

Community Board 12, Manhattan Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee
June 14, 2022 (held virtually via Zoom)

Committee Members Present: Elizabeth Lorris Ritter, Chair; Nobles Crawford, Ass't. Chair; Jumirna Alcober, Daniel Bonilla; Barbara Frazier; Alexis Marnel, Public Member; Nayma Silver-Matos, Public Member. **Excused:** Sally Fisher. **Other Board Members:** Mary Anderson, Daryl Cochrane, Osi Kaminer, Michelle Lee, Debby Nabavian, Steve Simon. **Staff:** Paola Garcia. **Agencies/Organizations:** Rosa Yolanda Pineda, Arianna Jimenez, Erica Filpo, Mishal Nawaz, Nahies Castro, Ricardo Miranda, Solanly Almanzar, Dinora Aparicio, Kadia Kone, Lizbeth Mendez, Susana Macias, Yosaira Matos Santana, & Bryant Yumba Castillo, Conectémonos; Frances Hall, Ilya Bernstein, Julie McCoy, Roxana Petzold, Steve Harris, & Trish Anderton, Inwood Canoe Club; Carolyn Hirsch, CUIMC; Thomas Betts, Futures Ignite/WHEELS; Cassandre Collazo, Girl Scouts; Bob Barnett, Harlem River Community Rowing; Coach Dave Crenshaw, Hike the Heights; Alexander Campos, Hispanic Society Museum & Library; David Thom, Inwood Owners Corp.; Eileen King, Inwood Tower (M-L Coop); Yocasta Capellan, Literacy Inc.; Megan Byrnes & Shiloh Holley, Morris-Jumel Mansion; Helen Forgione, Natural Areas Conservancy; Cory Hasson, Yolanda Rodriguez, & Jason Smith, New York Restoration Project; Peter Mauger, New York-Presbyterian; Martin Collins & Niria Leyva-Gutierrez, Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance; Deputy Cmmr Sheelah A. Feinberg, NYC Dep't of Cultural Affairs; Emma Bird, Fernando Ortiz, & Tara Das, NYC EDC; Jennifer Hoppa & Terrance Hatzigiannis, NYC Parks; Joe O'Donnell, Marcus Book, & Matt Best, NYC Transit; Anne Toomey, Monica Palta, & Camryn Becker, Pace University; Lorial Crowder, Partnerships for Parks; Mino Lora, Peoples Theatre Project; Maggie Clarke, RING; Rachel Cytron & Ian Caddick, RowNY; Julia Attaway, St. Frances Cabrini Shrine; Christina Alphonso, The Met Cloisters; Pat Courtney, Volunteers for Isham Park. **Also Attending (40+ members of the Public in attendance):** Abra Bingham; Adam Fran; Alec Castro; Alexis Agliano Sanborn; DOCTOR Allegra LeGrande, Ph.D.; Angelo Petheryotis; Ann Afnan; Anne Toomey; Bernard Grobman; Brandon Tesh; Cate Wiley; Charles Raynolds; Christina Burke; Denise Canniff; Eligio Reynoso; Genesis Abreu; Gislaine Fertullien-Edwards; Ira Gershenson; Jake Banas; Janet Finkelstein; Jaylene Pena; Juan Bancamper; Karen Tongish; Kelly Ray; Keltha McAulay; Loretta Henke; Luana Ferreira; Mansita Diawara; Manuel Sierra; Marco Shalma; Mel S. <no lastname>; Michael Liu; Patricia Collyer; Paul Kittas; Sheree Johnson; Silvia Smith; Sky Pape; Stuart Desser; Tessa Carter; Yareli Flores.

1. The meeting was called to order at about 6:37pm by the Chair, with welcome, opening remarks, updates & announcements:

- Happy Flag Day!
- We might change the agenda order this evening to accommodate the scheduling conflicts with some of the presenters.
- This will be the last meeting of the session since we are not required to meet over the summer. Currently, no plans for July/August. This will also be our last meeting on Zoom.
- RowNY will be going before the FCRC (Franchise Concession Review Commission) as a sole-source concession operator for the programming at Sherman Creek Boat House. Chair will be submit testimony echoing the Board's full support as reflected in our September 2019 reso and subsequent meetings, as she did with the Public Design Commission.
- The Assistant Chair, Nobles Crawford, gave a brief report on the presentations by the Parks Department & Historic House Trust at the June 1st Land Use Committee meeting, which he attended, regarding the proposed capital projects at the Dyckman Farmhouse Museum & the Morris-Jumel Mansion. LU will be preparing resolutions in support of these two restoration and accessibility upgrade projects, which the Chair of that Committee will share with this Committee for comments/input prior to circulating to the full Board. Both projects were presented in preliminary form to this Committee in September 2021; out of consideration for the time of the Parks, HHT, DFH, & MJM staff the Committee Chairs decided it was not necessary to require that final presentations be made at both Committees, and that it was appropriate to go through LU since the Landmarks Preservation Commission (to which the resos are directed) is under the purview of the Land Use Committee. A member of the public, Dr. Allegra LeGrande, Ph.D., asked why it was necessary for so much space to be dedicated to a Caretaker's residence. Both Jennifer Hoppa from Parks and MJM staff noted the importance of the caretakers' roles at both historic houses, the latter stating that had it not been for their caretaker when a pipe burst a few years ago the damage would have been significantly worse and more expensive.
- There has been a public outcry regarding cyclist safety with the rerouting of the bike path during the Greenway reconstruction project. The Chair offered an update: Although this is a Parks project, it was discussed substantially in last week's Traffic & Transportation Committee meeting. Alas DoT's response was far from satisfactory. Thanks to Dr. LeGrande for reminding us of our April 2021 reso on this subject,

asking the NYC Departments of Parks & Transportation to ensure a thoughtful solution to bike/pedestrian safety during the renovation project. The Borough President has forwarded this reso to Parks & DOT. For its part, Parks has also reached out to the NYS DoT for their input, and has paused the project in the interim. Although this continues to be a concern, there isn't really any additional action the Community Board can take at this point, which is why it is not a discussion item this evening.

- The Chair also asked that people who may have joined the Zoom using a link shared by someone else to please change their names on-screen so we know who's in attendance rather than having multiple people showing up with the same name.

2. Brief programming updates from cultural & friends-of-parks orgs <6:52pm>

- **Roxana Petzold, Inwood Canoe Club:** We are offering expanded free programming for public kayaking, with three 45-minnute slots running from 9am-noon. Sign up in person. Still in the planning stage of a few other programs including w/ the Lenape Center and Heroes on the Hudson (Wounded Warriors).
- **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 Aguilar & the String Beans.
 - 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.
- **Alexis Marnel, Classical Theater of Harlem:** Marcus Garvey Park's Uptown Shakespeare in the Park starts July 5th to the 29th; we are proud to present Twelfth Night with Tony nominee Kara Young as Viola. We're working with Union Settlement to get pop-up vendors Thursdays-Sundays during the run. Also we this year we are doing student internships through summer youth employment program for youth ages 18-24 interested in backstage careers in the theater.
- **Maggie Clarke, Riverside/Inwood Neighborhood Garden (RING):** Reporting from the RING! We're having our annual Art in the Garden this Saturday, noon-4pm. We have a dozen artists, with a few their works all around the garden, as well as musical performances, poetry, & dance. At the RING: Dyckman St./Broadway/Riverside Dr.
- **Alexis Agliano Sanbon, Community Garden at the Fort Washington Collegiate Church:** Had a presentation regarding the Garden Initiative. Established in 2021 through a grant, we began harvesting locally grown vegetables and work in coordination with the church to expose kids to gardening. In the last year we have expanded our space (w/help from the NY Restoration Project) and continue to be involved in local programming. To volunteer or for more info: FortWashGarden@gmail.com. Q (Maggie Clarke): you did a plant swap? A: Yes.
- **Corey Hasson & Jason Smith, NYRP:** had a presentation on a research project done in conjunction with students from Pace University. Since it's a longer presentation than just the two minutes, they'd like to come back in September to present.
- **Niria Leyva-Gutierrez (Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance):** The first cycle for applications for small grants (\$2.5-5k) to CB12M individual artists in various disciplines of art closed yesterday. Next cycle deadline is May 9th; visit our website (nomaaany.org) for more information. The 20th Uptown Arts Stroll poster contest is underway for Washington Heights/Inwood/West Harlem artists. Prizes: \$1,250 grand, \$500 2nd, & \$250 3rd. Online application at artstroll.com; deadline March 27th. We invite everyone to become a NoMAA member: sign up to receive our weekly newsletter or submit your own arts+culture events to our online calendar. Visit our new studios at 4140 Broadway, available for rent Monday-Sunday, 9am-7pm. Info: www.nomaaany.org / info@nomaaany.org.

3. Brief NYC Parks report (Jennifer Hoppa, Northern Manhattan Administrator) <7:14pm>

- June is Outdoors Month, and June 12th is National Trails day. Included in those 9 newly designated trails is Inwood Hill Park's Orange trail! Shout-out to Sally Fisher for championing the designation.
- Waiting for next steps from State DOT on Greenways project.
- Public Meeting on \$22million project for the Inwood Waterfront & stabilization project pursuant to the Inwood Rezoning Points of Agreement (Item #30) on Thursday, June 23rd at 6pm. At 348 Dyckman St., outside at the Marina. The project includes the installation of a community eco dock.
- Park benches are being removed from 204th St. @ Broadway by the Dyckman Farmhouse at the request of the Framhous to see if it helps dissuade some of the negative activity that hasresulted in public safety challenges. The seats on Broadway will remain. The Chair noted that she's not sure it'll be the most effective crime prevention measure, but is pleased to know that Parks is leaving the bench infrastructure in place in the case they need to be re-installed in response to future public input.
- A member of the public asked in the chat about the Bennett Park renovation. A: Design approvals are concluded and no more public input is being accepted. There was a robust public participation process for this project, including several public scoping meetings and presentations at this Committee.
- A member of the public asked about tree guards. A: If you don't want to do it through city public funding, you can do it through NYC Parks' Tree Time program: your building can adopt a location or ask for a new tree guard. (<https://www.nycgovparks.org/trees/tree-care/nyc-parks-tree-time>)
- We have 40+ Capital projects totaling \$150mm+; for details visit the capital tracker at nyc.gov/parks.
- Honored to have Nobles Crawford join the Board of the Fort Tryon Park Trust. (Much applause!)
- Q (Alexis Marnel): Are the classes on hold at the Rec Center; didn't see anything on the website. A: They are definitely still going on, and will reach out offline to inform.

4. Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) Deputy Commissioner Sheelah A. Feinberg <7:26pm>

- As Commissioner Laurie Cumbo was unable to attend, Deputy Cmmr Sheelah Feinberg presented instead. She is excited to learn more about cultural affairs uptown.
- The Commissioner has spent the first months of her administration around the City in all 5 boroughs and every neighborhood. Her vision for the Agency is to focus on increasing equity and allow funding through the Cultural Development Fund in the most effective manner possible. There is also the Cultural Institutions Group, though there are no CIGs in Inwood. DCLA is the largest municipal funder in the country, \$200mm+ last year. This year was tough in the budget, but they were able to secure an additional \$40M.
- Q (Liz Ritter): We have a lot of cultural organizations and individual artists uptown, and we're always looking for all kinds of resources to help expand the opportunity for people to be exposed. What's the best way for us in Washington Heights & Inwood to be heard and awarded a sufficient amount of funding from DCLA? A: Council Initiatives are additional monies that can be designated to cultural organizations, programs, & events. The Borough Presidents also have a budget for cultural organizations. Since DCLA's application deadline for their funding cycle was May 16th, the elected officials would be the best and fastest route for funding in this cycle. Artists should also reach out directly to local arts councils (e.g., NoMAA) as well.
- Q (Alexander Campos): Made clear that CD12M both Inwood AND Washington Heights so there are CIGs in Upper Manhattan, e.g., the Hispanic Society.
- Q (Jennifer Hoppa): Excited to see Commissioner Cumbo participating in the Pow-Wow at "Drums Along the Hudson" in Inwood Hill Park, and could tell she was connecting with the community. Deputy Cmmr. Feinberg offered a heartfelt land acknowledgement to the Lenape.
- The Chair asked for clarification as to why the Department of Cultural Affairs is referred to by the acronym "DCLA". A: to distinguish it from the Department of Consumer Affairs which was already referred to by "DCA."

- 5. Presentation from MTA for project for ADA accessibility at 168th St. & Broadway/St. Nicholas Ave.: subsurface alienation for elevator shaft construction and temporary alienation in Mitchel Square Park during construction (Marcus Book)** <7:38pm> The Chair noted that one of the “joys” of Community Board work is that issues don’t always fall neatly into one Committee or another. Mr. Book works for the MTA, but the project he is working on relates to use of Parks land on a long-term project based around accessibility. Mr. Book introduced Matt Best, Chief Engineer: This is a project they’re presenting to this Committee because it involves permanent alienation subsurface areas below a New York City Park (Mitchel Square) for the placement of an elevator at the 168th St. A/1 trains as well as temporary alienation of a small portion of the Park during construction. There is already an elevator at the street level to go to the token booth level but there is no access to the platform level without using stair so the station is not considered ADA-compliant. The addition of an elevator to provide access to the platform is a widely regarded public good and a long-standing priority of this Board. The project will take about four years and involves temporary loss of use of the northern tip of the Square (actually a triangle) just south of the intersection of Broadway & St. Nicholas Ave. at W. 168th St. during construction; once the project is completed there will be no loss of parkland. The permanently alienated area is below the street and will have no impact on the public’s use or enjoyment of the Park.

Q&A Committee/Public

- What constitutes an emergency that gives access to the stairs? When elevators aren’t working.
- Will there be any additional venting through the park space? No, subsurface use.
- What is the impact on the trees that are already there, or choices for trees in the future? A (Jennifer Hoppa): Any changes to parkland would go through the inter-agency office. In terms of mitigation and restitution, the MTA knows they will be replacing one tree. As far as the replacement of the parkland, they believe they will make improvements to the remaining Mitchell Square, if deemed sufficient. They don’t anticipate needing to replace parkland since they’re not taking up programming space.
- Danny Bonilla: How intrusive is drilling going to be around that area and would it affect any of the hospitals in that area? A: One of their primary outreach is to not impact any adjacent communities. Therefore, their contractor will have vibration monitoring, 24/7 security, decibel monitors, etc. Additionally, the neighborhood will be informed of this construction, not only through the CB General Meeting & email, but also with signage.

Since the legislation has gone through for both the permanent & temporary alienations, a CB resolution is not required, so no further action was taken.

- 6. Update on the Immigrant Research & Performing Arts Center (IRPAC) form NYC EDC (Fernando Ortiz & Emma Bird) & the People’s Theatre Project (Mino Lora)** <7:58pm>

IRPAC is another of the commitments as part of Inwood rezoning, and something the community and the Community Board have been calling on for years. Now that the People’s Theatre Project (PTP) has been officially named as the operator of the IRPAC and an architect has been retained and has been working on the project, today’s report is to provide an update on what it will look like. Note: the IRPAC “name” is for identification purposes only and is not intended to be the final name of the building or program. The building is currently under construction and the IRPAC is expected to open in 2027.

The IRPAC will be part of a larger residential development on the lots at 206th/207th Streets between Ninth & Tenth Avenues, where the Pathmark used to be. The space will not only house PTP, which offers free afterschool programming and theatre education classes to children in elementary, middle- and high school as well as an adult theatre program, but also two different flexible performance spaces which will be available to various community organizations for all manner of live events (theatre, music, film, dance, etc.).

Q&A Committee/Public

- Liz Ritter: What is the selection process for groups using the space once it's built. A: We will be doing a business plan; currently we are focused on the capital plan so we can be financially sturdy. We are already reaching out to and working with local arts organizations and providers to help guide how the space will be used.
- Danny Bonilla: Would neighborhood artists be able to have the majority of the opportunities to contribute to their rotating-artist mural. A: Of course; we already have a track record of this kind of community contribution, which is part of our organizational ethos. Q: Would there be free programming? All of PTP's programming is free; gave a sample listing of the many free programs currently being offered. However, they still need to figure out how flexible they can be with ad hoc planning to include as many groups and artists as possible.
- How does the space define "immigrant" and address representation in this way? A: The space is meant to include the broad range of immigrants that make up this community.
- A member of the community who was not familiar with PTP's programming asked which public schools PTP is in, and how are you trying to get the word out on your programming? A: We have teaching artists in almost 20 schools, mostly in Upper Manhattan, serving more than 900 K-12 children, many of whom are dual-language learners. We work closely with the local School District (D6) and parent groups. In CD12M we currently offer programming at Amistad, Dos Puentes, Harbor Heights, the GWHS Educational Complex, PS8, School in the Square, & WHEELS, as well as the YM/YWHA and Fresh Youth Initiatives.

7. Presentation on the Inwood portion of the Manhattan Waterfront Greenway from NYC Economic Development Corporation (EDC): Fernando Ortiz <8:47pm>

Presentation shared on the Manhattan Waterfront Greenway, which is a commitment that started under Mayor Dinkins. Today it is a partnership between EDC, Parks and DOT, to "close the loop" on this 32.5 mile waterfront hiking & biking path around Manhattan. The previous (de Blasio) Administration committed \$728M to this pursuit, with an emphasis on gaps in predominantly underserved areas of the Island. Many of the gaps in CD12's portions of the Greenway, which include both the Harlem & Hudson River frontage, have challenges and damage as a result not only of neglect but of climate change and sea-level rise, and are prone to flooding so design for resiliency is of particular import. For more information visit <https://edc.nyc/project/manhattan-waterfront-greenway>.

There being no further business, **the meeting was adjourned at 9:24pm.** (Motion by Danny Bonilla; second by Nobles Crawford; no objection).

Respectfully submitted: Nobles Crawford & Liz Ritter