

## PARKS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE – MEETING MINUTES

December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014

### Committee members Present

Mitch Glenn, Chair  
Osi Kaminer, Asst. Chair  
Richard Lewis  
Elizabeth Lorris-Ritter

### Committee Members Absent

James Berlin  
Kelley Boyd  
Juan Mejia

### Board Members Present

Lorenzo McGougan

### Public Member

### Public Member Absent

Patti Jacobs

### Guests

Danica Doroski (Partnership for Parks), Sara A. Fisher, Joel Yoffie, Harriet Rosebud (CB9), Signe Mortenson (CB9), Joyce Adewumi (CB9), Katherine O'Sullivan (MFU), Ethan Jones, Lizbeth Sanchez (DPR), Trish Anderton (Inwood Canoe Club), Jennifer Hoppa (DPR), Marc Steve, Nanette Ramkissoon

The meeting was called to order at 7:10pm

1. Joyce Adewumi, Founder/President of the New York African Chorus Ensemble. She's also chair of the arts & culture committee of Community Board 9 (CB9).

The 'Celebrate Diversity Celebrate You' festival is running for its 5<sup>th</sup> year. The festival was organized by and for the community to celebrate our diverse cultural traditions. The inspiration for the festival came from former NYPD Chief of Department Philip Banks III, who was concerned about bias crimes in the community. He asked if community organizations and the NYPD could bring together citizens, local organizations, government agencies, educational institutions and local businesses as a way to address racial discrimination. The first festival took place in Jackie Robinson Park in 2010.

This year the festival celebration took place at 141<sup>st</sup> & 145<sup>th</sup> street on St. Nicholas Avenue. Next year the plan is to add a bus and walking tours in different culturally significant areas in the community like Jumel Mansion and other.

The organizers collaborate with other organizations, small businesses and performers. This is a street fair in combination with different art forms included different cuisine, dance, and other forms of art. Also included foot massage, yoga, acupuncture, children activities, and fashion show about traditional attires from different countries. The NYPD introduced their Auxiliary and summer program and next year the NYPD will demonstrate the FATS system.

CB9 is in support of the festival and the organizers would like to collaborate with CB12 community to expand the existing festival.

The next festival will take place on May 30<sup>th</sup> 2015 noon – 7pm at St. Nicholas Between 141<sup>th</sup> street and 145<sup>th</sup> streets. There will be a preview concert for this festival on December 20<sup>th</sup> that will have a dialog about diversity and will focus on Africa because of the Ebola virus.

CB9 Art and Cultural Affairs Committee will meet on January 5<sup>th</sup> at 583 Riverside and 135<sup>th</sup> street to discuss the preparation of next year's festival. There is a need for people with knowledge of graphic design, marketing and outreach to students at schools to collect ideas for the concept of the next festival.

It must also be noted that the presenters brought delicious cakes and other pastries to our meeting, and were publicly thanked. We look forward to other collaborations with the presenters and with the CB9 Arts and Culture Committee.

2. Lizbeth Sanchez, a Conservation Corps Fellow for NYC Parks will study Cabrini Woods project. It is a capital project for a proposed nature conservancy of about 4 acres of land in Fort Tryon Park, just west of Cabrini Boulevard and north of W186 street.

Liz stated that because of lack of residential and commercial activity contractors dump their building debris in this wooded area and within the wood it is a steep area that limit the access into it. The purpose of this project is to highlight the natural assets of the area, establish ecology tours, activate the area to create more foot traffic and possibly eliminate the illegal dumping in that area.

There is a great ecological asset in this area including a large bird population and it is a prime area for nature photography. There are about 20 kind of birds year round and additional variety of migratory birds flying in during spring and fall.

This project will include interpretive signage that highlights ecological information of the area included birds, plants, and trees. And will include birds workshops and ecology guided tours. Additionally this project is also going to include improvement and restoration of the 1,000-linear ft fence and introduce hanging trash receptacles to replace the trash bags now hanging on the fence.

This project will be funded by the Fort Tryon Trust and will cost about \$25K. The projected completion date of this project is June 2015.

Committee member Liz Ritter stated that there may be more crime on Cabrini Blvd since the gate on north of 190<sup>th</sup> street is closed. Building the stairs so the gate can be reopen may mitigate the problem and as nice as the project is the best feature is the possibility that we might have the gate re-open. Jennifer

stated that Forestry will need to clear some fallen trees from the area and since it is a steep hill, it is not possible to bring heavy equipment to the area to clear the trees.

Liz also asked if it is possible to look into scannable signs that information can be accessible on smart phones, through the WiFi access points to be installed in area parks. Jennifer Hoppa stated that several areas in High Bridge Park and J Hood Wright Park would be done in 2015. Richard asked about the speed, band, and range of the wi-fi spots.

#### 4. Jennifer Hoppa's monthly report on CB12 area Parks:

- Staircase 50 is an historic staircase in Fort Tryon Park that includes 213 steps, from the northeastern corner of the park to the cloisters. Repair of these stairs has begin, including the addition of a rail. It is at 75% design and will go back for final design in early 2015. Construction is likely to start in 2016.
- FEMA amended their legislation they have until 12/31/14 to give us their final determination on the funding for the Inwood Nature Center rehabilitation. Park engineers are doing the design work to make the bathroom accessible. Water line to extend back up to 218<sup>th</sup> street.
- Fort Washington Park ADA ramp to Dyckman street remains under construction. This project has run into jurisdictional delays.
- Highbridge Skate Park is open. The entrance is on 181<sup>st</sup> street and Amsterdam avenue on the southeast corner.
- Inwood Dog Run received \$10K for upgrades through the Iams funding
- The copper pipes around the dog run in Inwood Hill Park will be repaired in spring 2015
- Isham Park water project is on schedule and slated to be done in the spring of 2015
- Public scoping for the renovation of Jacob Javits Playground is likely to take place at the end of December.
- Payson Playground was not funded for capital reconstruction but was on the CB12 capital construction list.
- Many parks have been re-seeded to cover overused grass patches.

5. Girl Scout Troop 3210's plan to paint a mural on a residential building facing Isham Park was discussed for a 2nd time. The committee felt, after the November meeting, that a resolution in support of the girl scouts project was agreed to. Subsequently, during review of the text of the resolution there was feeling among some members that they had not voted for the resolution as constructed. So we discussed again at the December meeting.

Committee member Osi Kaminer stated that she contacted the Borough President's office and spoke with consulting lawyer Jim Caras. Mr. Caras stated that although this is not his area of specialty he wasn't sure that we could approve or disapprove of a mural on a private building. At the November meeting, the Girl Scouts stated that they received permission to work on the wall from the 34<sup>th</sup> Precinct. Osi contacted the 34<sup>th</sup> Precinct and was advised by DI Morello that he told the Girl Scouts that he could not approve or disapprove any mural on a private wall. Osi also stated that she called the ACLU and confirmed that we cannot approve or disapprove murals on private walls.

Committee member Liz Ritter stated that since the history of this wall is really sad and contentious, a resolution on this mural is important. There has often been graffiti and murals on this wall over the years. She further commented that while many people found the last mural interesting, thought provoking and moving many others found it offensive and still more either didn't notice or simply didn't care. The previous commander of the 34<sup>th</sup> Precinct ordered his officers to cover the previous mural with black paint.

Liz Ritter rewrote the resolution to give community support to the girl scouts and their collaborators Creative Arts Workshop, while allowing us the option to review the final design.

The Committee voted to approve the resolution in support of the mural 3-1-0-0. The public voted 2-2-2-0 on this issue.

The meeting was adjourned at 9pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Osi Kaminer.

**Community Board 12, Manhattan – Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee  
December 2, 2014**

**Resolution supporting Creative Art Works Partnership Project  
to Paint a Mural on a Residential Wall Outside Isham Park’s Entrance**

**Whereas:** Girl Scout Troop 3210 and Creative Art Works Partnership (CAW) presented a proposal at the November 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Community Board 12, Manhattan (CB12M)’s Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee, after having also made a preliminary presentation at the March 4<sup>th</sup> Committee meeting, to design and paint a mural on the wall of a privately owned residential building adjoining a small grassy knoll at the entrance of Isham Park and its southern edge on Broadway; and

**Whereas:** This wall is regularly covered with graffiti, and members of Girl Scout Troop 3210 expressed a desire to create a large-scale public art project by and for the community; and

**Whereas:** CAW will be an active partner in this project and brings some 28 years of experience creating public art works and hires applicants from the Summer Youth employment Program (SYEP) to do their projects; and .

**Whereas:** Girl Scout Troop 3210 and CAW represented that they have received permission from the owner of the building on which wall the mural is to be painted; and

**Whereas:** The NYC Department of Parks & Recreation requires evidence of community support in order to allow access through the Park to the building’s wall, and would like a plan in place for sustaining the project; and

**Whereas:** CAW will need to work with others to access the wall’s structure and integrity, complete the design and start work during in July, at which point the Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee will not have an opportunity to review the final design before the start of CB12M’s summer recess period; now therefore be it

**Resolved:** that CB12M supports the proposed project in concept; and be it further

**Resolved:** that CB12M requests that Girl Scout Troop 3210 and CAW provide a plan for maintaining and sustaining the proposed mural, including paint-overs to remediate graffiti; and be it further

**Resolved:** that CB12M reserves the right to comment at a future time on the project.

Committee: 3-1-0-0; Public: 2-2-2-0