

# PARKS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE – MEETING MINUTES

April 7<sup>th</sup> 2015– Morris Jumel Mansion

## Committee members Present

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

## Committee Members Absent

Kelley Boyd

## Board Members Present

## Public Member

## Public Member Absent

Patti Jacobs

## Guests

Deborah Foord (Broadway Mall), Bob Isaac, Steven Harris, Trish Anderton, Mary Anderson, Mercedes Colledo, Lucia Rodriguez, Angel Nicoso (Union Community of Washington Heights), Martha Paleon, Sisa Martinez, Pedro Mejia, Mirta Jimenez, Joanne Petlu, David Cerron (DPR), Diogenes Abreu, Paul Kittas, Fred Stahn (High Bridge Park Development), Jennifer Hoppa (DPR), Rosalba Naranjo, Katherine O’Sullivan, Natalie Espino, Arelis De Lao (Union Community of Wash Heights)

The meeting was called to order at 7:08pm by the Committee Chair Mitchell Glenn with introductions and welcome.

- 1. Deborah C. Foord, Board Member & Chair, Public Art Committee of the Broadway Mall,** provided an overview of the Broadway Mall Association’s exhibition- Don Gummer on Broadway.

The Broadway Mall Association is pleased to announce a major exhibition by American artist Don Gummer from May 8<sup>th</sup> 2015 through November 2015. The exhibition will feature ten aluminum and stainless steel sculptures along the Broadway Malls from Columbus Circle to 157<sup>th</sup> St. There is one piece that will be featured in CB12 on 157<sup>th</sup> St. This is the artist’s first outdoor public art exhibition in NYC. A cell phone tour, in English and Spanish, will include the artist’s commentary.

- 2. Carol Ward, Executive Director, Morris Jumel Mansion,** presented on events for the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Morris Jumel Mansion.

Morris Jumel Mansion is celebrating its 250 year anniversary. In the last year, the mansion had approximately 22,000 visitors—9,000 of whom were students from various schools. There are four major events to celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mansion:

- February: The Mansion hosted a benefit performance of Lin-Manuel Miranda’s *Hamilton*.
- May-August: The Morris Jumel Mansion will have one of its largest art exhibitions featuring work by Yinka Shonibare. *Colonial Arrangements*, places Shonibare's work inside the beautifully appointed period rooms of Morris-Jumel Mansion and will take place May 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup> 2015. Carol Ward presented images of the sculptures that will be featured in the various rooms throughout the Mansion.

*Colonial Arrangements* kicks off May 1<sup>st</sup> with a two-tiered opening. At 6 p.m. the VIP preview hour will be attended by the artist. At 7 p.m., the doors to the general public. The general opening is free; the VIP Preview Hour is \$50. To RSVP to the general opening, email [marketing@morrisjumel.org](mailto:marketing@morrisjumel.org) or call 212-923-8008.

Morris Shonibare summer continues with events in May, June and July, including interactive art-making workshops for adults and children, an expert let panel talk, and multiple tours and workshops.

- July: Fundraising party will be hosted in South Street Seaport.
- October: Two part community birthday bash will be hosted on October 31<sup>st</sup>. During the day, the community will gather for a day of story-telling. In the evening, Morris-Jumel will debut *Spirits of the Past*, with actors playing the roles of the Mansion's residents and visitors.

### 3. **Jennifer Hoppa**, presented on the Reopening of the Historic High Bridge.

J. Hoppa presented on the public meetings NYC Parks and community partners like the Highbridge Coalition and the Harlem River Working Group have been having on the reopening of the High Bridge.

Everyone wants the reopening of the bridge to be a monumental event, highlighting the bridge's significant role in the development of NYC. In addition, we want to ensure that all the electeds, area residents, community leaders and civic groups that have been advocating and working towards its reopening get to be a part of the celebrations.

Therefore, NYC Parks has set up a framework for public involvement and collaboration on the festivities.

On July 25, 2015 there will be a community celebration on both sides of the bridge, with historical tours, performances, City Parks Foundation puppet mobile, Bronx Children's Museum mobile bus, fitness instruction, public art installations, music, interactive art making and other components happening. The day will end with a concert by La Banda Gorda in Highbridge Park.

In addition, themes for events/activities leading up to and following the bridge's reopening are planned.

May: Blueways and Bikeways

June: History Month

July: Community Celebration

August; Arts and Culture

September: Bike Bonanza

People are encouraged to go to [www.thehighbridge.org](http://www.thehighbridge.org) for more details as we draw closer to the bridge's reopening.

Ms. Hoppa also relayed the work being done to help with wayfinding signage, the 6 new Park employees that are being provided to help sustain the bridge and the park, and the challenge of getting toilets down at the bridge level.

4. **Paul Kittas**, presented on the High Bridge Aqueduct. Paul briefly talked about the history and expected success of the opening of the High Bridge. He also reviewed the importance of signage at High Bridge for ease of navigation for the community.
5. **David Cerron, Revenue Division of Parks**, provided a general overview of the solicitation process for concessions at the Parks (including La Marina, Ice Rink in High Bridge Park, restaurant in Fort Tryon Park, etc.). Before proceeding into the discussion, it was noted that this item was not on the agenda and would have to be discussed in detail at the May meeting to ensure that key players know about the discussion in advance. The committee agreed to proceed with a general discussion with the understanding that this would be added to the May agenda where this would be reviewed in detail.

David provided a general update on the concession agreement for La Marina. He discussed sound buffering requirements, limitation of 15 events per season, and water front access. David noted that La Marina worked with NYPD and other organizations to better manage traffic congestion issues.

New Leaf Café closed since December 2013 due to necessary roof replacement. Coffeed is the new operator and will begin operations at the same location as early as this month (April 2015).

Osi Kaminer asked if David can return to the Parks Committee next month to ensure that the committee is aware that this is on the agenda. David agreed to return in May.

Richard Lewis asked about the pre- contract concession process. The process is as follows:

- Solicitation goes out for about 6 weeks
- After proposals are returned, numerous factors are included for consideration
- Parks ratings committee reviews and rates each proposal
- Ratings committee works with the agency legal office to finalize a contract
- The length of the contract depends on the necessary capital investment, and the length of time needed to have a return on the investment
- The length of the contract is published

A few questions came up about La Marina in reference to the length of the contract, date of renewal, and the eco-dock. Committee agreed to table questions for review at the May meeting.

Question came up on whether the High Bridge ice skating concession is finalized. A vendor has not yet been found to run this concession. Parks is reviewing the RFP requirements to see if there are ways to get more interest.

#### 6. **Jennifer Hoppa, Monthly Parks Department Update.**

- 13,000 street trees and in park trees have been planted since Million Trees began.
- NYC Parks remains committed to caring for and sustaining our trees, parks and forests.
- Recently the Borough's gardeners pruned all the young street trees in Community Board 12, and private tree contractors were mobilized to prune larger street trees. CM Levine has helped advocate for and secure additional city funds to ensure that the pruning cycle of street trees in shortened/more frequent. In addition, we've had ISRP Crews working with NYC Parks' Natural Resources Group on helping in forest planting sites flourish.

- As a follow up to March's Committee Meeting on Replanting and Removals, J. Hoppa returned with some updates on removals for:
  - Fort Tryon Park
  - Inwood Hill
  - Highbridge
  - Fort Washington

Pictures of conditions and maps of removals were presented. J. Hoppa explained how only trees that were potential hazards and were in deteriorated condition would be removed. (Not trees that were in inaccessible areas or trees that were invasives but otherwise healthy)

- Jennifer spoke about plans for replanting a like number of trees in Northern Manhattan parks

## **7. Old Business**

The Committee again discussed and re-approved the resolution requested by the New York Restoration Project to support their effort to build a 2100 sq ft administration building in the Sherman Creek area on parkland that NYRP finished clearing 2 years ago. The same resolution that was passed in March was forwarded for consideration by the Executive Committee and the Full Board at those meetings.

## **8. New Business**

Arelis Delayo presented on behalf of Union Communal de Washington Heights E Inwood. The community organization developed a thorough needs assessment for the Audubon Playground, located on Audubon Ave and West 170<sup>th</sup> St. The needs assessment includes new and improved restrooms, recreation areas for children/ youth, resting areas with benches, amongst a list other needs for the Park.

The Committee was very appreciative of the assessment. Liz Lorris- Ritter reviewed the capital budget approval process with the organization and recommended that they return in the Fall to ensure that the proposal is incorporated in the capital prioritization process. It was also noted that Councilman Ydanis' office has a short term improvement plan for \$155K that will be available for voting in the community participatory budget.

Meeting adjourned at 9pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Juan Mejia.