was divided into 12-14 tables, each with map of the park as well as a facilitator and a note-taker. For a half hour each group discussed what they envisioned and saw as necessary improvements for park. Each table then reported back to the full group the highlights of the conversation. Main concerns for park were: bathrooms; improving connectivity of between the northern and southern sections of the park; more access points and more inviting entryways; repair paths, stairs, lighting; installing water fountains; better signage and maps; more benches; more exercise equipment or park furniture for outdoor exercise; a soccer field; more concessions; improving access to natural areas/trails. There also were more fanciful suggestions, such as a zip line.

Northern Manhattan Parks Administrator Jennifer Hoppa added that it was thrilling to hear impassioned, unique ideas, such as building a soccer field, ice skating rink and concessions/refreshments area, as well as ideas that echoed from table to table. Now the landscape architects are tasked with trying to accommodate as many of these suggestions as possible, within the footprint of the park and the project budget, in the proposed design. Other proposals, such as improving maintenance and security, and increased publicity for public programming, will have to be addressed separately since they are outside the scope of a capital project. We'll be inviting you to see and comment on design concept plans at a Community Report Back Meeting in early 2017. Please watch for this announcement in the coming months. You can also follow the progress of this Anchor Parks project, and any other NYC park capital project, on the NYC Parks Capital Tracker website: <https://www.nycgovparks.org/planning-and-building/capital-project-tracker>. If you were unable to attend the meeting and want to share your ideas and concerns about Highbridge Park, the public input period is open until December 12th. The link is: <https://www.nycgovparks.org/planning-and-building/capital-project-tracker/project/8580>. Click on the green "Share Your Thoughts" button on the bottom left side of the page. Tell your family, friends, school groups, etc. so we can equip the consultants with your ideas.

2. **Dyckman Green Gym:** Leatt Beder & George Bloomer, NYC Parks, presented an updated design based on feedback from the November meeting and ongoing discussion with the BarStarzz. The gym is now a multi-structure apparatus with five ADA accessible structures. The gym has been expanded by 300 square feet; the overall size is 2800 square feet. BarStarzz raised objections that the design had a triangular apparatus (which they don't want), and lacked toe bars which could not be incorporated to due safety and size constraints. Also they would like a 5-foot (not 4-foot) bar for certain exercise routines. The Committee would like for Barstarzz and NYC Parks to be in agreement on these points before approving the proposed design. BarStarzz will meet with park design team to plan modifications. Construction possible in Fall 2017 depending on timeline of remaining approval process. The project will be bundled with other parks projects to ensure a \$1million bonded contractor. *[Note: subsequent to the meeting, Barstarzz met with NYC Parks designers who were able to get approval from the equipment manufacturer to modify the bar to 5'. A resolution in support of the amended design therefore is included as part of the work product of this meeting.]*
  
3. **Audubon Playground Update:** Jennifer Hoppa reported that \$7.7 million available for complete overhaul. The temporary structure will be demolished. ADA compliant bathrooms will be installed. Seventy-eighty people came to the public scoping session and commented through the portal. A schematic design will be presented to the Committee in Spring 2017.
  
4. **Inwood Nature Center Rehabilitation:** Rebecca Byrnes, Ricardo Hinkle, & Alex Kozar, NYC Parks architects presented the proposed design. The new design is ADA compliant and accessible, more flood resistant, with mechanical structures to be installed on roof and shielded from view by wood screening. Site entrance is improved by moving to center. Exhibits will be restored, although public has questions about programmatic quality and content. \$2.5 million funding is from FEMA, the Mayor, and Councilman Ydanis Rodriguez.

The plan is finished, but initial landscape restoration will be incomplete: site circulation, paved area will be done immediately; Native America interpretive garden, resilient habitat restoration and the rest of plan needs \$500,000 additional funding. Security for center is the current roll-down gates.

Members of the public raised concerns about the programmatic plans for the Nature Center and how these will be incorporated into the interior design. There were additional concerns that the rehabilitation of the external building not limit enhancements and updates to the interior structure (within existing funding constraints). NYC Parks will revisit the interior design in consultation with the community (including users and experts) to provide improved and updated programs and activities for the community.

A resolution in support of NYC Parks proposed renovation plan with the aforementioned recommendations was unanimously approved by the Committee (6 votes in favor); the public vote was also in favor (9-1-0-2).

5. **Parks Department Update from Jennifer Hoppa:**

- The Highbridge Water Tower is a separately funded project proposed to be completed in two phases. The initial phase is funded and is in final design. A construction contractor will be sought in 2017. This project will open the tower to the public after making necessary repairs and safety

improvements, including to the windows, roof, and stairs. The unfunded Phase II project would include work unrelated to the building opening but important for the long life of the building, such as painting. It would include a new permanent wheelchair ramp. Parks also would like to make a long-standing community request happen: the installation of electronic, programmable bells in the tower to replace the original carillon installed in 1958 and destroyed in 1985.

- Nature in NYC: NYC Parks' partner in restoring and stewarding our Natural Areas, the Natural Areas Conservancy has their nature map out for NYC: <http://naturalareasnyc.org/map>.
- Wildlife in NYC: we've had recent deer sitings in Jackie Robinson Park and in Fort Tryon's Heather Garden. Wildlife NYC is NYC.GOV's new website to help the public navigate what it means to have wildlife in NYC: <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/wildlifeny/index.page>.
- Connector paths from Ann Loftus playground to Cloisters will have order to work next month and work will commence in the Spring.
- Upcoming events (details on these and more at [www.northernmanhattanparks.org](http://www.northernmanhattanparks.org)):
  - Dominoes Tournament, Weds., 12/7, 4pm- 6:30pm in J. Hood Wright Rec. Center (Must be a member to enter the tournament.)
  - Family Movie Night: Nightmare Before Christmas, Fri., 12/9, 7pm-9pm at Morris-Jumel Mansion in Roger Morris Park (65 Jumel Terrace)
  - Ft. Tryon Park Trust Family Wildlife Workshop, Sat., 12/10, 2:30pm- 4pm, JHW Rec. Ctr.
  - Early Childhood Math Program, Sats., 12/10 & 12/17, 10am-12pm, Dyckman Farmhouse Museum (Broadway & W. 204<sup>th</sup>); register by emailing [education@dyckmanfarmhouse.org](mailto:education@dyckmanfarmhouse.org).
  - Green Neighborhood: Inwood (Full) Invasives Removal, Sat., Dec 10, 9am-1pm. (Meet at Dyckman & Payson; email: [Rebecca.Carden@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:Rebecca.Carden@parks.nyc.gov) 718-392-5232.)
  - RING Holiday tree and Menorah lighting is December 11<sup>th</sup>.
  - NYRR IHP Open Run: Sat., Dec. 10/17/24/31, 9am-10am. Meet at Isham/Seaman.
  - Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> tour of Highbridge Park. Meet at 155<sup>th</sup> and Edgecombe at 11am.
  - What Do Animal Do During Winter? Sunday, 12/18, 1pm-2:30pm, Inwood Hill Park's Payson Center. Space is limited (ages 4-7); RSVP is required; email [RSVP@FortTryonParkTrust.org](mailto:RSVP@FortTryonParkTrust.org).
  - MULCH FEST January 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> at Inwood Hill Park
  - Urban Park Ranger's Super Hike: Inwood to Little Red Lighthouse, Sun., 1/8 at 11am; meet at Inwood Hill Park at Isham Street & Seaman Avenue
  - Ft. Tryon Park Trust Heather Garden Family Foray, Sun, 1/8 1pm-2pm in Heather Garden.
  - January 22<sup>nd</sup> is Coyote Day program at Payson Center.
- 6. **New Business** Discussion about improving street safety on Isham Street, Cabrini Boulevard, Fort George Hill with better lighting in the adjacent parks. As lighting (even in parks) is under the purview of the Department of Transportation, not the Parks Department, this matter is referred to the Traffic & Transportation Committee. Mitchell to follow up with T&T Chair Yahaira Alonzo.

The meeting was adjourned at 9pm.

**Community Board 12, Manhattan Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee**  
**Resolution Supporting the Proposed Design of an Outdoor Fitness Area in Inwood Hill Park**  
**December 6, 2016**

**Whereas:** Councilmember Ydanis Rodriguez initially approved \$100k for an outdoor fitness area on Dyckman Street in Inwood Hill Park, with the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation (NYC Parks) to design and build such a facility within the allocated budget; and

**Whereas:** a public scoping meeting was held on January 22, 2016, and based on feedback of the facilities' users it became clear that the initial allocation would be insufficient and NYC Parks procured an additional \$150k from the Councilmember, for a total of \$250k; and

**Whereas:** a presentation was made by NYC Parks architects at the November 1, 2016 meeting of the Community Board 12, Manhattan Parks & Cultural Affairs (PCA) Committee for such a plan, but members of the community and other users of the facility, including representatives of BarStarzz from both within and outside of the community, had concerns regarding the equipment manufacturer and also wished to see significant modifications of the proposed facility; and

**Whereas:** NYC Parks, a New York City agency, is constrained by NYC procurement regulations and the City's VENDEX process, but was able to work with a manufacturer to get design modifications in the equipment being used for the proposed project; and

**Whereas:** NYC Parks made a presentation at the December 6, 2016 meeting of the PCA Committee which incorporated significant modifications in scope, size, and design based on both feedback from the November meeting and subsequent input of the BarStarzz; and

**Whereas:** the BarStarzz desired an additional design modification which the NYC Parks was able to get a manufacturer to make in the proposed equipment; now, therefore be it

**Resolved:** that Community Board 12, Manhattan supports the proposed design presented by NYC Parks at the December 6, 2016 Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee meeting, as subsequently amended (i.e., that the equipment have a 5' bar rather than a 4' bar); and be it further

**Resolved:** that Community Board 12, Manhattan urges the Public Design Commission to support this project when it comes before the Commission for approval.