

Community Board 12, Manhattan Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee
April 12th, 2022 (held virtually via Zoom)

Committee Members Present: Elizabeth Lorris Ritter, Chair; Nobles Crawford, Ass't. Chair; Sally Fisher; Daniel Bonilla; Edda Santiago, Alexis Marnel, Public Member **Excused Absence:** Barbara Frazier. **Absent:** Danielle Jettoo; Nayma Silver, Public Member. **Other Board Members:** Mary Anderson, Steve Simon **Staff:** Paola Garcia **Also Attending:** <to be added later>

1) **The meeting was called to order** at about 6:34pm by the Chair.

2) **Welcome, Opening Remarks, Updates & Announcements** <6:34pm>

- Return to In-person Meetings: effective June 8th (60 days from 4/12). Required to have an in-person component and virtual option. May is likely to still be virtual, but pay attention to notices from the office.
- Since Barbara was signed up for minutes this evening but excused due to a funeral, we need someone to take minutes. Nobles volunteered.
- Last month's resolution on Inwood Hill & Fort Tryon Parks' Pathways passed unanimously at the March General Meeting (33 in favor).
- It's My Park Day grant deadline is this Friday (4/15). You can request tools, bulbs, plants, bags, gloves, etc., for your park beautification event on May 21st & 22nd. Info: carlos.acosta@parks.nyc.gov.
- Incoming Cultural Affairs Commissioner Laurie Cumbo was invited to attend to share her vision and priorities for DCLA. Unfortunately, she was not able to attend this evening, so Agenda Item #4 is removed. Liz to follow up w/ Cmmr Cumbo to invite to May meeting.
- Item 5, EDC presentation on IRPAC also deferred to May as they are still ironing out details. They would like to be on the May agenda to present their waterfront development plan.

3) **Brief programming updates from cultural & friends-of-parks organizations** <6:41pm>

- **Julie McCoy, Inwood Canoe Club:** The organization continues to evolve their program with COVID restrictions. For example, "Shoreline Cleanup Day" was a very successful pivot from canoeing. They will also be continuing their Open House offering and other educational activities but in smaller groups. ICC soon will be opening sign-ups for their signature learn-to-paddle sessions as well.
- **Shiloh Holley, Morris Jumel Mansion:** gave an update regarding a new exhibition of works by uptown artist Andrea Arroyo; the upcoming Harlem Art Crawl; Jane's Walks the first weekend of May; and the May 14th Family Day.
- **Ian Caddick, RowNYork:** A few more spots remaining in their high school student rowing program; e-mail info@rowny.org if anyone knows any students interested. Also looking to re-start the Veterans' rowing program; gauging interest in the community. Q (Sally): Are you doing programs for middle schoolers? A: Perhaps in the spring, but not right now due to COVID restrictions
- **Sally Fisher, Friends of Inwood Hill Park:** Reminders regarding upcoming events: Earth Day is 4/22 with events all weekend; Riversweep on 5/7 (meet at Dyckman pier); Trails Day 6/4.
- **Martin Collins, NoMAA:** Artists may calendar their arts & cultural events for publication by the Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance, including events, exhibitions & open studios during the 20th Uptown Arts Stroll in June, online at <https://www.nomaanyc.org/submit-event/>. The Stroll opens Weds. 6/1 @ 6pm at the Harlem School of the Arts (St. Nicholas Ave. @ W. 145th St. Open studios will be Sat./Sun., June 4/5 & 11/12 from West 135th-220th St. and may be in-person, virtual, or both. The closing is Thurs., 6/30 @ 6pm at the United Palace (4140 Broadway). The poster contest winners & this year's honorees will be announced soon. Stay up to date on the Stroll at www.artstroll.com. NoMAA will have 3 technical assistance workshops for artists and arts organizations at Broadway Housing Communities (898 St. Nicholas Ave., 9th floor), on Weds, 4/6, 4/13, & 5/4 @ 6:30pm. Free; RSVP required: <https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/nomaas-technical-assistance-for-artists-2022-192989>
- **Alexander Campos, Hispanic Society:** Many upcoming programs including:

- Nuestra Casa Family and Community Arts Day at Audubon Terrace (Sat., 4/19, 2pm-4pm), an afternoon of live music and art for all ages inspired by the exhibition. Enjoy the sounds of Son Jarocho by *Son Pecadores* and decorate ceramic tiles with local artist, Andrea Arroyo.
- Spring Open House, (Sat., 4/23, 2pm-5pm), featuring the installation by local artist Andrea Arroyo, *Art As Solidarity*, organized by NoMAA in collaboration with the Morris-Jumel Mansion Museum, the United Palace, and the Hispanic Society Museum & Library and in conjunction with the Harlem Culture Crawl Weekend featuring Latin Jazz performance by Annette Augilar & the String Beans.
- Concert Series: Flamenco, in collaboration with the April, 28, 2022 – American Academy of Arts and Letters. 633 W. 156th St. Featuring La Gitana on April 28th & El Spanish Dance on April 29th. Limited Seats to both performances; RSVP required: events@hispanicsociety.org. Masks & proof of COVID-19 vaccination required.
- El Baile / *Cruz de Mayo*: This 1915 painting from 1915 forms part of Sorolla’s monumental work, “*Vision of Spain*” at the Hispanic Society. This concert will recreate the atmosphere of a private party in Seville at the beginning of the 20th century, with special attention paid to the costumes, accessories, and, in particular, to the festive, joyful music and dances. May 26th at the AAA&L.
- **Cassandre Collazo, Girl Scout Troop Leader 3205**: We will resume the Outdoor Storytime at the Riverside/Inwood Neighborhood Garden (RING), every Thursday at 11am, weather permitting.

4) Jennifer Hoppa, Northern Manhattan Parks Administrator <6:57pm>

- Announced many upcoming events, including continuing tours of the Highbridge Tower, the City Nature Challenge (4/29-5/1); a biodiversity hike (4/30); children’s programs during the school holiday week (4/18-4/22); many activities for Earth Day; and the Urban Wildlife Festival on May 14th, noon-3pm in Highbridge Park. For information on these and many other FREE events in our local parks, visit nyc.gov/parks or forttryonparktrust.org/events.
- Once again, there are coyotes denning in Inwood Hill Park. They are NOT dangerous. Do not feed them; leave them alone. Please keep dogs on leash to protect both your dog and the coyotes. Please call 311 or email jennifer.hoppa@parks.nyc.gov to report sightings as NYC Parks is working with the Coyote Project.
- COVID testing vans are returning to Parks; call 311 or check nyc.gov for sites & hours for FREE testing.
- The Inwood Hill Park Pathways Project will begin in June, and Fort Tryon Park in July. We will ensure that the Orange Trail (for National Trails Day) is intact and not impacted by the work.
- Monday (4/18) is the groundbreaking for the Monsignor Kett Playground renovation. This innovative design won an award from the Public Design Commission. The Playground project is anticipated to take a year, and the separate comfort station project to take 18 months.
- Fort Tryon Park’s Bennett Avenue rockface construction will begin in May. It will be loud; we will be reaching out to residents of the housing complex across the street.
- Question (Nobles): Why was Javits Playground locked early the other day? A: New staffer on lock-ups; they weren’t aware of the hours and closed it too early; we’ve advised them of the correct hours.

5) Introduction from Nicole O’Brien of The Pandering Pig / The Bonnefont (new Ft. Tryon Park restaurant concession) <7:10pm>

Liz gave a brief summary on the history of the licensing for the Ft. Tryon Park restaurant concession, all of which has been covered in previous minutes. Briefly: the previous license was due to expire in early 2020 and there had been a request for proposals (“RFP”) for a new concession. The best bid was a renewal of the existing concession but they ceased operations in December 2019, in violation of their contract. The next-best respondent was not able to come to an acceptable agreement with Parks, so the agency opted to reissue the RFP with additional feedback from the community. COVID and other citywide concerns unrelated to this concession derailed that timeline, and the new RFP was not issued until 2021. The accepted respondent, The Bonnefont, has been approved by the NYC FCRC (Franchise & Concession Review Committee) following a public hearing in March with extensive community input (including from this Committee), and has a signed contract with Parks, which is awaiting registration with the Comptroller; this final step is expected within a month.

Nicole O'Brien, a principal of The Bonnefont and current owner/operator of The Pandering Pig on Pinehurst Ave. was in attendance to share her vision for the new concession; a member from the Parks Revenue dept. was also in attendance to field any questions related to process. Nicole introduced herself as a longtime local resident and local public school parent, and a business owner for seven years. After expressing her excitement over bidding for and winning the concession, she noted that among her priorities is to provide a community good. For example, The Pandering Pig already works with PS/IS187 to grow produce; The Bonnefont plans to expand this program, including adding other local schools, and to create a high school apprentice program for hospitality management/operations. She looks forward to contributing to the fabric of the community, and to educating local school children and the public about healthy eating. The type of cuisine for the new restaurant will be contemporary French, with an emphasis on fresh, local ingredients. Inspiration for the name and concept comes from the Bonnefont Cloister, which came from Southern France and also house the Museum's herb garden.

Alexander Han, from Parks' Revenue Division, walked us through the process of awarding a concession, from issuance of the RFP to what's required by the concession rules during the review process. There was extensive community outreach including through the Community Board, BID, Chamber of Commerce, and local electeds, as well as an online campaign specifically for this RFP, and working with SBS & EDC. Parks also extended the application deadline to accommodate community-based applicants. There were nine responses to the RFP, four of which would be considered to be local businesses. There hasn't been a design approved yet, but once that process is done (with the necessary permits from DOB in hand), Nicole and team will have up to 9 months to do construction and open the facility. To be conservative, it's anticipated to be late-spring of 2023 though it could be earlier.

Q&A

- Sally: Who are the other partners of the consortium, and could they give more information on the garden. A (Nicole): There are investors in the LLC, many of whom are from the community. As for the garden, it's still TBD according to the design they're drafting, but the vision currently includes vertical gardens and organic landscape integration. The garden will not encroach in any way on the park space. We are already working w/PS/IS187 and are. Looking to work with IS218 as well. Sally: WH/I Food Council would be happy to partner.
- Liz: In addition to fine-dining, will there be other options for more "take away" and casual, budget-friendly options? A (Nicole): There will be a breakfast cart accessible to all and lunch specials in response to community need as well as foot-traffic of the museum looking for eating options. We are aware if price points given our experience of operating in the community for 7 years. We are looking to add a "mid-week menu;" we don't want to be exclusive or uninviting.

6) Continued conversation on Parks (re-)naming's: Curtis Zunigha, The Lenape Center <7:34pm>

Liz provided some context for this conversation, stemming conversation started in November 2020 on the renaming of Bennett Park, and consideration of (re-)naming various parks throughout CD12. (See November & December 2020 minutes) as well as a conversation begun at the end of 2019 regarding a possible street co-renaming near Inwood Hill Park. Through the work the CB has done with the Advisory Group for Inwood Sacred Sites (i.e., the BRC shelter development on W. 212th St., formerly an African-American & enslaved people's burial ground and Native American ceremonial pit), Liz was introduced to Curtis Zunigha and other members of the Lenape Center, and looked to them for feedback and guidance on how best to proceed to honor these lands. All of what is now New York City, up the Hudson Valley to the Catskills, west through Pennsylvania and south to Delaware were Lenape which were once home to Lenape.

Curtis Zunigha is a member of the Board of Directors of the Lenape Center, a cultural organization founded in 2009 to educate the public about the Lenape and preserve Lenape culture & heritage. (See more on Facebook or website: lenapecenter.org. Curtis himself is a member of the Delaware Lenape, and lives in Oklahoma. He gave a brief and very broad yet informative overview of the Lenape particularly as they relate to what is now New York

City, including the origins of the word “Manhattan” and how Wall Street came to have its name. He is heartened that in the shadow of the symbol of global commercial enterprise rooted in the physical barrier to exclude his people from what had been their land, this community is invested in recognizing the Lenape; it is a small but heartening indication that 400 years of erasure are not the last word. He recommended at the very least to introduce plaques in places to give the history of the Lenape, to share the past of their tribe and the history they’ve forged for us today. Curtis believes that the most appropriate names would be conceptual ones, i.e., those that capture the sense of place or history, not a particular Lenape individual. He will get back to us with suggestions, but wanted to make sure we had this context and looks forward to future ongoing conversation.

Liz also noted the Parks Department's excellent signage program which provides extensive information on the natural history of the area and persons/events after whom/which a park is named. Jennifer said that Parks Arts & Antiquities Department, which manages the signage program, would be happy to work with the Committee and the Lenape Center.

Curtis also recommended the exhibit currently at the Brooklyn Public Library’s Greenpoint branch, the library’s first Lenape-curated exhibit, closing April 30th; to learn more visit <https://www.bklynlibrary.org/exhibitions/lenapehoking>. To learn more about the work of The Lenape Center, visit www.thelenapecenter.com.

Board/Public Questions & Comments

- Steve Simon: Are you aware of the “Drums along the Hudson Festival”, and do we include the Lenape in that event? [Curtis] Not involved in it before, but would love to be. [Jennifer] It would be great to get Curtis and his tribe more involved. The event is in June.
- Steve Simon: Did the Lenape live all over NY; were there specific areas in Manhattan? [Curtis] From the foothills of the Catskills, all the way down through NY - including all of Manhattan. They did not reside in Long Island— that was the Shinecock — but the Lenape did go through PA and down through DE. The Lenape are the indigenous people of Manhattan, but we recognize that there are many indigenous peoples from other parts of the Americas who live in Manhattan. It is important to recognize all of these different Native Americans. The Lenape Center does not speak for them and no one person speaks for all of the Lenape.
- Julie McCoy: In past years, though not recently due to COVID, the Inwood Canoe club has hosted the “Two Row,” an event wherein participants paddled all the way from Canada through the Hudson River Basin down to the New York Harbor.

To conclude the meeting, if not the conversation, Liz noted that this is an evolving and iterative conversation, and part of the point is the public education along the way. It is not the Committee’s goal to have a fast resolution of one name for one place but to incorporate a deeper understanding of the land's history and stewardship in place-naming.

7) Old Business / New Business / Mail / Additional announcements (8:08pm)

- Jennifer Hoppa
 - i. NYC Parks and the Natural Areas Conservancy are looking for Trail Stewards. She explained the scope of the task, and will send the flyer and links to apply to the office.
 - ii. Highbridge Park is 130 acres, and 103 of it are forest. The Natural Resources group and Natural Areas Conservancy is starting a new focus on the park with the “Hudson River Estuary Planning Project,” a hands-on conservancy education program.
- Edda Santiago, on behalf of the Housing & Human Services Committee: we will be creating a Resource Fair this summer, and are looking for volunteers. If interested, connect with me, or Committee Chair Marielle Ali.

There being no further business, **the meeting was adjourned at 8:13pm.** (Motion by Nobles; second by Edda; no objection). **Happy Holidays!**

Respectfully submitted: Nobles Crawford & Liz Ritter