

**Community Board 12, Manhattan Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee**  
**October 13, 2020 @ 6:30pm (via Zoom)**

**Committee Members Present:** Elizabeth Lorrin Ritter, Chair; Daryl Cochrane, Assistant. Chair; Nobles Crawford; Sally Fisher; Barbara Frazier; Danielle Jettoo; Francisco Lopez; Ayisha Oglivie; Edda Santiago; Nayma Silver, Public Member. **Excused:** Alexis Marnel, Public Member. **Other Board Members:** Mary Anderson; Domingo Estevez; Steve Simon; Omar Tejada. **Staff:** Paola Garcia; Ebenezer Smith. **Also Attending:** (note that some attendees didn't put their full names or any name at all): Jennifer Bristol; Cynthia Auburn; Alexander Campos, Hispanic Society; Andrea Arroyo; Bob Barnett, Harlem River Community Rowing; Eileen Leonard; Ira Gershenhorn; John Rumely; Julia Attaway, St. Francis Cabrini Shrine; Lorial; Martin Collins, NoMAA; Megan Byrnes; Mike Fitelson, Unite Palace; Naiomy Rodriguez; Rajeev Cherukupalli; Steve; Tara Wholley; Tiffany Braby; Trish Anderson; Rachel Cytron; Ian Caddick, RowNY; Katherine O'Sullivan; Jerry Culligan; Chris Nickell for NYS Sen. Jackson; Jennifer Hoppa, NYC Parks Department; Natalie Espino for Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer; Shiloh Holley, Morris-Jumel Mansion; and "Anonymous Attendee"

The meeting was called to order at about 6:33pm by the Chair.

**1) Welcome, Opening Remarks, and Updates**

- Welcomed returning Committee member Barbara Frazier & new Public Member Nayma Silver; noted that Yomaris Smith is no longer a Public Member as she serves on two other Committees.
- Lenape St. Co-naming update: Mr. Ramos is still working on the package to collect petition signatures and hopefully will present next month.
- Due to full agenda Review of Inwood Re-zoning EDC POA/commitments deferred to November.
- Noted recent designation of several historic buildings (FW NYPL Branch; Holyrood Church).

- 2) Update on Summer noise/trash conditions around the parks (6:41pm):** Due to ongoing safety, enforcement, and sanitation issues in uptown parks, the Chair reached out to Parks Enforcement to request regular attendance at and reporting to the Committee. Inspector McCants gave a brief report on conditions, followed by a robust Q&A.

Happy to report there is a new Sergeant joining the team; so currently 2 sergeants and 9 officers assigned to Northern Manhattan parks (north of 125<sup>th</sup> St.) There were two tours for most of the summer, up to Sept. Now there is a 10am-8pm tour for the team. Concentrating on Inwood Hill, Ft. Tryon, & Highbridge Parks, and have been attempting to close the peninsula area of IHP to large groups particularly on weekends. Danielle, Sally, Daryl, Nayma & Francisco asked questions from the Committee. There was conversation around clarifying Park's process of party/gathering permits, Bennett Park PEP focus, prevention of large parties (i.e., stop setups of large parties), NYPD collaboration on fines in regards to masks and social-distancing violations (specifically in focus of BIPOC receiving 90% of the fines distributed). Questions from the public were around enforcement in parks for aforementioned violations (parties, raucous behavior, trash, etc.). There was a lot of frustration in terms of perceived lack of enforcement or ineffective enforcement. Insp. McCants confirmed that officers were there, but the crowds do return after PEP leaves, which is when they ask the NYPD to patrol those areas when his officers are off-shift. It was also raised about reckless use of scooters in the parks. Insp. McCants advised to call 311 since the NYPD has a particular way to police these vehicles (please note: they are not allowed to give chase); parks try to make the area conducive to not ride carelessly, but more education and enforcement is needed. There was also discussion of smoking in parks (it's illegal), a rule the NYPD doesn't enforce.

**3) Brief Parks & Cultural Organization Updates (7:15pm)**

- Martin Collins (NoMAA): I invite everyone to meet a new uptown artist or performer at 7:30pm every Thursday through November 19<sup>th</sup> on Thursdays with NoMAA. This week we'll feature Marjorie Eliot Parlor Jazz at 7:30pm Thursday, October 15<sup>th</sup>.

- Alex Campos (Hispanic Society): Opened exhibition project (Treasures on the Terrace) Mon. - Sun. 8am - 5pm; open to Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>. They have also been aiming to open the Arroyo room later this year. They have virtual tours open regularly, even one this Wednesday. Discussed all of the organizations Hispanic Society is teaming-up with for programming and education.
  - Bob Barnett (Harlem River Community Rowing): In a holding-pattern in terms of the free programming they usually offer. Waiting for COVID re-opening updates from the city and state. Hopefully they can reopen in the Fall. They haven't yet had an opportunity to use the new boat launch in Roberto Clemente State Park since there's nowhere there to store their canoes.
  - Julia Attaway (Cabrini Shrine): "Making Space for Serenity" - Every Wednesday we offer a quiet time for people to reflect. This is not a religious service, just soft music by candlelight. Free and open to all, with a collection basket for the musicians Also: on Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>: "What is a Relic," an exhibit on the history of relics and their uses within faith. Free and open to all.
  - Obed Fulcar (Friends of Sherman Creek): Gave an update of their successful water clean-up event on Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>. The Chair also wished him a happy birthday. 😊
  - Ian Caddick (RowNY): Amanda Kraus has moved on from RowNY. No update on the boathouse. Q: When is next Community Advisory Board meeting? A: not sure; will report back.
  - Sally Fisher (Friends of Inwood Hill Park): Announced several upcoming events, including a Riverkeeper Sweep on Saturday Oct. 17<sup>th</sup>; meet at the Dyckman Piers.
  - Natalie Espino (MBPO): Excited to announce tomorrow evening will have a Town Hall on the Arts, which have taken such a hit due to COVID; provided Zoom link. Especially in light of our current COVID challenges, this town hall will be focused on finding solutions.
  - Rosa Yolanda Pineda (Connectemonos): "My Park Day", on Saturday 10/17 is doing general cleaning at the Juan Bosch Plaza in Highbridge Park over 6 successive weeks (through Nov. 21<sup>st</sup>) near GW Educational Campus as well. As we have discussed before this is part of Connectemonos Green Space initiative: Juan Bosch Plaza, West 186<sup>th</sup> Basketball Court and the future farm behind GWEC, which we would like to connect and bring programs to.
  - Jennifer Hoppa Updates (NY Parks): Announced several upcoming programs Including "It's My Park Day" in Fort Tryon Park this Sunday; tree planting in Inwood Hill Park next Saturday; IHP cleanup on Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2pm-4pm (meet at 218<sup>th</sup> St. & Indian Road.) and trail maintenance/clean-up at the Highbridge Mountain Biking Trails on Fort George Avenue on the second Saturday of every month at 10am. There will also be a Public Scoping Meeting via Zoom on Oct. 29<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm for the replacement of Bennett Park's central lawn with artificial turf. This is a \$1.1 million project funded by Borough President Brewer and Councilmember Rodriguez.
- 4) **Proposed installation at the Morris-Jumel Mansion, Shiloh Holley & Andrea Arroyo (7:47pm)** The work "CoVIDA" by Andrea Arroyo to pay homage to victims of the pandemic. They shared working drawings of the piece, which will be installed on the gates of Roger Morris Park, and will include ribbons with names of those who have died as submitted by members of the community. Andrea is a local artist who has had many installations in local parks and at the Mansion. They are partnering with NoMAA on installation/ promotion. The committee and public were unanimous in their support and enthusiasm for and approval of the piece, which, if approved by Parks, will open on November 2<sup>nd</sup> and remain in place through Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>. Shiloh also announced upcoming events at the Mansion.
- 5) **UPLift NYC Proposed Project in Highbridge Park, Domingo Estevez (7:57pm)** UPLift NYC provides services to 600+ youth and young adults. Domingo shared a presentation on an area at the northern end of Highbridge Park near the Buczek Little League fields where they have been running youth programming. Domingo would like approval to adopt this area and also would like CB12M's support to include this proposed renovation in our capital project rankings. He was also looking for resources to develop a "friends of" group. Jennifer Hoppa suggested reaching out to Partnership for Parks for grants and other technical assistance.

- 6) **NYC Parks Report, Jennifer Hoppa (8:07pm)** No news on the New Leaf Café concession in Ft. Tryon Park. Inwood ballfields' project is still in design. The Mayor's \$84 million budget cut to Parks represents 14% of the agency's budget, and resulted in a loss of 1.7k positions including many seasonal staff. The Parks Department's budget is less than 1% of the City's overall budget. A community member asked about security issues in Highbridge Park and on the High Bridge.

#### Capital Project Updates

- Highbridge Soccer Field: part of Phase 2 of the Anchor Parks project was completed and we had a photo opportunity (rather than a full ribbon-cutting, due to COVID) featured on local news.
- Audubon Playground, a \$14 million project, is open to the public; some areas still remain under construction including the restroom building. Playground's full completion expected in December. Comfort Station Building/restroom will be several months later.
- Water Tower at Highbridge projected completion June 2021.
- Adventure Playground nearing completion by end of year. Comfort Station/Restroom is a separate architectural construction project.
- Phase I/Laurel Hill Terrace Staircase is delayed due to design changes needed for electrical/structure of the historic staircase.
- The following projects are pending OMB release: IHP Nature Center; Anne Loftus Playground; Monsignor Kett Playground; Dyckman Waterfront for \$22 million

#### Capital Funding Requests:

- McKenna Square Park
- Fort Tryon and Inwood Pathways
- Isham Park staircases and bluestone patio restorations
- Funding to complete two additional Inwood Hill Park ballfields (#3 & #5)
- Comfort station in Fort Washington Park to serve people using Discovery Playground, ballfields, volleyball courts, picnic areas, cyclists
- Wallenberg Playground Basketball Courts overhaul
- Nature Center Learning Landscape.
- PEP Headquarters in Fort Tryon/relocation from temporary trailers in Highbridge Park.
- Payson Playground and Parkhouse ADA work
- Gorman Park Landscape
- 186<sup>th</sup> Street Courts: Additional \$500k funding so project can advance

- 7) **FY '22 Capital & Expense Budget Priority Rankings (8:27pm)**: Unlike other agencies, Parks doesn't have its own capital budget. Capital projects must be at least \$50k and have a useful life of 5-10 years. The Chair briefly explained of each item and gave an update on completed projects and those that have been funded and should be moved to "Continuing Support." To this list the Committee added items based on public input and ongoing Committee conversation in the past year. There were many clarifying questions from the Committee, resulting in modifications and additions. The public offered testimony as to the importance of the various items; someone who chose to remain anonymous hurled increasingly hostile and accusatory invective via the "chat" feature. Nobles created a Google form for Committee Members to rank by Thursday. [See ranked list, below.]
- 8) **Consideration of Parks Names and Possible Renaming (9:56pm)**: In light of contemporary discussions on race and the recent renaming of an FDNY award formerly named for James Gordon Bennett (who as it turns out had a terrible history of racism and racially inflammatory journalism), an uptown fireman who heads Parents of Bennett Park asked if Parks would consider renaming Bennett Park. Commissioner Silver has a working Committee reviewing Park names Citywide, and will be making an announcement on Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup>, Black Solidarity Day. This will be the beginning of a public discussion

not a final announcement of a completed proposal. Due the hour, discussion of this issue was deferred to the November meeting; if anyone has suggestions for Parks to consider, send them to the Chair who will forward them to Parks.

There being no additional business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:08pm (motion by Barbara; second by Daryl; no objection).

Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee CAPITAL Projects			2020	2019
PCA	312202024C	Hispanic Society renovations: roof, interior, terrace, adjacent sidewalks, & ADA compliance	1	2
PCA	NEW	Add ADA-compliant bathroom in Javits Playground	2	--
PCA	NEW	Basketball at the Ft. George Playground (Highbridge Park)	3	--
PCA	NEW	Lighthouse Link (HHP Greenway)	4	--
PCA	312202035C	Raoul Wallenberg Playground & Basketball Court Reconstruction (Amsterdam btw. W 188/190)	5	4
PCA	NEW	Renovate eastern (Broadway) perimeter playground in Ft. Tryon Park's Anne Loftus Playground and add sensory playground	6	5
PCA	NEW	Repair badly degraded staircases & retaining walls in Isham Park	7	1
PCA	NEW	Add ADA-compliant bathroom in FW Park Discovery Playground	8	--
PCA	312202034C	More family picnic / BBQ areas throughout CD12 Parks to meet increasing community demand	9	11
PCA	312202018C	Inwood Hill, Highbridge, and Fort Tryon Parks: reconstruct 60+ miles of park pathways & paving	10	7
PCA	NEW	Basketball at W. 186th St. lot <needs additional \$350k>	11	--
PCA	NEW	Ft. Washington Park Inspiration Point Portico: repair steps	12	--
PCA	NEW	Community Garden: prepare land, make accessible & soil mitigation	13	--
PCA	312202031C	J. Hood Wright overlook and viewing platform: ADA accessibility	14	10
PCA	NEW	Inwood Hill Park: Ballfields 3 & 5	15	--
PCA	NEW	Add ADA-compliant bathroom in Dyckman Ballfields	15	--
PCA	NEW	Add ADA-compliant bathroom in Highbridge Park by ballfields & Water Tower	17	--
PCA	NEW	Inwood Hill Park Nature Center: add a "learning landscape"	18	--
PCA	312202037C	Highbridge Rec Center weatherization (fix windows to retain heat/cooling)	19	9
PCA	312202041C	Renovate Payson Playground & make it and park house accessible	20	12
PCA	NEW	Repair & reconstruct Ft. Tryon Park's Linden Terrace	21	6
PCA	NEW	Asbestos abatement and restoration of "Building D" in Ft. Tryon Park for security presence	22	13
PCA	312202046C	Renovate / repair Inwood Hill Park Nature Center following hurricane Sandy	CS	3
PCA	312202016C	Full renovation of Fort Washington branch library	CS	CS
PCA	312202019C	Morris-Jumel Mansion exterior envelope & barrier-free ADA-compliant access	CS	CS
PCA	312202049C	Renovate/rehabilitate Msgr. Kett Playground (204 btw. 10th & Nagle)	CS	CS
PCA	312202054C	Dyckman Farmhouse: roof repairs	CS	CS

Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee EXPENSE Programs			2020	2019
PCA	312202013E	Increase funding by at least \$500k for various programming throughout CD12 parks, playgrounds, courts, & historic houses: fund additional Playground Associates and Parks & Urban Park Ranger staff as well as contracted specialists for afterschool, recreational, waterfront, and cultural programming for kids, teens, adults, seniors, and the formerly incarcerated or institutionalized. (DPR)	1	4
PCA	NEW	Add recycling collection and more trash receptacles in parks	2	--
PCA	NEW	Native American / African Burial Grounds (Tenth Ave. & W. 212th St.): Develop a memorial with directional & interpretive signage	3	--
PCA	312202034E	Increase DCLA funding by at least \$500k to increase support for arts programming and individual artists within CD12M (DCLA)	3	3
PCA	312202030E	Fund additional staff for Sanitation, Maintenance & Operations, Horticulture (2 APSWs, 6 CPWs to ensure more sites have fixed post staff) (DPR)	5	5
PCA	312202044E	Dedicated Forestry Crew for CD12: Dedicated crew of 4 to help w/ sustained invasives removal & native plantings in Inwood & Highbridge forests (DPR)	6	2
PCA	NEW	Add funding to Partnerships for Parks & City Parks Foundation to support friends-of-parks groups.	7	
PCA	312202020E	Fund additional Park Enforcement Personnel & Urban Park Rangers (PEP) (DPR)	8	1
PCA	NEW	Outdoor learning initiatives in parks, community gardens, and other green spaces	9	--

Respectfully submitted: Nobles Crawford & Liz Ritter