

**Community Board 12, Manhattan Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee**  
**October 12, 2021 (via Zoom)**

**Committee Members Present:** Elizabeth Lorris Ritter, Chair; Nobles Crawford, Assistant Chair; Daniel Bonilla; Sally Fisher; Barbara Frazier; Alexis Marnel & Nayma Silver-Matos, Public Members. **Excused:** Danielle Jettoo. **Absent:** Edda Santiago. **Ayisha Oglivie** **Absent:** **Other Board Members:** Mary Anderson, Steve Simon. **Agencies & Representatives:** Natalie Espino, MBPO; Maria Febus, NYC Parks Department; Marjorie Naidich, NYC Parks Horticulture & Natural Resources Division; Yvonne Marshall Andre, A/M Al Taylor. **Staff:** Paola Garcia. **Also Attending:** Christina Alphonso; Trish Anderton; Julia Attaway, Cabrini Shrine; Bob Barnett, Harlem River Community Rowing; Alexander Campos, Hispanic Society; Martin Collins, NoMAA; Lorial Crowder, Community League of the Heights; Rachel Cytron, RowNY; Loretta Henke; John Krawchuck, NYC Historic House Trust; Maria Lara; Radaisy Ramirez, HS for Health Careers & Sciences; Sky Pape; Sarina Prabasi, Buunni Coffee; Cristobal Vivar.

**1. Call to Order, Welcome, Opening Remarks and Updates <6:31pm>**

- Apologies for any confusion regarding the possibility of in-person meetings; will raise the need for protocols/procedures at next week's Exec Committee.
- Attended 10/1 *Off-Broadway in the Boros* performance on Dyckman St. and 10/1 Guinness record-breaking mangu at The Hudson (besting 809's previous record). Shoutout to Sally Fisher & the WH/ Food Council for working to get the leftovers into community fridges.
- Testified at Public Design Commission's 9/20 hearing to share CB12M's support of the RowNY Boathouse project per our previous resos. PDC tabled the matter over concern about the number of bathrooms in the immediate area.
- Participated in a panel on the Audubon Mural Project at a NYS Audubon Society event.
- Shoutout to WH resident and theater director/producer Woody King for his recent Tony Award. Mr. King, is responsible for bringing many BIPOC works and actors to the NY stage & screen.

**2. Brief Parks & Cultural Organization Updates <6:431pm>**

- **Martin Collins (NoMAA):** Please see the Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance newsletter at [www.nomaanyc.org](http://www.nomaanyc.org) for exhibitions, events, open studios, funding opportunities & more. Submit your arts & cultural events to [www.nomaanyc.org/submit-event/](http://www.nomaanyc.org/submit-event/) for publication in NoMAAs online calendar and newsletter. Thursdays w/ NoMAA resumes November 4th w/ artist Lyndell Brookhouse-Gil <https://lbgpaintings.com/>. Please see [www.nomaanyc.org](http://www.nomaanyc.org) for scheduled Thursdays w/ NoMAA & email [info@nomaanyc.org](mailto:info@nomaanyc.org) for more information. submit arts and cultural events to [NOMAnyc.org](http://NOMAnyc.org); Nov. 4th - Lindell Brookhouse Gill ([lbgpaintings.com](http://lbgpaintings.com) or [noma@nyc.org](mailto:noma@nyc.org))
- **Rachel Cytron (RowNY):** Currently enrolling students from Upper Manhattan middle- and high high schools; no experience of any kind necessary. [info@rowny.org](mailto:info@rowny.org). Working with PDC on final approvals for proposed boathouse. Also noted re: bathrooms that \$2mm was allocated to NYRP several years ago, but this project was never done; the status of that allocation is unclear. Sally asked about dock access, changes to the pathways compared to what was shown to us in June, and how many trees would be removed. A(Rachel Cytron): the dock will have public access, similar to the Muscota Marsh dock. Not sure on exact number/placement of trees; will research and reply back to Chair who will share w/Committee. The public pathway that looks cut-off in the design will be extended.
- **Alexander Campos (Hispanic Society):** New exhibition, *Gilded Figures: Wood & Clay Made Flesh*, featuring 30 Baroque sculptures from the Iberian Peninsula & Latin America, beginning Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>, Thurs-Sun, noon-6pm. Free! No reservations needed, but proof of vaccination required. There's also an exhibit at the Grolier Club (E. 60<sup>th</sup> St.): *Treasures of the Hispanic Society Library*, featuring 100 rare books & manuscripts from the HSA's collection. Free; weekdays, 10am-5pm.
- **Cristobal Vivar:** Maria Lall, the volunteer gardener who worked for years in Isham Park, died in August. He presented a petition with 186 signatures to the Traffic & Transportation Committee requesting that Isham Alley, which connects Broadway to Park Terrace West at the southern end of the park, be renamed for her. Since that is part of the Park and not a street he was referred to this Committee. Liz noted that this was discussed at length at our last Committee meeting. She reiterated that Parks requires that a person be deceased for at least three years prior to consideration for an honorary naming, expressing confidence that there shouldn't be any difficulty

in effecting such a renaming in 2024. She stated again that Parks is working with the family and Volunteers for Isham Park on a commemorative tree planting and memorial event, and directed Mr. Vivar to CB12's website for the minutes of the 9/14/21 meeting.

- **Sally Fisher (Friends of Inwood Hill Park & WH/I Food Council):** Noted that Food Council also worked w/ the Flavor Fusion to compost several tons of vegetal waste from the mangu event at The Hudson. FIHP has 12k+ daffodil bulbs to plant, starting this weekend. On Nov. 6<sup>th</sup> we're planning another waterfront clean-up, with launch thereafter of sailboats made out of upcycled materials.

**3. Maria Febus, Northern Manhattan Parks Deputy Administrator <7:01pm>**

- Filling in for Jennifer Hoppa, who is on vacation.
- Continuing to assess recent storm damage (Henri & Ida) and work w/Capital Division & FEMA.
- Announced many upcoming stewardship events on Oct. 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> for *It's My Park Day*, including in Bennett, Inwood Hill, and Fort Tryon Parks, and on Highbridge Park's mountain bike trails.
- Spotted Lantern Fly infestation continues to be a serious concern; SQUASH 'em if you see 'em!
- We have increased funding for PEP patrols; a substation at the Payson Playground building should be live by year's end.
- The 181<sup>st</sup> St. Greenway is awaiting lane closure permits so that project may be slightly delayed.
- LOTS of free programming in our parks! Visit [www.NorthernManhattanParks.org](http://www.NorthernManhattanParks.org) for details. Of particular note: *In The Heights* in the Highbridge Pool on 10/15, and Beetlejuice in Ft. Tryon Park (Dongan Lawn) on 10/23.

**4. Parks Trail Management (Marjorie Naidich; NYC Parks Forestry & Trails Program Manager) <7:06pm>**

Gave an extensive presentation on trail management and forest restoration in Inwood Hill & Highbridge Parks. She shared Trail Guides for both parks with links to these maps on the NYC Parks website (<https://www.nycgovparks.org/places-to-go-hiking>; <https://www.nycparks.org/park-features/hiking/inwood-hill-park>) In IHP they have made trail improvements to almost 10 miles of paved and unpaved trails, as well as restoration of historic gully infrastructure, removal of invasive plants and debris, corridor pruning and structure improvements, installation of 31 check steps to improve erosion conditions from rainwater flow, and the removal of redundant trails and desire line (i.e., paths that people stomp through natural areas for a shortcut.) Some of this work was done in conjunction with volunteer Eagle Scouts. In Highbridge, they've done similar path maintenance, check-step installation and invasive removals as in IHP, and will be installing trail markers to match the Old Croton Aqueduct markers such as are in Van Cortlandt Park. They hope soon to upload interactive trails maps to the website. Future plans include canopy gap tree planting (white pines) in a canopy gap next month, and reviewing changes to the bike trail network proposed by the NYC Mountain Bike Assn. She also announced upcoming stewardship events.

Sally Fisher asked if the "Play Fair" crew is going to help with invasive species removal in Inwood Hill Park? A(Marjorie Naidich): Yes! Q: Is there work to be done on shoreline restoration? A(Steve Simon): Pretty sure shoreline restoration is in the plan. Also wanted to state the "Play Fair" program is supplemental funding from the City Council, not private funding.

**5. Discussion and Ranking of FY '23 Capital and Expense Budget Priorities <7:27pm>**

The Chair gave brief explanation of the budget process, noting that this is a Charter-mandated responsibility of each Community Board. NYC's fiscal begins July 1<sup>st</sup> and end June 30<sup>th</sup>; a fiscal year is named for the number of the calendar year in which the fiscal ends. So, we currently are in calendar year 2021 and fiscal year 2022; this evening we will be setting our Committee's priorities for the upcoming fiscal year, FY '23. There are two different budgets: Expense (i.e., programming, or "staff & stuff") and Capital (i.e., projects, which cost at least \$50k and have a useful life of 3+ years). The Parks Department is the only NYC agency that doesn't have its own capital budget; therefore all of its projects are funded by elected officials (usually the local Councilmember, but also the Borough President, Mayor, Council's Borough delegation, etc.). Parks & Culture are not just a fluffy extra; parks help to keep the environment safe and

our community’s residents healthy. That said, there are also many other important priorities from other Committees, including health, aging, transit infrastructure, housing, education, and so much more.

In preparation for this meeting, the Chair took last year’s list of priorities, removed any capital items that have been completed; moved any capital items that have been fully funded and are in design, procurement, or construction from the numeric ranking to the list for “Continuing Support;” and added any capital or expense items that had been raised in the prior year either in this Committee or at the Executive Committee or General Meetings in the prior year. She noted that some items raised in this Committee (e.g., lighting or cameras in parks) are actual the purview of other Committees (i.e., T&T and Public Safety, respectively) and have been referred to those Committees. The Chair thanked Committee members Danny Bonilla and Nobles Crawford for their help in creating a voting form on Google, which makes ranking and tallying much easier. She went on to explain each of the items. Before going to discussion within the Committee she asked if there was any public testimony.

- John Krawchuck, Executive Director of the NYC Historic House Trust, spoke regarding the need for a capital project to renovate, restore, and make accessible the Little Red Lighthouse in Ft. Washington Park, which has just celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its installation in that location on Sunday. It has not had a full restoration since 1951, though there was a modest refurbishment in the 1980’s. Estimated cost is about \$6.35mm
- Sky Pape, a community resident, spoke to the importance of repairing retaining walls and staircases in Isham Park; trails & paths throughout our parks; oyster castles and shoreline restoration; and the learning landscape at the IHP Nature Center; restoration of the Payson Playground park house; as her priorities.
- Alex Campos noted that even though institutions have been allocated funds through this process, sometimes they can’t be access until the project is fully funded.
- Barbara Frazier spoke passionately about the importance of the sensory playground in Anne Loftus/FTP, and the renovation of Gorman Park.
- Sally Fisher spoke at length and in several contexts on the importance of shoreline restoration and any projects that worked to repair the environment from the ravages of climate change. She also expressed concerns about lumping too many projects or programs together in a single line-item, as this could dilute funding for environmental awareness, education, and restoration.
- Steve Simon, a member of the Board and also the Chief of Staff to the Manhattan Borough Parks Commissioner, noted the importance of the addition of \$60mm to the Parks Department’s operating budget through the “Play Fair” initiative, which has been used for additional maintenance and staff throughout the system, and advocated for the continuation of this supplemental funding on an ongoing basis.
- Several Committee members made suggested edits to clarify wording of the various line items.
- The Committee members received links to forms to rank the Capital & Expense items; see below.

**FY ’23 EXPENSE PRIORITIES**

Extend \$25mm "Play Fair" funding to support additional programming throughout CD12 parks, playgrounds, courts: fund additional Playground Associates, Maintenance/Operations Workers, Gardeners, Forestry, & GreenThumb staff, Urban Park Rangers, Parks Enforcement Patrol, and to provide recreational, waterfront, afterschool, environmental/conservation and cultural programming for kids, teens, adults, seniors, and the formerly incarcerated or institutionalized. (DPR)	1
Native American / African Burial Grounds (10 <sup>th</sup> Ave. & W. 212 <sup>th</sup> St.): Develop a memorial w/directional & interpretive signage	2
Staff a center/facility for evening & afterschool recreational/educational activities for at-risk youth	3
Increase DCLA funding by at least \$1mm to increase support for arts programming & individual artists within CD12M (DCLA)	4
Add recycling collection and more trash receptacles in parks	5
Outdoor learning initiatives in parks, community gardens, and other green spaces	6
Add funding to Partnerships for Parks & City Parks Foundation to support friends-of-parks groups.	7
Increased use of goats as a better, more eco-sensitive alternative to pesticides for removal of invasive species	8

## FY '23 CAPITAL PRIORITIES

Reconstruction of the Little Red Lighthouse (foundation, wrought iron fence, electrical upgrades, ADA access, etc.	1
Inwood Hill, Highbridge, and Fort Tryon Parks: reconstruct 60+ miles of park pathways & paving	2
Renovate Payson Playground & make it and park house accessible	3
Hispanic Society renovations: roof, interior, terrace, adjacent sidewalks, & ADA compliance	4
Add ADA-compliant bathroom in Javits Playground	5
Renovate eastern (B'way) perimeter in Ft. Tryon Park Anne Loftus Playground and add sensory playground	6
Repair badly degraded staircases & retaining walls in Isham Park	7
Gorman Park: Phase II (to repair & restore the lower park)	8
Repair & reconstruct Ft. Tryon Park's Linden Terrace	9
Lighthouse Link (FW Park Greenway)	10
Hudson & Harlem River shoreline restoration, including salt marshes, oyster castles, etc.	11
J. Hood Wright overlook and viewing platform: ADA accessibility	12
More family picnic / BBQ areas throughout CD12 Parks to meet increasing community demand	13
Raoul Wallenberg Playground & Basketball Court Reconstruction (Amsterdam btw. W 188/190)	14
Add ADA-compliant bathroom in Dyckman Ballfields	15
Add ADA-compliant bathroom in Highbridge Park by ballfields & Water Tower	16
Highbridge Rec. Center weatherization (fix windows to retain heat/cooling)	17
Renovate/repair sidewalk pavers on W. side Cabrini Blvd. (W. 190 St. - M. Corbin Circle) adjacent to FW/FT Parks	18
Inwood Hill Park Nature Center: add a "learning landscape"	19
Asbestos abatement and restoration of "Building D" in Ft. Tryon Park for security presence	20
Ft. Washington Park Inspiration Point Portico: repair steps; ADA accessibility	21
Community Garden: prepare land, make accessible & soil mitigation	22
Inwood Hill Park: Ballfields 3 & 5	23
Basketball at the Ft. George Playground (Highbridge Park)	24
Renovate / repair Inwood Hill Park Nature Center following hurricane Sandy	CS
Full renovation of Fort Washington branch library	CS
Morris-Jumel Mansion exterior envelope & barrier-free ADA-compliant access	CS
Renovate/rehabilitate Msgr. Kett Playground (204 <sup>th</sup> St. btw. 10 <sup>th</sup> & Nagle)	CS
Dyckman Farmhouse: roof repairs	CS
Add ADA-compliant bathroom in FW Park Discovery Playground	CS
Basketball at W. 186 <sup>th</sup> St. lot	CS
Dyckman Rest: add new playground and reconfigure seating area	CS
Repair drainage, regrade, and renovate soccer field Inwood Hill Park (at Dyckman ballfields)	CS
Reconstruct HHP bike path (W.179 <sup>th</sup> to Dyckman Streets)	CS
Restoration of Bennett Park Lawn	CS
Dyckman Waterfront restoration & Eco-dock	CS
Harlem River walkway/esplanade	CS
Renovate Anne Loftus Playground	CS

There being no additional business or announcements, **the meeting was adjourned at 9:15pm.** (Motion by Nobles; second by Nayma; no objection).

Respectfully submitted: Nobles Crawford & Liz Ritter