



Community Board 12 - Manhattan Washington Heights & Inwood

530 West 166th St. 6th Floor, New York, NY 10032

Phone: (212) 568-8500, Fax: (212) 740-8197

Website: www.nyc.gov/mcb12

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

June 30, 2017

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

Re: Resolution supporting the Highbridge Park Anchor Parks Initiative Project (Phase II)

Dear Commissioner Silver:

Please be advised that Community Board 12, Manhattan, unanimously passed (40 votes in favor, and 1 Not Voting due to conflict of interest) at its Tuesday, June 27, 2017 General Meeting, the following resolution supporting NYC Parks' proposed design for Phase II of the Highbridge Park Anchor Parks Initiative Project, with additional suggestions, and further urging NYC Parks to implement safe, ADA-compliant, gender-neutral and family-friendly bathrooms:

Whereas: Mayor de Blasio announced a \$150 million Anchor Parks Initiative, giving \$30 million for infrastructure improvements in one large park in each borough, and the designated Manhattan park is Community Board 12's own Highbridge Park, stretching from W. 155th to Dyckman Streets between Edgecombe, Amsterdam, and Fort George Avenues and the Harlem River Drive; and

Whereas: the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation (NYC Parks) engaged the design firm of MKW & Associates to help develop a Master Plan for Highbridge Park and several phased projects within the scope of the Master Plan to be funded through the Anchor Parks Initiative; and

Whereas: NYC Parks held public visioning sessions on November 28, 2016 & January 31, 2017 at the Highbridge Recreation Center and maintained an open comment period to solicit additional public feedback; and

Whereas: MKW & Associates and NYC Parks presented at the March 7th meeting of the Community Board 12, Manhattan (CB12M) Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee (PCA), at which meeting the Committee unanimously approved a proposed design for a Phase I renovation at the northern end of the Park, which resolution was approved unanimously by the full Board at its March 28th meeting; and

Whereas: MKW & Associates and NYC Parks presented a Phase II renovation for the Adventure / Sunken Playground – the utility of which has long-since been outlived – and other improvements at the southern end of the Park at June 6th meeting of the Community Board 12, Manhattan (CB12M) Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee (PCA); and

Whereas: the proposed Phase II \$16+ million renovation is consistent with the Master Plan's goals include improving, increasing, or adding north-to-south connectivity, play opportunities, bathrooms, wayfinding, lighting, gathering spaces, and entrances, and the possible addition of a soccer field; and

Whereas: the proposed Phase II renovation focuses on the Adventure/Sunken playground at the southern end of the Park, including a complete redesign which adds age-appropriate/age-segregated recreation areas to maximize utility and minimize conflict, an adult/teen fitness area, a new comfort station, an inviting and ADA-compliant layout that honors the playground's unique and innovative original design and works with the natural setting, and architectural flourishes that evoke the High Bridge and the Highbridge Water Tower; and

Whereas: the project will also include new lighting for the Sunken Playground as the Access trail from W. 165th St. down to the historic High Bridge at W. 173rd St., as well as lighting of the staircase from the Access Trail up to the Water Tower Terrace; and

Whereas: Installation of new lighting in parks is a capital improvement under the purview of NYC Parks but the repair of existing lighting is under the purview of the NYC Department of Transportation; and

Whereas: NYC Parks has worked extensively with BarStarzz on the design of innovative, efficient and maximally useful design of outdoor fitness areas for adults and teens in other parks in CD12M (Fort Tryon, Inwood Hill, J. Hood Wright); and

Whereas: members of the PCA and members of the public agree by a 3:1 margin that bathrooms should be gender-neutral, ADA-compliant, and also able to accommodate families (i.e., small children or the elderly and their respective caregivers) while minimizing the potential risk of bathrooms being used for inappropriate purposes or unsafe or illegal activity; and

Whereas: The timeline for the renovation is for design to take another six months, bidding to take place by mid-2018, construction to begin by early 2019, and project completion by early 2020, now, therefore, be it

Resolved: Community Board 12, Manhattan supports the proposed Phase II design presented by MKW & Associates and the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation at the June 6, 2017 Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee meeting, and encourages the Public Design Commission to approve it as well so that these vital improvements may be made to our beloved park; and be it further

Resolved: Community Board 12, Manhattan urges NYC Parks and MKW Associates to work together to design and implement bathrooms that reflect the community's preference for safe and ADA-compliant bathrooms which also are gender-neutral and family-friendly; and be it further

Resolved: Community Board 12, Manhattan urges MKW & Associates and the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation to ensure that the available funding be maximized so as to ensure that a junior soccer field (100' x 300') be constructed north of the ball field in the mid-park area around W. 175th St.; and be it further


Resolved: Community Board 12, Manhattan urges MKW Associates to work with NYC Parks and BarStarzz on improved design of the proposed fitness area; and be it further

Resolved: Community Board 12, Manhattan respectfully requests that the NYC DoT work with NYC Parks on the maintenance of this and other lighting throughout Highbridge Park; and be it further

Hon. Mitchell J. Silver
June 29, 2017
Page 3

Resolved: Community Board 12, Manhattan urges all of our elected officials to continue to fund improvements to Highbridge Park to realize the full goals of the Master Plan which exceed the \$30 million Anchor Park Initiative funding and other resources already invested in the park.

Sincerely



Shahabuddeen A. Ally Esq.
Chairperson

cc: Hon. Bill T. Castro, Manhattan Borough Commissioner
Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor
Hon. Letitia James, Public Advocate
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Comptroller
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, Congressman
Mr. John Williams, Principal MKW & Associates

Hon. Brian Benjamin, State Senator
Hon. Marisol Alcantara, State Senator
Hon. Herman D. Farrell, Jr., Assembly Member
Hon. Carmen De La Rosa
Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez, Council Member
Hon. Mark Levine, Council Member



Community Board 12 - Manhattan Washington Heights & Inwood

530 West 166th St. 6th Floor, New York, NY 10032

Phone: (212) 568-8500, Fax: (212) 740-8197

Website: www.nyc.gov/mcb12

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

June 30, 2017

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 Audubon Playground

Dear Commissioner Silver:

Please be advised that Community Board 12, Manhattan, unanimously passed (40 votes in favor, and 1 Not Voting due to conflict) at its Tuesday, June 27, 2017 General Meeting, the following resolution supporting NYC Parks' proposed renovation design of the Audubon Playground and further urging NYC Parks to implement safe, ADA-compliant, gender-neutral and family-friendly bathrooms:

Whereas: The Audubon Playground, located on Audubon Avenue between W. 169th & W. 170th Streets, is in desperate need of an overhaul and complete renovation, including the removal of a "temporary" classroom structure erected more than 20 years ago and used as a school which structure bifurcates the playground rendering the design awkward, inefficient and dangerous; and

Whereas: Members of the community and representatives of the Friends of Audubon Playground approached Community Board 12, Manhattan's Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee in April, 2015 to advocate for a complete renovation, and have been active and consistent advocates for same; and

Whereas: the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation (NYC Parks) and the Department of Education had an extensive walk-through of the playground in December 2015, and a scoping meeting in November 2016 following the announcement that a new Community Parks Initiative would make available sufficient funds to renovate the playground; and

Whereas: NYC Parks engaged the design firm of Quennell Rothschild & Partners (QRP) to design a complete renovation of the Playground including the removal of the educational structure, and QRP gave a presentation of its proposal at the June 6, 2017 meeting of the CB12M Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee; and

Whereas: NYC Department of Education is committed to relocating the Alternative Learning Center currently located in the "temporary" classroom structure located in the playground and vacating said structure no later than July 1, 2018; and

Whereas: The proposed ADA-compliant design adds more square footage and saves all large trees; removes the "temporary" structure and re-grades the footprint of same; replaces all of the existing play equipment, except for the turtle, which is being retained; utilizes existing and new fencing of various types and heights to maximize safety, delineation of space, and aesthetics; honors the legacy of John James Audubon by featuring plantings that attract birds, and includes a whimsical birdhouse in the shape of his former home which had been located nearby; creates

two distinct play areas for young (2-5) and older (5-12) children separated by low plantings, which enable visual supervision between the areas; includes water spray play areas for different age groups; features a small area with synthetic turf for gross motor movement (ball play, track) and a junior basketball court; will have low fencing at the perimeter to facilitate continued community plantings while also not providing a visual barrier to the playground; and will replace the adjacent sidewalks; and

Whereas: The comfort station will be made ADA-compliant, doors will be widened to accommodate wheelchairs, and the mural on it will be removed to repair masonry, and members of the PCA and public agree by a 3:1 margin that bathrooms should be gender-neutral, ADA-compliant, and also able to accommodate families (i.e., small children or the elderly and their respective caregivers) while minimizing the potential risk of bathrooms being used for inappropriate purposes or unsafe or illegal activity; now, therefore, be it

Resolved: Community Board 12, Manhattan supports the proposed design presented by Quennell Rothschild & Partners and NYC Parks at the June 6, 2017 Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee meeting, and encourages the Public Design Commission to approve it as well so that this desperately needed renovation may be made to this playground in an area of the community that is devoid of same; and be it further

Resolved: Community Board 12, Manhattan urges NYC Parks and Quennell Rothschild & Partners to work together to design and implement bathrooms that reflect the community's preference for safe and ADA-compliant bathrooms which also are gender-neutral and family-friendly.

Sincerely,



Shahabuddeen A. Any, Esq.
Chairperson

cc: Hon. Hon. Mitchell J. Silver
Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor
Hon. Letitia James, Public Advocate
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Comptroller
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, Congressman
Quennell Rothschild & Partners

Hon. Brian Benjamin, State Senator
Hon. Marisol Alcantara, State Senator
Hon. Herman D. Farrell, Jr., Assembly Member
Hon. Carmen De La Rosa
Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez, Council Member
Hon. Mark Levine, Council Member