



Community Board 12 - Manhattan Washington Heights & Inwood

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Shahabuddeen A. Ally, Esq., Chairperson
Ebenezer Smith, District Manager

November 29, 2018

Hon. Mitchell J. Silver
Commissioner of NYC Department of Parks & Recreation
830 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10065

Re: Resolution supporting the Renovation of the Pinehurst Avenue, Step-Street Terraced Gardens.

Dear Commissioner Silver:

At the General Meeting on Tuesday, November 27, 2018 Community Board 12 Manhattan, passed a resolution with a vote of (37) In Favor, (0) Opposed, (0) Abstention and (1) Not voting due to conflict requesting that the NYC Departments of Health and Environmental Protection works with NYC Parks to ensure that all appropriate rodent abatement measures are taken during the construction and calling on our local elected officials, local businesses, and the 181st St. BID – to install a “big belly” waste receptacle on W. 181st St. at the base of the stairs.

Whereas: The Pinehurst Avenue Step-Street extends up from W. 181st St. to the cul-de-sac south of W. 183rd St. with terraced gardens, wrought iron fencing, and bench seating on either side reminiscent of a Parisian streetscape; and

Whereas: The gardens have been maintained for decades by the volunteers of the W. 181st St. Beautification Project (“W181BP”), but the underlying terracing is in such disrepair due to rotting timbers and burrowing rodents such that it is hazardous for gardeners to continue to do their work; and

Whereas: The steps themselves were replaced by the New York City Department of Transportation (under whose purview the stairs remain) in 2002, but the underlying structural issues of the terracing was not addressed and continues to decline, and there also is spalling (deterioration) on the concrete stairs, poor lighting, and inadequate water sourcing which lacks an RPZ backflow preventer and is not up to code; and

Whereas: The NYC Parks Department agreed to take on the renovation project despite the stairs being under the purview of DOT, and representatives of Parks made a presentation at the November

13, 2018 meeting of the Community Board 12, Manhattan Parks & Cultural Affairs ("PCA") Committee which included feedback and responses to questions from the W181BP based on an earlier presentation to that organization; and

Whereas: The plan will use recycled plastic lumber cribbing in lieu of wood timbers for longer life and below-grade steel mesh hardware cloth in lieu of burlap cloth which is not successful for rodent control, remove ivy which is both invasive and "rodent friendly", repair the benches and gates, and add LED lighting; and

Whereas: The plan will preserve the eight trees as well as the large wisteria at the bottom of the steps, and plantings will be primarily shrubs and annuals rather than perennials; and

Whereas: The project will cost \$400k, with \$225k from Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer and \$175k from Councilmember Ydanis Rodriguez (10th District), and is expected to complete the design phase in Spring '19 and to take 21-24 months beyond that for procurement and construction; and

Whereas: The rodent situation is exacerbated both by ambient garbage and a small wire-mesh waste bin located near the bottom of the stairs; and

Whereas: In response to questions by the PCA Committee and the public, Parks agreed to:


- use aggressive rodent abatement, using the more human and environmentally-friendly CO2 method;
- work with NYC Department of Health (which leads the City's rat eradication efforts) to coordinate with the adjacent buildings and businesses on rodent abatement, and with the Department of Environmental Protection on any corrections to nearby street drains as they may relate to pest control;
- work with W181BP and adjacent buildings to facilitate access during construction if the W181BP or other community group organizes a mural (or murals) on the adjacent building walls;
- provide adequate notice, as is their practice, of any shutdowns of the staircase, though these are believed to be very minimal;
- locate a construction dumpster on the north side of W. 181st St. at the base of the stairs to minimize any loss of parking (the area is not currently a legal parking space, so there should be no impact);
- work with local businesses to ensure minimal impact during construction staging (again, likely to minimal-to-nil); and
- continue to work with the W181BP on all aspects of the project, including the planting plan; and

Resolved: Community Board 12, Manhattan supports the proposed design; and be it further

Resolved: Community Board 12, Manhattan calls on the NYC Departments of Health and Environmental Protection to work with NYC Parks to ensure that all appropriate rodent abatement measures are taken during construction to resolve this infestation going forward; and be it further

Resolved: Community Board 12, Manhattan calls on our local elected officials, local businesses, and possibly the 181st St. BID – which may be extending west to Ft. Washington Ave. and beyond – to install a “big belly” waste receptacle on W. 181st St. at the base of the stairs.

Sincerely,



Shaabuddeen A. Ally, Esq.
Chairperson

cc: Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Letitia James, Public Advocate
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Comptroller
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, Congressman

Hon. Marisol Alcantara, State Senator
Hon. Alfred Taylor, Assembly Member
Hon. Carmen De La Rosa, Assembly Member
Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez, Council Member
Hon. Mark Levine, Council Member